

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

For NPS use only

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

received DEC 29 1987
date entered

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

1. Name

historic Upper Meeting House of the Baptist Church of Middletown

and/or common Holmdel Community Church of the United Church of Christ Complex Baptist Church (formerly Holmdel)

2. Location

street & number 40 Main Street NA not for publication

city, town Holmdel Township vicinity of

state New Jersey code 034 county Monmouth code 025

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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
	NA	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military
			<input type="checkbox"/> museum
			<input type="checkbox"/> park
			<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> religious
			<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
			<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
			<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name Holmdel Community Church of the United Church of Christ

street & number 40 Main Street

city, town Holmdel vicinity of state New Jersey 07733

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Monmouth County Hall of Records

street & number East Main Street

city, town Freehold state New Jersey 07728

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

Monmouth County Historic Sites Survey
title Inventory #1318-1-6,7,8 has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date 1980-1984 federal state county local

depository for survey records Office of New Jersey Heritage, CN-404

city, town Trenton state New Jersey 08625

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			

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

DESCRIPTION

The Holmdel Community Church complex is located on approximately 5 acres fronting on Main St. (County Route #520) in the village of Holmdel in Holmdel Township, Monmouth County, New Jersey. The early 19th century church, incorporating structural elements of its 1705 predecessor, is a combination of early 19th century forms with a succession of later 19th century additions and alterations. Its simple external appearance is typical of contemporaneous church structures built in the Middle Atlantic Colonies of New York and New Jersey. The interior is Victorian. Adjacent to the church are an 1886-7 church hall and an 1882 Victorian Gothic parsonage. The back half of the property contains an 18-19th century cemetery. All contribute to the significance of the complex.

Holmdel Village, formerly called Baptisttown, includes a number of early and late 19th century homes and an early 19th century Dutch Reformed church. Since the mid-20th century, the surrounding area has gradually changed from predominantly rural to suburban.

Original Church

Aside from remaining structural elements and a brief 1789 reference by Morgan Edwards¹, little is known of the physical appearance of the original 1705 church. In describing three Middletown Baptist meeting houses, the Lower House in Middletown Village, the Upper House, which he calls Bray's, in the present village of Holmdel, and one in Cheesequake, Morgan says they were "finifhed as ufual, but want ftoves to make them comfortable in winter". He gives the measurements of the Lower House in Middletown Village as "42 feet by 32". It is reasonable to assume the 1705 Holmdel church measured approximately 32 feet wide by 42 feet long, since Thomas Griffiths² relates it was said, the 18th century Upper and Lower Meeting Houses were "as much alike as two peas".

In 1794, according to Griffiths, a subscription was taken to rebuild the Upper Meeting House, but it wasn't until October 29, 1809, that a dedicatory service was held. The new house, he says, was "thirty-six feet by forty-five". The present main girder which supports the sanctuary floor is located 15 feet from the east wall and 19 from the west, indicating that it dates to the smaller 1705 house. Griffiths provides information about the interior of the rebuilt house as follows: "In 1840 the house of worship was modernized; the lofty pulpit and sounding board, and gallery up under the eaves, came down. The square pews gave place to slips."³

¹Morgan Edwards, A.M. Materials Towards a History of the Baptists in New Jersey, Vol. II, pg. 11-12.

²Thomas S. Griffiths. A History of Baptists in New Jersey, pg. 25.

³Trenton Baptist Association, Minutes, 1874, p. 34.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

DEC 29 1988

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Upper Meeting House of the
Baptist Church of Middletown,
Holmdel Township, Monmouth
County, NJ

Section number 7 Page 2

In 1850, the front of the church was extended and a steeple added. Shortly after, the steeple blew off and was replaced by a bulbous one. In 1961, the second steeple was damaged by lightning and replaced with the present one. This 1850 addition is the present narthex.

In 1866, the back of the church was extended, and in 1870, a baptistry installed. This addition is the present alter end of the sanctuary (approximately 11 feet) and the present bi-level choir and boiler room section (chancel).

Present Church

The present church is comprised of three sections: the front narthex (12 x 36'), the sanctuary (56.5 x 36'), and the rear chancel (12.5 x 34'). The front facade, including the gable, is sided with an intricate combination of patterned shingles. Entrance features include triple stained glass windows and a pediment. Four pilasters complete the design.

Excluding the rear chancel, the sides and rear gable are covered with 26.5" cedar shingles. Handmade nails secure the shingles to lath fastened to 4 x 6" timbers, which make up much of the balloon framing. The rear chancel, originally sided with clapboard, has aluminum siding.

The gable roof of the narthex and sanctuary is covered with asphalt shingles. The valuted choir in the chancel is covered with a pyramidal roof of painted galvanized iron. The lower portion of the chancel, which surrounds the choir, is covered by a flat roof of painted galvanized iron overlaid with asphaltic paper to correct poor drainage.

Sanctuary. The north foundation wall, at the junction of the sanctuary and front narthex, is of unmortared stone. This was probably the north foundation wall of the original 1705 church. The side foundation walls exposed to the weather are of local "peanut stone" that was originally set in a lime, sand and horsehair mortar. This stonework was repainted about 1970 with Portland cement mortar to correct a problem of joint weathering.

The materials used for the floor joists, beams and piers bear the imprints of post and girt construction, typical of traditional framing, used in the original meeting house. Evidence of this includes exposed mortise for studs and rafters fastened with elongated oak pegging, occasional hand hewn and rough sawn beams, and rock and log pilings.

DEC 29 1987

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Upper Meeting House of the
Baptist Church of Middletown,
Holmdel Township, Monmouth
County, NJ

Section number 7 Page 3

The main girder is supported by a series of hand-fitted, unmortared stone pilings which rest directly on the ground and is typical of traditional early construction. Tenon ends of the floor joists are fitted into mortised channels of the beam and are pinned into place by hand-wrought iron spikes. Pilings of log sections set on unmortared rock bases support the joists at points 2/3 of their length to create a cantilever grid system, thereby eliminating the destructive forces of frost heave.

Massive rough hewn structural roof and ceiling components are fitted together by pinned mortise and tenon joints. Trusses having truncated heads and hips are suspended by every other pair of rafters at the peak. Diagonal members, secured at the hips of the trusses, support the rafters midway. The ceiling system is suspended at the middle by joists pinned to the foot of the trusses. Bridging, which is secured by means of pinned mortise and tenon joints and backed by wooden stops, provides additional support to the rafters.

The plainness of the exterior belies the present Victorian interior. Between 1887 and 1894, the interior was transformed into elegant Victorian styling combined with Gothic and Romanesque appointments. Methods of decoration reveal the high degree of artistic and manufacturing achievement developed during the latter part of the Industrial Revolution. The methods used here utilize a blended media of wood, metal, plaster and glass.

An unusual feature of this structure is its inclined floor, which was designed for maximum viewing and constructed over a previously-used floor. The ceiling is lined with sections of pressed tin. The sections abut and are suspended by means of carrying rods held in position by wood hangers. The rods are secured through an earlier lime/sand/horsehair plaster and lathe ceiling 3" above and are integrated into the richly stamped panel ornamentation, disappearing from view. Concave metal sheeting, ribbed for decoration and strength, joins the paneled ceiling around its perimeter to the walls, forming a partially vaulted cornice.

Set in triptych fenestration on the east and west walls are large, pointed-arch tracery windows of cast opalescent stained glass. A tracery design encloses a central cross on the center panels. Lower memorial panels are bordered by yellow jewels, above which triple rows of blue rondels provide the most colorful element of the windows.

A balcony, accessible from twin staircases on either side of the narthex, is distinguished by a gracefully recurved parapet. Its entablature of exquisitely

DEC 29 1987

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Upper Meeting House of the
Baptist Church of Middletown,
Holmdel Township, Monmouth
County, NJ

Section number 7 Page 4

carved hardwood contains a frieze having a linked grapevine pattern. The repetitive ornamentation of the cornice and architrave enclose the design. A prominent string of dentils support the cornice and repeat the block headings of the turned balusters above. Two unadorned, cast iron columns, having bulbous capitals, support the balcony. Their plainness contrasts sharply with the elaborate woodwork above.

Narthex. Conventional concrete footings in the area of the entry steps, which were probably rebuilt in the early 1900's and brick masonry walls make up most of the narthex foundation. Four impostes within the frontal elevation help support the combined weight of the steeple and upper building structure.

