1. **NAME**

   **COMMON:** Trinity Church

   **AND/OR HISTORIC:** Trinity Church

2. **LOCATION**

   **STREET AND NUMBER:** 141 Church Street at Spring Street

   **CITY OR TOWN:** Newport

   **STATE CODE:** 44

3. **CLASSIFICATION**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CATEGORY (Check One)</th>
<th>OWNERSHIP</th>
<th>STATUS</th>
<th>ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC</th>
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<tr>
<td>District</td>
<td>Building</td>
<td>Public</td>
<td>In Process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Site</td>
<td>Structure</td>
<td>Private</td>
<td>Being Considered</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Object</td>
<td></td>
<td>Both</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

   **PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)**

   - Agricultural
   - Commercial
   - Educational
   - Entertainment
   - Government
   - Industrial
   - Military
   - Private Residence
   - Public
   - Religious
   - Transportation
   - Other (Specify)
   - Museum
   - Scientific
   - Comments

4. **OWNER OF PROPERTY**

   **OWNER’S NAME:** Episcopal Church

   **STREET AND NUMBER:** 27 Church Street

   **CITY OR TOWN:** Newport

   **STATE CODE:** 44

5. **LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

   **COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC:** Newport City Hall

   **STREET AND NUMBER:** Washington Square

   **CITY OR TOWN:** Newport

   **STATE CODE:** 44

6. **REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

   **TITLE OF SURVEY:** Historic American Building Survey (photocopies of 3 1936 and 2 pre 1925 measured drawings, HABS form 1959 and 8 data pages 1972).

   **DATE OF SURVEY:** 1936, 1959, 1972

   **DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:** Library of Congress/Annex, Division of Prints and Photographs

   **CITY OR TOWN:** Washington

   **STATE CODE:** D.C. 011
### DESCRIPTION

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<tr>
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<td>□ Good □ Fair □ Deteriorated □ Ruins □ Unexposed</td>
</tr>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
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<th>(Check One)</th>
<th>(Check One)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>□ Unaltered</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ Moved</td>
<td>□ Original Site</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Describe the Present and Original (if known) Physical Appearance**

Trinity Church, Newport is a two story rectangular frame and clapboard building with gable ends and a low pitched roof. Two rows of round-headed windows run along the north and south sides and a larger arched window of similar form marks the central nave on the eastern end. The steeple on the western end is formed by a tall square wooden tower topped by a narrow modillioned cornice. From this rises an arced belfry framed by Doric pilasters with a modillioned cornice and triglyph frieze, a lantern with round-headed windows framed by Ionic pilasters supporting another cornice and plain architrave, and a slender spire. Tall slender cones, similar in form to the spire, rest at the corners of the first stage. The second and third stages are marked by urns, diminishing in size to correspond to the graduation of the steeple sections.

Although it lacks the variety of forms found at The First Baptist Meeting House in Providence, which is about forty years later, the steeple at Trinity has a soaring graceful form achieved by the slender, almost delicate proportions of its parts. The tower itself is somewhat awkward in the spacing of its openings which are unrelated by proportion, spacing, or architectural features, such as the use of a stringcourse on the tower at Old North.

The entrances on the north are framed by fluted pilasters on pedestals which support a segmental arch with a semicircular depression. This naive divergence from classical forms, almost as if a drawing in a pattern book had been misunderstood, provides a provincial freshness to the building, suited to the regional wooden construction.

The building, including the steeple was designed in 1725, but the steeple spire was not constructed until 1741. In 1768 the first top was blown down and replaced in its original form. It is therefore earlier than Old North, its model, which was redone by Bulfinch in 1807. The only other major structural alteration occurred in 1762 when the building was lengthened by two bays.

