NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

1. NAME
   COMMON: Sixth District Court House
   AND/OR HISTORIC: Colony House or Old State House

2. LOCATION
   STREET AND NUMBER: 150, Benefit Street
   CITY OR TOWN: Providence
   STATE: Rhode Island

3. CLASSIFICATION
   CATEGORY (Check One)
   District [ ] Building [ ]
   Site [ ] Structure [ ]
   Object [ ]
   OWNERSHIP (Public [ ] Private [ ])
   Public Acquisition: In Process [ ] Being Considered [ ]
   STATUS: Occupied [ ] Unoccupied [ ]

   ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC: Yes [ ] Restricted [ ]
   Preservation work in progress [ ] Unrestricted [ ]
   Accessible to the public: Yes [ ] Restricted [ ]

   PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)
   Agricultural [ ] Government [ ]
   Commercial [ ] Industrial [ ]
   Educational [ ] Military [ ]
   Entertainment [ ] Museum [ ]
   Object [ ]
   Other (Specify) [ ]

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY
   OWNERS NAME: State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations
   STREET AND NUMBER: State House, 90, Smith Street
   CITY OR TOWN: Providence
   STATE: Rhode Island

5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION
   COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC:
   City Hall
   STREET AND NUMBER: Dorrance and Washington Streets
   CITY OR TOWN: Providence
   STATE: Rhode Island

   APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY:
   Less than 1 acre

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS
   TITLE OF SURVEY: College Hill Demonstration Grant Study
   DATE OF SURVEY: 1959
   DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:
   Providence City Plan Commission
   STREET AND NUMBER: 10, Dorrance Street
   CITY OR TOWN: Providence
   STATE: Rhode Island
   CODE 4415
This building was constructed in 1760-1762 and is of brick above a stone basement, with quoins and rusticated window trim of brown sandstone, a wide brick belt and additional embellishments of wood. When first built it was a rectangle of about forty by seventy feet, containing two storeys (as it still does) above a basement inserted in a steeply-sloping site between Benefit Street on the east (above) and North Main Street on the west (below). Its roof was and remains of hipped form--interrupted originally on one, if not both, elevations by a central pediment at the eaves containing a circular attic window. This in turn surmounted a large, wide, pedimented window treatment directly over the entrance(s). The hipped roof was topped by a balustraded deck supporting a cupola or clock-belfry. This is the best description that can be made from an old print of the building as seen from the west (a part of Walling's 1851 Map of Providence).

Interior accommodations provided for the offices of colonial government (at that time shared between Providence and Newport) and for the government's library. On the interior, only one room--the northeast one on the 1760-1762 building's second floor--fully retains its original appearance, although throughout additions, alterations and renovations an over-all XVIII-Century manner and type of trim has been maintained.

In 1850-1851 the building was enlarged and altered by Thomas A. Tefft, but in a very sympathetic way. He extended forward a new brick entrance pavilion on the west front, with a long stair rising to a main door of Italianate aedicular form but not out of harmony with the older architecture. Surmounting this pavilion or projecting bay, he placed what looks like an adaptation of the old wooden clock tower and cupola originally in the centre of the main block's roof.

At a still later time in the XIX Century further enlargement was required, and an addition to the east front was made by Alfred Stone. He brought forth from the old east wall--directly onto the Benefit Street pavement--a block containing entrance, foyer and flanking rooms, two bays in depth and matching the original building in height. In his use of brick, of sandstone rustication etc., he was as careful and understanding as Tefft. The result is that few people to-day, unless so instructed, are aware that this building has undergone change since 1762.

This structure has been a property of the colony and state since its inception; it has always been in use and continues to be well maintained.
To most visitors or sightseers the attraction of this building will lie in its historic place as a one-time capitol of the state of Rhode Island, an honour shared until 1900 with the other Colony House in Newport. It housed the legislature which by a great majority proclaimed Rhode Island as the first free and independent republic in America on May 4, 1776--two months before ratification of the Declaration of Independence in Philadelphia. The building now serves the state daily, though for judicial purposes only.

