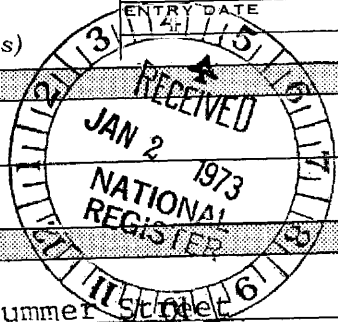


**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM**

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

STATE:
New Hampshire
COUNTY:
Hillsborough
FOR NPS USE ONLY
ENTRY DATE
APR 23 1973



1. NAME
COMMON:
Peterborough Unitarian Church
AND/OR HISTORIC:
First Church in Peterborough

2. LOCATION
STREET AND NUMBER:
Main Street, Northwest corner of Summer Street
CITY OR TOWN:
Peterborough
CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT:
Second, James C. Cleveland
STATE: New Hampshire CODE: 33 COUNTY: Hillsborough CODE: 011

3. CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
<input type="checkbox"/> District <input type="checkbox"/> Site <input type="checkbox"/> Object <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Building <input type="checkbox"/> Structure <input type="checkbox"/> Object	<input type="checkbox"/> Public <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Private <input type="checkbox"/> Both	Public Acquisition: <input type="checkbox"/> In Process <input type="checkbox"/> Being Considered <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Occupied <input type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress	Yes: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Restricted <input type="checkbox"/> Unrestricted <input type="checkbox"/> No

PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate):

<input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural	<input type="checkbox"/> Government	<input type="checkbox"/> Park	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation	<input type="checkbox"/> Comments
<input type="checkbox"/> Commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> Industrial	<input type="checkbox"/> Private Residence	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify)	
<input type="checkbox"/> Educational	<input type="checkbox"/> Military	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Religious	Cultural	
<input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> Museum	<input type="checkbox"/> Scientific		

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY
OWNER'S NAME:
Congregational Society (Unitarian) of Peterborough
STREET AND NUMBER:
Main Street
CITY OR TOWN:
Peterborough
STATE:
New Hampshire
CODE:
33

5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION
COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC:
Hillsborough County Registry of Deeds
STREET AND NUMBER:
Hillsborough County Courthouse
P.O. Box 370
19 Temple Street
CITY OR TOWN:
Nashua
STATE:
New Hampshire
CODE:
33

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS
TITLE OF SURVEY:
"New Hampshire State Plan for Historic Preservation"
DATE OF SURVEY: December, 1970
 Federal State County Local
DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:
Department of Resources and Economic Development
STREET AND NUMBER:
P.O. Box 856 State House Annex
CITY OR TOWN:
Concord
STATE:
New Hampshire
CODE:
33

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

STATE: New Hampshire
COUNTY: Hillsborough
ENTRY NUMBER: APR 23 1973
DATE: APR 23 1973
FOR NPS USE ONLY

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION	(Check One)					
	<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Good	<input type="checkbox"/> Fair	<input type="checkbox"/> Deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> Ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> Unexposed
	(Check One)			(Check One)		
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Altered	<input type="checkbox"/> Unaltered	<input type="checkbox"/> Moved	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Original Site		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Brick building, 53' wide by 67' long, slate roof. Wood pediment and clock tower at front. Brick outer walls 12" thick on granite base and stone cellar walls. Five granite steps: across front with three doorways and windows above. In each side, three wide two-storied windows with semi-round louvred fans over, set in round head recessed panels in the brick walls. Dr. William Morgan ("Survey of Peterborough Architecture") writes that the building "has most of the chief characteristics of the Federal style: temple front with recessed arcade of niches; large doorway in each niche with semi-elliptical louvred fan; a semi-elliptical fan in the pediment; modillioned cornice; the detailing and texture throughout rather flat and two dimensional. Naturally the dominant feature of the exterior is the four stage steeple-cum-clock tower in the Wren manner (as published in James Gibbs, later in Benjamin and others), complete with English baroque urn finials, classical details (Doric entablature on upper belfry, etc.) topped by a gold leafed, cupola-like dome with an elaborate gold weather vane."