The interior also bears a close resemblance to Old North, Boston. These two buildings are the only Colonial churches which use superimposed piers to support the balcony and ceiling, rather than the one large order. This feature relates the design to Wren's St. Stephens Holborn and St. Andrews Wardrobe. In both churches these piers are paneled below and fluted on the second level. Trinity, however, differs in ceiling construction. The lateral cross vaults of the aisle bays are lifted to the level of the main vault, thus forming a system of quasi-groin vaults over the nave. This creates a unifying lateral sweep which gives reposeful dignity to the austere simplicity of the interior. The effect is heightened by the large arched window set within a deep arched plaster reveal in the wall which forms a frame for the altar and pulpit.
There are also a few seventeenth-century overtones in the raised paneling for the gallery breasts and the Jacobean "Union Jack" paneling under the warder's pew. This design was a favorite of Munday's who repeated it in the balcony of the Colony House and the Sabatarian Meeting House.

The great, triple-decked wineglass pulpit in its original center aisle position is a unique survival of a typical colonial form. The massive sounding board over the pulpit and the iron-work are fine examples of colonial craftsmanship.

The chancel table, made in England in 1680, is the original altar of the church. Trinity also possesses the second chalice and paten sent to the Colonies by the London Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts (SPG); this set has been in continuous use since 1702. There is also a bell, the gift of Queen Anne in 1702, and the original casework and a few pipes of the Bridge organ given by Bishop Berkeley. The royal crown and Bishop's mitre which ornamented it fortunately survived the Revolutionary War. Flemish brass chandeliers were first hung in 1728 and the painted altarpiece was a gift from the SPG in 1733. The high backed box pews are also a rare survival of the original. Trinity is one of the few early American churches which has never required restoration.

Boundary

Trinity Church is located on a long narrow block closely surrounded by other church buildings, period houses and warehouses. The landmark boundary has been drawn to exclude all but the church itself in the landmark designation, beginning at the northeast corner at the intersection of Spring and Church Streets, continuing south along the west curb of Spring Street to Frank Street, then west along the north curb of Frank Street to a point in line with the hedge at the rear of cemetery, then north along this hedge to Church Street, then east along the south curb of Church Street to the point of beginning as shown in green on the sketch map.
Trinity Church, Newport, was begun in 1725 by Richard Nunday, a local craftsman who also was responsible for the Colony House, Newport, another national historic landmark. Very similar in design to Old North (Christ Church) Boston, it seems likely that William Price, a Boston print dealer and one of the founders of Trinity, as well as the designer of Old North, obtained the plans. This would explain the close relationship to the Boston church. Both churches are closely related to the designs of Sir Christopher Wren for his London Churches, indicating access to his plans which Price might have had. The elegant classical correctness of the spire contrasts with the curious segmental pediments broken at the top by inverted semicircles over the eastern doors and the awkward proportions of the tower openings, giving an unorthodox yet distinctive character to one of the most beautiful of colonial churches. Trinity is also one of the very few church buildings which retains its original interior furnishings and has never required restoration. With its steeple and interior intact, Trinity remains a rare survival and important example of Georgian church design in the American colonies.

HISTORY

The present Trinity Church was erected in 1725-26 by Newport's master carpenter, Richard Nunday, designer of the Colony House and some of the finer private houses of the period. Both the interior and the steeple of Trinity are considered to be more closely related to Wren's London churches than any other Colonial building with the exception of Old North. Old North in Boston had been begun two years earlier from essentially the same plans. Both are associated with William Price, a Boston print dealer, who could have had access to prints or plans of Wren's churches.

Wren designed over fifty-two churches for London after the Great Fire of 1666 and these had an unmistakable effect on all subsequent church design.

The London Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts was founded in 1701 and they are known to have commissioned the architect to draw plans for several churches proposed to be erected in the Colonies.
8. Significance second page

Since none of these plans have been found it is speculation to link Trinity or Old North directly to them, but they are specifically related to Wren's designs in general and particular comparisons can be made to his churches. The spire for example relates to St. Lawrence Jewry and the use of superimposed piers on the interior, used nowhere else in Colonial church building, related to St. Stephens Holbron and St. Andrews Wardrobe.

The spire, designed in 1726, was not actually constructed until 1741. In 1768, when it was found to be defective it was taken down and rebuilt to follow the original design. In 1762, the church was lengthened two bays (30 feet) by dividing the building in half, moving back the rear portion and joining the sections with matching fabric.

