

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name HOUSATONIC CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

other names/site number _____

2. Location

street & number 1089 Main Street not for publication

city or town Great Barrington (village of Housatonic) vicinity

state Massachusetts code MA county Berkshire code 003 zip code 01236

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this ☒ nomination
☐ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of
Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property
☒ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant
☐ nationally ☐ statewide ☒ locally. (☐ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Brona Simon DSHPO January 29, 2002
Signature of certifying official/Title _____ Date
Massachusetts Historical Commission

State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property ☐ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria. (☐ See continuation sheet for additional Comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title _____ Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby certify that this property is:

- ☒ entered in the National Register
☐ See continuation sheet.
- ☐ determined eligible for the
National Register
☐ See continuation sheet.
- ☐ determined not eligible for the
National Register
- ☐ removed from the
National Register
- ☐ other (explain): _____

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

Edson R. Beall 4.18.02

Berkshire, MA
County and State

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

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National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Housatonic Congregational Church
Great Barrington (Berkshire), MA

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DESCRIPTION:

Setting:

The Housatonic Congregational Church (MHC #268) property nomination contains a single building consisting of a sanctuary with an earlier attached social hall to the rear; one structure, an L-shaped dry-laid stone wall, formerly the foundation for a horse shed behind the church; and one non-contributing object, a 1996 wooden and metal sign in front of the church.

The church property is located on the north side of Main Street in Housatonic, a village in the town of Great Barrington, between residential houses to the east and the Ramsdell public Library, adjacent some 60 feet to the west. The lot frontage on the church property is 91 feet, including a paved driveway along the east side of the building and a small parking lot behind the church. Main Street runs east-west with sidewalks on both sides of the street. The principal façade of the church faces south with a setback of 35 feet. The church is located about 500 feet of the Monument Mills complex (NR 1983) on Front Street. Main Street meets High Street about 200 feet west of the church. Corpus Christi Roman Catholic Church (1911), occupies the northeast corner of High and Main streets. The church sits on an L-shaped lot, formerly rectangular, from which an east portion along Main Street was separated into a separate house lot when the parsonage was sold in 1979. There is a 13-foot right of way between the church and the former parsonage. The elevation of the church lot rises some ten feet to the rear of the property and extends behind the adjoining former parsonage house lot. The L-shaped foundation of dry laid stone for the original church horse sheds breaks the rise directly behind the church. This area at the rear is presently used as a car park for the church, and the stone wall functions as a retaining wall against the wooded hill behind the church property, tapering from 12 feet high at the west end to 6 feet high at the east end. Along the face of this wall there are 10 iron rings and staples at various heights. The hilly wooden area north of the church parcel begins 12 feet from the rear of the Parish Hall.

Exterior:

The present sanctuary was designed in 1893-4 in a cruciform shape and build on part of the original 1842 church foundation. The main ridge line on the sanctuary runs north-south, with lower intersecting gables over two slightly projecting pavilions on the east and west sides of the building. All three gable ends are dominated by large two-story round-arched windows. The Housatonic Congregational Church is a Queen Anne design

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with an asymmetrical façade consisting of a front-facing gable and a two-story belfry tower nestled at the southeast corner of the front façade. Two gabled projecting entry porches are located on the front façade at the west end of the gabled portion and the southeast corner under the belfry tower. These open porches consist of wooden steps, a solid balustrade area sheathed in vertical siding supporting turned columns, in turn supporting a wooden frieze under fully pedimented gabled roofs. Inserted in the gabled pediments are scrolled decorations suggesting Queen Anne gouge work painted a contrasting white to highlight the design. An open belfry with wooden balustrade, sits atop the two-story belfry tower with hipped roof. It is covered by an octagonal, conical, asphalt-shingled roof.

On the front façade, a very large round-arched stained glass window is centered in the front gabled area on the first floor and is flanked by two rosette windows framed with simple stylized window hoods. The gable is overhung above the large arched window and flanking rosette windows. The arched overhang above the arched window ends in pairs of supporting shingled brackets. This overhang extends horizontally over the two rosette windows, and then curves down to the roof eaves, again terminating in two additional paired shingled brackets. High in the gabled area at the attic is a small Palladian window with keystone arch and molding repeating similar to that around the rosette windows. There is a double-hung 1/1 corniced window on the first floor east of the large arched window.

