**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY – NOMINATION FORM**

**1. NAME**

- **COMMON:** Brick School House
- **AND/OR HISTORIC:** Meeting Street School; Providence Preservation Society

**2. LOCATION**

- **STREET AND NUMBER:** 214 Meeting Street
- **CITY OR TOWN:** Providence
- **STATE:** Rhode Island, 02903

**3. CLASSIFICATION**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CATEGORY (Check One)</th>
<th>OWNERSHIP</th>
<th>STATUS</th>
<th>ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>□ District. □ Site □ Structure</td>
<td>□ Public □ Private □ Both</td>
<td>□ Occupied □ Unoccupied □ Preservation work in progress</td>
<td>□ Yes: □ Restricted □ Unrestricted □ No</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

- □ Agricultural
- □ Government
- □ Park
- □ Transportation
- □ Commercial
- □ Industrial
- □ Private Residence
- □ Other (Specify)  Headquarters of preservation organization
- □ Educational
- □ Military
- □ Religious
- □ Scientific
- □ Entertainment
- □ Museum

**4. OWNER OF PROPERTY**

- **OWNER'S NAME:** City of Providence
- **STREET AND NUMBER:** City Hall, Dorrance Street at Washington Street
- **CITY OR TOWN:** Providence
- **STATE:** Rhode Island, 02903

**5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

- **COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.:** City Hall
- **STREET AND NUMBER:** Dorrance Street at Washington Street
- **CITY OR TOWN:** Providence
- **STATE:** Rhode Island, 02903

**6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

- **TITLE OF SURVEY:** Historic American Buildings Survey
- **DATE OF SURVEY:** 1957, 1962
- **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
The Brick School House, completed in 1768, is a rectangular two-story timber-framed brick building, five bays wide by two bays deep, set on a foundation of rough-cut stone. It is covered by a hipped roof (now asphalt-shingled) in its main portion, and a chimney rises at each end. The entrance elevation, facing south, has in its center a two-story gabled pavilion or projection, pierced by the front door and one window above, which houses the principal staircase. This doorway has a Doric surround with fluted pilasters and a pediment (which is probably a 20th-century "restoration" or application); there is a secondary entrance on the north side of the building. A slightly-projecting brick belt course runs between stories, and there is a molded wooden eaves cornice. The windows have new twelve-over-twelve double-hung sash set in plain wood frames with molded sills; there are segmental arches in the brickwork over the windows of the first story.

The first floor of the building was originally a single large room with a fireplace at each end, but has now been divided, with the east end converted into four small rooms now used for display, storage, and toilets. The old floor is covered by modern composition tile. There is a high wainscot of horizontal boarding to window-sill level; above, walls and ceiling are plastered.

The second floor, also originally one room, now has been partitioned across its east end to allow for a shallow kitchen. Rear stairs are set in the northeast corner. Above a boarded wainscot reaching to the sills of the high-placed windows, walls are plastered; the ceiling is plastered along the inner side of the hipped roof, above the wooden trusses. The hardwood floors are later replacements. Recent renovations include painting the plaster walls white, and treatment of the wainscoting and wooden work with a mixture of paint and glaze in a dark brown color simulating the color discovered underneath later paint layers.

Throughout the building, trim is very simple. Both the main stair at south center and the secondary one (in the northeast corner, probably added later) are enclosed, of U-shape, and have plain open railings of long boards. Windows and doors are very modestly trimmed; some of their plain, mitered architraves are probably original. The windows were equipped in 1965 with folding interior shutters copied from 18th-century models (and such were quite likely in place originally) to allow for darkening the rooms. The two remaining fireplaces, with splayed hearths, at the west end of each floor are completely devoid of mantels or other surrounding trim; the matching fireplaces at the east end of the building have been covered over.
The Brick School House is an example of the type of plain, utilitarian building erected for community purposes in the eighteenth century. It has been altered in the course of a succession of uses but remains in good condition and close to its original appearance.

Historically, it has a first significance in being the first brick-built, permanently-purposed school structure in Providence and one of the first free schools in the United States. Moses Brown had called for various school constructions in Providence in 1768, and—although his proposal was voted down by the town—it was somehow resolved, according to Staples's Annals of the Town of Providence, "to build a brick school house, 30' x 40' and two stories high, near the court house." Deed Book 17, page 476, in the Providence City Hall further informs that

'I, Ambrose Page of Providence ... mariner ... do covenant, agree [to grant estate to Town of Providence if Town builds] a Good and convenient School House on the Lot in Providence whereon the Late Court House which was burnt down did stand lying [near] John Waterman's House ...

