

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

For NPS use only

received **AUG 31 1987**

date entered **OCT - 1 1987**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**

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

**1. Name**

historic United Unitarian and Universalist Church

and/or common Same

**2. Location**

street & number 216 Main Street N/A not for publication

city, town Mukwonago N/A vicinity of

state Wisconsin code 055 county Waukesha code 133

**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	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
	<u>N/A</u>	<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 United Unitarian and Universalist Society of Mukwonago

street & number (Society Secretary) 318 Gibson Street

city, town Mukwonago \_\_\_\_\_ vicinity of state Wisconsin 53149

**5. Location of Legal Description**

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Waukesha County Courthouse

street & number 515 West Moreland Boulevard

city, town Waukesha state Wisconsin 53186

**6. Representation in Existing Surveys**

title Wisconsin Inventory of Historic Places has this property been determined eligible?  yes  no

date 1978, 1980  federal  state  county  local

depository for survey records State Historical Society of Wisconsin

city, town Madison state Wisconsin 53706

## 7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input checked="" 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

The two and one-half story frame clapboarded church is situated on a lot within the confines of Mukwonago's original 1836 platted grid. Although only a block south of the intersection around which a core of local businesses established themselves, the church's immediate neighborhood also included residences and another house of worship. Within the last ten years the neighborhood has suffered the loss of two architecturally significant residences (Laurel Andrews-1884 and James Johnston-ca 1875) as well as the Baptist Church (1879). All three sat on contiguous lots on the west side of Main Street, opposite the United Unitarian and Universalist Church which was constructed on the northeast corner of Main and Henry.. The building's exterior remains relatively unchanged. The Gothic structure treats northbound passersby to an unobstructed view of its symmetrically pleasing lines on both the south and west elevations. The main gable facade is capped with a frame bell tower. Currently there exists no written record or memory of associated outbuildings on the church lot. However, one can speculate that outhouses and a driveshed for horses and buggies probably existed during the earliest years of operation.

The building's front (west) facade features symmetrically positioned openings on the first and second levels. The double doors, centrally situated at ground level and capped with an elliptical transom, provide the focus around which the single flanking windows are positioned. Placed equidistance between the front corners and the doors are two-over-two paned double-hung units topped with the same elliptical arch found in the transom. Immediately above these first floor openings exist three second story windows, each of which matches the width of the opening immediately below. All three windows, including the widest one directly above the central doorway, are designed with the upper panes narrowing into a Gothic arch. A seventh opening in the gable peak repeats the use of this arch, but in a smaller one-over-one pane. The pattern of window arch design employed on the front gable is carried out on the north and south sides where three symmetrically positioned elliptical-arched first floor windows are found directly below three Gothic-arched upper level openings. An original doorway, providing direct access to the hall, assumes the position of one lower level opening on the north wall. Only on the rear (east) kitchen portion, where four rectangular four-over-four paned windows are found, is this window design altered. However, symmetry is maintained with their placement.

Random-coursed fieldstones are the primary components in the foundation which is reinforced with limestone quoins at each corner. Although the masonry work appears to be quite uniform throughout, that portion under the kitchen was added in 1889. The church is sided with five inch wide clapboards affixed with square-headed nails on all exterior elevations. The siding rises to the peak and eaves levels where it meets a sculptured frieze and cornice. The clapboards, frieze, and cornice are again carried out in the quad-sided gable-peaked bell tower resting on the roofline above the front facade. Like other design elements introduced on the lower levels, the Gothic-arched openings are also repeated in the bell tower. A louvered-covered arch in each gable directs the eye upward to the octagonally-shaped steeple base. Prior to 1906 this view was capped with a spire.

(continued)

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The front facade's exterior double-doors lead into a symmetrically-designed vestibule that includes enclosed staircases and closets on both sides of the central aisle. The aisle leads to a second set of doors behind which the meeting hall is situated. Flanking closets and staircases are enclosed with a series of narrow three-inch beaded boards vertically attached and tightly butted and nailed. This design matches the hall's pine wainscoting, however the woodwork in the vestibule is grained and not painted. Both staircases are anchored by a newel post. The set of double interior four-panel doors with original locks and hardware provide entry to the first floor hall. In the hall wainscoting and all window, door, and baseboard molding is original and painted. The woodwork is of a consistent and unadorned design. Immediately behind the hall is the utilitarian church kitchen. Access to the upper level can also be gained through a staircase off the kitchen. Originally used as a dining room, the area directly above the kitchen was serviced by a dumbwaiter that has since been removed. Worshipers enter the sanctuary through the upper level vestibule where the pattern of grained wainscoting begun on the first floor is continued. A Gothic-arched double doorway matching the window design provides a formalized entry into the worship hall. The sanctuary's flooring - boards six inches wide and tightly butted - remains exposed.