The interior is paneled with maple wainscoting. Exquisitely carved maple corbels, secondary impostes and lintels contrast with the plainness of the wainscoting. The ceiling is clad in diagonally placed wainscoting and bordered by a cornice composed of a combination of hardwood mouldings. Fluted maple window and door casings and fillets marked by turned corner blocks are carried throughout the church. The ornate newel posts of the banisters leading to the balcony compliment the balustrade posts surrounding the choir. The choir posts feature turned and carved rosettes, fluting and carved finials, and the rosette theme is again repeated on the sawn balusters which have quartered rosettes at their upper and lower corners. The stained glass design of the sanctuary windows is repeated in smaller, rectangular windows in the narthex.

Chancel. A magnificent Romanesque archway forms a picture frame effect for the choir. It is supported by wood columns thought to have been used in the original 1705 structure. Clad in plaster decoration, it is the most formal feature of the building. A repetitive pattern of garlands is trapped in the cast moulding of the archway, and elaborate cornices set off the arch from the columns.

Overhead, the choir is roofed in by a partite ceiling. Natural light filters in through two stained glass windows and is reflected downward to illuminate the choir. The pointed-arch windows, not visible from the sanctuary, are brilliantly colored, contrasting sharply with the sanctuary glass. A decorative organ pipe facade forms a backdrop for the choir. The blue and gold facade was installed in 1896, part of a Muller and Able pipe organ since replaced.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

DEC 29 1987

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Upper Meeting House of the
Baptist Church of Middletown,
Holmdel Township, Monmouth
County, NJ

Section number 7 Page 5

2/2 sash with unique cast iron latches illuminate the three exterior walls of the chancel. The upper portions of the soldered copper baptistry tank, no longer in use, and the access ladder remain intact beneath the choir platform.

Parsonage and Church Hall

The present parsonage, built in 1882, is a 2½ story, nine-room Victorian Gothic house. During the 1970's, the original clapboard siding was covered with vinyl siding, and the slate cross-gabled roof, damaged during a storm was reroofed with asphalt shingles. The main floor contains four rooms with a central hall and stairway and a one-story kitchen at the rear.

The church hall, built in 1886-7 as a chapel, contains a small foyer with two rest rooms on one side and a closet on the other, a larger high ceiling hall, and a rear one-story kitchen addition. The original clapboard siding was covered with aluminum siding in 1973, and the gable roof has asphalt shingling. The original gravel cellar was excavated in the mid-1970's and converted into a 5-room Sunday School area.

Cemetery

The cemetery contains approximately 150 tombstones, the earliest dating to 1757, and the latest, 1897. Two known Revolutionary War soldiers, Lt. John Whitlock and Col. Asher Holmes, are buried there, as is Rev. Benjamin Bennet, pastor of the Middletown Baptist Church (Upper and Lower Houses) from 1792 to 1815.

The earliest stone is that of Sarah (Holmes) Salter, followed by her uncles, John Holmes (1758), James Holmes, Esq. (1762), and her father, Samuel Holmes (1760).

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/ humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input 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 1850-1890's **Builder/Architect** unknown

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

SIGNIFICANCE

An integral part of Holmdel, the Upper Meeting House of the Baptist Church of Middletown¹ was an early church house of the first Baptist society in New Jersey, organized in 1668² by English settlers emigrating from Long Island and New England colonies. The original church* and an adjacent parsonage were built c. 1705³ on property conveyed that year in a deed of trust. This property has been in continuous religious use since that time. In 1809, the church was rebuilt, incorporating parts of the original 18th century structure. During the mid-19th century, the front and back were extended, and during the latter part of the century, the interior was remodeled in the Victorian style. In addition to the church, the complex includes the third parsonage, a large Victorian house built in 1882, replacing the second 1818 parsonage; a simple unadorned hall, built in 1886-7; and a cemetery dating 1757-1897. The three structures stand side by side at the crossroads of old Baptisttown, a picturesque remainder of the town's origin.

Architecture

The church architecture spans two centuries, beginning with primitive 1705 structural elements, some intact and some altered in the 1809 rebuilding, and culminating with the late-19th century Victorian interior.

The exterior of the church reflects the series of 19th century additions and alterations; likewise, the interior is a pleasing blend of 19th century eclecticism. Superb examples of earlier workmanship, incorporated from the original church house, exist in the foundation, roof and wall structures. The sanctuary girder, located two feet off center, is an 18" x 12" hand hewn white oak beam supported by a series of unmortared stone piers, and the north sanctuary foundation wall is of unmortared stone. There are floor support columns fashioned of untrimmed tree trunk sections and piles of large unmortared stones.

¹Until 1848, Holmdel was part of Middletown. It was formerly referred to as Baptisttown.

²Thomas S. Griffiths. A History of Baptists in New Jersey, p. 15-16.

³Ibid. p. 24.

*the first Baptist house built by Baptists for their own worship in north Jersey according to church minutes of 1836

9. Major Bibliographical References

See continuation sheet.

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property 4.81±

Quadrangle name Marlboro, NJ

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UTM References

A

1	8	5	6	9	1	0	0	4	4	6	6	1	2	0
Zone		Easting				Northing								

B

Zone		Easting				Northing								

C

Zone		Easting				Northing								

D

Zone		Easting				Northing								

E

Zone		Easting				Northing								

F

Zone		Easting				Northing								

G

Zone		Easting				Northing								

H

Zone		Easting				Northing								

Verbal boundary description and justification

See continuation sheets.

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

state code county code

state code county code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Marilyn K. Duff, Chairman

organization Holmdel Community Church UCC Nomination Committee date December 1986

street & number 40 Main Street telephone (201) 946-2438 or (201) 946-8821

city or town Holmdel state New Jersey 07733

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 National Park Service.

Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer signature Allen C. Seubke

title Assistant Commissioner for Natural & Historic Resources date 12/03/87

For NPS use only

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

Patrick Andrews
for Keeper of the National Register

date 12/7/90

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

DEC 29 1987

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Upper Meeting House of the
Baptist Church of Middletown,
Holmdel Township, Monmouth
County, NJ

Section number 8 Page 2

The south sanctuary wall contains a hand hewn white oak column with unused mortises, of a finish typical of c. 1700. The roof and floor supports are a mix of tree trunks with a hand-cut flat surface on one side and structural members, some of which are hand hewn, hand sawn or mill sawn. There are some structural parts that were sawn from wood that was originally hand hewn.

A plot of the 1705 survey shows the original road direction paralleled the present front of the church, which is angled more northwesterly than the adjacent hall and parsonage. On December 17, 1705, four and one-third acres of church property were conveyed by Baptist minister John Bray and his wife Susanna to Obadiah Bowne and Jarat Wall. The following day, in an Acknowledgement of Trust in an Indenture of Bargain and Sale, Bowne and Wall declared that the deed of bargain and sale was made to them "of mear Special trust and confidence to and for ye only use benefit and behoof, of ye Society, community or congregation of people called baptists forever..."⁴ Held in trust until 1793, when the Baptist Church of Middletown was incorporated, the property was owned by Baptists until 1968, when it was passed to the Holmdel Community Church of the United Church of Christ, an outgrowth of the Baptist Church.

Through his gift, John Bray's name became synonymous with the Upper Meeting House. Church minutes in 1735 refer to "The Old Meeting-house near John Bray's"; in 1794 and 1809, to a "new meeting-house on Bray's⁵ lot"; and in 1816, to "the upper house, commonly called the Bray Meeting-house".

Settlement/Religion

The Baptist settlers who established the first Baptist society in New Jersey, c. 1668, played a prominent role in the initial settlement and early government of Monmouth County.

⁴Monmouth County Deed Book D, pp. 131, 134.

⁵Franklin Ellis, History of Monmouth County, New Jersey, p. 817-818.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

DEC 29 1987

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetUpper Meeting House of the
Baptist Church of Middletown,
Holmdel Township, Monmouth
County, NJSection number 8 Page 3

Formally constituted in 1688, with Rev. Thomas Killingsworth⁶ assisting, the Baptist Church of Middletown was one of the earliest in the colonies of that denomination. A further distinction was the first Baptist Sunday School in New Jersey, opened in 1815 by Mrs. Ann B. Taylor on her farm near the Upper Meeting House.

