

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

FOR NPS USE ONLY
RECEIVED **MAR 31 1982**
DATE ENTERED

**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 Rocky Hill Congregational Church

AND/OR COMMON Rocky Hill Congregational Church

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER 805-817 Old Main Street

N/A NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

Rocky Hill N/A VICINITY OF First

STATE CODE COUNTY CODE
Connecticut 09 Hartford 003

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	PUBLIC ACQUISITION	ACCESSIBLE	<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 Rocky Hill Congregational Church

STREET & NUMBER 805-817 Old Main Street

CITY, TOWN STATE
Rocky Hill N/A VICINITY OF Connecticut

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC. Rocky Hill Town Hall

STREET & NUMBER 699 Old Main Street

CITY, TOWN STATE
Rocky Hill Connecticut

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE See continuation sheet

DATE " " " " FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS " "

CITY, TOWN STATE " "

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION

EXCELLENT DETERIORATED
 GOOD RUINS
 FAIR UNEXPOSED

CHECK ONE

UNALTERED
 ALTERED

CHECK ONE

ORIGINAL SITE
 MOVED DATE _____

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Over View

The Rocky Hill Congregational Church is a 50 x 65-foot, two-story, gable-roofed, frame structure built in 1808 in the Georgian style of architecture. The church is centrally located in Rocky Hill, Connecticut, and faces south on a triangular plot of land.

In the pavilion of the facade there is a central, pedimented doorway, and over it, in the second floor, a fine Palladian window. A square tower rises in three stages from the roof line. (Photograph 1.) The interior is graced with Ionic columns and entablature, and a low central dome. (Photographs 2 and 3.) In 1948 a 50 x 47-foot parish house was built at the back, the same width as the church, and sensitively designed in the same Georgian style. (Photographs 4 and 5.)

Exterior

The foundation walls visible above grade are brownstone ashlar with vertical striations. The blocks are eight inches tall and vary from two to four feet in length. Two courses show at the front, but, due to the fact that the land slopes off to the north, four courses are visible at the rear of the church. The front steps are large blocks of brownstone. The clapboards of the siding have three inches exposed to the weather; the present clapboards were installed in 1962. The roof is covered with asbestos shingles.

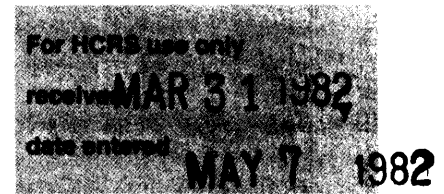
The several elements of the facade are carefully proportioned and well related to one another. The three triangular pediments of the doorway, the pavilion and the roof, each larger and higher than the other, create an upward thrust that culminates in the steeple. The projecting pavilion is unified with the building's main facade by the common cornice line of the pavilion and roof pediments. The raking cornices of the roof pediment, being higher than those of the pavilion pediment, continue to carry the eye upward.

The central entrance of two-leaf, six-panel doors is flanked by fluted columns, on pedestals, with molded capitals that support an entablature of molded architrave, plain frieze and cornice with dentil course and modillions. Single doors to left and right are framed by fluted pilasters on pedestals carrying a flat entablature similar to that of the central entrance but without the surmounting pediment. Only the central doorway has a transom, of six lights.

At second-floor level, over the central entrance, there is a handsome Palladian window. Its middle section has a half-round arch with heavily reeded key block. The imposts of this arch are the elaborate entablatures of the flanking sections of the Palladian motif, each supported by two

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

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



Continuation sheet Surveys

Item number 6

Page 1

Historic American Buildings Survey

1942

Federal

Library of Congress

Washington

DC

State Register of Historic Places

1975

State

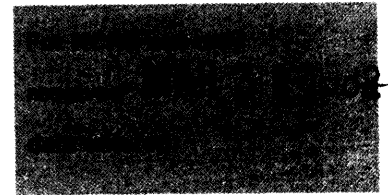
Connecticut Historical Commission

Hartford

CT

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

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



Continuation sheet	Description	Item number	Page
	Rocky Hill Congregational Church	7	1

engaged Ionic columns. The entablatures consist of molded architrave, plain frieze, and cornice with dentil course and modillion blocks, a grouping that is found repeatedly on both the exterior and interior of the church. The whole Palladian window rests on a projecting molding that is supported by 12 carved modillions. The glazing is 10 x 12 inches, the same as all the other windows in the church. To left and right of the Palladian window are rectangular 12-over-12 windows. These windows are the only upper-level windows in the building not to have half-round arches above them.

