

NEWPORT

Church singled out for honor

The National Register of Historic Places adds St. Mary's Church.

Daily News staff

NEWPORT — The National Park Service has placed St. Mary's Church, the second oldest Catholic church in the state, on the National Register of Historic Places.

Located at Spring Street and Memorial Boulevard, the church was an important early work of Irish-born architect Patrick C. Keeley, who went on to design many other churches considered architecturally significant throughout the Northeast and Midwest.

A listing on the National Register puts the church on the Rhode Island State Register of Historic Places and makes it eligible for historic preservation grants.

"Parishioners from the beginning have had a large role in building and sustaining our beautiful church," the Rev. George B. McCarthy, pastor, said in a prepared statement. "During construction, members of the parish gave a day's labor to excavate the foundation and helped throughout the building process."

Many of the early parishioners were Irish immigrants hired to help in the construction of Fort Adams. McCarthy, a native of Castleisland, County Kerry, Ireland, is the 12th pastor of St. Mary's Church, which is considered second period Gothic architecture.

The parish now counts 1,150 families among its members. Many visitors to the Newport area participate in services, and the church has a place in

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Bouvier on Sept. 12, 1953.

The parish started in a remodeled building on Barney Street in 1828. Five years later, a new church was built at the site but by 1847 it had become too small. The land at Spring and William streets was purchased and con-

struction began on the present church.

Its exterior is made of coursed hewn brownstone from the Middlesex Quarry in Portland, Conn.

The church was completed and dedicated on July 25, 1852, by Bishop Bernard O'Reilly, under the patronage of the Holy Name of Mary, Our Lady of the Isle. The church celebrated its 150th anniversary in 2002.