

JAN 0 2 1990

75
AREA

FORM NO.

10

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
80 BOYLSTON STREET
BOSTON, MA 02116

Town Swansea, Mass. MRA
SWANSEA

Address G. A. R. Highway (U. S. Rte. 6)

Historic Name Church of Christ, Swansea
[also: First Christian Congregational Church]

Use: Present Religious services

Original Religious services

DESCRIPTION

Date 1833

Source Church records/D. H. Hurd

Style Greek Revival

Architect unknown

Exterior Wall Fabric clapboard

Outbuildings none

Major Alterations (with dates) _____

enlargement/int. renovations (1873);

1-story education wing, E side (1966)

Condition good

Moved no Date ---

Acreage less than one acre

Setting heavily developed commercial

area with major traffic along G. A. R.

highway

Recorded by H. Pierce/K. Valente/K. Broomer

Organization Swansea Historical Commission

Date 1978/March 1986/October 1989

Photo (3"x3" or 3"x5", black and white) Indicate address of property on back of photo. Staple to left side of form.

Sketch Map: Draw map showing property's location in relation to nearest cross streets and/or geographical features. Indicate all buildings between inventoried property and nearest intersection(s).

Indicate north

(see attached map)

UTM REFERENCE 19 314980 4624300

USGS QUADRANGLE Somerset, MA 1985

SCALE 1:25000

NATIONAL REGISTER CRITERIA STATEMENT (if applicable)

Church of Christ, Swansea (now the First Christian Congregational Church) retains integrity of location, design, materials, workmanship, and association and is significant on the local level. The church meets Criterion A for its associations with the non-sectarian Christian church organized in the town in the late 17th century, and Criterion C as an important local example of Greek Revival architecture. The church also meets Criterion Consideration A as a religious property deriving its primary significance from architectural distinction and historical importance.

ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE Describe important architectural features and evaluate in terms of other buildings within the community.

The present church is the second on the site. The first meetinghouse, built in 1720 of oak and chestnut timbers, was unique in that it was heated. [Hurd and Hutt] In 1815, the roof of this square meetinghouse was blown off, and replaced so that the former ends of the structure became the sides. Dedicated in 1833, the present 1½-story structure is of rectangular massing with a pedimented gable-front facade. Six paneled pilasters partition the facade into bays, the center bay containing a double-door entrance in a round-arched surround. Long double windows flanking the entrance are topped with ogee-arched heads; another blind ogee fan ornaments the pediment. Rising from the two-stage square tower is an octagonal cupola with louvered pointed-arch openings. Gabled one-story extensions to the rear (north side) of the building are likely the result of the 1873 remodeling which focused on the interior. An organ built in the church in 1868 by E. & G. Hook was restored in 1963 and repaired in 1978. The empire pulpit was a gift from the Central Congregational Church, Fall River, in 1875.

HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE Explain the role owners played in local or state history and how the building relates to the development of the community.

The Church of Christ, Swansea was formally organized in 1693. Services held as early as 1680, however, may qualify the congregation as one of the oldest in New England. [Swansea Tercen.] The church is historically significant for its ecclesiastical independence, never having had a legal connection with the town and therefore never supported by taxation. The church imposed no doctrinal tests as conditions of admission, and was open to all Christians regardless of the specific tenets of their faith. In 1725 the members decided to receive additional members only by the "laying on of hands." The church was briefly associated with the Six-Principle Baptist Church of Swansea from 1803 to 1820 and thereafter operated independently.

During the 18th and early 19th centuries, the pastors of the church were all members of the Mason family, descendants of Samson Mason, who came to America in the late 17th century. The Greek Revival building was constructed during the pastorate of Richard Davis (Nov. 1830-May 1833), although the structure was not ready for occupancy until the beginning of the ministry of his successor, James J. Thatcher. Rev. Thatcher, a well-known Swansea minister, went on to serve as pastor to the First Baptist Church in North Swansea in the 1840s.

BIBLIOGRAPHY and/or REFERENCES

- Hurd, Duane H. History of Bristol County, Mass. Philadelphia, 1883.
Hutt, Frank Walcott. A History of Bristol County, Mass. NY: Lewis Hist. Publ. Co., 1924.
Pierce, Helen, ed. Swansea Tercentenary 1667-1967. Swansea, MA, 1967.
Wright, Otis Olney. History of Swansea 1667-1917. Swansea, MA, 1917.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number _____ Page _____