The belfry in the southeast corner of the front façade has paired double-sash 1/1 windows on the second floor directly above the east entry porch. The open two-story belfry contains the church's original bell cast by the Andrew Meneely Bell Company of West Troy, NY in 1845 for the first building.

The exterior original wall fabric of the church is divided into three surface coverings. Fish scale wooden shingles cover the overhung portion of the gables, extending up to the roof lines. The majority of the exterior wall surfaces of the sanctuary are sheathed in staggered butt wooden shingles. Below the first story window sill line are vertically-laid matched boards extending down to the foundation. Staggered-butt wooden shingles cover the enclosed two-story belfry tower up to the pent roof which supports the open belfry. All roofing was originally wooden shingles and is now asphalt shingle.

The east and west sides of the church are dominated by the projecting pavilions, each inset with a large round-arched stained glass window under a projecting round-arched

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gable end supported by triple, shingled brackets, with a rosette window in the attic trimmed with wooden keystone and hood molds. This is similar to the design on the gabled end of the front façade. The front east side of the building contains the belfry tower with three 1/1 windows placed in the stairwell leading up to the open belfry. The north end of the rear of the south side contains a small second-story gable with a 1/1 round-arched window with hood mold accommodating a small second-story minister's office. There is no corresponding second-story gable on the west side. First-story windows in the sanctuary on both the east and west sides of the church are transomed, stained glass, and triple sashed. A narrow single-sash window of a similar style is placed in the jut of each pavilion facing front toward the street.

Attached to the rear of the church is the original 1867 Lecture Hall, with gable ends facing east and west. After the addition of "parlors" and other unspecified improvements in 1883, this building became the Parish Hall, which was already attached to the back of the original church by 1893 when construction photographs were taken of the new church building. The connector between these two buildings may have been constructed in 1883 and contained the "parlors" mentioned in the church records. The construction photos indicate that this one-story connector originally had a ridgepole at right angles to the side-gabled roof of the original Parish Hall. In short, the new church was attached by design to the existing rear building in 1893-94. The foundation of the church is rusticated ashlar limestone blocks, some of it dating to the original 1842 church building, with additions in similar material in 1867, 1883, and 1893.

The work of Harding & Seaver Architects in 1928 consisted of adding an additional area to the rear of the parish Hall to accommodate a stage and kitchen, as well as a glassed-in entrance porch on the east side at the original connector between the church and the hall. In terms of design, the architects' challenge was to make a harmonious whole of the existing complex. This was accomplished by resheathing the entire hall and its new additions in clapboard, raising the roof line between the church and hall to meet the ridge pole line of the original hall, continuing the ridge line of the roof over the new rear addition, and dropping the roof down over the rear stage and kitchen addition as a hipped roof. This solution allowed for the glassed-in porch on the east side to be included under the pitch of the new raised roof of the connector, and to intersect with the ridge line of the roof of the original hall. Raising the roof of the connector also enabled the same roof pitch on the east side to extend over the new porch addition continue across the original hall façade at the first floor, thus allowing for additional space on the east side for the new kitchen area.

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The architectural style employed to pull the design together was Colonial Revival, popular in 1928. The sheathing chosen for exterior walls was clapboard. Vestiges of the returned eaves of the original roof on the hall were retained. Cornerboards and a wide plain wooden frieze were added, as well as stylized Palladian windows in the original gable ends of the hall. These Palladian windows appear to have been fashioned by retaining 2/2 round-arched windows with hood molds in the east and west gable ends of the original hall, and then adding flanking quarter-round lights with fan-shaped muntins. Double-hung windows are 6/6 on the east and west sides of the building. The new glassed-in porch was fitted with six sections of twelve-light window panels. The entrance doors on the new porch are also twelve-light under a small gabled entrance. A double door on the west side of the hall was designed with four-light transoms over doors of six lights paneled at the bottom of the doors.

