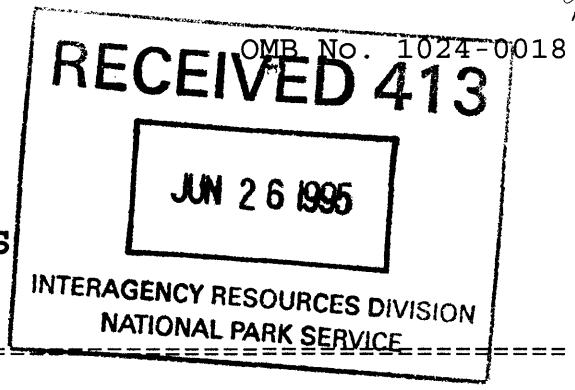


9p6

NPS Form 10-900
(Rev. 8-86)



United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
REGISTRATION FORM**

=====

1. Name of Property

historic name: WHITNEYVILLE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

other name/site number: N/A

=====

2. Location

street & number: 1247-1253 Whitney Avenue

city/town: Hamden not for publication: N/A
vicinity: N/A

state: CT county: New Haven code: 009 zip code: 06514

=====

3. Classification

Ownership of Property: private

Category of Property: building

Number of Resources within Property:


| Contributing | Noncontributing | |
|--------------|-----------------|------------|
| <u>2</u> | <u>1</u> | buildings |
| <u> </u> | <u> </u> | sites |
| <u> </u> | <u> </u> | structures |
| <u>1</u> | <u> </u> | objects |
| <u>3</u> | <u>1</u> | Total |

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register: 0

Name of related multiple property listing: N/A

=====
4. State/Federal Agency Certification
=====

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this x nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property x meets does not meet the National Register Criteria. See cont. sheet.


Signature of certifying official _____ Date June 22, 1995
John W. Shannahan, Director, Connecticut Historical Commission

State or Federal agency and bureau _____

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet.

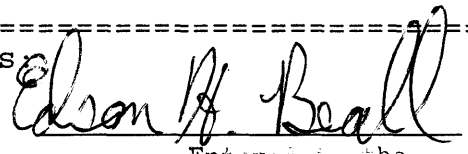
Signature of commenting or other official _____ Date _____

State or Federal agency and bureau _____

=====
5. National Park Service Certification
=====

I, hereby certify that this property is

- entered in the National Register See continuation sheet.
- determined eligible for the National Register See continuation sheet.
- determined not eligible for the National Register _____
- removed from the National Register _____
- other (explain): _____


Entered in the National Register 7/28/95

Signature of Keeper _____ Date of Action _____

=====
6. Function or Use
=====

Historic: RELIGION Sub: religious facility

Current: RELIGION Sub: religious facility

7. Description

Architectural Classification:

Greek Revival

Other Description: N/A

Materials: foundation STONE roof ASPHALT
walls WOOD other _____

Describe present and historic physical appearance. X See continuation sheet.

8. Statement of Significance

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties: state.

Applicable National Register Criteria: A,C

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions) : A

Areas of Significance: ARCHITECTURE
RELIGION

Period(s) of Significance: 1834-1924

Significant Dates: 1834, 1866, 1924

Significant Person(s): N/A

Cultural Affiliation: N/A

Architect/Builder: Rufus G. Russell, 1866 interior renovation

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above. X See continuation sheet.

=====
9. Major Bibliographical References
=====

X See continuation sheet.

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

X preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.

- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark

X recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # CT-108

- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

Primary Location of Additional Data:

- X State historic preservation office Connecticut Historical Commission
- Other state agency 59 South Prospect Street
- Federal agency Hartford, Connecticut 06106
- Local government
- University
- Other -- Specify Repository: _____

=====
10. Geographical Data
=====

Acreage of Property: 1.69

UTM References: Zone Easting Northing Zone Easting Northing

Table with 4 columns: Zone, Easting, Northing, and a blank column. Row A: 18, 674610, 4579130, B. Row C: blank, blank, blank, D.

___ See continuation sheet.

Verbal Boundary Description: ___ See continuation sheet.

The nominated property includes the parcel at 1247-1253 Whitneyville Avenue, as recorded in the Hamden Land Records, Vol.46, p. 187.

Boundary Justification: ___ See continuation sheet.

The boundary includes the entire church-owned parcel, embracing both the church and associated parish house.