The church still possesses the original altar table, a bell sent by Queen Anne to the parish in 1702 and an organ given by Dean Berkeley in 1733. The building has been in continuous service since 1726 and still maintains an active parish today.
Sketch map of Trinity Church, Newport, Rhode Island, 1975

- Church property
- Landmark boundary
- TO BE
- OR DEMOLISHED
MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Downing, Antoninette F., Early Homes of Rhode Island, Richmond, Va., 1937.


GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CORNER</th>
<th>LATITUDE</th>
<th>LONGITUDE</th>
</tr>
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<tr>
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<td>Degrees Minutes Seconds</td>
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<td>Degrees Minutes Seconds</td>
<td>Degrees Minutes Seconds</td>
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<tr>
<td>SE</td>
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<tr>
<td>SW</td>
<td>Degrees Minutes Seconds</td>
<td>Degrees Minutes Seconds</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LATITUDE</th>
<th>LONGITUDE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Degrees Minutes Seconds</td>
<td>Degrees Minutes Seconds</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: 2 acres

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE: CODE COUNTY: STATE: CODE COUNTY: STATE: CODE COUNTY: STATE: CODE COUNTY:

FORM PREPARED BY Patricia Heintzelman, architectural historian, Landmark Review Project

ORGANIZATION Historic Sites Survey

DATE 1/10/75

STATE: D.C. CODE: 11

STATE-LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION

As the designated State Liaison Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:

National [ ] State [ ] Local [ ]

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register.

[Signature]

ATTEST: [Signature]

Boundary Surveyed: [Date]

Boundary Surveyor: [Name] [Date]

Director, ORHP: [Name] [Date]
Form 10-301

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
PROPERTY MAP FORM

(Type all entries - attach to or enclose with map)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NAME</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>COMMON: Trinity Church</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AND/OR HISTORIC: Trinity Church</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| LOCATION |
| STREET AND NUMBER: 141 Church Street at Spring |
| CITY OR TOWN: Newport |
| STATE: Rhode Island |

| MAP REFERENCE |
| SOURCE: sketch map drawn on site by Patricia Heintzelman |
| SCALE: unscaled |
| DATE: 1974 |

| REQUIREMENTS |
| TO BE INCLUDED ON ALL MAPS |
| 1. Property boundaries where required |

Form 10-301

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
PROPERTY MAP FORM

(Type all entries - attach to or enclose with map)

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</tbody>
</table>

| LOCATION |
| STREET AND NUMBER: 141 Church Street at Spring Street |
| CITY OR TOWN: Newport |
| STATE: Rhode Island |

| MAP REFERENCE |
| SOURCE: U.S.G.S. 7.5' Series, Newport Quadrangle |
| SCALE: 1:24000 |
| DATE: 1957, photorevised 1970 |

| REQUIREMENTS |
| TO BE INCLUDED ON ALL MAPS |
| 1. Property boundaries where required |
| 2. North arrow |
| 3. Latitude and longitude reference |
### NAME:
FOUNDING NAME:

** COMMON:** Trinity Church
** AND/OR HISTORIC:** Trinity Church

### LOCATION:

** STREET AND NUMBER:** 141 Church Street at Spring Street
** CITY OR TOWN:** Newport
** STATE:** Rhode Island [44] ** COUNTY:** Newport [005]

### PHOTO REFERENCE:

** PHOTO CREDIT:** Patricia Heintzelman
** DATE OF PHOTO:** October, 1974
** NEGATIVE FILED AT:** Historic Sites Survey, NPS

### IDENTIFICATION:

** DESCRIBE VIEW, DIRECTION, ETC.:**

View of Trinity Church, west end.

---

**View of east end of church.**
**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES**

**PROPERTY PHOTOGRAPH FORM**

_(Type all entries - attach to or enclose with photograph)_

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NAME</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>COMMON: Trinity Church</td>
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<tr>
<td>AND/OR HISTORIC: Trinity Church</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| LOCATION |
| STREET AND NUMBER: 141 Church Street at Spring Street |
| CITY OR TOWN: Newport |
| STATE: Rhode Island |
| COUNTY: Newport |
| CODE: 44 |
| COUNTY CODE: 005 |

| PHOTO REFERENCE |
| PHOTO CREDIT: Patricia Heintzelman |
| DATE OF PHOTO: October 1974 |
| NEGATIVE FILED AT: Historic Sites Survey |

**IDENTIFICATION**

DESCRIBE VIEW, DIRECTION, ETC.