Interior:

The interior of the sanctuary occupies nearly the entire first floor space of the 1894 building and sits on a full basement. Because of the connected hall at the rear, the sanctuary faces west, and the north or rear wall of the sanctuary has only a door into the hall beyond. This solution to retaining intercourse between the church and hall demanded that the organ be placed in front of the large-round-arched stained glass window in the west pavilion. The raised pulpit was then located in front of the organ. Pews were positioned in a semicircle, with two aisles facing west. As one enters the sanctuary from the east entrance porch into the belfry tower, one turns left toward the west to be seated. Since the east wall of the building is the rear of the sanctuary, there are two additional rooms. The first is a small vestibule immediately inside the east entrance in the belfry tower, with two doors leading into the sanctuary. The second room in the northeast corner of the church proper contains a short hallway and staircase leading up to a second-story study room above the first-floor hallway and staircase.

The interior of the sanctuary has a cruciform-shaped pressed metal ceiling with fleur-de-lis pattern with an egg-and-dart border. It is beamed and bracketed in dark wood. The sanctuary floors are pine. Two metal columns with Composite order capitals support the ceiling on the east side toward the rear pews. Pews are oak in a light golden finish. A dark wooden wainscot in vertical linen-fold pattern runs along the lower walls under the window sills. Door and window molding is ribbed with bulls-eye corner blocks. Doors in the sanctuary are five-paneled and dark-stained to match the molding and wainscot. The pulpit and organ case are both paneled wood. The original wall covering is

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unknown, but the current walls are painted wallboard. All stained glass is multi-colored and predominately geometric in design. It was manufactured by Redding Baird & Co., whose principals were listed as "early glass men" in a 1965 article by Orin Skinner in *Stained Glass*, but a company little-known by the Stained Glass Association of America. The outside of the stained glass windows has been covered in Plexiglas panels.

The Parish Hall is one story with an unfinished attic and full poured-concrete basement. The 1928 kitchen, dressing room, and stage addition, measuring approximately 52 by 18 feet, sits over a crawl space. It is accessible from the rear north wall of the sanctuary through a door. The hall and its connector have maple floors, plaster walls with chair rails, plaster ceilings, five-paneled doors, cornice window moldings, molded baseboard, and six-paneled folding doors to separate the hall from the connector. All trim is painted white. The kitchen is fitted with linoleum floors and counters. Transomed windows are operable.

Alterations Since 1928:

The 1893-94 church building is remarkably intact with only a few interior alterations. The sanctuary received new wiring and lights in 1939. In 1978, all the sainted glass and was repaired by removing and replacing all the lead between the glass pieces. Following this, Plexiglas was placed over the exterior of each window to prevent future damage. Unfortunately, this has caused condensation and an air pocket which builds up heat intense enough to damage the releading. New furnaces were installed in 1942 and again in 1985. In addition, the church has installed painted wallboard in the sanctuary which masks the original wall covering.

On the exterior of the church, some twenty or thirty years ago, the front double doors on the east entrance were replaced with more modern eight-paneled double doors lower in height, so that plywood covers top of the door opening. In 1994, the east stairs leading up to the east entrance porch were replaced and the exterior of the building was repainted a light blue with white trim. Due to water damage in 1996 and a chronic problem with poor drainage at the rear of the church and hall, a new drainage system was installed. In 1998, new asphalt shingled roofs replaced the previous 1976 roof covering. The original roof was wood shingled.

There have been some slight changes in the attached Social Hall since 1928. In 1980 the small dressing room west of the stage in the 1928 rear addition was remodeled into a pastor's office. This room was subsequently refurbished in 1996 after water damage.

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In 1998, a new ceiling was installed in the social hall kitchen. A handicap ramp was installed inside the social hall at the door entering into the sanctuary and a temporary ramp one was placed outside in recent years.

Changes to the site included removal of the old wooden horse shed behind the church, construction of a new garage, and installation of paving in the driveway and parking lot, east of, and behind, the social hall. The stone wall behind the hall was part of the foundation of the west horse barn, a one-story rectangular wooden structure open on the south side facing the back of the hall. In 1996, the original wooden sign in front of the church was replaced with the current metal and wooden one.