The cornice and raking cornices of the pavilion pediment have moldings of bold profile and a series of modillions that are plain, not carved. The tympanum is covered with clapboards, and has a central fanlight.

To the left and right of the pavilion, the facade has a 12-over-12 window at each level. At the upper level they have half-round arches. Beyond the windows, at the corners of the building as at the corners of the pavilion, are fluted corner boards, 12½ inches wide.

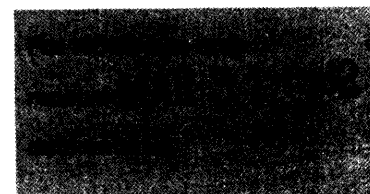
The facade of the tower rises from the roof of the pavilion in front of the main roof gable end, thus providing a third wall plane, between the facade of the pavilion and the main facade. The three-stage tower is 15 feet square, and 40 feet high. The first stage is covered with clapboards and has fluted corner boards, under a modest cornice. The second stage has fluted Doric pilasters at the corners of each face, supported by a plain belt course and surmounted by a molded cornice with dentil course. The large, round face of the 1835 clock occupies most of the south side of this stage. The north face has a 12-over-12 window under a round-headed opening. The east and west faces have similar openings in which windows apparently never were installed. These openings are closed by narrow, horizontal boards. The present third stage of the tower replaces a former spire, that was removed in 1843 because of wind damage. The spire had a gilded ball finial and weathervane arrow. The third stage, set back from the cornice of the second stage, is a belfry, with louvers in rectangular openings on each face. Panelled pilasters in the Greek Revival style define the corners, and are separated from the louvers by flush, vertical boarding. This stage has a solid balustrade or parapet at its base and a panelled parapet above its cornice.

The modillioned cornice continues along the side elevations of the church each of which has two tiers of six 12-over-12 windows, the upper tier with half-round arches. All the windows have blinds, added in 1944. The window enframements are plain. Immediately above the the foundations, serving as a water table, there is a bold molding of wood with a torus profile.

The rear corners of the building have fluted corner boards like the front. The original rear elevation is now mostly obscured by the connector to the parish house, but the gable-end pediment with fanlight continues in place and visible.

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

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



Rocky Hill Congregational Church

Continuation sheet	Description	Item number	Page
		7	2

Interior

The audience room is a tall, well-lighted, open space. The central aisle leads to the pulpit which is in front of a Palladian window, now closed in. The side galleries with their associated columns and entablatures add important decorative, architectural elements, while a shallow dome in the ceiling is a fitting touch of Georgian elegance.

The floor of the sanctuary, originally at the same height as the vestibule floor, was raised 17 inches, for reasons unknown, in 1842 to its present level. The first pews were box pews, on both the first floor and in the balconies. In 1830 they were removed from the galleries in favor of seats, to be replaced by the present seats, c. 1950. On the first floor the box pews were replaced with the present slips, whose doors have raised moldings, in 1842. The exterior walls have a panelled dado; its top molding is an extension of the window sills.

The Palladian window in the north wall, originally an exterior wall, is similar to the one in the pavilion. In accordance with standard practice in New England meeting houses, the pulpit initially was high up, in front of the window, giving the preacher a dramatic position in front of the north light. As part of the 1842 renovations, the pulpit was lowered to its present height. The present pulpit, the steps on either side leading up to it, and the wall panelling behind the pulpit were installed in the late 1930s. Panelled doors with round-headed enframements similar to the central arch of the Palladian window are to left and right.

The side galleries are elaborate. They are supported by three fluted Doric columns with egg-and-dart carving on the echinus. Each flute is stopped at the top by a round button. As part of the row of columns under each gallery, there is an engaged half-column on the north wall and a pilaster on the south wall. The columns carry an entablature of molded architrave, a frieze in which appear carved console brackets, and a molded cornice. The face of the gallery balustrade above is embellished with raised strips of wood in a wide guilloch pattern.

A second tier of two columns rises from the balcony balustrade. (There is no column in the second tier over the central first-floor column.) Their fluted shafts are capped by Ionic capitals of robust vigor. The capitals have large volutes connected by a quarter-round egg-and-dart molding over a circular beaded molding. There is a rosette above the level of the volutes. (Photograph 6.) Each column carries a block of entablature consisting of molded architrave, plain frieze, and cornice with modillions and dentil course, leading to the ceiling. There are engaged half-columns at both front and rear walls, at this level.