The most significant alteration suffered by the church has been the loss of its spire. Other minor changes to the exterior include: a slight lowering of the front entryway when original doors were replaced; the addition of a concrete slab and iron railing replacing the plain wooden entry platform; the construction of a porch roof over the north wall's entrance to the hall; and the pouring of concrete steps below the exterior kitchen door on the same wall. Inside the church the alterations are minimal and cosmetic. All rooms and original partitions remain intact.

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<sup>1</sup> Mukwonago Chief, July 24, 1889.

<sup>2</sup> Waukesha Freeman, July 26, 1906.

Nomination includes:

1 Contributing Building.

## 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> social/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

Specific dates 1878 (construction)<sup>1</sup> Builder/Architect unknown

Period of significance: 1878-1937\*

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph) Criteria A & C

Mukwonago's United Unitarian and Universalist Church is perhaps the most prominent remaining cultural resource found on Main Street's village landscape. As an excellent example of a frame Gothic meeting house form transferred to southeastern Wisconsin by nineteenth century New Englanders, it is locally significant in both the areas of architecture and socialization. Documentation indicates that it has functioned not only as a house of worship since 1878, but also as a primary social center for village and town residents.

### Architecture

Construction on the church was initiated in late Spring of 1878. Work was reported near completion that Fall, although the building's formal dedication did not occur until August of 1879. Erected at a total cost of \$3,000, the building may have been professionally designed. However, the only documented reference to work being performed either by professionals or church members is one describing the efforts of the church women assisting a Mr. Weinrab with the original interior painting and graining. Built opposite the homes of village founding fathers and Unitarian and Universalist Society organizers Sewall Andrews and Martin Field, the structure blended compatibly with the other residential, mercantile, and religious units along the village's primary thoroughfare during the late nineteenth century. Today, it represents the sole surviving church edifice constructed by Yankees on Main Street by 1880. Other architecturally significant structures completed by the Congregationalists (1872) and Baptists (1879) have since been demolished. Considering its age and mode of construction, the United Unitarian and Universalist Church is in remarkable condition. Only minor non-conforming aesthetic influences have crept into the original building fabric over the years. The bi-level room arrangement still functions as it did originally with worship services on the second floor and public or private gatherings on the ground level. To the rear of the meeting hall exists a kitchen of substantial size used for the preparation of church dinners or light refreshments for gathered groups. It comprises the easternmost portion of the building and is original to the 1878 date of construction. The retention of interior features, such as pews, doors, flooring, and grained woodwork greatly enhance the church's image as an architecturally noteworthy house of worship within the community and the county.

### Social/Humanitarian

The United Unitarian and Universalist Church holds a primary position in the chronicles of Mukwonago's social history. From the beginning local church planners recognized the potential a public hall offered them when considering supplementary sources of revenue. Yet, they did not overlook the more basic benefits offered to them by including a hall within the new church. As one nineteenth century church essayist wrote,

(continued)

# 9. Major Bibliographical References

Western Historical Company, History of Waukesha County, Wisconsin, Chicago, 1880.  
Waukesha Freeman, February 21, 1878; April 18, 1878; September 26, 1878; July 26, 1906.

# 10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property Less than 1 Acre

Quadrangle name Mukwonago

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

UTM References

A 

1	6	3	9	1	1	8	0	4	7	4	6	1	2	5
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

Lot 7 and nine feet of Lot 6, Block 12 of Sewall Andrews' original plat (1836) of the Village of Mukwonago.

