

FORM B - BUILDING

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
Office of the Secretary, State House, Boston

In Area no.

Form no.

142-E

2. Photo (3x3" or 3x5")
Staple to left side of form
Photo number _____

Roll 2, Exp. 21

4. Map. Draw sketch of building location
in relation to nearest cross streets and
other buildings. Indicate north.

1. Town Worcester
Address 717 Main Street
Name Main Street Baptist Church
Present use Emmanuel Baptist Church &
United Baptist Convention of Mass, &
R.I.
Present owner Emmanuel Baptist Church

3. Description:

- Date 1853, 1855
Source Nutt, C. Hist. of Worc.
Style "Norman" Romanesque
Architect unknown
Exterior wall fabric brick
Outbuildings (describe) none
Other features square tower with low
hip roof, recessed wall panels,
corbelling, buttresses, arched entry
Altered addition Date 1924
Moved no Date _____

5. Lot size Assessor's Book 3, p. 8
Lot 1--21, 246 sq. ft.
One acre or less ☒ Over one acre _____
Approximate frontage 120'
Approximate distance of building from street
25'

6. Recorded by W. & M. Seaman
ed. B. R. Pfeiffer
Organization Worc. Heritage Pres. Soc.
Date November 1977

(over)

7. Original owner (if known) Third Baptist Society of Worcester
 Original use church and chapel
 Subsequent uses (if any) and dates same

8. Themes (check as many as applicable)

Aboriginal	☐	Conservation	☐	Recreation	☐
Agricultural	☐	Education	☐	Religion	☒
Architectural	☒	Exploration/ settlement	☐	Science/ invention	☐
The Arts	☐	Industry	☐	Social/ humanitarian	☐
Commerce	☐	Military	☐	Transportation	☐
Communication	☐	Political	☐		
Community development	☐				

9. Historical significance (include explanation of themes checked above)

The Third Baptist Church, known as the Main Street Baptist Church after 1864, was constructed in two stages, the rear chapel in 1853, the main church in 1855. Designed in what was then called the "Norman" style of architecture, the church is the city's only remaining example of this style which enjoyed limited popularity in the mid-nineteenth century. (Although this "Norman" style was derived from Romanesque sources, it is a completely separate style from Romanesque Revival style which was popularized under the influence of H. H. Richardson in the last quarter of the nineteenth century.) Characteristic of this early and fanciful taster for Romanesque architecture are the building's recessed wall panels, buttresses, corbelling, and recessed arched entry with bands of geometric ornament (perhaps of cast-iron).

The main church was dedicated on January 9, 1856 at a service during which the church's pastor, H. L. Wayland and his father, Dr. Wayland, president of Brown University, delivered sermons in which they "condemned in most emphatic language all lavish and extravagant expenditure in the building of church edifices." In contrast, the reporter for the ceremony noted that "the sermon was strictly puritanic and did not seem in harmony with the elegance and taste displayed in the building of this new edifice." Newspaper accounts described the structure as being "of brick and of the Norman style of architecture, of recent adoption in our country" with pews of
 (cont.)

10. Bibliography and/or references (such as local histories, deeds, assessor's records, early maps, etc.)

National Aegis, Jan. 16, 1856, p. 2 (dedication article).
Mutt, Charles. History of Worcester, Vol. II, pp. 831 & 847.
Rice, Franklin P. Worcester of 1890, p. 768 (Eli Thayer bio.).
Stevens, C. E. Worc. Churches: 1719-1889, p. 84 (illus.).
Worcester's Illustrated Business Guide (1881), p. 81 (history & illus.).

2.

Indicate each item on inventory form which is being continued below.

9.

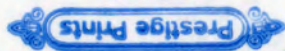
black walnut, the walls frescoed and the "timbers of the arch, or roof, ... grained in imitation of oak." Further, "the windows are of colored glass gaudily elegant and typically symbolic, not excelled in Roman Catholic churches."

The Third Baptist Society was formed in 1852 when Eli Thayer, a prominent educator, businessman, politician, led an off-shoot group of the First Baptist Church. The congregation first met in the old City Hall, later in Brinley Hall, and, in 1854, in the chapel at the rear of the present building. Among other activities, the congregation was active in its support of Worcester Academy and in the establishment of a French Baptist chapel on Beacon Street. By 1902 the congregation had rejoined the First Baptist Church and the Main Street church became the property of the First Presbyterian Church of Worcester.

Staple to Inventory form at bottom



DEC 1977



by Berkeley

DEC 1977

142-E³⁰ AUG 1979
Emmanuel Baptist
717 Main St
West & south
elevations

Please refer to the map in the
Multiple Property Cover Sheet
for this property

Multiple Property Cover Sheet Reference Number: 64000304