

PH 0507873

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

FOR NPS USE ONLY  
RECEIVED NOV 22 1977  
DATE ENTERED DEC 1 1978

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

DB # 78 606461

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS  
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

1 NAME

HISTORIC First Church Congregational

AND/OR COMMON  
First Church Congregational

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER  
Pleasant and Stevens Streets

CITY, TOWN  
Methuen

\_\_\_ VICINITY OF

\_\_\_ NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT  
5th Massachusetts

STATE  
Massachusetts

CODE  
025

COUNTY  
Essex

CODE  
009

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE
<input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE <input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL <input type="checkbox"/> PARK
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL <input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	<b>PUBLIC ACQUISITION</b>	<b>ACCESSIBLE</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT <input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL <input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME Board of Directors, First Church Congregational

STREET & NUMBER  
Pleasant and Stevens Streets

CITY, TOWN  
Methuen

\_\_\_ VICINITY OF

STATE  
Massachusetts 01844

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,  
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC. Essex County Registry of Deeds

STREET & NUMBER  
32 Federal Street

CITY, TOWN  
Salem

STATE  
Massachusetts

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE Inventory of Historic Assets of the Commonwealth

DATE  
1974

\_\_\_ FEDERAL  STATE \_\_\_ COUNTY \_\_\_ LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR  
SURVEY RECORDS  
Massachusetts Historical Commission

CITY, TOWN  
Boston

STATE  
Massachusetts

# 7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED DATE _____
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

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## DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

First Congregational Church is located on the corner of Pleasant and Stevens Streets in a predominantly residential neighborhood just east of the Methuen Town Center. The 1-3/4 acre lot is planted with low shrubbery, tall pines and maples. To the rear of the church is a parking lot.

The plan of the church is a simple 5 bay deep, ridge roofed auditorium with apse to the rear and attached 3 story tower on the facade. The church is constructed of rough cut Pelham granite block laid in random ashlar. Fenestration is modest, narrow lancet windows. The shallow eaves and slight parapet gables are supported by simple corbels.

The facade is dominated by the tower which, on the ground floor, contains the principal entrance to the structure. The paired, herringbone wooden doors are set within a deeply recessed ribbed Gothic arch. The second level of the tower has paired round headed trefoil windows within a slight recession. Side elevations at this level have quatrefoil windows. The third level houses the bells and is stepped in to create turrets on the four corners. All four sides of this level are occupied by open trefoil arches with simple tracery. The top of the tower is crenellated to create a battlement. On either side of the tower, framing it, are three sided, one story projections with crenellated rooflines and Gothic arched windows on the broad side.

The rear elevation is dominated by the projecting apse. The square, ridge roofed apse is constructed of Indiana limestone. The corners are accented by diagonal buttresses which are capped by finials. The roofline is crenellated to create battlements. The rear elevation is dominated by the LaFarge stained glass window, "The Resurrection." The Gothic arched window opening is framed by a gable which interrupts the roofline battlement. On the west elevation of the apse is a one story flat roofed section with door and 1/1 sash window.

The Phillips Chapel is attached to the east elevation by a passageway. The chapel is constructed of the same Pelham granite and features flat arched fenestration and a ridge roof with identical gables and corbels. The facade is three bays wide. The center entry is set within a projecting crenellated stone porch with Gothic arch. In the gable is a carved trefoil. The peak of the gable is topped by an open, Gothic arched bell housing. Two brick chimneys rise from the roof. The rear elevation has two doors in the western end and iron stairs leading to an arched opening in the gable.

To the east of the chapel, attached by a porch and passageway, is the one story Parish House. This flat roofed rectangular structure is constructed in buff brick and features deep eaves and long narrow fixed sash fenestration. The entrance is sheltered by the porch adjacent to the Phillips Chapel; the remainder of the facade is five bays wide.

The principal interior space is the apse designed by Heins and LaFarge. Separated from the main body of the church by a deeply splayed Gothic arch, it is finished with marble reredos and furnished with a carved oak pulpit and lectern, great oak chairs and communion table and a limestone font.

The main body of the church was built in 1855; Phillips Chapel was added in 1881. The apse was dedicated in 1895 and the Parish House was constructed in 1964. The granite was memorial in front of the Parish House was dedicated in 1957.

