

**United States Department of the Interior  
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

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

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

For NCRS use only

received

MAR 8 1982

date entered

APR 12 1982

## 1. Name

historic Huntington Street Baptist Church (First Universalist Meeting House)

and/or common Huntington Street Baptist Church

## 2. Location

street & number 29 Huntington Street N/A not for publication

city, town New London N/A vicinity of congressional district 2nd

state Connecticut code 09 county New London code 011

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

## 4. Owner of Property

name Huntington Street Baptist Church of New London

street & number 29 Huntington Street

city, town New London N/A vicinity of state Connecticut

## 5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. New London City Clerk, Municipal Building

street & number 181 Captain's Walk

city, town New London state Connecticut

## 6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title State Register of Historic Places has this property been determined eligible?  yes  no

date 1975  federal  state  county  local

depository for survey records Connecticut Historical Commission

city, town Hartford state Connecticut

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## 7. Description

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<b>Condition</b>		<b>Check one</b>	<b>Check one</b>
<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		

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### Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Huntington Street Baptist Church is located on the east side of Huntington Street in New London, on the western boundary of the Central Business District. Situated on a prominent granite ridge, the church is highly visible from the downtown and adjacent residential streets. Rectangular in plan, the church is constructed of brick in the American or stretcher bond, covered with a white, stucco-like material, resting on a granite rubble foundation and granite water table. The gable roof and pediments on either end are of frame construction, the end facing Huntington Street being extended to form a monumental portico with six Corinthian columns supporting the pediment. (Photo 1). Columns, capitals, and entablature are derivative from Minard Lafever's The Beauties of Modern Architecture, published in 1835.<sup>1</sup> (Photo 2). The lot on which the structure stands is roughly rectangular in plan with a 75' frontage on Huntington Street, and extends eastwards from the street approximately 141' on the north side, and 126' on the south.<sup>2</sup>

Other notable exterior features are the square base which once supported an octagonal steeple and cupola with weathervane, removed in 1931. The remaining portion has Doric corner pilasters with inset Ionic columns framing louvered openings. (Photo 1). Brick pilasters at each of the corners of the church support Corinthian capitals. The main body of the church consists of five bays, each lighted by two window openings with granite lintels. Window sash is double hung, single pane sash of stained glass.

The interior preserves many of the original Greek Revival features. (Photo 3). Most prominent of these are an entablature at the baptistry end of the church, supported by pilasters and free standing columns of Corinthian design, again copied closely from Minard Lafever.<sup>3</sup> (Photo 4). The same theme is repeated in the choir loft, where more monumental columns and pilasters support an entablature that is carried completely around the sanctuary. (Photo 5). The balcony is supported by unfluted columns with very simplified capitals, with an entablature featuring a frieze with motifs of Vitruvian scroll and anthemion. (Photo 6).

The ceiling displays leaf and dart molding, and an elaborate central medallion making use of anthemion and a variety of foliate forms, taken directly from Lafever.<sup>4</sup> (Photo 7). Interior doors appear to be original, with the exception of the main entrance from the vestibule into the sanctuary, and are surrounded by shouldered or eared moldings characteristic of the Greek Revival.

Few changes to the fabric of the building appear to have taken place until 1922. In the 1860s or 1870s, judging from a stylistic basis, a small shed with Italianate features was added on the south side of the church. At some time prior to 1901, a large section of the white picket fence which once enclosed the property, was removed, only a small section of which remains on the north side.<sup>5</sup>

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In 1922, major renovations to the interior of the building were undertaken. These included replacement of flooring in the sanctuary and gallery, installation of wainscoting and new pews, new gallery rail and choir loft rail, repainting, and the addition of electric light fixtures. At this time, the double-hung, 2-over-2 window sash was replaced by stained glass windows. A brick chimney to accommodate the new central heating system seems to have been added at this time, representing the only major exterior change. <sup>6</sup>

In 1931, the major portion of the steeple was removed for reasons of safety, having deteriorated to a dangerous condition. The next major series of renovations occurred in 1949, on the occasion of the centennial of the occupation of the building by the Baptists. Major changes in the sanctuary included a newly designed pulpit platform, and the creation of two new rooms on either side of the choir loft. Florescent lighting was installed, and modifications to doors to conform to fire codes were undertaken. <sup>7</sup>

