**NAME**

COMMON: United Congregational Church

AND/OR HISTORIC:  

**LOCATION**

STREET AND NUMBER: Spring and Pelham Streets

CITY OR TOWN: Newport

STATE: Rhode Island, 02840

**CLASSIFICATION**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CATEGORY</th>
<th>OWNERSHIP</th>
<th>STATUS</th>
<th>ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>District</td>
<td>Public</td>
<td>In Process</td>
<td>Yes: Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Site</td>
<td>Private</td>
<td>Being Considered</td>
<td>Restricted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Structure</td>
<td>Both</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Unrestricted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Object</td>
<td>Public Acquisition:</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>No</td>
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</table>

PRESENT USE (Check One or More As Appropriate)

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

**OWNER OF PROPERTY**

OWNER'S NAME: United Congregational Church

STREET AND NUMBER: Spring and Pelham Streets

CITY OR TOWN: Newport

STATE: Rhode Island

**LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE, GISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC:

City Hall

STREET AND NUMBER: Broadway

CITY OR TOWN: Newport

STATE: Rhode Island

**REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE OF SURVEY: Historic American Buildings Survey

DATE OF SURVEY: 1970

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS: Library of Congress

STREET AND NUMBER: Independence Avenue and 1st Street, S.E.

CITY OR TOWN: Washington

STATE: District of Columbia
**DESCRIPTION**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CONDITION (Check One)</th>
<th>(Check One)</th>
<th>(Check One)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Excellent</td>
<td>Good</td>
<td>Fair</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deteriorated</td>
<td>Ruins</td>
<td>Unexposed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Altered</td>
<td>Unaltered</td>
<td>Moved</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**DESCRIPTION THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (If known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE**

The church is a large, rectangular masonry structure, its brown Connecticut sandstone walls laid in random ashlar pattern, with regular quoining at the corners. It is, above a basement, of one high, open story internally, containing there a gallery; exterior walls are divided by a belt course at the gallery level, with a tier of large, single, round-arched windows above and smaller, paired windows below. The gable roof is carried by large timber trusses supported by the outer masonry walls and the nave arcades. The main entrance, in the west gable end framed by corner towers, has triple arched doorways under triple arched windows. The window label mouldings, the eaves and eave brackets—and particularly the arched doorways—all show (Lombardic) Romanesque Revival detail.

The corner towers are square in plan and of unequal height. The south one terminates just above the eaves line, the north one just above the ridge line, of the main roof. Originally the north tower carried a concave, steep pyramidal roof and an open cupola with a weather-vane; these were lost in a hurricane but are seen in early views.

The main entrance leads to a shallow narthex; stairs to the galleries are in the corner towers left and right. Beyond the narthex is the main auditorium or sanctuary, with a high nave, single aisles to either side with galleries above, and a very shallow chancel against the east wall framed by a large arch. The sanctuary seats over 1,000. Interior walls are finished with wood wainscoting above which is plaster scored in rusticated patterns. Flat plaster ceilings are carried on deeply projecting beams with large, curved knee braces. Round-arched doorways have mediaeval-type mouldings.

Interior decoration by John LaFarge in 1880 included new colored windows, painting of the altar wall, and painting the ceilings. Blues, greens, reds, and gold predominate, and rich, deep, tapestried patterns run throughout. The east wall is done in oil paint directly on the slightly textured plaster wall. Some of the stained glass windows are signed and dated.

A parish house was added in 1908. It adjoins the original building on the east, and contains offices and meeting-rooms in two floors and a partial basement.
This building serves the United Congregational Church which was formed in 1833 by the union of the First and Second Congregational parishes in Newport. Their history goes back to the late 17th century, and Ezra Stiles is included in the list of distinguished ministers of the churches. The present building was built during the pastorate (1811-1873) of Dr. Thatcher Thayer, one of the more important clergymen in Newport's history.

The cornerstone of the present building was laid December 5, 1855, and the building was dedicated January 15, 1857. The building was designed by the architect Joseph C. Wells. Builders and contractors included, for carpentry, John Sniffen; for masonry, Samuel McCorkle and Sons; for stone-cutting, William Crommelin. In 1880 the interior of the church was decorated by John LaFarge, and it contains important examples of his mural-painting and stained glass work.