# 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 checked="" 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 checked="" 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/HUMANITARIAN
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES	1855, 1895	BUILDER/ARCHITECT	Original Architect Unkown
STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE	Apse, Heins and LaFarge		

First Congregational Church is significant for its architecture and for its associations with the growth and development of the Town of Methuen.

This structure is the third meetinghouse built for this congregation. The first meetinghouse was erected by the town in 1728 on another site; the congregation was organized in 1729. The second meetinghouse was built in 1796 and later moved to this site. This 1855 structure incorporates materials from the second meetinghouse.

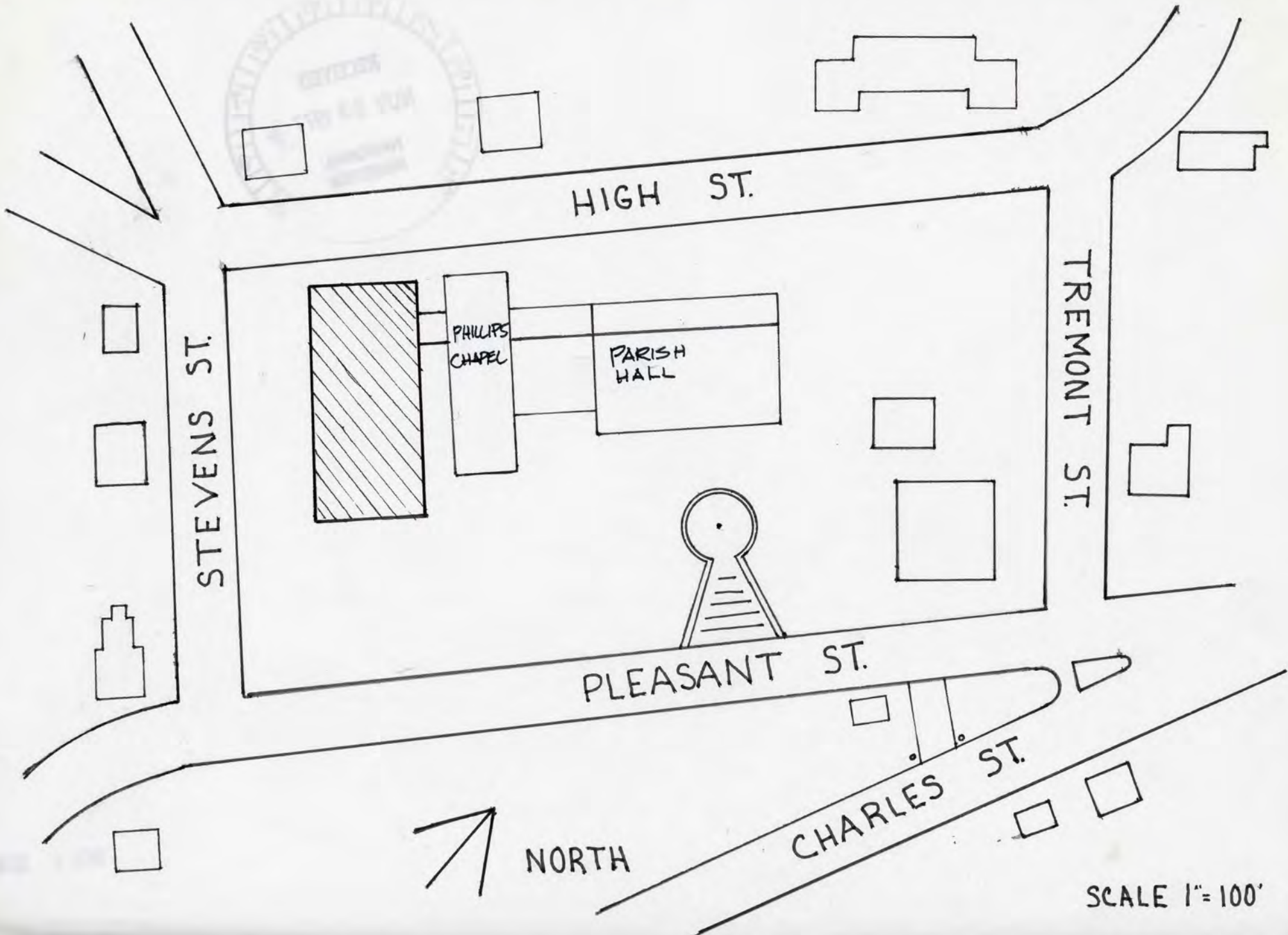
In New England towns, the first meetinghouse served as the community center and location of town meeting until the disestablishment of Congregationalism in the 19th century.

