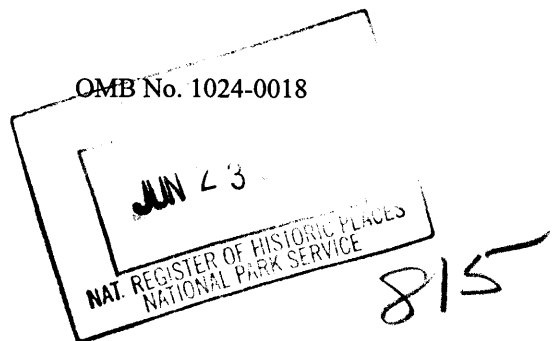


United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
REGISTRATION FORM



1. Name of Property

historic name Pine Orchard Union Chapel  
other names/site number Union Chapel, Pine Orchard Chapel

2. Location

street & number 25 Chapel Drive not for publication \_\_\_  
city or town Branford vicinity \_\_\_  
state Connecticut code CT county New Haven code 009 zip code 06405

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, 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. I recommend that this property be considered significant \_\_\_ nationally X statewide \_\_\_ locally. ( \_\_\_ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official

Date

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 for additional comments.)

Signature of commenting or other official

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. 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):

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

Beth A. Savage

7/19/00

Pine Orchard Union Chapel  
Name of Property

Branford, New Haven County, Connecticut  
County and State

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**5. Classification**

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**Ownership of Property** (Check as many boxes as apply)

- private  
 public-local  
 public-State  
 public-Federal

**Category of Property** (Check only one box)

- building(s)  
 district  
 site  
 structure  
 object

**Number of Resources within Property**

Contributing	Noncontributing
<u>1</u>	_____ buildings
_____	_____ sites
_____	_____ structures
_____	_____ objects
<u>1</u>	_____ Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register N/A

Name of related multiple property listing (Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

N/A

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**6. Function or Use**

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**Historic Functions** (Enter categories from instructions)

religious facility  
recreation center  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Current Functions** (Enter categories from instructions)

religious facility  
recreation center  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

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**7. Description**

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**Architectural Classification** (Enter categories from instructions)

Late Victorian, Queen Anne  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Materials** (Enter categories from instructions)

foundation cement-covered masonry  
roof asphalt shingle  
walls shingle, weatherboard  
\_\_\_\_\_  
other \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Narrative Description** (Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

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Section 7 Page 1 Pine Orchard Union Chapel  
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**Narrative Description**

Pine Orchard Union Chapel was built as a seasonal house of worship at the juncture of Pine Orchard Road and Chapel Drive in Branford, Connecticut (Photograph #s 1,2,3). Branford falls within the Eastern Coastal Slope geographic region, an 18-town area situated along the southeast coast of Connecticut. The chapel's present setting is residential, characterized by early twentieth-century bungalows interspersed with modern houses. Long Island Sound is one block to the south. The Queen Anne-style chapel was relatively isolated from surrounding dwellings when it was built in 1897 (Photograph #4). A rectangular one-story balloon-framed building measuring approximately 54 by 34 feet, the chapel has a flared gable roof with rafter ends exposed under the eaves. Each gable is accented with plain bargeboards and semicircular crossbracing surrounded by lattice. Most of the decorative finials and drops are missing, as well as the original red cedar-shingle roof covering. The roof, now covered with asphalt shingles, is topped by a square pyramidal belfry. The chapel's siding consists of horizontal shiplap; a plain trimboard separates the shiplap from the red cedar cove shingles applied to each gable. The walls, which are punctuated by large multipane Queen Anne-style windows, flare out at the chapel's base and rest on a cement-faced foundation; there is no full basement. Since the time of the chapel's completion, the landscape treatment has been primarily lawn; the existing concrete entrance walk and foundation plantings are not original.

The chapel's side, or north and south, elevations are faced with horizontal shiplap; each elevation consists of four bays of Queen Anne-style windows fitted with 42-over-2 sash that are capped by molded crowns. The only variant appears on the north elevation at the west end where a divided casement accommodates two 27-over-1 windows, a reflection of the interior vestibule's wall. The exterior walls flare outward beneath a wooden stringcourse placed along the bases of the windows. The rear, or east, elevation is sided with horizontal shiplap between the foundation and the upper trimboard (Photograph #5). The rear entrance is located on the elevation's north end and is approached by four wooden steps flanked by open railings (Photograph #6). The door contains two vertical panels each framed by egg-and-dart molding. The east gable's decorative treatment is identical to that of the facade.