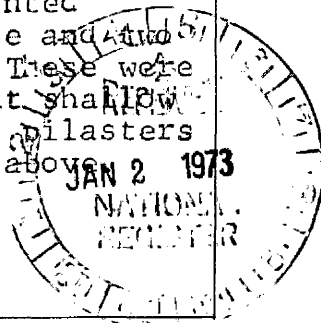
Charles A. Place (Charles Bulfinch, Architect and Citizen) notes that the tower is supported by the outer front wall and the inner wall separating vestibule from main room. Brick inner wall, 10" thick, carried only to gallery floor, with tower weight at ceiling level supported by two timber columns, fluted, with simple molded capitals.

Exterior of the original main body of building is unaltered. Two chimneys were built at north end in 1842, to accommodate first stoves. Roof slated in 1853. First bell was installed in 1828. Paris' house attached at rear was built in 1926 (architects Little & Russell; Boston), matching church in materials and style. Horse sheds (15 stalls now used as garages) are on back part of church grounds. Although present structures were built in 1905, they replaced original sheds at same location.

Interior, vestibule 10' deep full width of building, with stairway at each end leading to gallery and three wide doors opening into main room. Main room, plain almost square auditorium, with gallery at back and each deep coved border. Organ in back gallery installed in 1866, enlarges and rebuilt in 1933. Original white painted box pews with doors and mahogany top railing.

Original plain flat wall back of pulpit at front of main room was "modernized" some time before 1860 with painted "trompe l'oeil" decorations depicting a central niche and two side niches with figures of Saints Peter and Paul. These were removed in 1896 when alterations included the present shallow recessed arched chancel with Roman Ionic columns and pilasters and high panelled pulpit with leaning sounding board above.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS



8. SIGNIFICANCE

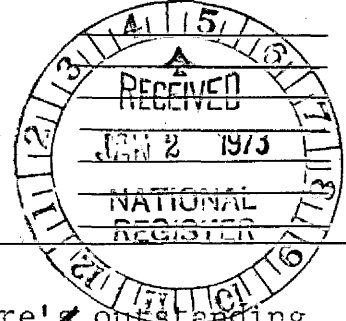
PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- Pre-Columbian; 16th Century 18th Century 20th Century
 15th Century 17th Century 19th Century

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known) 1825-1826

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- | | | | |
|--|---------------------------------------|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal | <input type="checkbox"/> Education | <input type="checkbox"/> Political | <input type="checkbox"/> Urban Planning |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Prehistoric | <input type="checkbox"/> Engineering | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Religion/Philosophy | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Historic | <input type="checkbox"/> Industry | <input type="checkbox"/> Science | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture | <input type="checkbox"/> Invention | <input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture | |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Landscape | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Social/Humanitarian | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Art | <input type="checkbox"/> Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Theater | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Commerce | <input type="checkbox"/> Literature | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Communications | <input type="checkbox"/> Military | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Conservation | <input type="checkbox"/> Music | | |



STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Architecture

Dr. Morgan writes "one of New Hampshire's outstanding churches and a superb example of the Federal style." Formerly attributed to Charles Bulfinch, later opinions (including Morgan and Kirker) consider that the building more likely was derived from Asher Benjamin's American Builder's Companion, an edition of which appeared in 1820, just before construction of the church in 1825.

The Bulfinch tradition describes the procurement of a sketch or plan prepared by Bulfinch for another church but not used there. New England church historian Dr. F.L. Weis writes that the most direct information is given by Judge Jonathan Smith, onetime President of the Clinton, Massachusetts Historical Society, whose father, John Smith, with another member of the Peterborough building committee, visited Boston and brought back a plan prepared by Bulfinch some time previously for a church in Lancaster, Massachusetts, but rejected because a larger church was wanted there. Dr. Weis was at one time minister at Lancaster, and he found a tradition there that in 1816, the building committee had rejected a Bulfinch plan later used in Peterborough.