In The History of Brown University, Walter Bronson notes that when what was originally called Rhode Island College decided, c. 1770, to bring itself from Warren into Providence, classes were held in the Brick School House; and the corporation met there to determine a final location in the city:

The students ... at certain hours met in one of the chambers of the old brick schoolhouse, with the officers, for recitation ... the Committee for settling the spot for the College ... met at the New-Brick [sic] School House.

During the Revolutionary War, the school house is said to have been taken over for use by the colonials as an arsenal and gunpowder factory, and allusion to such a role is found in Edward Field's Revolutionary Defenses in Rhode Island:

(See Continuation Sheet.)
8. Significance.

1. That the Town Arms and Accoutrements be Devided [sic] into three equal Divisions: to be lodged in the hands of three discreet men in each District of the Town--Viz. above or near the Court House ...

Eventually inadequate for public school uses, the building nevertheless remained in municipal ownership and somehow avoided destruction. Under lease, it has in this century housed the Meeting Street School, a foundation for the teaching and treatment of muscularily and cerebrally afflicted children which has achieved great accomplishment and reputation. Now removed, this effective organization has chosen to retain the name it took when first working in the Brick School House.

Again under lease from the city, the building has since 1960 appropriately housed the offices, the community programs and information services of the Providence Preservation Society, which with its own funds has undertaken a step-by-step restoration of this historic structure, locally well-known and still in lively use.
### 9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES


### 10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

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<tr>
<td>SW</td>
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#### APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY:
Less than one acre

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

<table>
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<th>County</th>
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### 11. FORM PREPARED BY

- **NAME AND TITLE:** B. Christopher Bene, Surveyor-Researcher
- **ORGANIZATION:** Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission
- **STREET AND NUMBER:** Room 201, 265 Melrose Street
- **CITY OR TOWN:** Providence
- **STATE:** Rhode Island, 02907
- **DATE:** March 18, 1972

### 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 [X]

**Name:** __________________________

**Title:** __________________________

**Date:** __________________________

**NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION**

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:** __________________________
PROPERTY PHOTOGRAPH FORM

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

1. NAME
   COMMON: Brick School House
   X ANONYMOUS Meeting Street School; Providence Preservation Society

2. LOCATION
   STREET AND NUMBER: 21 Meeting Street
   CITY OR TOWN: Providence
   STATE: Rhode Island

3. PHOTO REFERENCE
   PHOTO CREDIT: B. Christopher Bene
   DATE OF PHOTO: February, 1972
   NEGATIVE FILED AT: Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission, Room 201, 265 Melrose Street, Providence, Rhode Island, 02907

4. IDENTIFICATION
   DESCRIBE VIEW, DIRECTION, ETC.
   South elevation (main entrance front).
NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

PROPERTY PHOTOGRAPH FORM

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

1. NAME
   COMMON: Brick School House
   AND/OR: Meeting Street School; Providence Preservation Society

2. LOCATION
   STREET AND NUMBER:
   24 Meeting Street
   CITY OR TOWN: Providence
   STATE: Rhode Island
   CODE: 144
   COUNTY: Providence
   CODE: 007

3. PHOTO REFERENCE
   PHOTO CREDIT: B. Christopher Bene
   DATE OF PHOTO: February, 1972
   NEGATIVE FILED AT: Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission, Room 201, 265 Melrose Street, Providence, Rhode Island, 02907

4. IDENTIFICATION
   DESCRIBE VIEW, DIRECTION, ETC.
   Fireplace wall (west wall of main first-floor room.)
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: Brick School House
AND/O: Meeting Street School; Providence Preservation Society

2. LOCATION
STREET AND NUMBER: 2 Meeting Street
CITY OR TOWN: Providence
STATE: Rhode Island

3. PHOTO REFERENCE
PHOTO CREDIT: B. Christopher Bene
DATE OF PHOTO: February, 1972
NEGATIVE FILED AT: Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission, Room 201, 265 Melrose Street, Providence, Rhode Island, 02907

4. IDENTIFICATION
DESCRIBE VIEW, DIRECTION, ETC.
Main room on second floor, looking north-east.
GEOGRAPHICAL COORDINATES

Lat.: 41° 49' 42.92" N
Long.: 71° 24' 33.80" W
**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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<td><strong>PLATFORM</strong></td>
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</table>

**1. NAME**

COMMON: Brick School House
AND: Meeting Street School; Providence Preservation Society

**2. LOCATION**

STREET AND NUMBER:
24 Meeting Street

CITY OR TOWN: Providence

STATE: Rhode Island

**3. MAP REFERENCE**

SOURCE: U. S. Geological Survey

SCALE: 1: 24,000

DATE: 1957

**4. REQUIREMENTS**

TO BE INCLUDED ON ALL MAPS

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