First Congregational Church is an early example of a high style "Roman" edifice for a non-conformist congregation. This orientation was furthered with the construction of the Heins and LaFarge designed apse in 1895. The interior of the apse is constructed of Minnesota buff-toned dolomite and the marble reredos is derived from Venetian tetrecento memorials. The marbles used are from Massa-Carrara, Verona, Sienna, Belgium, Portugal, North Africa and Pennsylvania. The apse also houses figures of Patience and Purity by Louis St.Gaudens. The LaFarge window, "The Resurrection", is composed of 10,000 pieces of glass and is estimated to have cost \$50,000. LaFarge considered the window to be his masterpiece. His description of the composition was, "It represents the Resurrection. The figure of angels open the gates of death and the clouds roll away while the triumphant figure of the risen Lord leaves the tomb, and passes into light."



FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

METHUEN, MASSACHUSETTS





DEC 1 1978

Property First Church Congregational

State Mass. Working Number 11.22.77.1977

**TECHNICAL**

Photos 2  
Maps 2

**CONTROL**

*OK pl*  
11.28.77

We do not see Phillips Chapel on the Parish Hall -  
It is not well-justified historically - does it  
stand on architecture? Do we know what is  
being omitted

**HISTORIAN**

*Sheffy*  
call/recon  
2-13-78

*only covers church*

**ARCHITECTURAL HISTORIAN**

*accept*  
*Bravman*  
1.11.78

*chapel looks like church - only  
smaller*

**ARCHEOLOGIST**

**OTHER**

**HAER**

Inventory \_\_\_\_\_  
Review \_\_\_\_\_

**REVIEW UNIT CHIEF**

ADDITIONAL PHOTOS REC'D.

1855 CHURCH DESIGNED IN RATHER FORMAL MANNER FOR A NON CONFORMIST  
CONGREGATION. 1895 APSE BY HEINS AND LAFARGE. LATER CHAPEL AND  
PARISH HALL JUSTIFIED BECAUSE THEY ARE CONJUGATED AND SYMMETRICALLY  
DESIGNED.

*ACCEPT*  
*use Doreen*  
11/30/78

**BRANCH CHIEF**

**KEEPER**

National Register Write-up \_\_\_\_\_  
Federal Register Entry 2-6-79 Send-back \_\_\_\_\_  
Re-submit \_\_\_\_\_

Entered DEC 1 1978

INT:2106-74



First Church Congregational  
Methuen, MA.  
1975

DEC 1 1978

Joseph G. Bella  
299 Broadway  
Methuen, MA. 01844

Photo #1  
Looking south towards the facade

NOV 22 1977



First Church Cogregational

Methuen, MA.

1975

Joseph G. Bella

299 Broadway

Methuen, MA. 01844

DEC 1 1978

Photo #2

Looking east towards the west elevation

NOV 22 1977



Methuen  
First Church Congregational  
Joseph G. Bella, 1975  
299 Broadway  
Methuen