Significant among the early Baptist settlers in both religion and government were John Bowne⁸, James Ashton⁹, and Jonathan Holmes¹⁰. John Bowne (1630?-1684), believed to have been the first preacher of the Baptist society¹¹, was a patentee of the 1665 Monmouth Patent land grant, and, according to Stillwell, "perhaps, the most conspicuous figure in the early history of Monmouth County". His wife, Lydia Holmes, with whom he emigrated from Gravesend, L.I., was the daughter of Rev. Obadiah Holmes (1606-1682), second pastor of the First Newport Baptist Church at Newport R.I. (1652-82), and founder of the American Holmes branch, emigrating to Salem, Mass. in 1638.¹² John and Lydia Bowne were paternal ancestors of President Abraham Lincoln through their daughter Sarah (Bowne) Salter and granddaughter Hannah (Salter) Lincoln¹³.

⁶Morgan Edwards, A.M. Materials Towards a History of the Baptists in New Jersey, Vol. II, p. 16. David Benedict, A General History of the Baptist denomination in America and Other Parts of the World, p. 582-3, says Killingsworth (thought to be from Norwich, England) assisted with the organization of the Piscataway Church in 1689, and the Cohanse Church, 1690, where he served as a pastor until his death in 1708.

⁷Griffiths, op. cit., pg. 29.

⁸John E. Stillwell, M.D. Historical and Genealogical Miscellany: Early Settlers of New Jersey and Their Descendants, Vol. III, p. 32-34.

⁹Ibid., p. 20-22.

¹⁰Ibid., p. 307-8

¹¹Edwards, op. ct., p. 304-6.

¹³Ibid., Vol. IV, pp. 181-2, 191.

DEC 29 1997

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetUpper Meeting House of the
Baptist Church of Middletown,
Holmdel Township, Monmouth
County, NJSection number 8 Page 4

James Ashton (?-1705?), believed to have emigrated from Providence, R.I., was the second, and first ordained, preacher of the Baptist society.¹⁴ In 1669, he served as a deputy to the General Assembly at Portland Point, a constable to the Court, and foreman of the Grand Jury. In 1672, he was named a grantee of Middletown and Shrewsbury under the amended patent. Two of his daughters, Alice and Deliverance, married sons of Jonathan Holmes, the founder of the Monmouth County Holmes branch and also a grantee of the 1672 amended patent.

The Holmes name, like that of John Bray, is an integral part of Upper Meeting House history. The renamed town of Baptisttown perpetuates the name. Jonathan and his brother Obadiah (2nd)¹⁵, sons of Rev. Obadiah Holmes of Newport, were early landholders in Middletown. In 1667, they purchased 1,600 acres from the Indians, which they called Plain Dealing. This land was located in Pleasant Valley near Baptisttown. Obadiah (2nd) did not settle in Middletown, but was associated with organizing and preaching at the first Baptist church in South Jersey, Cohansey (now Roadstown), in 1690.

Jonathan (1633-1713) remained in Middletown until 1684, serving in various capacities, including deputy, overseer, justice and constable. In 1684, he returned to the family homestead in Middletown, Rhode Island. His sons Obadiah (3rd) (1666/7-1745) and Jonathan (2nd) (1682-1766) inherited his Middletown, N.J., lands equally, Obadiah the easterly half. Three sons of Obadiah, James (1702-62), Samuel (1704-60) and John (1708-58), are buried at the Upper Meeting House cemetery. Two others, Jonathan (?-1768) and Joseph (?-1777) lived at Freehold and Upper Freehold/Crosswicks (Cream Ridge). Joseph was a founder of the Upper Freehold Baptist Church in 1766.¹⁶

Jonathan (4th) (?-1738), son of Jonathan (2nd), left a legacy of 400 pounds, "Unto the Baptist Society, of Middletown..."¹⁷ This legacy was used to support the pastorates of Abel Morgan, who served from 1738 to 1785, Samuel Morgan, and Benjamin Bennet, and in 1818, was partially invested in the second Upper Meeting House parsonage.¹⁸ Items relating to the will are recorded in the two known early church books.¹⁹

¹⁴Edwards, op., cit., p. 16.

¹⁵Stillwell, op. cit., Vol. III, p. 310-12.

¹⁶Ibid., p. 318.

¹⁷Ibid., p. 331.

¹⁸Trenton Baptist Association. Minutes, 1874, p. 28.

¹⁹Church Book I, p. 1-10 (a second numbering near end of book, 1745-1786); Church Book II, pp. 1-20, 42-45 (1749-1798).

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

DEC 29 1987

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Upper Meeting House of the
Baptist Church of Middletown,
Holmdel Township, Monmouth
County, NJ

Section number 8 Page 5

In addition to the Upper Meeting House, the church had a second center of worship, located in Middletown Village, called the Lower Meeting House. The two houses acted as one until 1836. When they separated, the Lower House took the name First Baptist, retaining the organization of the original body and also the church records. The Upper Meeting House took the name Second Middletown Baptist and was recognized as an independent church September 1, 1836.²⁰ First Middletown Baptist is today Old First Church, Kings Highway, Middletown, N.J. (Kings Highway NRHP District).

In 1848, at the time of the separation of Raritan Township (containing Holmdel) from Middletown Township, Second Middletown changed its name to Holmdel Baptist Church. The name was formally adopted in 1850. Around the beginning of the second quarter of the 20th century, the church began to lose its support as many of the farms, for so long owned by Baptists, were bought for country estates or by those not of the Protestant faith. The neighboring Dutch Reformed Church (organized in 1699 by Dutch settlers), which in 1838 had erected its third church building near the Baptist church, suffered similar problems.

In 1936, the two historic churches federated into The Holmdel Church, alternating places of worship. The struggle continued, and in 1941, an appeal was made to large farm owners not associated with the church to contribute \$100 per year for three years to help the church "pull thru".²¹ In 1953, in an effort to increase membership, the church was opened to non-denominational members. In 1968, the three bodies of The Holmdel Church (Baptist, Reformed and non-denominational) voted to become a member church of the United Church of Christ. In so doing, the Baptists became one with the Massachusetts Puritans and Long Island Dutch, whom they had fled 300 years earlier.

PASTORATES	TENURE	EVENTS
John Bowne (1630?-1684)	unknown	1668 Origin of church
James Ashton (?-1705?) ²²	unknown	1688 Formal organization
John Bray (?-1716?) ²²	unknown	c.1705 Church house and parsonage built
John Okison (?)	unknown	1705 Church property conveyed

²⁰Church Book I, p. 254, records that 52 members were dismissed to form a new church at "Holmsville" September 1, 1836.

²¹W.H. LaBoyteaux, personal letter.

²²Stillwell, op. cit., p. 109-110.

550 20 1007

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Upper Meeting House of the
Baptist Church of Middletown,
Holmdel Township, Monmouth
County, NJ

Section number 8 Page 6

PASTORATES	TENURE	EVENTS
		1711 Bray and Okison silenced; Okison disowned ²³
		1712 Earliest church records
John Burrows	1713-30	
George Eaglesfield	1731-33	
Abel Morgan	1738-85	
Samuel Morgan	1785-92	
Benjamin Bennet (buried in cemetery)	1792-1815	1793 Church incorporated
Mr. Hand (principal of Holmdel Academy)	1815?-18	1909 Church rebuilt
Augustine Elliott	1818-20?	1815 Baptist Sunday School started
		1818 Second parsonage built
William King	1822-25	
Thomas Roberts	1825-36	1836 Separation of Lower and Upper Houses into First and Second Middletown Baptist
W.D. Hires (two sons buried in cemetery)	1836-46	1840 Church interior modernized
John Rogers (supply)	1846-47	
William J. Nice	1847-51	1850 Front narthex and steeple added Church renamed Holmdel Baptist Church
Clarence W. Mulford	1851-52	
C.E. Wilson	1853-69	1866 Sanctuary extended and chancel added
Thomas S. Griffiths	1870-81	1870 Baptistry installed

²³Edwards, op. cit., p. 14-15

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

DEC 29 1987

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Upper Meeting House of the
Baptist Church of Middletown,
Holmdel Township, Monmouth
County, NJ

Section number 8 Page 7

<p>W.W. Case</p> <p>Robert B. Fisher T.E. Vassar W.P. Chase John Sherman Marshall Harrington (Presbyterian)</p> <p>Virgil Zirbel, student Robert Watt, student Donald Swartwout, student Richard Hunter, student Wallace Gallup (Presbyterian) Andrew Burkhardt</p> <p>(Dutch reformed) Thomas McNally (Baptist) John W. Waldron (Baptist, U.C.C.)</p>	<p>1881-93</p> <p>1894-1905</p> <p>1905-12</p> <p>1912-24</p> <p>1924-35</p> <p>1936-41</p> <p>1941-43</p> <p>1943-44</p> <p>1945-47</p> <p>1947-52</p> <p>1952-53</p> <p>1954-64</p> <p>1964-66</p> <p>1966-</p>	<p>1882 Third parsonage built 1886-7 Chapel (hall) built 1893 Church remodeled</p> <p>1936 Holmdel Baptist and Holmdel Reformed Churches federated into The Holmdel Church</p> <p>1953 Non-denominational members accepted</p> <p>1961 New steeple erected</p> <p>1968 Becomes member church of United Church of Christ; renamed Holmdel Community Church of the United Church of Christ</p>
---	--	---

Other historic church buildings in Holmdel are:

Holmdel Dutch Reformed Church, 43 Main St., built 1838, privately owned.
St. Catharine's Roman Catholic Church, 84 Stilwell Rd., built 1879, property of
Holmdel Historical Society.