The chapel's principal elevation is the west gable end, on the north end of which is the main entrance (Photograph #7). The open front porch with shed roof, measuring approximately 10 by 7 feet, is sided at each end with cove shingles. Chamfered square posts surmounted by shallow-arched lintels support the porch roof; the eave of the cornice is defined by five elongated brackets between two matching consoles. The porch is flanked by square-sawn balustrades. The cement floor of the porch is a recent alteration. A divided screen door covers the wide entranceway and three-part, vertically paneled door. The door panels are framed with egg-and-dart molding. South of the porch are two large 42-over-2 Queen Anne-style windows with molded crowns. Three contiguous 24-over-24 windows are centrally located in the cove-shingled gable; the casement's lug sill is accented at each end by blocks with

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Section 7 Page 2 Pine Orchard Union Chapel  
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applied paterae (Photograph #8). A Gothic Revival-style label molding above the windows serves to visually unify the facade. The gable roof, with its plain bargeboards and semicircular crossbracing surrounded by lattice work, projects beyond the chapel's exterior walls and is supported by chamfered right-angle braces. Straddling the ridge, the belfry consists of a square asphalt-sided base above which on each side are paired louvers flanked by pilasters; a steeply pitched hip roof with flared eaves and block modillioned cornice rests on top. The original ventilator is in place on the ridge behind the belfry.

The chapel's interior is open-timbered and the woodwork is naturally finished (Photograph #9). The rooms have pine floors and beaded wainscot. The walls and ceiling are predominately faced with exposed studs, rafters, and horizontally laid beaded boards. Also exposed are three heavy roof trusses, each consisting of chamfered tie beams connected by vertical tie rods to shorter chamfered collar beams (Photograph #10). Right-angle braces support each truss at their ends (Photograph #11). The three trusses are interconnected with pairs of parallel beams extending the auditorium's entire length. Smaller timbers provide diagonal support at each interior corner. In 1988 six electric neo-Colonial brass chandeliers were attached to the bases of the roof trusses.

The chapel's 19-foot-high auditorium is entered through an enclosed vestibule which contains a privately donated water closet installed in the early twentieth century (Photograph #12). The interior face of both the chapel's three-panel main door and the two-panel back door exhibit well-preserved egg-and-dart molding. The auditorium's entranceway contains a pair of four-paneled doors; the door to the water closet is also four-paneled. Although plain, the interior door frames and window surrounds are accented by corner blocks with turned paterae. A long hemp rope connected to the chapel's bell hangs inside the auditorium near the vestibule. The solid copper bell, which is suspended from a steel bar in the belfry, measures approximately two feet in diameter and 18 inches in height. The capital letters "I.M." (presumably a manufacturer's mark) are cast on the bell's exterior.

On the east wall, the decorative focal point of the chapel's interior is the raised chancel approached by two wide wooden steps (Photograph #13). A wooden lectern with arched side panels and carved corner columns is in place at the northeast end of the lower step. Four velvet-lined silver collection plates inscribed with "Union Chapel, Pine Orchard, 1905" survive as well; they were manufactured by Rogers, Smith and Company of Meriden, Connecticut. To the north, two additional narrow steps lead to a screened robing/storage area behind the lectern. This space and its counterpart at the chancel's southeast end are enclosed by ornately pierced wooden screens capped and connected along the chancel's back wall by delicate cresting in a fleur-de-lis pattern.

Pine Orchard Union Chapel  
Name of Property

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### 8. Statement of Significance

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**Applicable National Register Criteria** (Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing)

- |                                       |  |  |
|---------------------------------------|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> A            | Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.   | <b>Areas of Significance</b> (Enter categories from instructions)<br><u>architecture</u><br>_____<br>_____         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> B            | property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.  | _____<br>_____   |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> C | Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction. | <b>Period of Significance</b><br><u>1897</u><br>_____<br><b>Significant Dates</b><br><u>1897</u><br>_____<br>_____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> D            | Property has yielded, or is likely to yield information important in prehistory or history.  | _____<br>_____   |

**Criteria Considerations** (Mark "X" in all the boxes that apply.)

- |                                       |  |
|---------------------------------------|--|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> A | owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> B            | removed from its original location.  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> C            | a birthplace or a grave.   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> D            | a cemetery.  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> E            | a reconstructed building, object or structure.                               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> F            | a commemorative property.  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> G            | less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years. |