DEC 1 1978

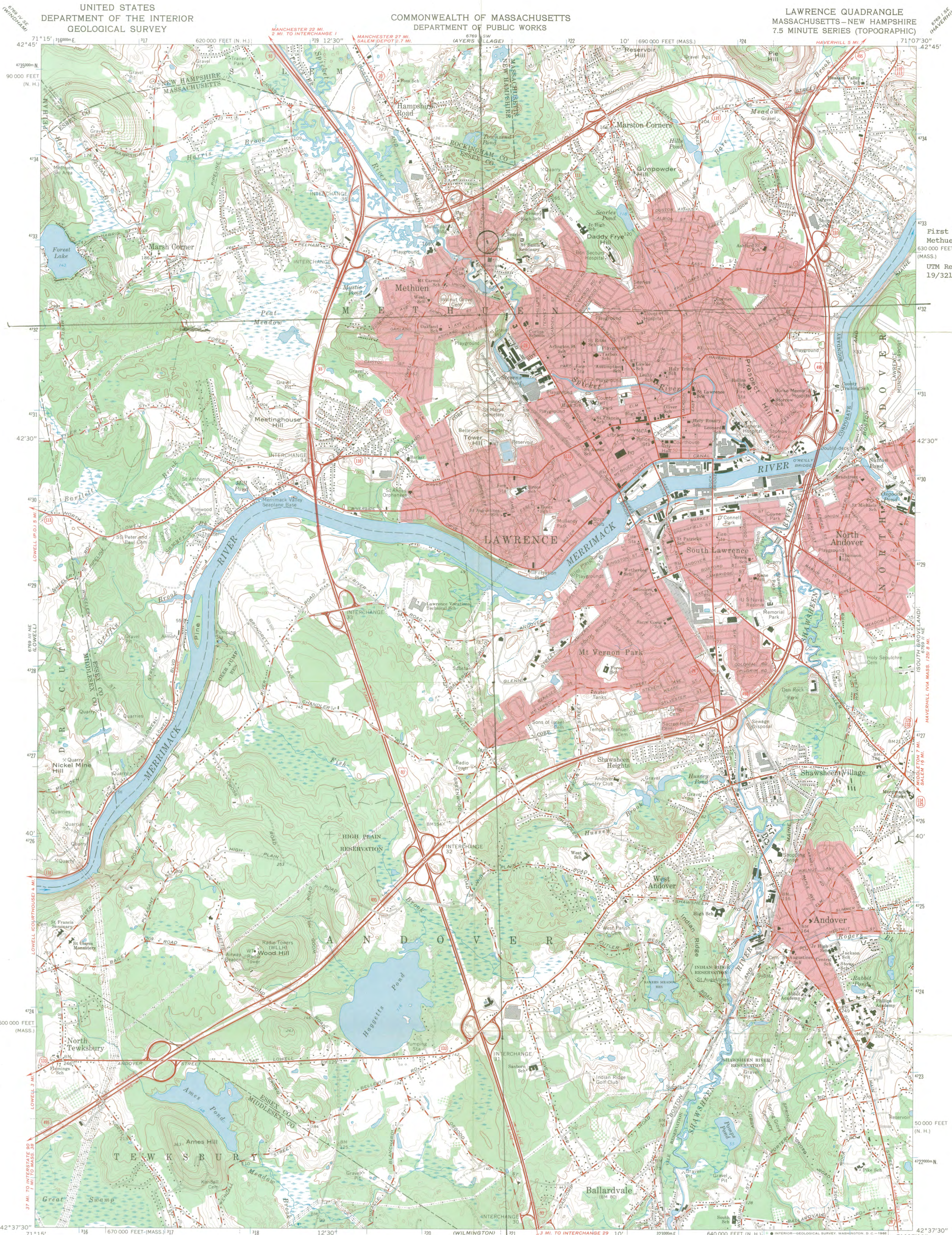
Photo #3  
Parish Hall, south elevation



Methuen  
First Church Congregational  
Joseph G. Bella, 1975  
299 Broadway  
Methuen

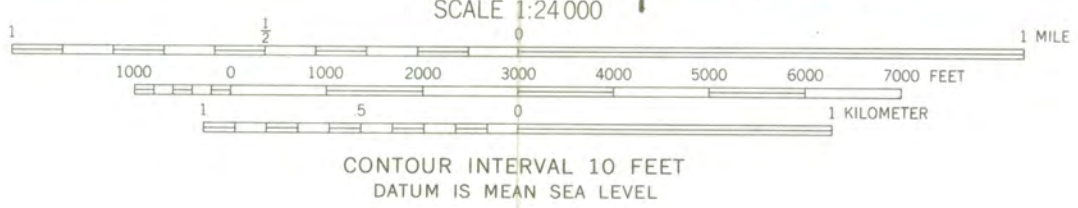
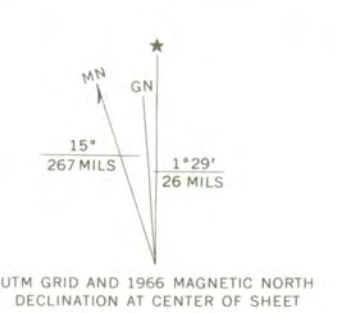
DEC 1 1978