=====
11. Form Prepared By
=====

Name/Title: Sarah B. Endriss, Roger Williams University; revised by Bruce Clouette & Maura Cronin, Hist. Resource Consultants, reviewed by John Herzan, Conn. Hist. Commission

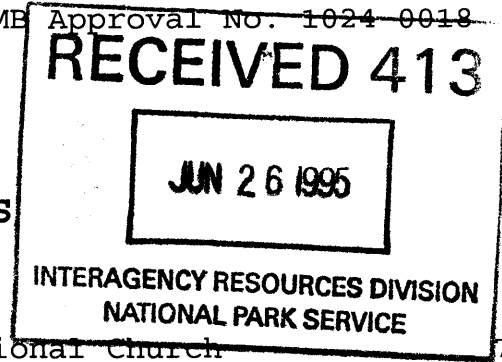
Organization: Connecticut Historical Commission Date: January 26, 1995

Street & Number: 59 South Prospect Street Telephone: 203-566-3005

City or Town: Hartford State: CT Zip: 06106

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**



Description Whitneyville Congregational Church
Hamden, New Haven County, CT

7-1

The Whitneyville Congregational Church is located on a slight knoll at the corner of Whitney Avenue and Lake Street in Hamden, Connecticut, facing southward toward Lake Street. The church (Photographs 1-4) is a two-story clapboarded Greek Revival-style building constructed in 1834. The property also includes a Colonial Revival-style parish house built north of the church in 1924 (contributing building--Photographs 9 and 10); a turnpike marker lettered with "III NH" (New Haven three miles) near Whitney Avenue (contributing object--Photograph 11); and a small storage shed (noncontributing building). To the northwest of the church, across Whitney Avenue, is the Whitneyville Cemetery, which the church founded in 1834. Among those buried in the cemetery, which is now town property, are many of the church's most prominent members, including the Reverend Austin Putnam, who served as the church's minister from 1838 to 1888.

The facade of the church (Photograph 1) features three entrances with paneled doors, the largest of which is the double-door center entry. The entries are recessed behind two two-story fluted Doric columns; the flanking side walls are thickened and pilastered in the manner of the antae of a classical Greek temple. Above the columns and pilasters is a wide entablature enriched by a course of small dentils. The cornice moldings define the gable area as a pediment, the surface of which is finished with flush boards. The entrance steps have been cut down somewhat from their original width.

A three-stage tower rises near the front of the church. The first two stages, a tall plain base surmounted by a belfry, are both square in plan and have pilastered corners; the belfry has a louvered rectangular opening on each side flanked by an additional pair of pilasters. The top stage is octagonal, with applied moldings defining rectangular panels on its sides; its roof takes the form of a small semi-circular dome. The original bell still hangs in the tower; however, it is now stationary in order to preserve a fractured edge. The bell was made by George Bradley in August 1834.

The side elevations of the church contain six bays with 12-over-12 windows (Photographs 2 and 4). The two rear bays were added in 1866, when the church's original 37 by 49 1/2-foot plan was extended by 17 1/2 feet; all the windows appear to date from that episode. At the same time, round-arched windows were also added in the vestibule or foyer of the church. All of the windows have pintles for outside shutters; however, the shutters were removed sometime between 1987-1991. Plans are currently under way to rehang them.

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National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Description Whitneyville Congregational Church 7-2
Hamden, New Haven County, CT

The rear elevation (Photograph 3), dating from the 1866 renovations, includes a 6 by 14-foot pedimented projection (creating a recess for the altar within) and a fanlight in the main gable.

The foundation of the church is constructed of two different types of stone. The west side, facing Whitney Avenue, appears as irregularly shaped blocks of gray granite, probably of local origin. The basement is more exposed on the east side, where there is an outside entrance, and there the walls are of brownstone.

The interior of the church, with the exception of the vestibule immediately within the entrances, is entirely occupied by a large auditorium. (Photographs 6 and 7). The walls are plastered above a simple wainscot. A gallery runs along three sides, carried on columns with Corinthian capitals and accessed by two sets of stairs in the vestibule. Twelve rows of pews are arranged with a center aisle and narrower outside aisles, with additional seating along the rear wall and in the galleries. A large chandelier, dating from 1931, hangs from the ceiling.

The interior as it appears today represents a mixture of the original plain finishes, Victorian elements introduced in the 1866 renovation, and changes made in the 20th century in an attempt to recapture some of the original simplicity. Victorian alterations, designed by noted New Haven Architect Rufus G. Russell, include mahogany trim added to the pews; rebuilding of the galleries, along with elaborate moldings along the face; and a large archway for a recessed altar. Two similarly sized pulpits were installed flanking the archway, whereas originally there was but a single pulpit. Some of the Victorian changes have been reversed: the walls had been adorned with frescoes painted by John Jackle, there were additional moldings and paneling along the walls, and the archway woodwork was more complex.

The rear portion of the gallery is entirely taken up by the console and pipes of a large organ, purchased on October 20, 1929, at a cost of \$3,350 (Photograph 8). The organ was built by M. P. Moeller, Inc. of Hagerstown, Maryland, one of America's foremost makers of pipe organs.¹

¹The organ was designed by H. Leroy Baumgartner, a professor in the Yale School of Music, and he also supervised its construction.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

| | | |
|-------------|--|-----|
| Description | Whitneyville Congregational Church Hamden, New Haven County, CT | 7-3 |
|-------------|--|-----|

The parish house (Photographs 9 and 10), built in 1924, occupies the site where the church horse sheds stood until the late 1800s. It is a two-story brick building that contains numerous meeting rooms, a kitchen, and a small auditorium with a stage. Colonial Revival details include a semi-elliptical arch over the entrance; brick splayed lintels with concrete keystones above the window openings; six-over-six sash; and two-story pilasters at the corners of the building and below a plain pediment centered above the entrance.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Significance Whitneyville Congregational Church
Hamden, New Haven County, CT