**Significant Person** (Complete if Criterion B is marked above)  
N/A

**Cultural Affiliation**  
N/A  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Architect/Builder**  
Brown and Berger, New Haven, CT, architects  
C.W. Harrington, Branford, CT, builder

**Narrative Statement of Significance** (Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

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### 9. Major Bibliographical References

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#### Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

#### Previous documentation on file (NPS)

- 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
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey  
# \_\_\_\_\_
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record  
# \_\_\_\_\_

#### Primary Location of Additional Data

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository: \_\_\_\_\_

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Pine Orchard Union Chapel  
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**Statement of Significance**

Pine Orchard Union Chapel is representative of nondenominational resort chapels built in Connecticut at the turn of the century; it is significant as a distinctive and well-preserved example of the Queen Anne architectural style applied to a seasonal house of worship (Criterion C). The chapel is also significant for being compatible in design with nearby cottages built in the Queen Anne, Shingle, and Colonial Revival styles. Pine Orchard's transformation from open farmland to summer colony spawned a variety of important facilities, including two hotels, a railroad station, a post office/general store, a trolley line, a country club, and a chapel. Services on summer Sundays were held through the mid-twentieth century, but use of the unheated building declined as Pine Orchard became a year-round community. Today, the chapel is used for weddings, memorial services, local meetings, and children's summer programs.

**Historical Background**

Branford's picturesque coastline with its distinct neighborhoods was touted as an attractive vacation destination in regional nineteenth-century periodicals. In 1852 railroad service from New Haven to nearby shoreline towns commenced, enabling travelers to discover the natural beauty of Pine Orchard and other new coastal resort areas. Jerry Sheldon, a local shoemaker, opened a successful summer boarding house on the bluffs north of Pine Orchard Harbor in Branford. Set on five acres of land with 500 feet of shoreline and a bathing pier, Sheldon House (established c.1845) became a popular watering place, expanding several times over its 120-year history to accommodate the hotel's growing clientele. Additions included the construction of cottages which families could rent for the season. Another Pine Orchard hotel, Weyboset House, opened in 1857 but remained in business for only 20 years. Both establishments succeeded in popularizing Pine Orchard as a summer resort community.

Between 1872 and 1892 Robert Wallace of Meriden and later Wallingford, along with two of his five sons, Henry L. Wallace and Frank S. Wallace, purchased the Jared Pierpont farm and adjacent waterfront properties in Pine Orchard. Robert Wallace, son of a Scottish immigrant, is credited with manufacturing the first silver-plated nickel spoons in America. Wallace and his sons envisioned developing what is now Island View Avenue in Pine Orchard as a waterfront residential enclave. In 1880 they completed a subdivision of their holdings consisting of 100 building lots. By 1889 the Wallace family and a business associate had built six summer cottages and a bathing pier in this area. Between 1891 and 1893 lots for summer homes had been sold to individuals

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Pine Orchard Union Chapel  
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from Branford, Cheshire, Hartford, Meriden, New Haven, and North Haven, Connecticut, as well as from New York City. More lots were sold in 1895, and by 1896 a local store with its own post office had opened.

Concurrently, Ellis B. Baker, a telephone network entrepreneur from Meriden, planned a 35-lot subdivision for what is now Pine Orchard's Crescent Bluff Avenue area. Baker is recognized for having begun Connecticut's second telephone exchange facility in Meriden only three days after the first one had opened in New Haven in 1878. Unlike the Wallace development, which had been laid out parallel to Long Island Sound, Crescent Bluff was organized with a series of roads placed perpendicular to the shore.

The decision to build a nondenominational chapel in Pine Orchard followed the neighborhood's growth as a resort community. Informal organ and hymn-singing gatherings began in the summer of 1891 at Rock Point Cottage, the home of Joseph P. Beach. Howard T. Moss also assembled local children for weekly Sunday school classes. Attendance at these events increased over the following summers, resulting in regularly scheduled Sunday afternoon services. By the summer of 1895 several new cottages had been built and services in Pine Orchard included visiting clergymen who led impromptu parlor discussions. Other cottages, such as the Samuel E. Dibble Cottage on Island View Avenue, were occasionally substituted for the original meeting place.