Photo #4  
Phillips Chapel, south elevation



First Church Congregational  
Methuen, MA.  
630 000 FEET  
(MASS.)  
UTM Reference:  
19J321030/4732860

Mapped, edited, and published by the Geological Survey  
Control by USGS, USC&GS, and Massachusetts Geodetic Survey  
Topography by planetable surveys 1941 and 1942. Revised 1966  
Polyconic projection. 1927 North American datum  
10,000-foot grids based on Massachusetts coordinate system,  
mainland zone, and New Hampshire coordinate system  
1000-meter Universal Transverse Mercator grid ticks,  
zone 19, shown in blue  
Red tint indicates areas in which only landmark buildings are shown



ROAD CLASSIFICATION

Heavy-duty	Light-duty
Medium-duty	Unimproved dirt
Interstate Route	State Route

LAWRENCE, MASS.—N  
N4237.5—W7107.5/7.5  
1966  
AMS 6769 II NW—SERIES V814



THIS MAP COMPLIES WITH NATIONAL MAP ACCURACY STANDARDS  
FOR SALE BY U.S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, WASHINGTON, D. C. 20242  
A FOLDER DESCRIBING TOPOGRAPHIC MAPS AND SYMBOLS IS AVAILABLE ON REQUEST



PAUL GUZZI

Secretary of the  
Commonwealth

# The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

## Office of the Secretary

### Massachusetts Historical Commission

294 Washington Street Boston, Massachusetts 02108

(617) 727-8470

November 16, 1977

Mr. Charles Herrington, Chief  
Registration Branch  
National Register  
OAHP, National Park Service  
Washington, D.C. 20240

Dear Charles:

Enclosed please find nomination forms for the following properties:

1. Brockton: Bixby Block
2. Arlington: Ephraim Cutter House
3. Newburyport: Dalton House
4. Methuen: First Congregational Church

All of the above have been reviewed by the State Review Board and signed by the SHPO.

Sincerely,

*Pat*

Patricia L. Weslowski  
Survey Director  
Massachusetts Historical Commission

PLW/ed  
enc.



DATE 2. 13. 78

TELEPHONE REPORT

TIME OF CALL

AM  
PM

1. CALL  TO:  FROM (Name)

Joe Onfant

2. ADDRESS (Tel. No. if needed)

MASS His Comm

3. SUBJECT, PROJECT NO., ETC.

1st Church Congregational.

4. DETAILS OF DISCUSSION

Requested photos or verex of photos on  
chapel + Parish Hall.  
— parish hall, church & chapel are  
nominated.

NAME OF PERSON PLACING/RECEIVING CALL

TITLE

OFFICE



*The Commonwealth of Massachusetts*

*Office of the Secretary*

*Massachusetts Historical Commission*

*Secretary of the  
Commonwealth*

*294 Washington Street Boston, Massachusetts 02108  
(617) 727-8470*

November 15, 1978

Charles Herrington  
Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation  
National Park Service  
United States Department of the Interior  
Washington, D.C. 20240

Attn: Brad Frandsen

Dear Mr. Herrington:

Enclosed you will find the additional photos requested for the First Church Congregational in Methuen, Massachusetts. I regret the delay in their submission and hope that they will complete the nomination.

Sincerely yours,

*Candace Jenkins*

Candace Jenkins  
National Register Coordinator  
Massachusetts Historical Commission

CB/ts  
enclosures

THE NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

DATE: NOV 28 1978

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

INITIALS: \_\_\_\_\_

ENTRIES IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

STATE MASSACHUSETTS

Date Entered DEC 1 1978

<u>Name</u>	<u>Location</u>
First Church Congregational	Methuen Essex County

Also Notified

Honorable Edward W. Brooke  
Honorable Edward M. Kennedy  
Honorable Paul Tsongas

State Historic Preservation Officer  
Mrs. Patricia L. Weslowski  
Executive Director  
Massachusetts Historical Commission  
294 Washington Street  
Boston, Massachusetts 02108