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

state code county code

state code county code

# 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Martin C. Perkins/Historian

organization date May, 1987

street & number 308 Pleasant Street telephone 414/363-8978

city or town Mukwonago state Wisconsin 53149

# 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.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature 

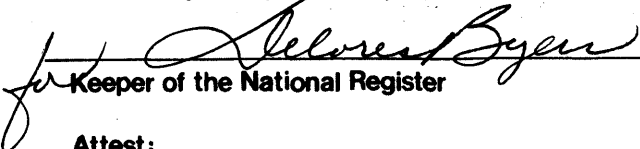
title date 8/21/87

For NPS use only

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

entered in the National Register

date 10-1-87

  
Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

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this additional space could also be used for church business meetings, social affairs, Sunday School, or other purposes contributing to the overall operation. Entries in the treasurer's records reveal that since its inception the church society has shared the facility with a number of local organizations. These organizations represented a variety of social, economic, religious, and civic causes. Local chapters of the Good Templars, Women's Christian Temperance Union, Territorial Badgers, Modern Woodmen of America, and Royal Neighbors regularly convened in the church hall as did the village's Creamery Company and the Farmers' Mutual Insurance Company. Members of the German Lutheran Church, Catholic Advancement Association, Methodist Episcopal Society, and more recently the United Church of Christ furthered their religious beliefs here until their own houses of worship were constructed. Elected officials of both the village and town utilized the building for public meetings prior to the construction of permanent government halls. The church hall's popularity can be attributed to the fact that until well into the twentieth century, it represented perhaps the largest readily available public meeting space within the Town of Mukwonago's thirty-six square miles.

<sup>1</sup>Waukesha Freeman, September 26, 1878.

<sup>2</sup>United Unitarian and Universalist Society's Treasurer's Records, 1890-1923.

<sup>3</sup>History of Waukesha County, Wisconsin (Chicago, Western Publishing Co., 1880) p. 763. Waukesha Freeman, April 18, 1878. In this edition the Mukwonago correspondent reported that Clark S. Hartwell, a prominent Waukesha builder, had drawn plans and figured project costs for the new church. Although Hartwell's participation would seem possible given his well-known church and hotel projects in Waukesha, his actual involvement has never been confirmed.

<sup>4</sup>Mukwonago What-Not, July 10, 1879.

<sup>5</sup>History of Waukesha County, Wisconsin, p. 763.

<sup>6</sup>Waukesha Freeman, February 21, 1878.

<sup>7</sup>John G. Adams, "The Vestry and Its Uses," Universalist Quarterly, XXVII (1870), p. 320-334.