OCT 2 1990

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetUpper Meeting House of the Baptist Church
of Middletown, Holmdel Township, Monmouth
County, NJSection number 8 Page 8ADDENDUM

Holmdel is a crossroad settlement that developed at the intersection of two early routes in the 18th century. According to Gordon's Gazetteer of 1834¹, the hamlet, mentioned as Holmdel or Baptisttown, contained eight dwellings, two stores, a Baptist church and an academy.

After Holmdel became a separate municipality in 1857, the hamlet became the principal village center, and by the late 19th century contained approximately 20 dwellings, a wood frame hotel, steam saw mill, carriage shop, shoe shop, two stores, a post office, school and a Dutch Reformed church as well as the Baptist complex. The Reformed church built a new structure in the village in 1838, moving from another location approximately a mile to the east.

The existing building stock primarily dates from the second half of the 19th century and early 20th century. The majority of the structures are residences as they were then, wood frame, two to two and one-half stories representing a range of architectural styles of the 19th century, including Greek Revival, Italianate, Queen Anne and other Victorian eclectic styles. Wood sided, a number have patterned shingles on their facades.

The church reflects the late 19th century architectural character that exists today. While other earlier buildings are small, plain structures of little ornamentation, the church with its late 19th century remodeling was reflecting community trends and its prosperity at the time.

Today the church and the neighboring Reformed church structure are the principal remaining Holmdel Village structures and are really the landmarks of the village.

¹Franklin Ellis. History of Monmouth County, New Jersey, p. 814.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

DEC 9 9 1987

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Upper Meeting House of the
Baptist Church of Middletown,
Holmdel Township, Monmouth
County, NJ

Section number 9 Page 2

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Benedict, David, A General History of The Baptist Denomination in America and Other Parts of the World. New York: Lewis Colby and Company, 1848, Chapter XII.

Edwards, Morgan. Materials Towards A History of the Baptists in Jersey. Philadelphia: Thomas Dobson, 1792, Vol. II.

Ellis, Franklin. History of Monmouth County, New Jersey. Philadelphia: R.T. Peck & Co., 1885. Reprinted Cottonport, La.: Polyanthos, Inc., 1974.

Griffiths, Thomas S. A History of Baptists in New Jersey. Hightstown, N.J.: Barr Press Publishing Co., 1904.

LaBoyteaux, W.H. Owner of Hop Creek Farms, Atlantic Township (Colts Neck), N.J. Personal letter, 22 July 1941. (Church records).

"Minutes of the Tenth Anniversary of the Trenton Baptist Association", June 3rd and 4th, 1874, The American Baptist-Samuel Colgate Historical Library, Rochester, New York.

Monmouth County Book "D" of Deeds, Monmouth County Hall of Records, Freehold, New Jersey, pp. 131, 134.

Stillwell, John E., M.D. Historical and Genealogical Miscellany: Early Settlers of New Jersey and their Descendants. New York: 1914, Vol. III; 1916, Vol. IV.

Special Collections and Archives, Rutgers University Libraries, New Brunswick, New Jersey: Collection #3046, Old First Church, Middletown, N.J. Church Book One, Clerk's Minutes, Membership Lists, Baptisms, Marriages and Deaths, and Financial Records, 1712-1741, 1785-1796, 1804-1922. Church Book Two, Financial Records 1746-1845 and 1739-1742, Minutes 1841-1889.

DEC 29 1987

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Upper Meeting House of the
Baptist Church of Middletown,
Holmdel Township, Monmouth
County, NJ

Section number 10 Page 3

BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

Present verbal boundary of Lot 7, Block 2 in Holmdel Township, Monmouth County, New Jersey:

Beginning at a point on the southerly side of Newman Springs Road (County Route #520), said point being 239.90 feet west from the westerly side of South Street. Thence.

1. South 17° 08' 35" east along the westerly line of Lot 8, 161.10 feet to a point in the center of a lawn inlet.
2. South 09° 10' 55" west still along westerly line of Lot 8, 31.60 feet to a point.
3. South 42° 09' 00" west along Lots 9 and 10, 176.16 feet to a point in the center of a headwall.
4. Down the center of a brook, following its various courses, and along the westerly line of Lots 11, 12, 13, 14, 18, 19, and 20, 525.00 feet plus or minus to a point.
5. North 20° 13' 00" west, 35.00 feet plus or minus to a concrete monument.
6. North 0° 11' 50" east along the easterly side of Lot 2, 209.05 feet to a point marked by a concrete monument.
7. North 74° 01' 05" west along the northerly line of Lot 2, 94.93 feet to a concrete monument.
8. North 17° 44' 55" east along the easterly line of Lot 4, 139.36 feet to a point.
9. South 74° 29' 10" east along the southerly line of Lot 5, 81.01 feet to a point.
10. South 74° 10' 00" east along the southerly line of Lot 6, 90.00 feet to a point.
11. North 74° 44' 55" east along the easterly line of Lot 6, 346.25 feet to a point on the southerly side of Newman Springs Road (County Route #520).
12. South 74° 10' 00" east along the southerly line of Newman Springs Road (County Route #520) a distance of 277.38 feet to the point or place of beginning.

Original verbal boundary as described in Monmouth County Book "D" of Deeds, pg. 134, December 18, 1705:

"All y't tract or piece of Land situate lying and being in ye bounds of Midletown aforesaid; Beginning at ye Northeast corner of ye said John Brayes land at a white oake tree standing on ye brook commonly knowen by ye name of John

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Upper Meeting House of the
Baptist Church of Middletown,
Holmdel Township, Monmouth
County, NJ

Section number 10 Page 3

Brays brook and from thence running West six degrees more Northerly twenty five Rod (412.5') to a stake and from thence south an by West and two Degrees forty nine minutes more westerly twenty seven rod (445.5') thence East six Degrees more southerly to ye said John Brays brook and from thence along ye said brook to where it began containing four acres and one third part of an acre, Bounded North by Jonathan Holmes land, West and south by ye said John Bray's land, East by ye said John Brays brook as in and by ye said Indenture of Bargain & Sale more at large it doth and may appear".

A 1969 survey map with a 1705 survey overlay is attached. Discrepancies between the 1705 and 1969 boundaries can be partially accounted for by the shift of magnetic north, changes in direction and width of Newman Springs Rd. and construction of the brook culvert. The most southerly and westerly sections are believed to have been joined to the church property at some point in time because they contained early family burial grounds.