The parsonage to the east, now a private home, was built in 1902 and sold in 1979 to finance repairs to the church. With the proceeds of the sale, the church refurbished the present kitchen, repaired the floor in the parish hall, repaired the sliding doors in the social hall, replaced the front east steps and entire roof, and painted the exterior of the church.

The land abutting the church's property and not owned by the church serves the community as a passive recreational area. The church's and neighborhood children play on the side lawn between the church and the Ramsdell Public Library to the west. Land to the rear behind the church property is used for a vegetable garden. Now and then church members use the rear of the church property for chicken barbeques and outside worship.

Archaeological Description

While no ancient Native American sites have been identified on the church property, sites may be present. One site is recorded in the general area (within one mile). That site, the Monument Mills Site (19-BK-124), is located less than 1000 feet from the nominated property on the West Bank of the Housatonic River. Environmental characteristics of the property also indicate the presence of several locational criteria (slope, soil drainage, distance to wetlands) that are favorable indicators for many types of ancient sites. The church is located on a well drained, sloping riverine terrace within 1000 feet of the Housatonic River. The church lot has a natural rise of about 10 feet to the rear of the property and is wooded and hilly. Given the above information, the small size of the lot (less than one acre) and impacts associated with church construction

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dating from 1842 and later, a moderate potential exists for locating ancient Native American resources on the church property.

A high potential exists for locating historic archaeological resources on the Housatonic Congregational Church property. Structural evidence may survive from portions of the original 1842 Church not incorporated into the present sanctuary, designed in 1893-94. Similar archaeological evidence may also exist from outbuildings, no longer extant, associated with the original church and the existing structure. An L-shaped foundation of dry laid stone from horse sheds associated with the original church has been identified behind the existing church. Archaeological evidence associated with occupational related features (trash pits, privies, wells) may also survive associated with the earlier church, the existing church or both.

(end)

Housatonic Congregational Church

Name of Property

Berkshire, MA

County and State

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- ☒ **A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- ☐ **B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- ☒ **C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- ☐ **D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- ☒ **A** owned by religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- ☐ **B** removed from its original location.
- ☐ **C** a birthplace or grave.
- ☐ **D** a cemetery.
- ☐ **E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- ☐ **F** a commemorative property.
- ☐ **G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographical References

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- ☐ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- ☐ previously listed in the National Register
- ☐ previously determined eligible by the National Register
- ☐ designated a National Historic Landmark
- ☐ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
- ☐ recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

ARCHITECTURE

RELIGION

Period of Significance

1876-1952

Significant Dates

1867, 1893-94, 1928

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

n/a

Cultural Affiliation

N/a

Architect/Builder

H. Neill Wilson and Charles Rathbun; Harding & Seaver; John H. Root

Primary location of additional data:

- ☐ State Historic Preservation Office
- ☐ Other State agency
- ☐ Federal agency
- ☒ Local government
- ☐ University
- ☐ Other

Name of repository:

Great Barrington Historical Commission

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SIGNIFICANCE:

The Housatonic Congregational Church meets Criteria A and C of the National Register of Historic Places on a local level. Under Criterion A, it is eligible for its role in the religious growth of the village of Housatonic and closely associated with local men who developed the local water power and furthered the fortunes of the Housatonic Manufacturing Co., later the Monument Mills, 1850-1956. The church meets Criterion C as a wonderful and rare example of the Queen Anne style of church architecture with Colonial Revival overtones in Berkshire County. It was designed by Pittsfield architect H. Neil Wilson in 1893-94, with builder Charles T. Rathbun, and includes an attached 1867 hall, which in 1928 was sympathetically redesigned and expanded in the Colonial Revival style by the firm of Harding & Seaver, Pittsfield architects. As a religious property, the church meets Criteria Consideration A.

