

**United States Department of the Interior  
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

For HCRS use only

**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**

received **OCT 2 1979**  
date entered **10 26**

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*  
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

## 1. Name

historic FIRST UNIVERSALIST CHURCH

and/or common THE CHURCH ON THE PLAINS

## 2. Location

street & number Main Street, corner Ronnie Lane not for publication

city, town Kingston vicinity of congressional district First

state New Hampshire code 33 county Rockingham code 015

## 3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> museum
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> other:

## 4. Owner of Property

name Kingston Improvement & Historical Society, Inc.

street & number Main Street

city, town Kingston vicinity of state New Hampshire 03848

## 5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Rockingham County Registry of Deeds  
Rockingham County Courthouse

street & number Hampton Road

city, town Exeter state New Hampshire 03833

## 6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title None has this property been determined eligible?  yes  no

date \_\_\_\_\_  federal  state  county  local

depository for survey records \_\_\_\_\_

city, town \_\_\_\_\_ state \_\_\_\_\_

---

## 7. Description

---

**Condition** excellent good fair deteriorated ruins unexposed**Check one** unaltered altered**Check one** original site moved

date \_\_\_\_\_

---

**Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance**

The First Universalist Church was designed in the Stick Style of architecture and is faced with horizontal clapboards with an overlay of vertical, horizontal and diagonal boards representing the unseen structural system typical of this style.

The main body of the church building is a rectangle with a high pitched roof broken on each side with two triangular roof dormers. The eaves project and have two brackets above each of the four single rectangular stencilled glass windows on the north side and five on the south side. Below these are shallow basement windows set in the brick foundation.

The building faces west and on the northwest corner, extending out from the main body of the building, is the high steeple which consists of four levels. On the first level at the front and on the north side are double rectangular stencilled windows with single, shallow basement windows beneath. On the second level are single, small four-leaf-clover stencilled windows, one each above the two lower double windows. On the third level are double peaked louvered openings on all four sides of the steeple, and this is where the bell is located. On the fourth level is the clock and roof area with a clock face on all four sides of the steeple with projecting peaked area of roof over each clock face surmounted by tapering roof to peak.

In the center front of the main body of the building are double-paneled doors, with a small rectangular stencilled window to the right of the door as you face the building.

A raised porch extends across the front of the building starting at the steeple. This is protected by a sloped roof supported by brackets. At the center front at the balcony level and above the porch roof are triple rectangular stencilled windows with the center window extending above the other two.

The gable area of the roof on the front of the building has a rather wide facing which forms a semi-circle above the windows with a cross piece at the bottom of the semi-circle and a vertical piece going to the peak.

On the south side beside the windows mentioned before there is a single door leading to the minister's room. This chancel area is set in slightly on both sides and has a lower roof.

On the east side (or rear of the building) is a high round window which is at the back of the chancel depicting the dove of peace. This window is in the process of being restored.

Before acquiring this building, it had not been in use for approximately twenty years and we have been working on restoration as the money is raised. The exterior of the building has been painted and repaired where necessary. Many of the windows have become cracked or broken, due in part from wind but mostly from vandalism. These should be restored and then protected with screening or plexiglas. Some patching of plaster has been done on the interior, but more is necessary. The entire interior of the church has the original stencilling, but it is in need of restoration. Half of the roof has been shingled, but the steeple roof and flashing to the main part of the building are badly in need of attention.

## 8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400–1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500–1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600–1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700–1799	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> art (crafts)	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800–1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900–	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

**Specific dates** 1879 **Builder/Architect** C. Willis Damon, architect

### Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The First Universalist Church is located in one of the historic districts of Kingston, New Hampshire, facing "The Plains", which was common land set aside by the early settlers of the town and has ever since been a center of activity. The clock in the steeple has told the time to passersby since the building was constructed in 1879. The architect, C. Willis Damon (1849-1916), designed a building that commands attention and yet is harmonious with its surroundings. The interior, stencilled by unknown craftsmen, bids a warm welcome to all who enter. This church building is an excellent example of the stick style of architecture of the period in which it was built.

Mr. Damon is still considered one of the four leading architects of Haverhill, Massachusetts. He was the son of a Universalist minister and was born in Pawtucket, Rhode Island. He graduated from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology School of Architecture in 1871 and opened an office in Haverhill about 1873, later forming a partnership with his brother which continued until 1915.

Winnikenni Castle, a well-known Haverhill landmark built in 1873, was his first major commission. He designed many of the factory buildings in Haverhill, as well as the old Haverhill High School and other school buildings in Haverhill, the Tilton Academy buildings in Tilton, New Hampshire, and the Courthouse in Portsmouth, New Hampshire, to name a few. In his obituary it states that during his early years he was considered one of the most brilliant architects in New England.

Two other special features of the building that we wish to preserve and that need special attention and restoration are the stencilled windows and the stencilling on the entire interior of the main body of the church building.

The message, God Is Love, stencilled over the door to the ministers room to the right of the chancel, still speaks to all who enter after nearly one hundred years.

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

Haverhill (Mass.) Public Library Committee, Architectural Heritage of Haverhill, Dec. 1976.  
Whiffin, Marcus, American Architecture Since 1780: A Guide to the Styles, 1969.  
Records in possession of Kingston Improvement & Historical Society, Inc.

## 10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property .2 acres

Quadrangle name Haverhill, NH

UMT NOT VERIFIED

Quadrangle scale 15'

### UMT References

A 

1	9	3	3	2	3	7	0	4	7	5	5	2	6	0
Zone				Easting				Northing						

B 

Zone				Easting				Northing						

C 

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

D 

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

E 

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

F 

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

G 

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

H 

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

### Verbal boundary description and justification

Town of Kingston Tax Map: U97

### List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state	code	county	code
-------	------	--------	------

state	code	county	code
-------	------	--------	------

## 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Gertrude W. Semple

organization Kingston Improvement & Historical Soc. date \_\_\_\_\_

street & number Box 54

telephone \_\_\_\_\_

city or town Kingston

state New Hampshire 03848

## 12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national  state  local

As the designated State Historic Preservation 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 Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature [Signature]

Commissioner, Dept. Resources & Economic Development

title NH State Historic Preservation Officer

date May 23, 1978

For HCRS use only

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

[Signature]  
Keeper of the National Register

date 12/26/79

Attest: [Signature]

Chief of Registration

date 12/2/79

FHR-8-300A  
(11/78)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
HERITAGE CONSERVATION AND RECREATION SERVICE

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

FOR HCRS USE ONLY
RECEIVED
DATE ENTERED

CONTINUATION SHEET 1

ITEM NUMBER 8 PAGE 2

---

SIGNIFICANCE (Continued)

The First Universalist Church is an excellent example of the Stick Style of architecture popular during this period. The style is characterized by steep roof slopes, projecting eaves supported by brackets, and diagonal stickwork, all of which are well illustrated in the church building. The front elevation is embellished by a decorative gable screen, a detail often associated with the Stick Style.