8-1

Summary

The Whitneyville Congregational Church is significant primarily as a well-preserved example of early 19th-century New England church architecture, epitomizing the Greek Revival style with its fluted columns, flush-boarded pedimented gable, and other elements derived from classical precedents (Criterion C). Although properties used for religious purposes are ordinarily not considered eligible for the National Register of Historic Places, the architectural distinction of the Whitneyville Congregational Church qualifies it for inclusion (Criterion Consideration A). In addition, the church is significant for its role in the historical development of the Whitneyville section of Hamden. The church was the place of religious worship for many of the area's residents, and the existence of a Congregational church helped give Whitneyville some of its identity as a distinct community within the larger town (Criterion A).

Architectural Significance

As a style of architecture, the Greek Revival was popular throughout New England during the 1830s and 1840s, especially for churches, which were built almost exclusively in the Greek Revival style. Classical elements such as fluted columns, pilasters, denticulated cornices, and pedimented gables--all present in the Whitneyville Congregational Church--were intended to recall the architecture of ancient Greece and the democratic ideas associated with Greek civilization. The ideal form for Greek Revival builders was that of the classical temple, which the Whitneyville Congregational Church closely approximates with its gable-end-facing-the-road orientation; the treatment of its gable as a pediment, flush-boarded in imitation of marble; and the arrangement of its entry, recessed behind fluted pillars and flanked by wide, plainly finished side walls imitating the antae of classical architecture. The extent of the Greek Revival detailing indicates that the church was considered an important community building meriting extra attention.

Although the interior has undergone several episodes of change, the Whitneyville Congregational Church retains its original exterior appearance largely intact. In addition to its characteristically plain and rectilinear form, added to only at the rear, the church exhibits appropriate siding materials and divided sash that is probably similar to what was originally installed. Along with the Greek Revival

United States Department of the Interior
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**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Significance Whitneyville Congregational Church 8-2
Hamden, New Haven County, CT

decorative elements, these make the Whitneyville Congregational Church an exceptional example of the antebellum New England meetinghouse.

Church records do not reveal the name of the architect or builder. However, similar examples in other Connecticut towns are known to have been designed and built by house-carpenters, not necessarily local, who typically had more than ordinary resources and expertise (many represented several generations of vernacular building experience). The basic form and Greek Revival details were also shown in pattern books of the period, such as Asher Benjamin's American Builder's Companion, and church building committees frequently visited other newly constructed meetinghouses to clarify their ideas.

Historical Significance

The Whitneyville Congregational Church is its congregation's second meetinghouse. The first was completed in 1795, the year that the Hamden East Plains Ecclesiastical Society was incorporated, on a site about one and a half miles away. By 1833 the first meetinghouse, a small unheated structure, had become inadequate. In November of that year, Society records show that a special committee of five men, James Ford, James Auger, Jesse Gilbert, Eli Dickerman, and Henry Ford, was appointed "to solicit a subscription for the purpose of building a new meetinghouse"¹

The congregation was split on the location of the new church. Half of the congregation wanted to stay in Hamden Plains because it was convenient, and the other half wanted the new church in the Whitneyville section of town because it was growing rapidly, and because they thought more members could be attracted from the Fair Haven (New Haven) church. Another factor aiding the move to Whitneyville was that land for the church was offered by the widow and son of Eli Whitney.² The move to Whitneyville was not as advantageous

¹Society Records. Vol. III.

²Hansen, Richard. "Whitneyville Congregational Church: A Research Report" (Yale University, 1962) 2, 23, 62. Although they attended religious services in New Haven, the Whitney family continued their financial support of the Whitneyville church.

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**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Significance Whitneyville Congregational Church 8-3
Hamden, New Haven County, CT

as originally believed, but the church did grow steadily throughout the years.

Whitneyville had grown up around the firearms factory established in 1798 by Eli Whitney and operated by his son, Eli Whitney, Jr., after the pioneer inventor's death in 1825. In addition to the factory, the settlement included company-owned tenements and boardinghouses and other dwellings inhabited by workers. Whitneyville was on a main road leading north from New Haven, the Cheshire Turnpike, incorporated in 1800. (Lake Street, which the church faces, originally led to the turnpike. However, the raising of the Whitney Dam in 1834 required the relocation of the route to present-day Whitney Avenue; the milestone currently in place on the west side of the church is significant as an increasingly rare artifact from the Turnpike Era.)

The Whitneyville Congregational Church served as a conveniently located place of worship for the Congregationalists in this neighborhood, but equally importantly, it was a focal point of social life in and around Whitneyville. The church provided entertainment, lectures, group activities, and annual fairs and festivals; indeed, it was the only large hall in the vicinity that could accommodate such events. The 1924 parish house is significant because it recalls the many-faceted functions of the church; it provided additional meeting space for groups and an auditorium and kitchen for suppers and other organized activities. Its Colonial Revival architecture identifies its origins in the early 20th-century, further testifying to the longstanding role of the church as a vital part of Whitneyville's community life.

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**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

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