Housatonic history:

Two sets of citizens were responsible for the founding and subsequent building of the Housatonic Congregational Church. Their efforts are inextricably bound to both the church and the history and development of the village of Housatonic. Great Barrington was established as a town in 1761, but the lands on both sides of the Housatonic River at the village of Housatonic were part of the "Equalizing" land, which the proprietors of 1749 decreed should be laid out in a manner to equalize the home lots of the original settlers. These lands were not subdivided until 1770. The Village of Housatonic, now within the incorporated boundaries of Great Barrington, was not settled until 1809. It was situated five miles north of the settlement of Great Barrington at a place where the Housatonic River furnished abundant water power with a drop of 76 feet in the three miles upstream of the village. In its early history the settlement of Housatonic lay entirely on the west side of the river. Industrial development occurred in 1809 on the upper water privilege with the damming of the river. By 1818, the small settlement was known as "Babylon" and Eber Stone had established a mill to manufacture spinning wheels. In 1825, Ransom Whitmore of East Haddam, CT, began operating his own cotton mill on the site of Stone's spinning wheel operation by taking over the mill site and associated riparian rights. In 1827 "Babylon" became "Deansville" after Sprowell Dean, a manufacturer from Springfield, together with Perley D. Whitmore, purchased the mill. In 1835 Whitmore's mill became the Housatonic Manufacturing Co., when Wells Laflin purchased the primary ownership. The name of the village was once again changed, this time permanently, to "Housatonic." Failing in 1848, the company was then incorporated in 1850 as Monument Mills. Subsequently, this upper privilege

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became the location of Monument Mills No. 1. A financial failure in 1848 and a mill fire in 1850 brought an end to the manufacture of cotton twine at this location. Both Perley D. Whitmore and H. Laflin, Jr. were among those who organized the Housatonic Congregational Church parish in December, 1841.

At the lower water privilege, construction of a shop manufacturing chairs, followed by a mill to manufacture shoe lasts, was begun in 1837 under the name Wawbeek Mills, which continued until 1856. The Wawbeek Mill building (1866) is today part of what became Monument Mills No. 2 at the lower privilege. An economic slump was responsible for the failure in 1848 of the Housatonic Manufacturing Co., as well as a local cotton twine mill. The village of Housatonic was boosted by the arrival in January, 1850, of the Housatonic Railroad which opened a line from Van Deusenville through Lee to Pittsfield, going through Housatonic village. Housatonic village, which began because of its water power, was made doubly-attractive with the addition of available and efficient rail transportation. In May, 1850, Monument Mills was incorporated by John C. and Asa C. Russell and John H. Coffing, beginning a long period of successful cotton manufacturing. First under the direction of John M. Seeley, and after 1865 under the control of Theodore G. Ramsdell, Monument Mills became the largest manufacturer of jacquard woven cotton bedspreads. In 1865 Ramsdell became, Superintendent, Agent, and General Manager, serving until his death in 1904. He was succeeded by his sons, T. Ellis Ramsdell and Thomas S. Ramsdell, all members of the Housatonic Congregational Church. John M. Seeley's generosity enabled the church to acquire the first parsonage, an existing house to the east, in 1876. By 1885, Child's Berkshire County history notes that Monument Mills had 68 jacquard looms, 1,800 spindles, and employed 350 hands who turned out 330,000 quilts and 2.7 million pounds of plain, fancy, double and twist cotton warps per year. It became the largest manufacturer of jacquard woven cotton bedspreads at the end of the 19th century. The Monument Mills company operated continuously until it closed in Housatonic in 1956.

Church History:

According to an 1894 address on the dedication of the new church, it was a powerful revival in 1841 which prompted the formation of the Housatonic Congregational Church that year. Great Barrington had a Congregational church which had been established around 1760, but the latter settlement lay five miles south of the village of Housatonic. Church formation in Housatonic also may have been related to the growing village, or to the arrival of a new preacher, or to the departure of the minister in Great Barrington. The historical record does not elaborate. It is known that Rev. Sturgis Gilbert took

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charge of the Great Barrington church from 1828 until his departure for western New York in the spring of 1839.

The Housatonic Congregational Church history actually began in the spring and summer of 1840 when a Charles Boynton of West Stockbridge began to gather the nucleus of a congregation at Housatonic village. Although he had studied law, he had a greater interest in the gospel and had recently been licensed to preach. The first meetings of his church society began in a "new schoolhouse," located on part of the lot where the current school which replaced it stands in town. During the winter of 1841, the new church congregation increased to about 18 members, who voted to form a Congregational Church Society on June 18, 1841. By the following Sabbath, June 20th, the number had grown to 45. Of the original 18 members, six came from Curtisville, five from Great Barrington, one from Lee, one from West Stockbridge, one from Stockport, and one from Hillsdale, NY. The parish was organized December 7, 1841.