Bulfinch himself was in Washington from 1817 to 1830, engaged on the national Capitol. Dr. Weis writes, "There is nothing in our records nor in the Bulfinch records that gives any connection between this church and Bulfinch. This is not unnatural; however, as it is stated that he never made any charge for church plans." G.F. Marlowe observes that apparently Bulfinch sold plans which do not appear in recorded lists of his work. George Abbot Morison, in his History of Peterborough, concluded that it is possible to consider that the general design followed plans developed by Bulfinch for some other location. Morison adds, "John Smith's visit to Boston and return with the plans undoubtedly occurred."

Asher Benjamin's Builder's Companion included designs found in Bulfinch's work and features of the Peterborough church appear in various plates in the Companion, including the recessed arched panels in the front and side walls, the three arched doorways in the front with the fan-shaped blind in the gable above, and the two story round head windows in the sides.

(Continued on "Continuation Sheet" 2 and 3)

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

George F. Marlowe, Churches of Old New England, photo.
 Samuel Chamberlain (New York: MacMillan Co., 1947), 165-167.
 George Abbot Morison, History of Peterborough, New
 Hampshire (Rindge: Richard R. Smith, 1954), I, 161-171, 238.
 Harold Kirker, The Architecture of Charles Bulfinch
 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1969), 381-382.
 Charles A. Place, Charles Bulfinch, Architect and Citizen
 (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin & Co., and Cambridge: The
 Riverside Press, 1925), 266, 269-270.
 (Continued on "Continuation Sheet" 4)

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

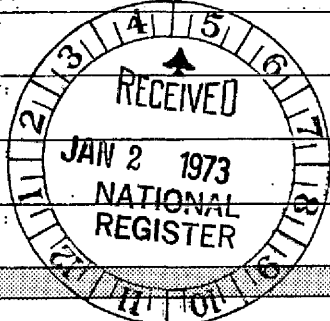
LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY			O R	LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES		
CORNER	LATITUDE	LONGITUDE		LATITUDE	LONGITUDE	
	Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds		Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds	
NW	0 0 0	0 0 0		42° 52' 36"	71° 56' 59"	
NE	0 0 0	0 0 0				
SE	0 0 0	0 0 0				
SW	0 0 0	0 0 0				

19/007050
4751

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: 3/4

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY	CODE



SEE INSTRUCTIONS

11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE: John J. Zimmerman, Vice-President

ORGANIZATION: Peterborough Historical Society DATE: September 30, 1972

STREET AND NUMBER: Grove Street

CITY OR TOWN: Peterborough STATE: New Hampshire 03458 CODE: 33

12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION

As the designated State Liaison 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. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is

National State Local

Name: George Gilman

Title: Commissioner
Department of Resources and Economic Development

Date: Dec. 20, 1972

NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION

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

Robertan Utley
Director, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

Date: 4/23/73

ATTEST:

[Signature]
Keeper of The National Register

Date: 4/13/73

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Continuation Sheet) 1

STATE	New Hampshire	
COUNTY	Hillsborough	
FOR NPS USE ONLY		
ENTRY NUMBER		DATE
		APR 28 1973

(Number all entries)

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS (Continued)

Title of Survey:

"Peterborough Architectural Survey"

Date of Survey: May, 1971 Federal State County xLocal

Depository for Survey Records:

Peterborough Historical Society

Street and Number:

Grove Street

City or Town:

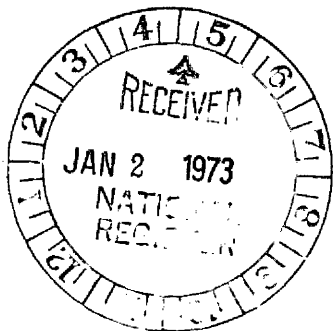
Peterborough

State:

New Hampshire

Code:

33



NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Continuation Sheet) 2

STATE	New Hampshire	
COUNTY	Hillsborough	
FOR NPS USE ONLY		
ENTRY NUMBER		DATE
		APR 23 1973

(Number all entries)

8. STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE (Continued)

Builder was a Mr. Kilburn named in a written agreement dated October 1, 1825, which specified that the meeting house was to be 53' wide and 67' long, with 86 pews on the floor and 22 in the gallery, and 4 long seats for singers. All pews to be made with mahogany top railings. Bricks were made in the Hadley family brick-yards in Peterborough. Lime and cement were brought from Nashua by ox-team.