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

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

Rocky Hill Congregational Church

Continuation sheet

Description

Item number

7

Page

3

The round arches of the side windows have radial muntins and heavily reeded keystones. The window surrounds are plain. The rear gallery, now fitted out for organ and choir, is not original, but dates from perhaps mid-19th century. It appears in a 1927 photograph, at which time the balustrades of the side galleries ran all the way to the south wall, suggesting that originally there was no rear gallery. The south wall divides the gallery from a room over the vestibule. In this wall, now covered by organ pipes, there is a large round-headed window that permitted light from the Palladian window in the pavilion to reach the audience room. Thus, initially, natural light flooded into the sanctuary from all four walls.

Examination of nicks in the paint at the gallery level reveals an under surface of dark wood, raising the possibility that the interior of the church, or at least the gallery level, was a dark color before being painted the present all-over white. A 1910 picture shows the first-floor pews in a dark color, although the gallery balustrades and columns are white.

At ceiling level there is a bold cornice with modillions at the intersection of walls and ceiling, surrounding the room. The cornice breaks out at the pilasters that divide the windows along the side walls. In the center of the ceiling there is an octagonal opening above which rises a shallow dome. At the base of the dome, just above ceiling level, a molding with stylized acanthus leaves runs around the inside of the octagonal opening. From an ornamental circular panel in the center of the dome is hung a two-tier chandelier with glass prism pendants. The panel and chandelier are not original.

The roof framing, visible above the ceiling and dome, consists primarily of six heavy king post trusses (Figure 8, Photograph 7). Each truss has double top chords. Three rows of purlins are framed into the upper chords, which serve as principal rafters, and into the purlins, in turn, the common rafters are framed. Each rectangular area outlined by the principal rafters and the purlins is strengthened by V-shaped or reverse-V-shaped wind braces. Kelly comments that the timbers of the roof frame, all oak, are unusually heavy. He estimates that each truss at the time it was installed weighed approximately 9,230 pounds.¹

When the church was built, it presumably was lighted by candles and had little if any heating apparatus. Oil lamps were installed on the interior in 1850, probably to be replaced later by gas lighting but this change is not in the record. Electric lighting was introduced in 1915. A furnace was installed in 1903, followed in 1914 by a steam heating system. Running water arrived in 1915, and 1919 saw the removal of the metal roof shingles. The basement was fitted out in 1910 for a Sunday School and as a space to be used for social purposes. The space under the sanctuary was further excavated and enlarged to its present configuration in 1930.

The parish house, a major addition to the church plant, was built in 1948-1952.

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

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



Continuation sheet	Description	Item number	Page
	Rocky Hill Congregational Church	7	4

Parish House

The parish house, 47 x 50 feet, continues the brownstone ashlar foundations and the same bold profile of molded, wood water table of the main building. There are five bays on the east and west elevations of 12-over-12 windows at the first floor and 8-over-12 windows at the second floor. Fluted boards separate the bays of the side elevations and define the corners of the building. The windows have the same blinds and the upper windows the same half-round heads as the church. The cornice line is lower. The ridge line of the gable roof of the parish house is at 90 degrees to that of the church, bringing the gable ends above the east and west elevations. These gable ends are arranged with two pediments, one larger than the other, echoing the effect of the pavilion and roof pediments of the church facade, even to the fan window in the smaller pediment. The smaller pediment does, in fact, project about two inches, thereby faintly echoing the pavilion of the church's south facade.

The north facade of the parish house also has five bays, over brownstone ashlar six courses high. There are no fluted boards dividing the bays on this facade. Entrance to the building is through a central, pedimented, projecting vestibule at grade. Above, at second-floor level in the central bay there is a simple Palladian window, without elaborate trim. In between, at about first-floor level, there is a tripartite window that continues the lines of the Palladian window. A six-pane transom over the door is repeated from the church pavilion.

The interior is divided by a central hall that runs in the north-south direction. The space east of the hall is occupied by a chapel, while meeting rooms and offices are west of the hall and on the second floor.

1. Kelly, p. 173.

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 1805-1808

BUILDER/~~ARCHITECT~~ Elijah Ackley, Seth Dickenson

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Criterion

The Rocky Hill Congregational Church is an outstanding example of Georgian ecclesiastical architecture in New England, with its tower patterned after the manner of James Gibbs, the famous English architect. The 20th-century parish house, designed by the Connecticut firm of Kelly & Kelly, is a sensitive and successful addition that is compatible with the church and does not detract from its distinction. (Criterion C, Exception A.)