The United Congregational Church is an interesting and well-preserved example of the Romanesque Revival, brownstone churches of the mid-19th century, and as such has a unique spot in the history of Newport's church architecture. It is particularly well sited, and it forms an important architectural accent in a predominately residential or residentially-scaled urban setting.
Newport Mercury, December 8, 1855.
Congregationalism, including a short history of the United Congregational
Church of Newport, Rhode Island (Newport, Rhode Island, c. 1965-
1970).
Documents, a coloured lithograph and early photographs owned by the
United Congregational Church, Newport, Rhode Island.

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY</td>
<td>DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CORNER</td>
<td>LATITUDE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NW</td>
<td>Degrees Minutes Seconds</td>
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<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SE</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SW</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY:

11. FORM PREPARED BY:

Osmund R. Overby, Project Supervisor

ORGANIZATION
Historic American Buildings Survey Newport Project

STREET AND NUMBER:
90 Bridge Street

CITY OR TOWN:
Newport

12. 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 [ ]

Name

Title

Date

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

Chief, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

ATTEST:

Keeper of The National Register

Date
**UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR**  
**NATIONAL PARK SERVICE**

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES**  
**PROPERTY PHOTOGRAPH FORM**

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>1. NAME</strong></th>
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<td><strong>STATE:</strong> Rhode Island</td>
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<td><strong>COUNTY:</strong> Newport</td>
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<table>
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<th><strong>3. PHOTO REFERENCE</strong></th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>PHOTO CREDIT:</strong> Historic American Buildings Survey</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>DATE OF PHOTO:</strong> 1970</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>NEGATIVE FILED AT:</strong> Library of Congress, Independence Avenue and 1st St., S. E., Washington, D. C.</td>
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<tr>
<th><strong>4. IDENTIFICATION</strong></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>DESCRIBE VIEW, DIRECTION, ETC.</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>West front.</td>
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</table>
**Property Photograph Form**

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

2. **LOCATION**
   - STREET AND NUMBER:
     - Spring and Pelham Streets
   - CITY OR TOWN: Newport
   - STATE: Rhode Island
   - COUNTY: Newport

3. **PHOTO REFERENCE**
   - PHOTO CREDIT: Historic American Buildings Survey
   - DATE OF PHOTO: 1970
   - NEGATIVE FILED AT: Library of Congress, Independence Avenue and 1st St., S. E., Washington, D. C.

4. **IDENTIFICATION**
   - DESCRIBE VIEW, DIRECTION, ETC.
     - Church auditorium, looking towards south-west, showing organ and choir loft.
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
PROPERTY PHOTOGRAPH FORM

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

1. NAME
COMMON: United Congregational Church

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3. PHOTO REFERENCE
PHOTO CREDIT: Historic American Buildings Survey
DATE OF PHOTO: 1970
NEGATIVE FILED AT: Library of Congress, Independence Avenue and 1st St., S. E., Washington, D. C.

4. IDENTIFICATION
DESCRIBE VIEW, DIRECTION, ETC.
North side.
**1. NAME**

**COMMON:** United Congregational Church

**AND/OR HISTORIC:**

---

**2. LOCATION**

**STREET AND NUMBER:** Spring and Pelham Streets

**CITY OR TOWN:** Newport

**STATE:** Rhode Island

**CODE: 005**

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**3. PHOTO REFERENCE**

**PHOTO CREDIT:** Historic American Buildings Survey

**DATE OF PHOTO:** 1970

**NEGATIVE FILED AT:** Library of Congress, Independence Avenue and 1st St., S. E., Washington, D. C.

---

**4. IDENTIFICATION**

**DESCRIBE VIEW, DIRECTION, ETC.**

Portion of south side of church auditorium.
**United States Department of the Interior**

**National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places**

**Property Photograph Form**

*Type all entries - attach to or enclose with photograph*

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<td>Rhode Island</td>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>DESCRIBE VIEW, DIRECTION, ETC.:</strong></td>
<td>East end of church auditorium.</td>
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**National Register of Historic Places**

**Property Map Form**

**Common Name:** United Congregational Church

**Location:** Spring and Pelham Streets

**City or Town:** Newport

**State:** Rhode Island

**Source:** U.S. Geological Survey

**Scale:** 1:24,000

**Date:** 1957

**Requirements:**

1. Property boundaries where required.
2. North arrow.
3. Latitude and longitude reference.