The history of the church since its founding is one of continual growth. While none of the ministers are notable for their non-religious contributions to life in Housatonic village, several stand out as having presided over improvements to the church property. The first Greek Revival-style church building was completed in October, 1842. Rev. Charles B. Boynton was installed as pastor, serving from 1841 until 1845. Members raised over \$3,000 to build this first church building and its membership grew to 104 under Rev. Boynton. The eighth minister, Rev. Amos E. Lawrence supervised the construction of the separate "Lecture Hall" behind the church in 1867 to hold his growing parish. It cost \$5,000. The hall was further improved in 1883 under the service of Rev. Charles W. Mallory, the eleventh minister. These improvements cost \$2,200, the nature of which is vague in church records, except to note that it was for "parlors." It appears from a historic photograph that the parlors may have been the connector which attached the hall to the original church. Through the generosity of John M. Seeley, the church purchased its first parsonage, a Greek Revival style house located next door to the east of the church, in 1876 for only \$1,700. An address by William Bartlett on the church's dedication in 1894 noted that, through Seeley, the Monument Mills Co. gave an additional \$500 as a contribution toward the purchase of the parsonage and that the church had benefited from the rent of the parsonage for several years, apparently as a company donation to the parish. Bartlett also praised Seeley for his financial support "so cheerfully accorded" and his help in the "service of son" during religious worship. The parsonage was replaced on the same site by a new one in 1902, during the term of Rev. R. DeWitt Mallory. Since 1979 when it was sold to

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a private party, the parsonage has sat on a separate parcel. Rev. A.J. Benedict was minister when the old church was torn down, and a new building replaced it in 1893-94, being dedicated in February of the latter year. The best-remembered minister of the mid-20th century was Rev. Watson Wadsworth, who accepted the church's calling in 1923, and remained until 1948. His term as pastor spanned the longest period in the church's history, running from the scare of scarlet fever and the Depression of the 1930s, through the end of World War II. Church meeting minute from 1948 noted that he would be greatly missed.

Construction of the 1894 building brought to the fore several civic and religious-minded local men whose connections encompassed both the church and the village. A new church building was needed because the old one was too small for the still-growing congregation. Rev. Benedict chose Deacon H.H.B. Turner as the treasurer of the building committee. Turner's family was one of the earlier settlers in the area, and Turner moved to the village of Housatonic in 1876, building a home to the west adjacent to the church. He is remembered as one whose influence benefited the village up to his death in 1907. The adjourned annual church meeting of April 1879 indicates that Turner gave money to erect a horse shed behind the parsonage which is still part of the church's property. This document, signed by Turner, notes, "I have built." This was apparently the second of two horse sheds which sat side-by-side behind the church and parsonage. Turner was an early prohibitionist, a librarian for twenty years, an assessor, and vice-president of the Great Barrington Savings Bank. Heading the church building committee in 1894, Turner was instrumental in raising almost \$15,000 for the new church building, personally loaning \$2,674.76 to the effort. Two other major contributors included Theodore G. Ramsdell and Nobel B. Turner.

In 1928 the church retained the services of Pittsfield architects Harding & Seaver to renovate the Social Hall, work that was dedicated in December. The dedication was to Deacon Nobel B. Turner, a wealthy farmer and lumber dealer, who had loaned \$300 in 1894 for the construction of the building. He was presented with a silver loving cup as a token of regard for his faithful service of 53 years as a Deacon. Turner also paid off the remaining bank note left from the Social Hall improvements of 1928 during the 1941 centennial anniversary. Writing in 1936 at the age of 86, Turner, who often preached, wrote of his wish for the continued role of the church as a beacon light and an influence for good in Housatonic. He died on January 6, 1943, at the age of 94.