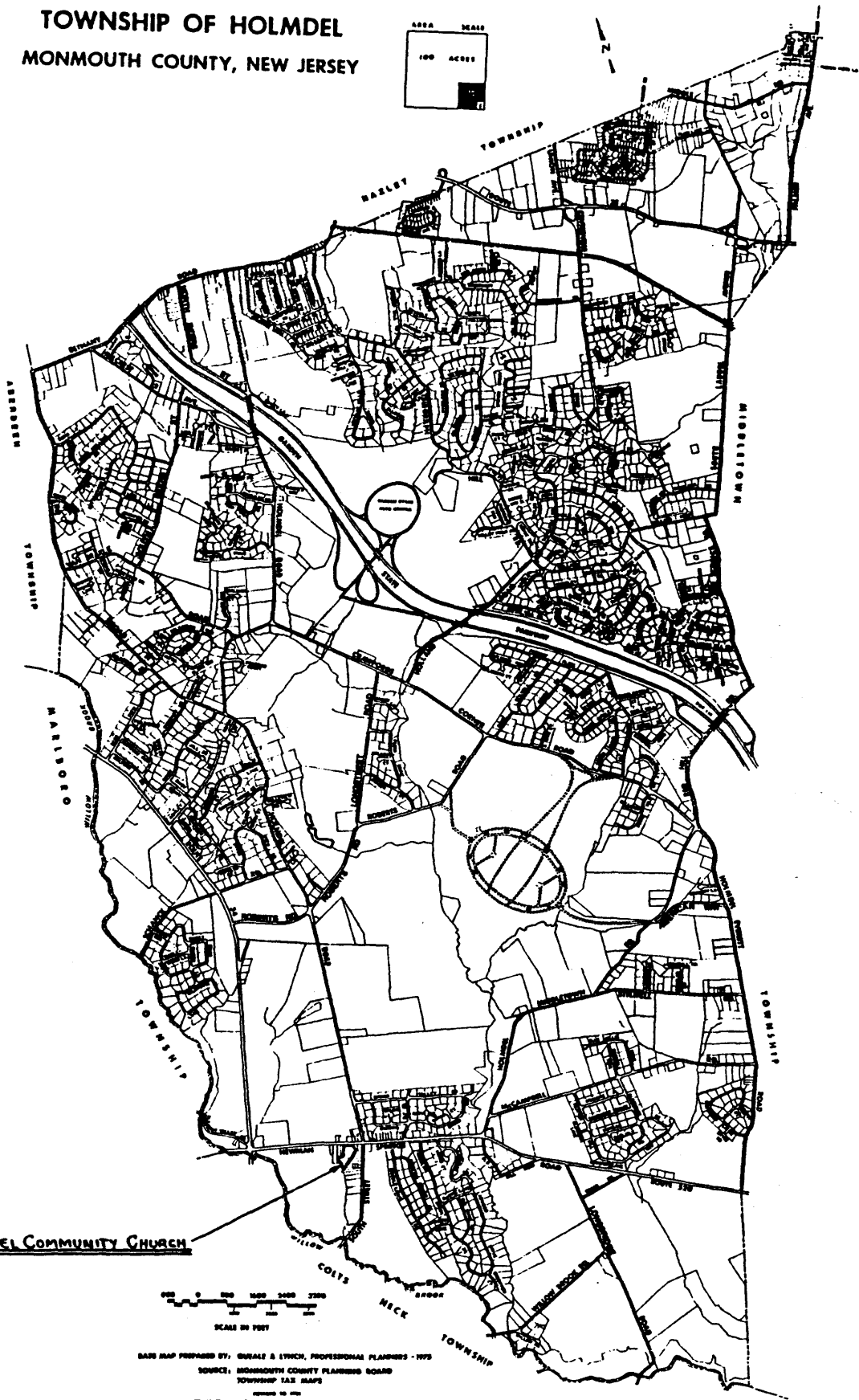
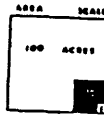
Lot #6 was sold by the Holmdel Baptist Church to George D. Schanck January 22, 1946 (Deed Book 2039, pp. 366 etc.).

Lot #5 was deeded to the Holmdel Baptist Church in 1909 by Chrineyonce S. and Lylie T. Holmes (Deed Book 857, pg. 122; Deed Book 1031, pp. 496 etc. [correction]). It was subsequently sold November 1, 1916, to George T. Jones (Deed Book 1031, pp. 498 etc.).

(Upper Meeting House of the Baptist Church of Middletown)
Holmdel Community Church

DEC 29 1967

TOWNSHIP OF HOLMDEL
MONMOUTH COUNTY, NEW JERSEY



HOLMDEL COMMUNITY CHURCH



BASE MAP PREPARED BY: BURALE & LYNN, PROFESSIONAL PLANNERS - 1975
SOURCE: MONMOUTH COUNTY PLANNING BOARD
TOWNSHIP TAX MAPS

Holmdel Community Church of the United
Church of Our Lady Complex, Holmdel, N.J.
- Area Map

(Upper Meeting House of the Baptist Church of Middletown)
 Holmdel Community Church of the United
 Church of Christ Complex, Holmdel, N.J.
 - Tax Map

SHEET 33

COLTS NECK
 TOWNSHIP
 MONMOUTH COUNTY

STATE HIGHWAY

ROUTE 1

SOUTH HOLMDEL ROAD

CANDLELIGHT DRIVE

2
 100.31 AC.±
 TOTAL

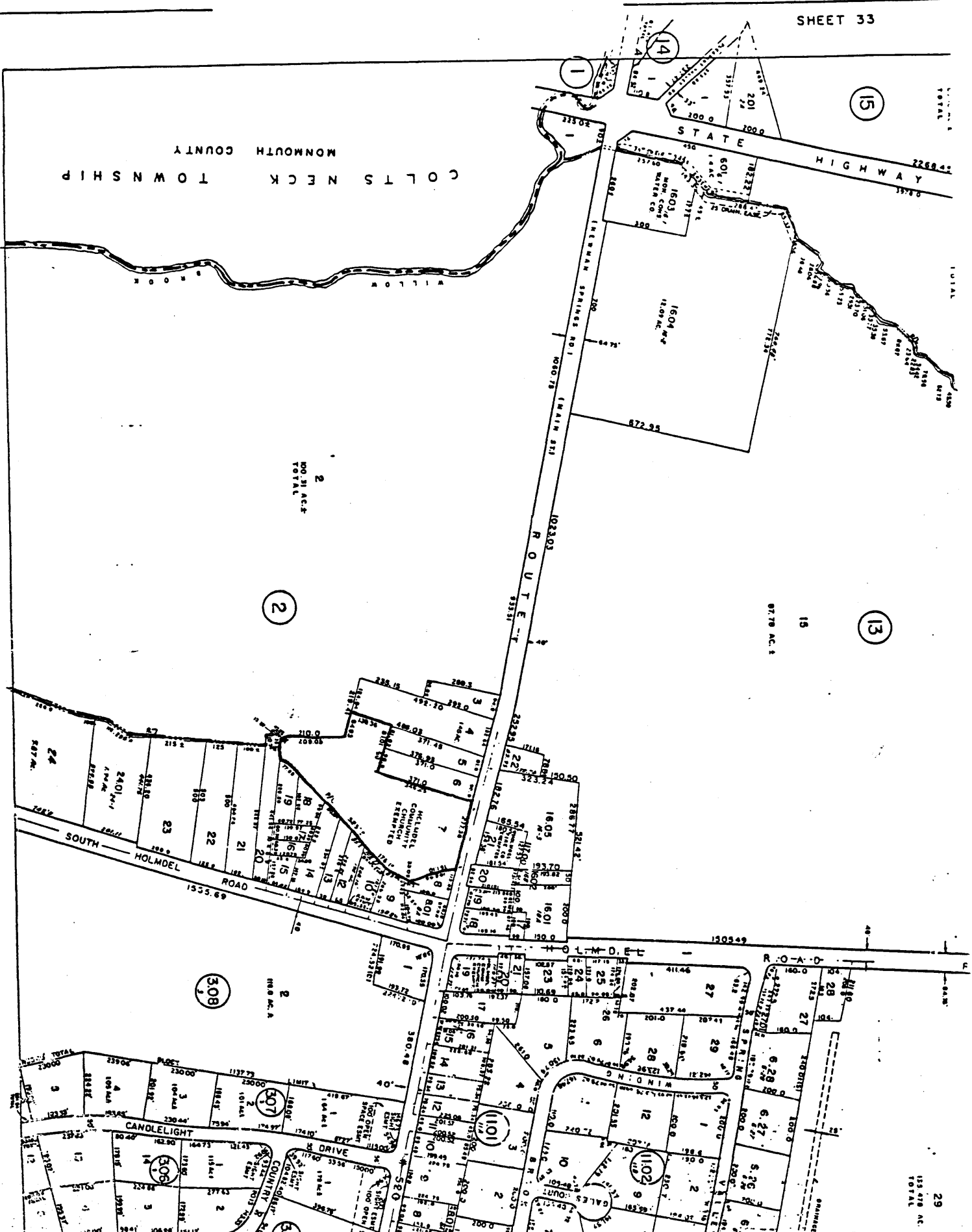
15
 0770 AC.±

308
 100 AC.±

29
 153.418 AC.
 TOTAL

SMALL NUMBERS ADJACENT TO LOT AND BLOCK NUMBERS
 REFER TO TAX MAP PRIOR TO SUBDIVISIONS AND/OR
 UNITS.