In 1972, a three story addition of cinder block and concrete was added to the rear of the church. Rectangular in form, with three horizontal bands of windows intersected by vertical pylons, the addition has little visual impact on the original building, due to the dramatic drop in height to the rear of the lot, where the addition has been placed. (Photo 8). The last major alteration, and potentially most serious, was the sandblasting of the brick in 1979 and its overlay with a synthetic compound composed of thoro seal and acryl 60. Although the visual impact of the church has not been greatly affected, the implications of this work for the structural integrity of the church remain to be seen. <sup>9</sup>

The Huntington Street Baptist Church has been fortunate in that the workmanship and design of the original builders has been respected rather carefully even during major renovations. <sup>10</sup> The exceptions have been, on the exterior, removal of the steeple in 1931, and the sandblasting and coating of the building in 1979. The interior still preserves most of the original features, and the most intrusive of the new additions, the pulpit platform with a new pulpit and partition, and the choir railing with inappropriate fretwork, do little to disturb the harmony of the predominantly Greek Revival interior.

## Footnotes.

1. Lafever, Minard. The Beauties of Modern Architecture. New York: D. Appleton & Co., 1835, plates 43 and 44 for capitals and entablature respectively.
2. Boundaries of the property are delineated on Tax Map 29, Block 171, Lot 17 on file at the City Assessor's Office, Municipal Building, 181 Captain's Walk, New London.
3. Lafever, op. cit., plates 11 and 12 for design of capitals, columns, and entablature.

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4. Ibid, plate 21.
5. Photographic evidence for the existence and extent of the fence may be found in a stereoscope view of the church, accession number 1947.01.10B, at the New London County Historical Society, 11 Blinman Street, New London. A view of the church sans fence may be seen in Picturesque New London, New London, American Book Exchange, 1901.
6. "Huntington Street Baptists Open Church Auditorium," The Evening Day, July 10, 1922, for a more complete description of the 1922 alterations.
7. "Huntington Street Baptists Note Centennial Tomorrow in Restored Meetinghouse," The Day, March 12, 1949, for description of the 1949 alterations.
8. Building permit on file in New London Building Inspector's Office, 33 Union Street, New London.
9. Interview with Rev. Peter Terletzky, March 6, 1980, and Reed, Barbara, "Restoration of New London Church completed for 130th anniversary," The Day, November 24, 1979, for treatment of brickwork.
10. Wall, R.B. "Huntington St. Church Shows Rare Workmanship," The Evening Day, June 17, 1922, reveals appreciation for the craftsmanship of the original builders at a time of major renovation.

# 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 checked="" 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 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** 1843 **Builder/Architect** John Bishop

### Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Huntington Street Baptist Church represents perhaps the last major Greek Revival Building erected in New London, built by the most productive and noteworthy builder-architect of New London, John Bishop, active from 1832-1890. The church is significant for its design, the decorative elements of which are derived from a pattern book of Minard Lafever, and for the quality of workmanship lavished upon it (Criterion C). The associations of the church with the conflict between the Universalist and Baptist movements is significant within the context of the development of religious tolerance in the United States, and the gradual emergence of a pluralistic, modern society. The issues of abolition and temperance, taken up by both Baptists and Universalists within the body of the church, were symptomatic of wider scale movements nationally, which were reflected in local political and religious sentiment. 1.

Architecturally, the church's decorative elements are derivative from designs by Minard Lafever, popularized in his work The Beauties of Modern Architecture, published by D. Appleton & Co. of New York in 1835, several subsequent editions being released. The importance of the pattern book, many of which were published in the late 18th-century and early 19th-century, in the spread of architectural styles cannot be minimized. Local carpenters and builders such as Bishop relied on such pattern books for inspiration, adapting them to suit local tastes and needs. Efforts to locate the architectural library of John Bishop, however, have proved unsuccessful, although the similarity of the detail work in the Huntington Street Baptist Church suggests that he must have possessed an edition of The Beauties of Modern Architecture. 2.