Religion/Philosophy

Begun in 1825, dedicated February 22, 1826, as the third building (succeeding two wooden buildings) of the First Church in Peterborough formed in 1752. The Town Church (and the only church) until the New Hampshire Toleration Act of 1819, separating town government from the church.

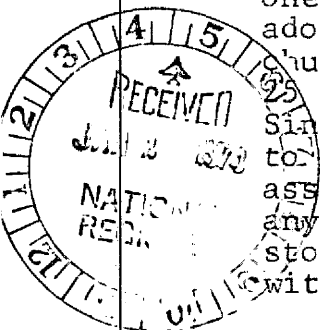
The second meeting house having become unusable and the Town being relieved, after 1819, of building a new one, the townspeople at a meeting November 13, 1824, adopted articles of association for erection of a new church building. Capital of not less than 200 shares at \$25 dollars each, to be sold to subscribers, was called for. Since the original town church membership was beginning to divide into separate denominations, the articles of association provided for the new building to be open to any denomination, time to be apportioned on the basis of stock ownership. Pews were to be sold at public auction with the proceeds divided among the stock holders.

Original town clock was installed in church belfry in 1856, replaced by present town clock in 1947. (Clock belongs to and is maintained by the Town.)

Through the first half of the 19th century, from 1799 to 1848, the two ministers of this church were the leading and most influential citizens of the Town. Morison observes that at that time the settled minister in a New England town dominated the civic, cultural and social affairs of the town to a degree hardly comprehensible in the 20th century. Elijah Dunbar, a Harvard graduate and a distinguished minister from 1799 to 1827, left almost the only early town records extant, in his sketch of early town history and his handwritten diary recording baptisms, marriages and funerals for those years, of great genealogical value (now in the Peterborough Historical Society).

Social/Philosophy

Dr. Abel Abbot, from 1827 to 1848, also a Harvard graduate, was the leader and prime mover in establishing in this church the first lyceum in New Hampshire. Organized December 13, 1828, the Lyceum was a town forum in which the townspeople studied and discussed matters of (Continued on "Continuation Sheet" 3)



NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Continuation Sheet) 3

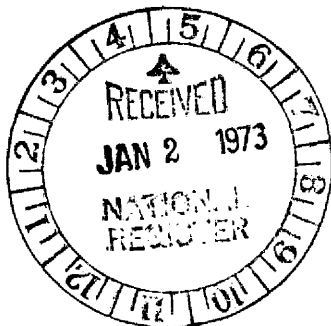
STATE New Hampshire	
COUNTY Hillsborough	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE
	APR 23 1973

(Number all entries)

8. STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE (Continued)

the widest range pertaining to the benefit of the Town or its citizens. It continued in its original form until 1856, and was revived periodically for another 40 years.

Dr. Abbot is better known as the founder of the first tax-supported, free public library in the world. In 1828, he started a juvenile library, later an incorporated library for subscribers, and on April 9, 1833, he persuaded the Peterborough Town Meeting to vote to establish a Town Library to be supported and maintained by the Town, with town funds, for the free use of the public. This was the first known instance of a free public library supported by taxation, a principle soon to be universally accepted.



NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Continuation Sheet) 4

STATE New Hampshire	
COUNTY Hillsborough	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE
	APR 23 1973

(Number all entries)

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES (Continued)

Edmund W. Sinnott, Meeting House and Church in Early New England (New York: Crown Publishers, 1963), 79-80.
 Frederick L. Weis, A Brief Historical Sketch of the First Church in Peterborough, 1752-1952 (Peterborough: n.p., 1953)