Swansea MRA
Bristol County, MASSACHUSETTS

Date Listed

- | | | | | |
|------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-----------------|------------------------|----------|
| Cover | Substantive Review | Accept
Cover | <i>Peter L. Savage</i> | 02-16-90 |
| 1. Anthony, David M., House | Entered in the
National Register | Keeper | <i>Nelore Byers</i> | 2/16/90 |
| | | Attest | _____ | _____ |
| 2. Anthony, Harold H., House | Entered in the
National Register | Keeper | <i>Nelore Byers</i> | 2/16/90 |
| | | Attest | _____ | _____ |
| 3. Bark Street School | Entered in the
National Register | Keeper | <i>Nelore Byers</i> | 2/16/90 |
| | | Attest | _____ | _____ |
| 4. Barneyville Historic District | Entered in the
National Register | Keeper | <i>Nelore Byers</i> | 2/16/90 |
| | | Attest | _____ | _____ |
| 5. Bend of the Lane | Entered in the
National Register | Keeper | <i>Nelore Byers</i> | 2/16/90 |
| | | Attest | _____ | _____ |
| 6. Brown, John, IV, House | Entered in the
National Register | Keeper | <i>Nelore Byers</i> | 2/16/90 |
| | | Attest | _____ | _____ |
| 7. Buffington, Deacon, John, House | Entered in the
National Register | Keeper | <i>Nelore Byers</i> | 2/16/90 |
| | | Attest | _____ | _____ |
| 8. Church of Christ, Swansea | Entered in the
National Register | Keeper | <i>Nelore Byers</i> | 2/16/90 |
| | | Attest | _____ | _____ |
| 9. Cole, Benjamin, House | Entered in the
National Register | Keeper | <i>Nelore Byers</i> | 2/16/90 |
| | | Attest | _____ | _____ |
| 10. Colony Historic District | Substantive Review | Keeper | <i>Peter L. Savage</i> | 02-16-90 |
| | | Attest | _____ | _____ |

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION

PROPERTY Church of Christ, Swansea
NAME:

MULTIPLE Swansea MRA
NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: MASSACHUSETTS, Bristol

DATE RECEIVED: 1/02/90 DATE OF PENDING LIST: 1/18/90
DATE OF 16TH DAY: 2/02/90 DATE OF 45TH DAY: 2/16/90
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 90000075

NOMINATOR: STATE

REASONS FOR REVIEW:

APPEAL: N DATA PROBLEM: N LANDSCAPE: N LESS THAN 50 YEARS: N
OTHER: N PDIL: N PERIOD: N PROGRAM UNAPPROVED: N
REQUEST: N SAMPLE: N SLR DRAFT: N NATIONAL: N

COMMENT WAIVER: N

ACCEPT RETURN REJECT 2/16/90 DATE

Entered in the
National Register

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

RECOM./CRITERIA _____
REVIEWER _____
DISCIPLINE _____
DATE _____

DOCUMENTATION see attached comments Y/N see attached SLR Y/N

CLASSIFICATION

___ count ___ resource type

STATE/FEDERAL AGENCY CERTIFICATION

FUNCTION

___ historic ___ current

DESCRIPTION

___ architectural classification
___ materials
___ descriptive text

SIGNIFICANCE

Period Areas of Significance--Check and justify below

Specific dates Builder/Architect
Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

- ___ summary paragraph
- ___ completeness
- ___ clarity
- ___ applicable criteria
- ___ justification of areas checked
- ___ relating significance to the resource context
- ___ relationship of integrity to significance
- ___ justification of exception
- ___ other

BIBLIOGRAPHY

GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

___ acreage ___ verbal boundary description
___ UTMs ___ boundary justification

ACCOMPANYING DOCUMENTATION/PRESENTATION

___ sketch maps ___ USGS maps ___ photographs ___ presentation

OTHER COMMENTS

Questions concerning this nomination may be directed to

Phone _____

Signed _____

Date _____



W. H. B. B. B.
W. H. B. B. B.
W. H. B. B. B.
W. H. B. B. B.

First Christian Cong. Ch.

GAR Highway

Church of Christ, Swansea/ First
Christian Cong. Church (MHC # 10)

G.A.R. Highway

Swausea, Mass. MEA

1986

View N



First Christian Cong. Church

G.A.R. Highway

Church of Christ, Swansea / First Christian
Cong. Church (MHC #10)

G.A.R. Highway

Swansea, Mass. MRA

1986

VIEW E

PROPERTY MAP
TOWN OF SWANSEA
BRISTOL COUNTY, MASSACHUSETTS

1961
REVISED
10/82

JAMES W. SEWALL COMPANY
SCALE 1 INCH = 100 ± FEET

OLD TOWN, MAINE

FOR ASSESSING PURPOSES ONLY

76



YHC# 10
GAR HIGHWAY
CHURCH OF
CHRIST/FIRST
CHRISTIAN
CONG. CH.

EASTERBROOK ST.

G.A.R. HIGHWAY

MAPLE AVE.

FALL

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

Multiple Property Cover Sheet Reference Number: 64000296