The high order of workmanship displayed on the exterior Corinthian columns, attributed to a local artisan, William Culver Miner, caused remark at the time of construction. 3. The fine interior details of Lafever-inspired columns and entablatures are related to a contemporary house at 17 Prospect Street in New London, the front porch of which reveals its indebtedness to Lafever also.

In overall conception and design, two other local buildings, no longer extant, appear to have been closely related to the Huntington Street Baptist Church; the Second Congregational Church (1835), nearby on the corner of Jay and Huntington Streets, destroyed by fire in 1868, and the home of Walter Learned, a grandiose home in the Greek temple style, demolished in the 20th-century. 4.

Historically, the church was built during a period of bitter confrontation locally between the Universalists and the more conservative Protestant denominations, chief of whom were the Baptists. Universalists, stigma-

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

- Caulkins, Francis Manwaring. History of New London, Connecticut. New London: Published by the author, 1852.
- Denison, Rev. F. The Evangelist: or Life and Labors of Rev. Jabez S. Swan. Waterford, Ct.: William L. Peckham, 1873.
- Historical Sketch of the Huntington Street Baptist Church New London, Anni-

## 10. Geographical Data

Acree of nominated property 1/4 acre

Quadrangle name New London Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

### UMT References

A	<u>18</u>	<u>742680</u>	<u>4581850</u>	B			
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
C				D			
E				F			
G				H			

### Verbal boundary description and justification

A description of the boundary of the property may be found in Book 47, page 536 of the Land Records at the New London City Clerk's Office, 181 Captain's Walk, New London, Connecticut

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

state	N/A	code	N/A	county	N/A	code	N/A
state	N/A	code	N/A	county	N/A	code	N/A

## 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Dale S. Plummer, National Register Nominations Consultant

organization Connecticut Historical Commission date 3/8/80

street & number 59 South Prospect Street telephone 566-3005

city or town Hartford state Connecticut

## 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 Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature



title Director, Connecticut Historical Commission date February 19, 1982

### For HCERS use only

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

Entered in the  
National Register

date 4/12/82

Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

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tized by Calvinist theologians for their belief in the ultimate salvation of all mankind, were, to quote a church historian, "regarded as un-Christian and an altogether evil influence. They were classed with Deists, unbelievers, atheists, gamblers, drunkards and horse thieves." 5. While a number of local citizens held Universalist views, including Rev. Nehemiah Dodge, a Baptist minister expelled from the denomination in 1823, it was not until 1835 that a church body under the optimistic name of First Universalist Society, was formed. 6. Opposition to the new group was extreme, and took the form of denunciations from the pulpits of local churches of these "unsanctified beings in Satan's hire," 7. and continued with the ostracism of community members even suspected of sympathy with the Universalists. 8.

A religious revival in 1842 led by Baptist minister Jabez Swan, a noted opponent of Universalist notions, brought the conflict to a head. Universalists, bitterly opposed to the "emotional religion" 9. advocated by the evangelist, and stung by his taunts, purchased a lot on Huntington Street on an elevated ridge, proceeding to build a church edifice with the highest steeple in New London, which would overlook and overshadow the two Baptist churches then located on a nearby ridge. Bishop, a member of the Universalist church, was selected to design and build the structure, accounting for much of the care taken in construction.

Thomas Greenwood, pastor of the new church, refrained from political references in his sermons, using the bible as his text. However, Richard B. Wall, in his retrospective article on the history of the church, remarks:

Other members, by preaching abolition and temperance continually, had seriously diminished the attendance of Sabbath worship. But in time Greenwood fell into the same practice and offended the majority of his auditors to the most alarming extent and the rapid decline of the church followed. 10.

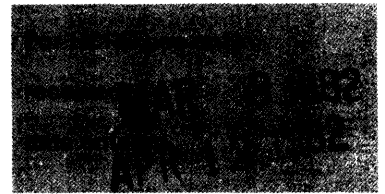
The heavy expenditure on the new building proved disastrous to the Universalists. Encumbered by debt and torn by dissension, the society was forced to sell the church for \$12,000 in 1849. 11. Elder Swan, the fiery Baptist preacher, returned in triumph from New York state, to preside over a new Baptist church formed by a colony of 185 members from the First Baptist Church, who had invited him to return and preach in the same pulpit where his bitter rivals had! 12.