# NATIONAL REGISTER DATA SHEET

① NAME as it appears on federal register: First Church Congregational				② OTHER NAMES:				③ date of entry: DEC 1 1978		④ county code: 09		
⑤ LOCATION street & number Pleasant and Stevens Sts.			city / town Methuen		vicinity of		state MA	county Essex		⑥ NPS REGION: NA		
⑦ OWNER <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE <input type="checkbox"/> STATE <input type="checkbox"/> MUNICIPAL <input type="checkbox"/> COUNTY <input type="checkbox"/> MULTIPLE <input type="checkbox"/> FEDERAL (agency name):							⑧ ADMINISTRATOR:					
⑨ EXISTING SURVEYS <input type="checkbox"/> HABS <input type="checkbox"/> HAER <input type="checkbox"/> NHL				⑩ FUNDED? <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO		⑪ CONGRESS DISTRICT 5th		⑫ SOURCE of NOMINATION <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> STATE <input type="checkbox"/> FEDERAL				
⑬ WITHIN NATIONAL REGISTER HISTORIC DISTRICT? <input type="checkbox"/> YES NAME: <input type="checkbox"/> NO				⑭ WITHIN NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK? <input type="checkbox"/> YES NAME: <input type="checkbox"/> NO				⑮ ACREAGE		!! state who prepared form? <input type="checkbox"/> LOCAL <input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE ORGANIZATION		
⑯ CONDITION <input type="checkbox"/> excellent <input type="checkbox"/> good <input type="checkbox"/> fair <input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated <input type="checkbox"/> ruins <input type="checkbox"/> unexposed <input type="checkbox"/> unexcavated <input type="checkbox"/> altered <input type="checkbox"/> unaltered <input type="checkbox"/> reconstructed <input type="checkbox"/> excavated <input type="checkbox"/> original site <input type="checkbox"/> moved <input type="checkbox"/> unknown				⑰ features: INTERIOR <input type="checkbox"/> SUBSTANTIALLY INTACT-1 <input type="checkbox"/> NOT INTACT-0 <input type="checkbox"/> UNKNOWN-4 <input type="checkbox"/> NOT APPLICABLE-7 EXTERIOR <input type="checkbox"/> SUBSTANTIALLY INTACT-2 <input type="checkbox"/> NOT INTACT-0 <input type="checkbox"/> UNKNOWN-5 <input type="checkbox"/> NOT APPLICABLE-8 SURROUND <input type="checkbox"/> SUBSTANTIALLY INTACT-3 <input type="checkbox"/> NOT INTACT-0 <input type="checkbox"/> UNKNOWN-6 <input type="checkbox"/> NOT APPLICABLE-8								
⑱ ACCESS <input type="checkbox"/> YES-Restricted <input type="checkbox"/> YES-Unrestricted <input type="checkbox"/> No Access <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown				⑲ ADAPTIVE USE <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO		⑳ SAVED: <input type="checkbox"/> YES		IS PROPERTY A HISTORIC DISTRICT? <input type="checkbox"/> yes <input type="checkbox"/> no				
⑳ AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE : <input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-prehistoric-2 <input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-historic-1 <input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE-3 <input type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE-4 <input type="checkbox"/> ART-5 <input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING-11 <input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT-26 <input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION-12 <input type="checkbox"/> HEALTH-27 <input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY-13 <input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION-10 <input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCH.-15 <input type="checkbox"/> LAW-16 <input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE-17 <input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY-18 <input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC-19 <input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY-20 <input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVT.-21 <input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION-22 <input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE-23 <input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN-24 <input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/CULTURAL-30 <input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION-25 <input type="checkbox"/> RECREATION-23 <input type="checkbox"/> SETTLEMENT-29 <input type="checkbox"/> URBAN PLANNING-31 <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY):							㉑ CLAIMS: explain 'first' <input type="checkbox"/> 'oldest' <input type="checkbox"/> 'only' <input type="checkbox"/>					
㉒ functions WHEN HISTORICALLY SIGNIFICANT: CURRENTLY:				㉓ dates of initial construction: major alterations: historic events:				㉔ ETHNIC GROUP ASSOCIATION				
㉕ architectural style(s):				㉖ architect:		㉗ master builder:		㉘ engineer:				
㉙ landscape architect / garden designer:			㉚ interior decorator:		㉛ artist:		㉜ artisan:		㉝ builder/contractor:			
㉞ NAMES give role & date PERSONAL:  EVENTS:  INSTITUTIONAL:												
㉟ NATIONAL REGISTER WRITE-UP												