SHEET 3



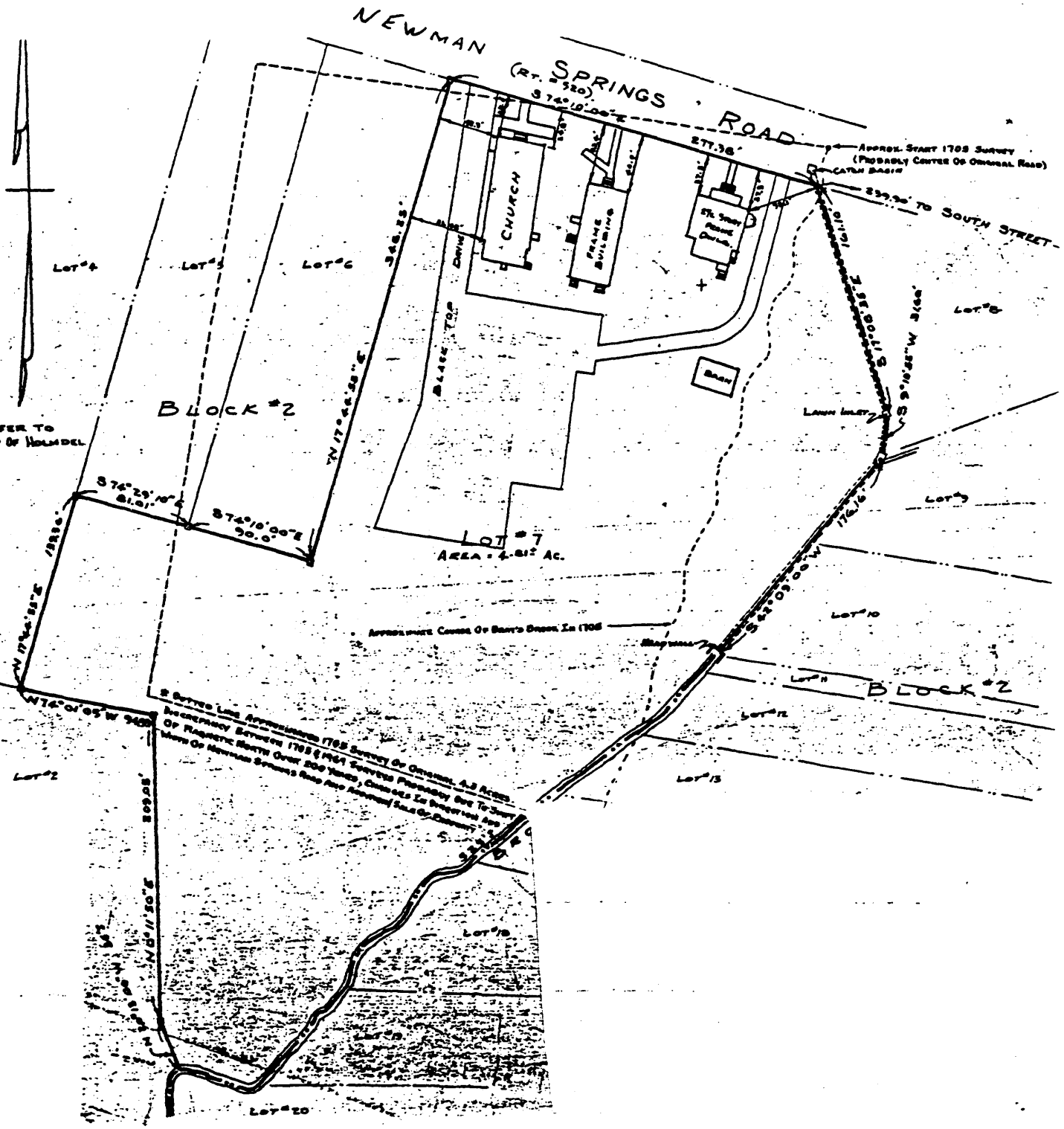
SURVEY FOR
HOLMDEL COMMUNITY CHURCH OF THE UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

LOT #7
NEWMAN SPRINGS RD
MONMOUTH COUNTY
SCALE 1"=40'

BLOCK #2
HOLMDEL TOWNSHIP
NEW JERSEY
MARCH 11, 1963

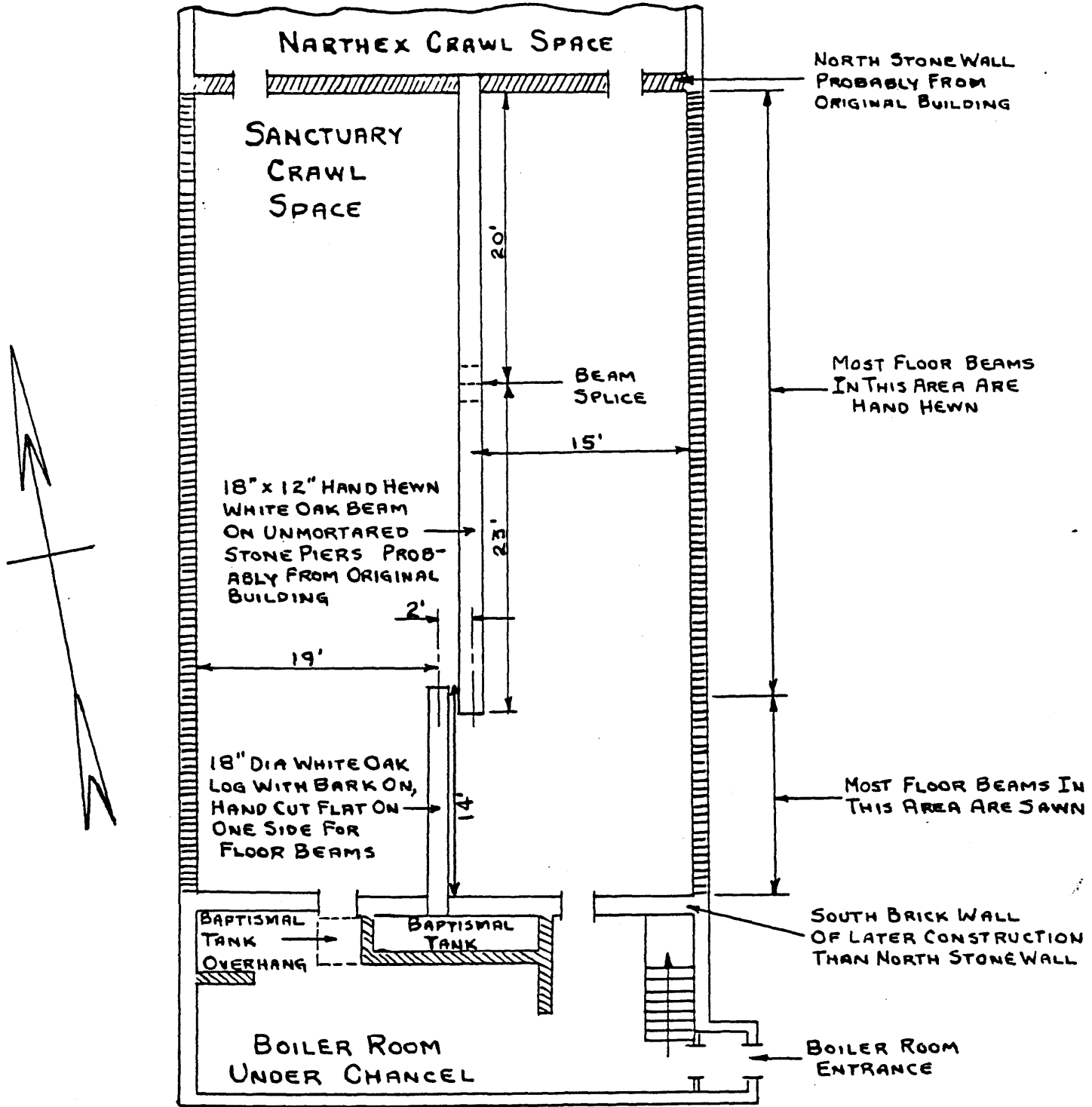
1109 Survey Control And Plans provided to 1961 Survey Plan by Holmdel Civil Control