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Theodore Ramsdell (1833-1903), so long associated with the church and Monument Mills beginning with his arrival in 1864, was mill superintendent for 22 years. He became manager and a large shareholder, and eventually vice-president of the company. His interest in the mill workers and the betterment of the village was well-known. He left a bequest of \$25,000 to erect and equip a public library, which was built on the lot adjacent to the Housatonic Congregational Church on the west. Completed in 1906, the Ramsdell Public Library became the property of the town in accordance with his wishes in 1908. He married Mary Spencer of West Stockbridge in 1873, and through her bequest to the church, one of their two sons, Thomas Ramsdell, gave \$2,500 for the electrification of the church building in 1920, as well as the Deacon Albert Whitmore memorial stained glass window in the sanctuary. Another son, T. Ellis Ramsdell, was one of seven officers in the Housatonic Congregational Society, a corporation filed with the Commonwealth of Massachusetts in 1906. The legal name was changed in 1934 to "Housatonic Congregational Church, Inc."

Most of the church records are missing for the decades between the mid-1940s to the 1980s. In terms of affiliation and church organization, the congregation voted to join the United Church of Christ in 1961. As a response to membership decline, in 1964 open membership enrollment was approved so that anyone could join the church. The decline also brought about the sale of the parsonage in 1979. Relations between the church and village of Housatonic have always been cordial. In the 1920s and 30s, the church hosted the Berkshire Youth Christian Endeavor and a bowling league held meetings in the hall. For a time, the church served as a convenient contingency location to evacuate students at the public school, two blocks away. During the late 1980s and early 1990s, the hall was used for a child-care center; and in 1998 the church property served as the town's voting place. In addition, when the community center underwent renovation, the church offered the use of the hall for physical education classes.

Criterion C:

The 1893-94 Housatonic Congregational Church building is associated with H. Neil Wilson (1854-1926), its architect, and Charles T. Rathbun (1842-1908), its builder, both from Berkshire County. The church records do not address how these men were chosen, nor do they shed light on how Harding & Seaver from Pittsfield were commissioned to do the 1928 alterations. A similar, larger, Queen Anne-style church building, but with Romanesque overtones in Berkshire County is located in Lee. Built in 1898, it was originally the First Methodist Church, and is now a private art gallery. Like the Housatonic Congregational Church it is asymmetrical in design with a three-story

(continued)

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Housatonic Congregational Church
Great Barrington (Berkshire), MA

Section number 8 Page 6

offset belfry tower and overhung gables over one massive round-arched window. It too is partially sheathed in wood shingle. The Lee church, however, was built five years after the Housatonic Church and was the work of New York City firm, George W. Cramer Co.

H. Neil Wilson designed the William Russell Allen House, the Berkshire County Home for the Aged, and Wallison Shipton Building in Pittsfield, and the David Bishop House and Red Lion Inn in Lenox and Stockbridge, respectively. Charles T. Rathbun was a carpenter and architects' apprentice in the New York office of John W. Priest. He designed and built the Thomas Allen residence, the First Methodist Church in Pittsfield, the Memorial Church in Lee, the Williamstown Congregational Church, and the former Central Block in Housatonic. None of Rathbun's other churches were Queen Anne style.

Successors to the H. Neil Wilson firm, and known in their own right as fine architects, Harding & Seaver of Pittsfield added to and improved Social Hall in 1928-29. This firm also designed a rear addition to the Ramsdell Library on the next door lot at the same time. The 1928 alterations included a rear addition of the stage and dressing rooms, kitchen, and the glass-enclosed porch on the east side of the Social Hall, together with new roof lines. An incomplete set of plans by Harding & Seaver are preserved in the Pittsfield offices of Bradley Architects.

The Johnson & Son organ:

The Johnson & Son pipe organ has a history as well. It is opus #805, manufactured by the Westfield, MA, Johnson company on February 20, 1892, and is a late example of the firm that built 860 organs between 1844 and 1898. The Housatonic organ was installed in the sanctuary in 1893 at a cost of \$1,800, raised by the Ladies Benevolence Society, and the trade-in of the old organ. Based on a list of Johnson & Son organs by John V.V. Ellsworth, the Organ Historical Society erroneously believed this organ to be one of thirty Johnson organs which were "completely original." However the organ in the Housatonic Congregational Church was completely overhauled in 1951 and electrified. According to William Baker, a Hatfield, MA, expert who has repaired organs for some 50 years, the electrification of this organ and the "releathering" of its bellows in 1988 renders it of no historical value. The church is not clear on what the releathering entailed, and Mr. Baker has stated that it could mean anything, including total replacement of the bellows.