While Elder Swan agreed with his Universalist counterpart on matters of politics, the theological gap between Universalist and Baptist was too great to span. As Wall observes:

In those days, the abolition movement, the temperance question agitated the minds of the people and inflamed the passions of church-goers to a degree incompatible with Christian teachings,

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and to these two burning issues were added the intolerance of the ideas and principles of Universalism. 13.

In the juxtaposition between religion and politics, much of the interest and significance underlying the history of the Huntington Street Baptist Church can be found. On a local scale, its history illuminates the conflict and change which also marked the national consciousness of the period.

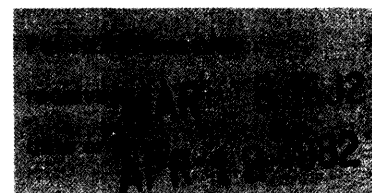
## Footnotes.

1. Obituary of John Bishop, New London Morning Telegraph, May 23, 1892, discusses his career and his responsibility for the design of the Huntington Street Baptist Church.
2. Ms. Caroline Boyce, a graduate student at Cornell University, attempted to locate Bishop's library in the summer of 1979, but without success.
3. Wall, Richard B., "Huntington Street Church Shows Rare Workmanship," The Evening Day, June 17, 1922. Also, The Trumpet, October 26, 1844.
4. For the Second Congregational Church, a rather poor photograph is extant in the photo files of the New London Public Library, 63 Huntington St, New London. For Walter Learned residence, see Picture-sque New London, page 83.
5. Scott, Clinton Lee. The Universalist Church of America: A Short History. Boston: Universalist Historical Society, 1957.
6. Caulkins, Francis Manwaring. History of New London, Connecticut. New London: Published by the author, 1852, pages 598, 599-600.
7. Wall, R.B., "Historical Sketch of New London's Famous and Venerable Courthouse," The Day, April 23, 1909.
8. Wall, R.B., "Huntington Street Church's Early Days Recalled," The Evening Day, March 10, 1922 for examples of ostracism of Doctor Dow, teacher at Union School, and an unnamed dentist forced from town.
9. Swan, J.S., "Skeletons of Sermons," ms. in possession of New London County Historical Society contains several references to 'emotional religion,' this being the title of Skeleton No. 2. ms. m1908.03.
10. Wall, "Huntington St. Church's Early Days Recalled."
11. Ibid.
12. Historical Sketch of the Huntington Street Baptist Church, Anniversary Exercises March 12-13, 1899, page 6.
13. Wall, "Huntington St. Church's Early Days Recalled."



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versary Exercises March 12-13, 1899, no imprint.

"Huntington Street Baptists Note Centennial Tomorrow in Restored Meeting-house," The Day, March 12, 1949; 8:1.

"Huntington Street Baptists Open Church Auditorium," The Evening Day, July 10, 1922.

Lafever, Minard. The Beauties of Modern Architecture. New York: D. Appleton & Co., 1835.

New London Morning Telegraph, May 23, 1892 (Death of John Bishop).

Picturesque New London. New London: American Book Exchange, 1901.

Reed, Barbara, "Restoration of New London Church completed for 130th anniversary," The Day, November 24, 1979.

Scott, Clinton Lee. The Universalist Church of America: A Short History. Boston: Universalist Historical Society, 1957.

Swan, J.S. "Skeletons of Sermons, New London, January 8, 1867," ms m1908.03 in possession of New London County Historical Society.

The Trumpet, October 26, 1844.

The Universalist, March 30, 1844.

Wall, R.B. "Historical Sketch of New London's Famous and Venerable Courthouse," The Day, April 23, 1909.

----, ---. "Huntington Street Church's Early Days are Recalled," The Day March 10, 1922.

----, -- -- "Huntington Street Church Shows Rare Workmanship," The Day, June 17, 1922.

----, ---. "When Elder Swan Stirred up People of New London," The Day, November 3, 1919.