LAND SURVEY
S.M. ENGINEERING CORP.
WALLACE V. SMITH, PRESIDENT, L.S. 2888
HOLMDEL, N.J.
N.J. P.E. 0



BLOCK NO. REFER TO
AP OF TOWNSHIP OF HOLMDEL
No. 2

FOUNDATION & MAIN BEAM SUPPORT FOR SANCTUARY

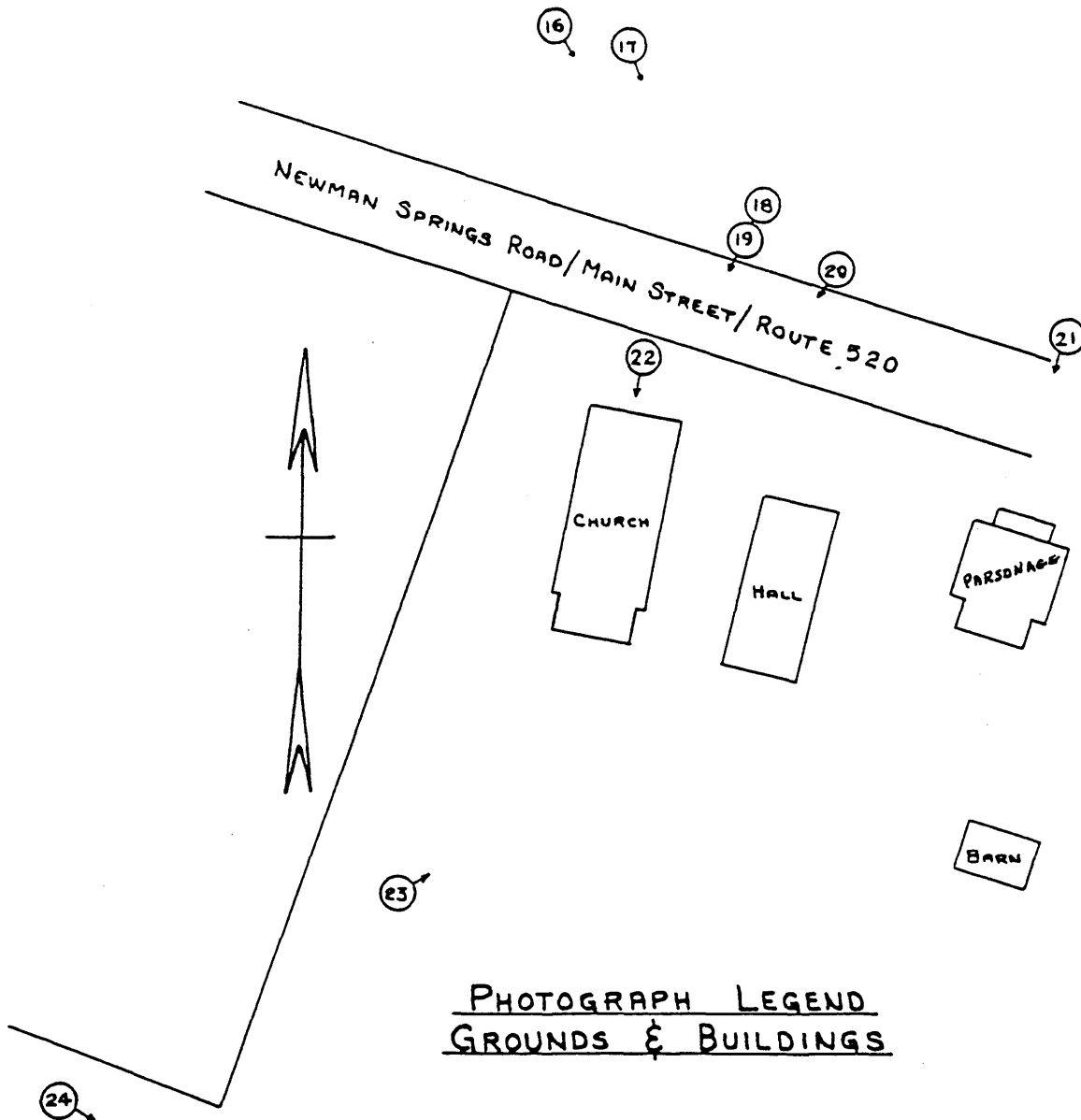


NOTE

- APPROXIMATE SCALE 1" = 10'
- DIMENSIONS ARE APPROXIMATE & DO NOT SHOW MINOR CHANGES IN BLDG WIDTH
- UNMORTARED STONE FOUNDATION WALL PROBABLY FROM ORIGINAL BUILDING
- "CEMENT" BLOCK
- BRICK WHERE NOT LABELED OTHERWISE
- MORTARED STONE

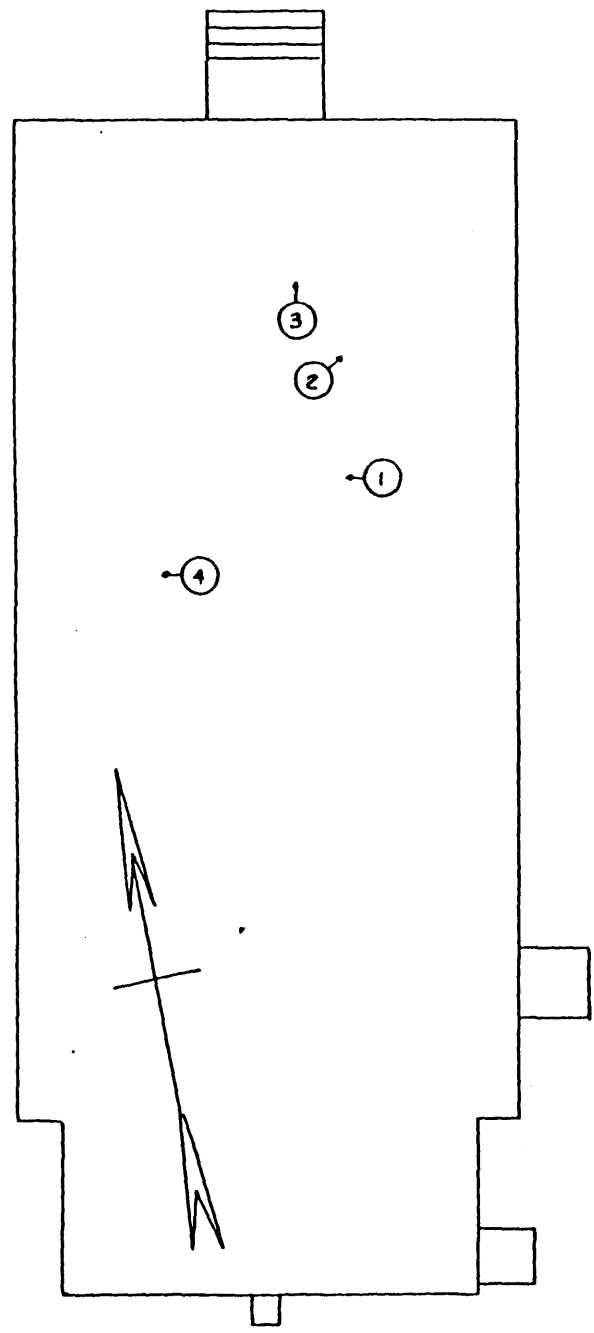
(Upper Meeting House of the Baptist Church of Middletown)
Holmdel Community Church of the United Church of Christ
Holmdel Township, Monmouth County, NJ