History

The area now known as Rocky Hill was a part of the town of Wethersfield from the time Wethersfield was settled in 1634 until Rocky Hill was split off and incorporated as a separate town in 1843. While it was part of Wethersfield, in May 1722, in response to a petition of local residents, a separate ecclesiastical society was established using the name Stepney Ecclesiastical Society.¹ The reason for the name Stepney is obscure, as the name Rocky Hill already was in use, and in any event the name was changed from Stepney to Rocky Hill in 1826. The first church edifice was completed in 1726. It is said to have been a plain wooden structure of two stories, but details of its appearance are not known.

The first minister was Rev. Noahdiah Russell, a graduate of Yale College in the class of 1724, who served for 37 years, to 1764. Another early minister of long service was Dr. Calvin Chapin, who was pastor of the church from 1794 to 1844. The church's first four pastors served a total of 124 years. They all were Yale graduates, and they all died while in the service of the church.

Proposals for a new meeting house, first voiced about 1800, culminated in a vote by the society on February 28, 1805 to proceed with a new church. The present site was selected, and the recommendation of the building committee to model the new structure after the meeting house in Middletown, Connecticut, was adopted. The new tax levied to finance the undertaking was collected with difficulty, causing some delays in the construction schedule. The new building, started in 1805, was completed three years later, and dedicated on September 22, 1808.

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

See Continuation Sheet.

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY Less than 1 acre.

QUADRANGLE NAME Hartford South

QUADRANGLE SCALE 1:24000

UTM REFERENCES

A 18 696540 4615140
 ZONE EASTING NORTHING

B
 ZONE EASTING NORTHING

C

D

E

F

G

H

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The nominated property is identified on Roxky Hill Tax Map No.. 22 as Lot 1, Block 9. The Assessor has no volume and page land records reference for the property.

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

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

David F. Ransom

ORGANIZATION

Connecticut Historical Commission

DATE

August 21, 1980

STREET & NUMBER

59 South Prospect Street

TELEPHONE

(203) 566-3005

CITY OR TOWN

Hartford

STATE

Connecticut

12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

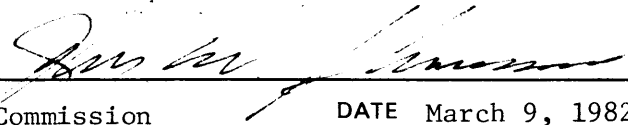
NATIONAL

STATE x

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

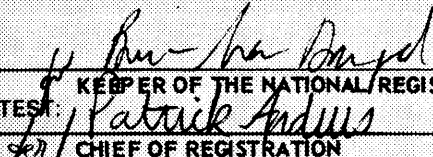


TITLE Director, Connecticut Historical Commission

DATE March 9, 1982

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

ATTEST: 
 CHIEF OF REGISTRATION

DATE 5/2/82

DATE 5/2/82

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

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



Continuation sheet Rocky Hill Congregational Church
Significance Item number 8 Page 1

Toward the end of the 19th century the church experienced a lean period in its history. There were several short pastorates, accompanied by declining membership. One gallery, not needed for its normal purpose of accommodating worshipers during church services, was cleared of seating and used for Sunday School and social purposes.

In the 20th century this condition was reversed as the church regained its strength, culminating in the major project of adding the parish house, c. 1950. The Rocky Hill Congregational Church has been a presence in the community since 1726, and today continues to fulfill the function undertaken more than 2½ centuries ago.

Architecture

The architecture of the Rocky Hill Congregational Church clearly exemplifies the Georgian style of architecture. It is a straightforward exposition of the formal arrangement of parts employing a symmetrical composition, enriched with classical detail. The pedimented projecting pavilion with colossal pilaster boards and the Palladian window of the facade are essential parts of the Georgian style as found in a variety of types of structures, including public buildings and residences as well as churches. The Rocky Hill Congregational Church is an excellent example of the use of the style for a church.

In addition to the overall success of the design and the pleasing proportions of the components, certain details are to be noted. For example, the chiseled brownstone ashlar foundations are exceptionally fine work. The wood water table immediately above the brownstone is an unusual feature with the boldness of its torus molding. The boldness of the cornice moldings, inside and outside, and the vigor of the Ionic capitals on the interior are consistent with the water table. The style and workmanship are quite sophisticated for a country church.