- Detail of spire

--

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES**

**PROPERTY PHOTOGRAPH FORM**

_(Type all entries - attach to or enclose with photograph)_

<table>
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| CODE: 44 |
| COUNTY CODE: 005 |

| PHOTO REFERENCE |
| PHOTO CREDIT: Patricia Heintzelman |
| DATE OF PHOTO: October 1974 |
| NEGATIVE FILED AT: Historic Sites Survey |

**IDENTIFICATION**

DESCRIBE VIEW, DIRECTION, ETC.

- View of modern 1955 church building, not given landmark status.
Interior view of east end of church.
STATE: Rhode Island
COUNTY: Newport

FOR UPS USE ONLY
ENTRY NUMBER DATE

COMMON: Trinity Church
AND/OR HISTORIC: Trinity Church

LOCATION:
STREET AND NUMBER: 141 Church Street at Spring Street
CITY OR TOWN: Newport
STATE: Rhode Island

CLASSIFICATION
CATEGORY (Check One):
- District
- Site
- Object

OWNERSHIP
- Public
- Private
- Both

STATUS
- Public Acquisition:
  - In Process
  - Being Considered

ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
- Yes:
  - Occupied
  - Preservation work in progress
  - Restricted
  - Unrestricted
  - No

PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate):
- Agricultural
- Government
- Park
- Transportation
- Commercial
- Industrial
- Private Residence
- Other (Specify)
- Educational
- Military
- Religious
- Museum
- Scientific
- Comments

OWNER OF PROPERTY
OWNER'S NAME: Episcopal Church
STREET AND NUMBER: 27 Church Street
CITY OR TOWN: Newport
STATE: Rhode Island

LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION
COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC:
Newport City Hall
STREET AND NUMBER: Washington Square
CITY OR TOWN: Newport
STATE: Rhode Island

REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS
DATE OF SURVEY: 1936, 1959, 1972
- Federal
- State
- County
- Local
DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:
Library of Congress/Annex
Division of Prints and Photographs
STREET AND NUMBER:
CITY OR TOWN:
STATE: D.C.
CODE: 011
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7. Description: (1)

Trinity Church

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**SIGNIFICANCE**

<table>
<thead>
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<th>PERIOD</th>
<th>Pre-Columbian</th>
<th>16th Century</th>
<th>17th Century</th>
<th>18th Century</th>
<th>19th Century</th>
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**SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known)**

- 1725-26
- 1768

**AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE** (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- Aboriginal
- Prehistoric
- Historic
- Agriculture
- Architecture
- Art
- Commerce
- Communications
- Conservation
- Education
- Engineering
- Industry
- Invention
- Landscape
- Literature
- Military
- Music
- Political
- Religion/Philosophy
- Science
- Sculpture
- Social/Humanitarian
- Theater
- Transportation
- Urban Planning
- Other (Specify)

**STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE**

Trinity Church, Newport, was begun in 1725 by Richard Nunday, a local craftsman who also was responsible for the Colony House, Newport, another national historic landmark. Very similar in design to Old North (Christ Church) Boston, it seems likely that William Price, a Boston print dealer and one of the founders of Trinity, as well as the designer of Old North, obtained the plans. This would explain the close relationship to the Boston church. Both churches are closely related to the designs of Sir Christopher Wren for his London Churches, indicating access to his plans which Price might have had. The elegant classical correctness of the spire contrasts with the curious segmental pediments broken at the top by inverted semicircles over the eastern doors and the awkward proportions of the tower openings, giving an unorthodox yet distinctive character to one of the most beautiful of colonial churches. Trinity is also one of the very few church buildings which retains its original interior furnishings and has never required restoration. With its steeple and interior intact, Trinity remains a rare survival and important example of Georgian church design in the American colonies.