During the 1895 season, summer residents began to give serious thought to erecting a chapel. Neighborhood children collected nearly \$7.00 for a chapel fund, some of which was raised by digging and selling clams. The fund was supplemented by \$114.19 through a series of parties hosted by Pine Orchard families. Efforts such as these helped to solidify community support for the construction of a new chapel and a successful organizational meeting was held at the home of Howard L. Moss on June 10, 1896. New Haven's *Journal and Courier* reported on June 29, 1896, that "summer cottagers" had subscribed over \$1,000.00 for the chapel and that Frank A. and Henry L. Wallace of Wallingford had offered to contribute a "suitable lot" of "ample size...not far from the shore."<sup>1</sup> The land conveyance was made with the condition that a chapel for public worship would be erected within 12 months and that if not executed, the property would revert to the grantors or their successors and heirs. (On August 26, 1901, the Wallace brothers legally released their rights to the land as set forth in the deed dated September 10, 1896.)

The first official meeting of the Pine Orchard Union Chapel Association was held on July 5, 1896. At that time Articles of Association and By-Laws were adopted. A building committee consisting of Samuel E. Dibble, George L. Sheldon, and Alden M. Young was also elected, each member representing a different area of Pine Orchard. The building committee's next meeting was held

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on August 7, 1896, at which time the members reviewed three proposals for the chapel's construction according to architectural plans prepared by Brown and Berger of New Haven. Richard Bradley's low bid of \$1,532.00 (exclusive of painting) was initially accepted in part because of his willingness to forgive (if necessary) up to \$500 dollars of the chapel's total cost. However, the association's Minute Book also stated that if another builder offered "more favorable terms," he would be hired. At the chapel's dedicatory service, C.W. Harrington of Branford was credited with completing the chapel's construction at a cost of \$1,600.00, leaving the association in debt for only a small amount, most of which was pledged by association members at the chapel's dedication.<sup>2</sup> The chapel's furniture, piano, window screens, draperies, fixtures, and bible were presented to the association by friends. The handsome carved wood lectern in place today was donated in 1900 by Joseph P. Beach of Pine Orchard in memory of his wife, Eliza M. Beach.

On July 3, 1897, Pine Orchard Union Chapel's trustees convened for the first time in their new building and voted to hold summer services at 4:00 p.m. on Sundays. They also appointed committees to be in charge of the chapel and grounds, supplies and music, flowers, and special services. The chapel's well-attended dedication on July 4, 1897, was covered in detail by the *New Haven Evening Register*. The newspaper account reported that "The hall was very prettily decorated, the stars and stripes hung over the platform and ferns and marguerites constituted the floral decorations. Six ministers of various denominations... occupied chairs upon the platform and the Pine Orchard Orchestra furnished music." Samuel E. Dibble, chairman of the building committee, recounted events that led to the chapel's completion and concluded "...we deliver it [the chapel] to the association, trusting that it will be forever devoted to the worship of Him who is the God and Father of us all, whatever may be our denominational differences."<sup>3</sup>

Services at Pine Orchard Union Chapel were held every July and August, with Sunday school classes commencing at 2:45 p.m., followed by evening prayer at 4:00 p.m. Sermons were delivered by guest ministers and priests from surrounding municipalities, including East Haven, New Haven, and Bridgeport. Music was provided by visiting quartettes, organists, choirs, and accompanists. In addition, the chapel served as a summer community center for neighborhood children. Programs included arts and crafts classes, bike hikes, picnic outings, swimming lessons, square dances, games, and an annual Fourth of July parade. While summer children's activities continue to occur, weekly religious services ceased sometime in the 1950s. Today, the chapel is primarily used for weddings, memorial services, and local meetings.



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Pine Orchard Union Chapel  
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**Architectural Significance**

Pine Orchard Union Chapel is a relatively rare example of Queen Anne-style church architecture in Connecticut. Although the chapel's pleasant domestic scale, steeply pitched front-gable roof, and decorative wooden wall surfaces recall scores of vernacular Queen Anne residences in New Haven and vicinity, the modest edifice when built became the focal point of Pine Orchard, a resort community characterized by large Queen Anne, Shingle, and Colonial Revival summer houses. Fortunately, the chapel is very well preserved. Its original red cedar-shingle roof survived until 1982 but was then in need of repair and resurfaced with asphalt shingles. Sometime in the early twentieth century the chapel was painted white, a deviation from the original dark stain. Overall, however, the integrity of the chapel's design is outstanding and evokes its past appearance and function with great clarity.