According to a turn-of-the-century history, the cost of the 1808 church was a little over \$9,000. "Elijah Ackley seems to have been the chief carpenter, Seth Dickenson had charge of the stone work, Josiah Beckley and William Tryon, Jr. furnished the timber mostly, and the underpinning and steps were of Portland (Connecticut) stone."² Presumably, these craftsmen modelled the edifice after the Middletown church without the services of an architect.

While the model consciously used by the craftsmen was nearby in Middletown, the steeple they erected derived from the work of the English architect, James Gibbs (1682-1754). A steeple rises from the ridge of the roof in Gibbs' precedent-setting ST. Martin-in-the-Fields (1722-6), as it does in

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

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

Rocky Hill Congregational Church
Significance

Continuation sheet

Item number 8

Page 2

the Rocky Hill Congregational Church. The resemblance was more complete in the early years when Rocky Hill had its spire, before the wind damage of 1843. The cornice moldings of the third stage of the tower, that replaced the spire in 1843, are simpler than those of the second stage, and without the dentil course, reflecting the change in architectural taste from the popularity of the Georgian style in 1808 to the preference for the Greek Revival style in 1843.

The importance of the Rocky Hill Congregational Church in architectural history was twice recognized in the 1940s. First, the Historic American Buildings Survey recorded the structure, with documentation deposited at the Library of Congress. The church holds an elaborate certificate to this effect that is signed by Harold L. Ickes, then Secretary of the Interior.

Second, J. Frederick Kelly (1888-1947), one of the first seriously to study early Connecticut architecture and still the acknowledged authority in the field, described the church at considerable length in his Early Connecticut Meeting Houses, published posthumously in 1948.

As compared with other outstanding churches of the period in Connecticut, Kelly singled out for comment three aspects of the Rocky Hill church. First, he notes that the ponderous trusses in Rocky Hill were the heaviest he found, and he speculates, inconclusively, on how the builders managed to get them into position. While such trusses have never been known to fail, the fact is due to the lavish use of tremendous oak timbers rather than to correctness of design. The few trained architects of the era, including David Hoadley and ~~It~~ thiel Town in Connecticut, who understood the principles of truss design, achieved equal performance with much lighter materials.

Second, Kelly remarked on the panelled dados, similar to those used in houses, as being rare in a church, in his experience found elsewhere in Connecticut only in the Farmington church. The usual practice was to use plain, wide, horizontal boards with beaded edges, up to the level of the window sills. Third, he commented favorably on the crisp and skillful carving of the Ionic capitals, departing somewhat from classical precedent.³

J. Frederick Kelly practiced architecture in New Haven with his brother, Henry Kelly. After the death of J. Frederick Kelly, Henry Kelly carried on the practice, and received the commission for the parish house at Rocky Hill. Thus it was Henry Kelly who benefitted from his brother's study of the church and who designed the successful parish house, 1948-1952. There are important differences between the parish house and the church, including the lower height of the parish house cornice line, and the fact that the direction of the ridge line of the roof is turned 90 degrees. There are also a number of design elements in the church that are repeated or echoed in the parish house, including the brownstone ashlar foundations, the water

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

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



Rocky Hill Congregational Church
Continuation sheet Significance Item number 8

Page 3

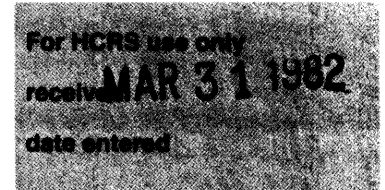
Table torus molding just above the brownstone, the fluted pilaster boards, the round-headed windows, and the composition of the facade.

Fortunately, there was ample space, and even with the addition of the parish house the church buildings as a whole are surrounded by pleasant lawns.

1. Stepney was the third ecclesiastical society in Wethersfield. The second was in the area now known as Newington.
2. Stiles, p. 843.
3. Kelly xlii, xlvi.

United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service

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



Continuation sheet Bibliography

Item number 9

Page 1

Interview July 31, 1980 with Ethel M. Cooke, church historian.

J. Frederick Kelly, Early Connecticut Meetinghouses, New York: Columbia University Press, 1948.

Andrew Twaddle, "A History of the Rocky Hill Congregational Church," nd (1920).

Ethel M. Cooke, ed., Rocky Hill Congregational Church, 1727-1977, nd (1977).

Henry R. Stiles, ed., The History of Ancient Wethersfield, Connecticut, New York: Grafton Press, 1904, v. 1.