Accompanying Documentation - BLACK & WHITE PHOTOGRAPH LEGEND #16-24

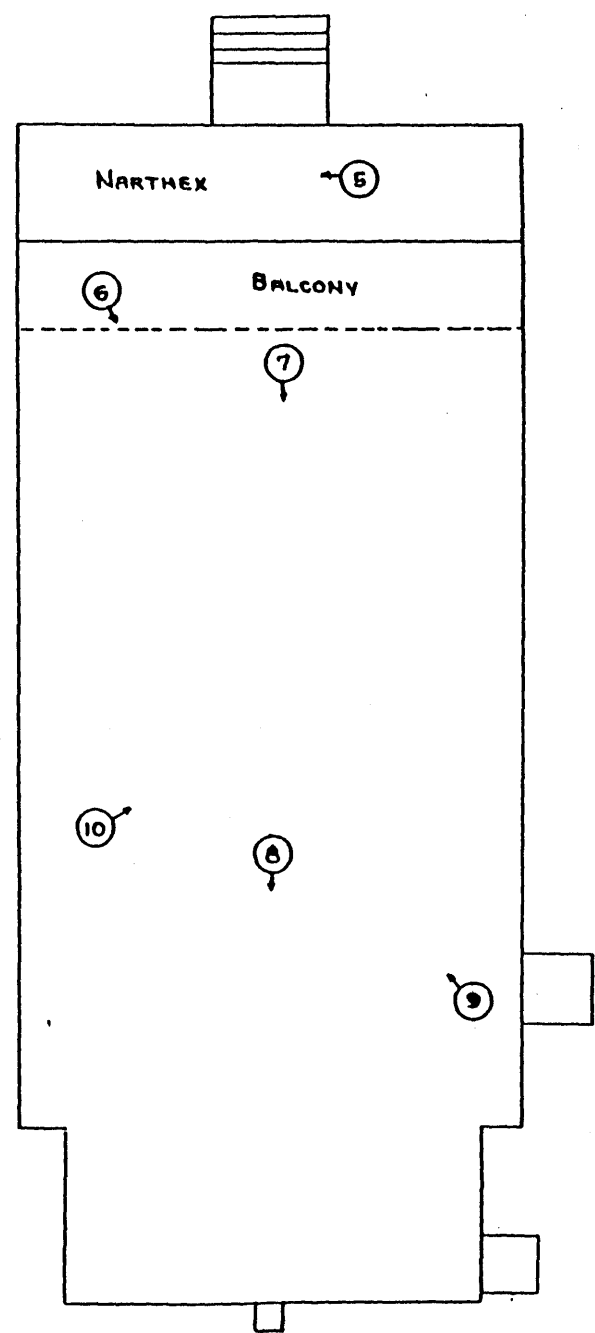


(Upper Meeting House of the Baptist Church of Middletown)
Holmdel Community Church of the United Church of
Christ Complex, Holmdel, Monmouth County, N.J.
Accompanying Documentation - BLACK & WHITE
PHOTOGRAPH LEGEND # 1-15
Not to scale

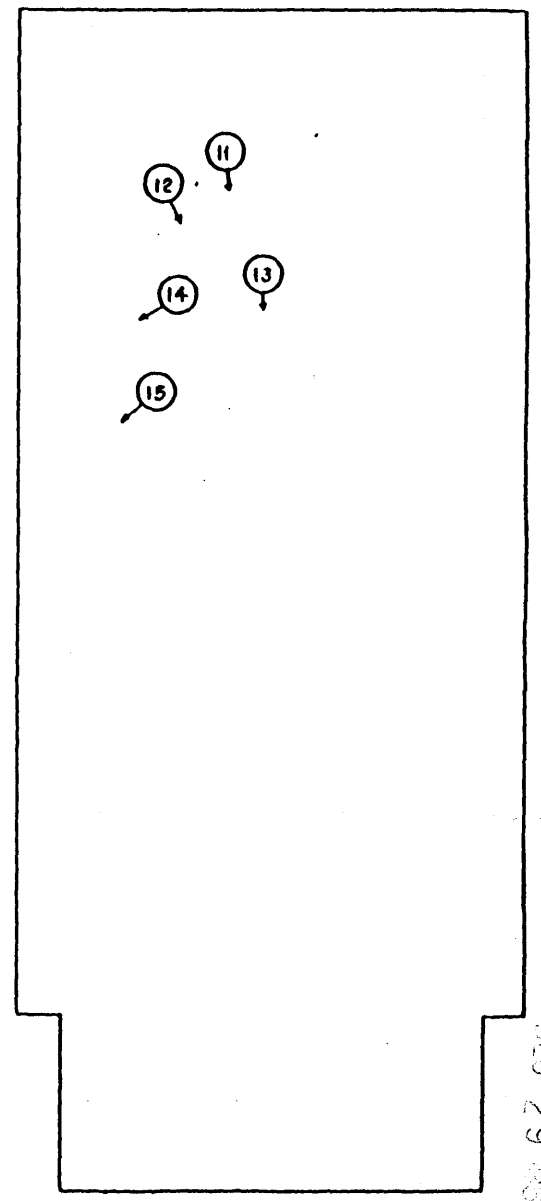
PHOTOGRAPH LEGEND
CHURCH FOUNDATION



PHOTOGRAPH LEGEND
CHURCH MAIN FLOOR

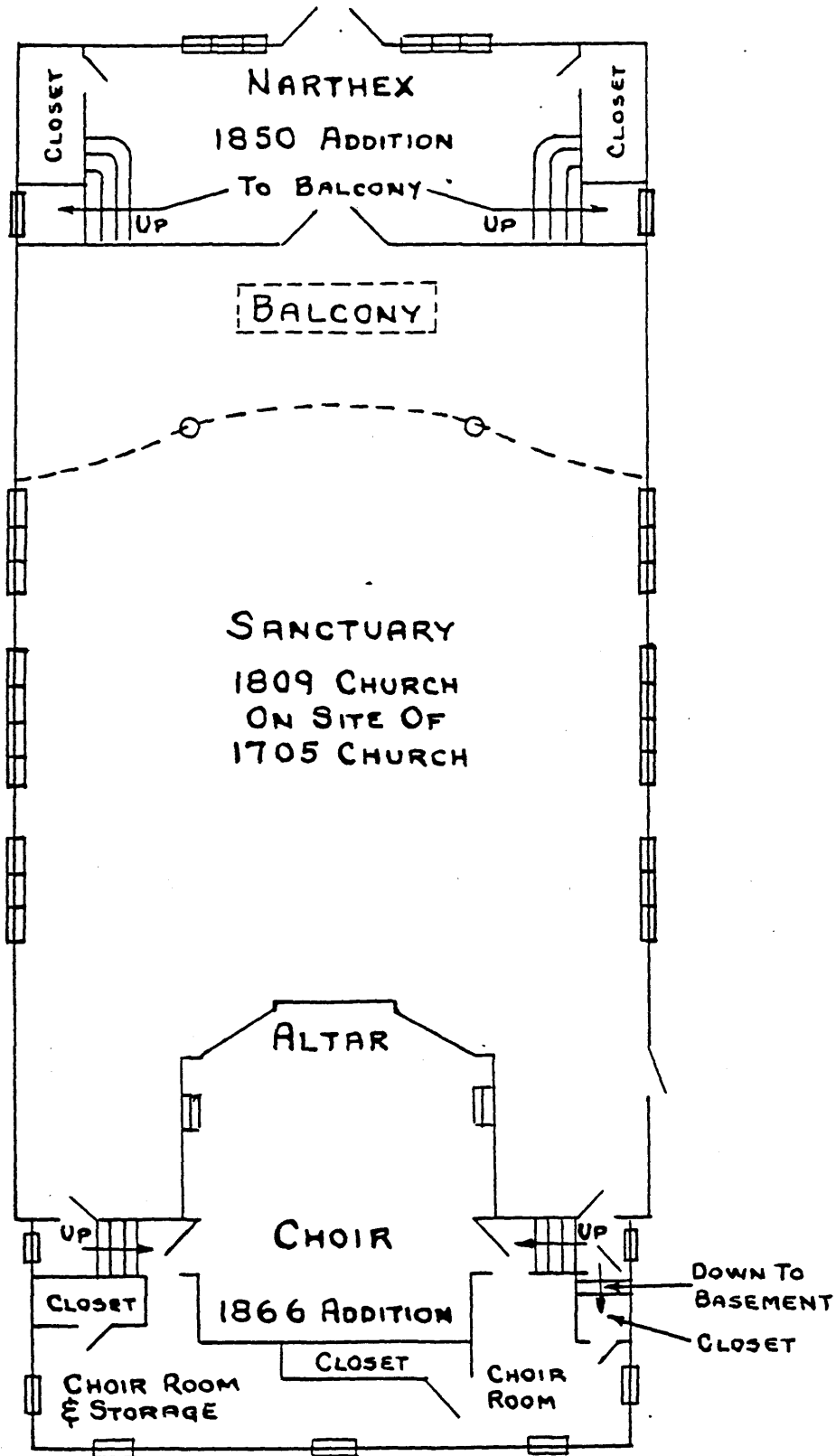


PHOTOGRAPH LEGEND
CHURCH ROOF/CEILING SUPPORT



(Upper Meeting House of the Baptist Church of Middletown)
Holmdel Community Church of the United Church
of Christ, Holmdel, Monmouth County, N.J.

FLOOR PLAN OF CHURCH



APPROXIMATE SCALE 1"=10'