Pine Orchard Union Chapel was designed by Brown and Berger, a short-lived but productive architectural firm located in New Haven. Frank E. Brown (1875-1928) and Charles E. Berger (1872-1931) were listed together as architects in the 1895 *City Directory*. By 1897 their names were listed separately and in 1898 Charles E. Berger was identified as "successor to Brown and Berger." Based on this chronology, it is likely that the chapel's design was collaboratively executed. Although the partnership apparently dissolved in 1898, that year Brown and Berger published *Practical Architecture*, a portfolio of photographs "of various types of buildings, designed by them, together with the cards of those who have satisfactorily furnished materials and labor in their construction."<sup>4</sup> (Coincidentally, Samuel E. Dibble, the New Haven merchant who also served as building committee chairman for Pine Orchard Union Chapel, advertised in their publication.) The firm's stated policy clearly accommodated clients' desires: "whether a low-priced cottage, a business block or a mansion is desired, our aim is to study our patrons' requirements, and the artistic, utilitarian or economical phases will be adapted and faithfully carried out by us according to the ideas of the client."<sup>5</sup> This responsive posture could have helped Brown and Berger secure the commission for designing Pine Orchard Union Chapel.

The firm's booklet also illustrates the scope and quality of its buildings in New Haven and vicinity. Domestic architecture dominated Brown and Berger's practice and their designs reflect a solid command of the Queen Anne, Shingle, and Colonial Revival styles. Brown and Berger created plans for several brick Neo-Classical Revival apartment buildings, a Colonial Revival school, a printing plant, a hotel and opera house remodeling, and many other projects. Interestingly, no church architecture other than a parsonage built in Ansonia was included in their publication.

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**Endnotes**

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<sup>1</sup> "To Have a Union Chapel," *Journal and Courier*, June 29, 1896. Unpaginated photocopy from private research files of John B. Kirby, Jr., Branford, Connecticut.

<sup>2</sup> It is not clear from available records if Bradley worked on the building at all or why a different builder apparently finished the chapel at a higher cost than Bradley's low bid.

<sup>3</sup> "Pine Orchard's Chapel," *New Haven Evening Register*, July 5, 1897, p. 3.

<sup>4</sup> Brown and Berger, *Practical Architecture* (New Haven, Connecticut, 1898), unpaginated introduction.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid*, unpaginated introduction.

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\_\_\_\_\_. Minute Book. Unpublished manuscript: July 5, 1896, to July 1, 1899.

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Section 9 Page 2

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Pine Orchard Union Chapel  
Name of Property

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**10. Geographical Data**

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**Acreage of Property** less than one acre

**UTM References** (Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

Zone	Easting	Northing	Zone	Easting	Northing	
1	<u>18</u>	<u>689295</u>	<u>4570520</u>	3	_____	_____
2	_____	_____	4	_____	_____	_____ See continuation sheet

**Verbal Boundary Description** (Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

See continuation sheet.

**Boundary Justification** (Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

See continuation sheet.

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**11. Form Prepared By**

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name/title John Herzan, National Register Coordinator  
organization Connecticut Historical Commission date February 1, 2000  
street & number 59 South Prospect Street telephone (860) 566-3005  
city or town Hartford state CT zip code 06106

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**Additional Documentation**

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Submit the following items with the completed form:

**Continuation Sheets**

**Maps**

A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A **sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

**Photographs**

Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

**Additional items** (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

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**Property Owner**

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name Pine Orchard Union Chapel Association, c/o Mrs. Gardner E. Wheeler, Jr.  
street & number 68 Sunset Hill Drive telephone (203) 488-9667  
city or town Branford state CT zip code 06405

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Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.). Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including the time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127,

Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

NPS Form 10-900-a  
(8-86)

OMB Approval No. 1024-0018

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**Verbal Boundary Description**

The nominated property is described in the Branford Land Records, Volume 48, Page 234.

**Boundary Justification**

The nominated property includes the land historically associated with the Pine Orchard Union Chapel during its period of significance.

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county and state

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**List of Photographs**

Photographer (unless otherwise noted): John Herzan, National Register Coordinator, Connecticut Historical Commission  
Date: 4/99 Negatives on file: Connecticut Historical Commission

1. Facade and north elevation, c.1910, camera facing SE (Courtesy Branford Historical Society)
2. Facade and south elevation, camera facing NE
3. Facade and north elevation, camera facing SE
4. Photocard showing Pine Orchard Trolley Line and Pine Orchard Union Chapel streetscape, c.1910, camera facing NE (Courtesy John B. Kirby, Jr.)
5. Rear, or east, elevation, camera facing W
6. Rear entrance, camera facing W
7. Front entrance, camera facing SE
8. Facade detail, south elevation, camera facing NE
9. Auditorium, camera facing NW
10. Roof trusses, camera facing E
11. Right-angle brace, camera facing NE
12. Vestibule, camera facing NW
13. Chancel, camera facing NE