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MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Downing, Antoninette F., Early Homes of Rhode Island, Richmond, Va., 1937.

and Scully, Vincent J. Jr., The Architectural Heritage of Newport,


and Neo-Classical Styles, Garden City, N.Y., 1970.

Place, Charles A., "From Meeting House of Church in New England," Old Time

GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES
DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY
OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES

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</tr>
<tr>
<td>SW</td>
<td>Degrees Minutes Seconds</td>
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LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES
DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY
OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES

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<th>LATITUDE</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>0</td>
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</table>

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: 2 acres

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

FORM PREPARED BY

Patricia Reintzelman, architectural historian, Landmark Review Project

ORGANIZATION

Historic Sites Survey

STREET AND NUMBER:

1100 L. Street, N.W.

CITY OR TOWN:

Washington

STATE:

D.C.

STATE-LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION

As the designated State Liaison Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:

- National
- State
- Local

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register.

CHIEF, OFFICE OF ARCHAEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

Boundary Certified:

CHIEF, ARCH. SURVEYS

Boundary Affirmed:

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE: 7-1-75

ATTEST:

DATE: 7-1-75
**PROPERTY MAP FORM**

*common:* Trinity Church  
*and/or historic:* Trinity Church

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>LOCATION</strong></th>
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</thead>
</table>
| **STREET AND NUMBER:** | 141 Church Street at Spring Street  
| **CITY OR TOWN:** | Newport  
| **STATE:** | Rhode Island  
| **COUNTY:** | Newport  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>MAP REFERENCE</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **SOURCE:** | sketch map drawn on site by Patricia Heintzelman  
| **SCALE:** | unscaled  
| **DATE:** | 1974  

**REQUIREMENTS**

1. Property boundaries where required.
2. North arrow.
3. Latitude and longitude reference.
NAME
COMMON: Trinity Church
AND/OR HISTORIC: Trinity Church

LOCATION
STREET AND NUMBER: 141 Church Street at Spring Street
CITY OR TOWN: Newport
STATE: Rhode Island

PHOTO REFERENCE
PHOTO CREDIT: Patricia Heintzelman
DATE OF PHOTO: October, 1974
NEGATIVE FILED AT: Historic Sites Survey, NPS

IDENTIFICATION
DESCRIBE VIEW, DIRECTION, ETC.

View of Trinity Church, west end

View of east end of church.
### Trinity Church

**LOCATION**

- **Street and Number:** 141 Church Street at Spring Street
- **City or Town:** Newport
- **State:** Rhode Island

**PHOTO REFERENCE**

- **Photo Credit:** Patricia Heintzelman
- **Date of Photo:** October 1974
- **Negative Filed At:** Historic Sites Survey

**IDENTIFICATION**

- **Describe View, Direction, Etc.:** Detail of spire

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**View of modern 1955 church building, not given landmark status.**
1. **NAME**
   - COMMON: Trinity Church
   - AND/OR HISTORIC: Trinity Church

2. **LOCATION**
   - STREET AND NUMBER: 141 Church Street at Spring Street
   - CITY OR TOWN: Newport
   - STATE: Rhode Island

3. **PHOTO REFERENCE**
   - PHOTO CREDIT: Patricia Heintzelman
   - DATE OF PHOTO: October 1974
   - NEGATIVE FILED AT: Historic Sites Survey

4. **IDENTIFICATION**
   - DESCRIBE VIEW, DIRECTION, ETC.: View of stairs to pulpit

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1. **NAME**
   - COMMON: Trinity Church
   - AND/OR HISTORIC: Trinity Church

2. **LOCATION**
   - STREET AND NUMBER: 141 Church Street at Spring Street
   - CITY OR TOWN: Newport
   - STATE: Rhode Island

3. **PHOTO REFERENCE**
   - PHOTO CREDIT: Patricia Heintzelman
   - DATE OF PHOTO: October 1974
   - NEGATIVE FILED AT: Historic Sites Survey, NPS

4. **IDENTIFICATION**
   - DESCRIBE VIEW, DIRECTION, ETC.: Interior view of east end of church.