Others will find the building's architecture alone to be of interest, for it is a good example of an XVIII-Century building which, though not large, was intended to be imposing and expressive of the majesty of government. In this respect it was successful, aided by its siting. While no classical orders or really pompous academic adornments were incorporated into this basically simple building, a certain robust and solid quality was given to the brick elevations by the pronounced quoin treatment of brown stone at the corners and the viscerously rusticated surrounds of the windows. This same form of trim was wisely copied in the later additions.

Changed internal use and space requirements have not permitted all of the interior to remain as first built. However, the one second-floor room already mentioned which has kept its old trim still gives—with its cornice, pilaster and panel decoration—a good idea of an "official chamber" of the mid-XVIII Century. Added and rearranged rooms show in their décor admirable understanding of, and attunement to, the building's known age and style.
M A J O R  B I B L I O G R A P H I C A L  R E F E R E N C E S


10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES
DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CORNER</th>
<th>LATITUDE</th>
<th>LONGITUDE</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NW</td>
<td>Degrees</td>
<td>Minutes</td>
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<tr>
<td>NE</td>
<td>Degrees</td>
<td>Minutes</td>
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<tr>
<td>SE</td>
<td>Degrees</td>
<td>Minutes</td>
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<tr>
<td>SW</td>
<td>Degrees</td>
<td>Minutes</td>
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LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES
DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY
OF LESS THAN ONE ACRE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LATITUDE</th>
<th>LONGITUDE</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Degrees</td>
<td>Minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>71° 24'</td>
<td>26° W</td>
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LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STATE</th>
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11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE: Richard B. Harrington, Consultant

ORGANIZATION: Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission

DATE: March 5, 1971

STREET AND NUMBER: State House, 90 Smith Street

CITY OR TOWN: Providence

12. STATE LIASON OFFICER CERTIFICATION

As the designated State Liaison Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register.

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 X State □ Local □

Name __________________________

Title __________________________

Date __________________________

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

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

Chief, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

Date __________________________

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)

STATE
Rhode Island
COUNTY
Providence

1. NAME
COMMON: Sixth District Court House
AND/OR HISTORIC: Colony House or Old State House

2. LOCATION
STREET AND NUMBER: 150, Benefit Street
CITY OR TOWN: Providence
STATE: Rhode Island

3. PHOTO REFERENCE
PHOTO CREDIT: Historic American Buildings Survey (Laurence E. Tilley)
DATE OF PHOTO: April, 1958
NEGATIVE FILED AT: Library of Congress, 1st Street and Independence Avenue, S. E., Washington, District of Columbia

4. IDENTIFICATION
DESCRIBE VIEW, DIRECTION, ETC.
Exterior from east.
Sixth District Court House
Colony House or Old State House

150, Benefit Street
Providence
Rhode Island

Rhode Island Development Council, Roger Williams Building, Hayes Street, Providence, Rhode Island, 02908

west elevation, showing entrance pavilion and tower added in 1850-1851
Sixth District Court House

Colony House or Old State House

150, Benefit Street

Providence

Rhode Island

Alice Hauck

1971

Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission, State House, 90 Smith Street, Providence, R. I., 02903

Court room, south-west portion of first floor, showing XIX or early XX Century woodwork in the colonial manner.
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<th>3. PHOTO REFERENCE</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>PHOTO CREDIT:</strong> Arthur W. LeBoeuf</td>
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<td><strong>DATE OF PHOTO:</strong> c. 1937</td>
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<td><strong>DESCRIBE VIEW, DIRECTION, ETC.</strong></td>
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<td>South-west room on second floor (judge's chamber), showing original woodwork.</td>
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**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES**

**PROPERTY MAP FORM**

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

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<tr>
<td><strong>SOURCE:</strong> U.S. Geological Survey</td>
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<td><strong>SCALE:</strong> 1: 24,000</td>
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<td><strong>DATE:</strong> 1957</td>
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<th>4. REQUIREMENTS</th>
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<td><strong>TO BE INCLUDED ON ALL MAPS</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>1. Property boundaries where required.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. North arrow.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Latitude and longitude reference.</td>
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