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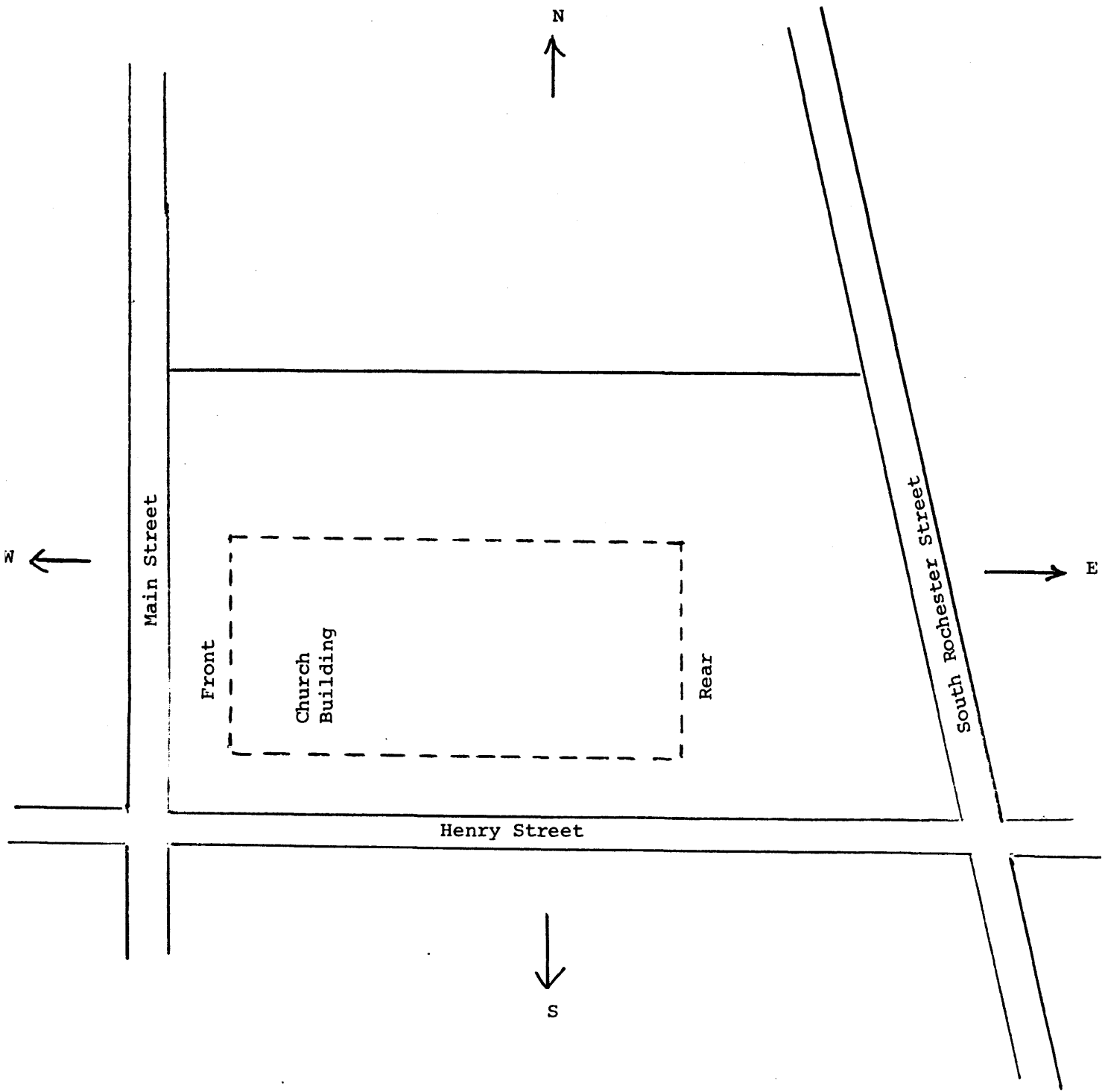
Leading spirits in the 1877 chartering of the church society included several of the village's most prominent residents. Two of Mukwonago's founding fathers - Sewall Andrews and Martin Field, both settlers of 1836 - joined with other Yankees to coordinate the organizational effort and building project. Andrews was widely known as the village's first merchant as well as a successful land speculator. Field, a lawyer, prepared the village's original plat prior to becoming a county judge for fourteen years. Along with such easterners as F.M. Payne, Otis Sargeant, William Frazier, J.N. Crawford, John Flatner, and W.P. Collins, they comprised a group of local residents active in the settlement's nineteenth century political, economic, and social arenas.<sup>8</sup> Noted women's suffragette Olympia Brown gave the dedication sermon in August, 1879. Brown, who preached at the Mukwonago church on a part time basis for years also had the distinction of being the first woman ordained as a minister in the United States.<sup>9</sup> The church's well-known liberal tradition was further evidenced by the preaching of other early woman ministers. These included Carrie Rice, Nellie Opdahl, and Florence Pollock.

<sup>8</sup> History of Waukesha County, Wisconsin, Biographical sketches of all with the exception of Collins can be found in this source; Andrews, 965; Field, 1007; Payne, 971; Sargeant, 1000; Frazier, 968; Crawford, 968; Flatner, 972.

<sup>9</sup> Alice C. Helland, "Olympia Brown" Famous Wisconsin Women, Vol. 3 (Women's Auxiliary of the State Historical Society of Wisconsin, Madison, 1973).

\*Period of Significance:

Because the property maintained its role as a local social and cultural center well into the mid-twentieth century, the proper period of significance would be 1878-1937. Church treasurer's records, local newspaper accounts, and first-person recollections substantiate its use well beyond 1937 as a primary meeting place for area organizations. By 1920 some groups had relocated their meetings and programs to newer facilities such as the village hall or the public high school. However, the church meeting hall still attracted fledgling religious organizations and other groups whose purpose, agenda, and meeting format could be better served in the confines of the lower level. Many continued to rent the facility well beyond 1950.



SKETCH MAP OF THE LOT ON WHICH THE PROPERTY OF THE UNITARIAN - UNIVERSALIST SOCIETY IS LOCATED .