(continued)

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Housatonic Congregational Church
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Johnson & Son was founded by William Allen Johnson (1816-1901), the son of a contractor who came to Westfield to work on the Northampton Canal. At age 18 he apprenticed to a mason and four years later began to work independently at that trade. In 1884 he assisted in the installation of an organ in the Westfield Methodist Church, and during the winter of the same year, built a small chamber organ, his first. He continued to build small organs in subsequent winters during idle months, finally giving up the mason's trade in 1851. By 1885 the firm employed 17-20 men. In 1871 he was joined by his son William H. Johnson (1840-1921), and in 1875 the name of the firm was changed to Johnson & Son. By 1890, Johnson the elder's health began to fail and his son became the head of the firm. It went out of business in 1898, six years after the organ in the Housatonic Congregational Church was built.

Until the middle of the 19th century, Boston was the "undisputed capital of organ building in New England." [Owen, p. 272] Johnson's commissions in western Massachusetts were the exception to the difficulty other manufacturers outside Boston and New York were facing in finding markets for their work. After the Civil War Johnson's production went increasingly to the Midwest, where new settlements were rapidly springing up. The Great Chicago Fire of 1871 consumed seven Johnsons, and within a year three replacement organs had been installed. Johnson's own Westfield factory burned the same year, but was quickly rebuilt. By 1873, his son William A. Johnson, began to assume a more prominent role in company matters.

None of Johnson's earliest chamber organs have been found or identified. His earliest church organs were patterned after contemporary Boston work. The firm built nine organs for Westfield clients between 1848-1899, but not one remained in original condition in 1979 when Barbara Owen wrote *The Organ in New England*. Johnson was not an innovator. Some of his best work is said to have been done during the 1860s and these were "characterized by solid construction and the use of good materials." [ibid, p. 281]

The Housatonic Congregational Church organ is one of Johnson & Son's pipe organs in the Berkshires, four of which may still be unaltered, according to Owen. However, Mr. Baker believes that the only completely unaltered Johnson organ in western Massachusetts is located at the church in Heath.

Archaeological Significance

(continued)

United States Department of the Interior
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Continuation Sheet**

Housatonic Congregational Church
Great Barrington (Berkshire), MA

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Since patterns of ancient Native American settlement in Great Barrington are poorly understood, any surviving sites could be significant. Ancient sites on the church property may contribute information for a greater understanding of Native American settlement and subsistence patterns in the uplands of western Massachusetts. Ancient sites in this area can improve our knowledge of Native people along the Housatonic River drainage and their relationships with other Native socio/political groups to the south in the Connecticut area, to the west towards the Hudson River drainage in New York or eastward to the Connecticut River locale. Ancient sites in this area may also be important in the study of Native American exchange systems and the role they played in the spread of technologies, ideas and material goods between the areas noted above and eastern and southern coastal regions. Documented Native resources in the vicinity of the church have demonstrated the potential for ancient resources to survive in areas with similar locational characteristics as the church and in the overall general area.

Historic archaeological resources described above have the potential to provide detailed information on the social, cultural and economic characteristics that typified a segment of a South Berkshire religious community that evolved from a rural agricultural settlement to a center for manufacturing and commerce in the 19th century. Artifacts and structural evidence associated with the original 1842 church and later building may contribute architectural details related to the original construction and later additions to each religious structure. Structural characteristics associated with each church and detailed analysis of occupational related features may also contribute important social, cultural and economic information related to church congregations and the town. Separate features and potentially stratified deposits associated with different congregations and time periods may also contribute information indicating changes in the church population throughout the town's 19th century period of growth.

(end)

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National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Housatonic Congregational Church
Great Barrington (Berkshire), MA

Section number 9 Page 1

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(continued)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Housatonic Congregational Church
Great Barrington (Berkshire), MA

Section number 9 Page 2

Unpublished Sources:

"Architects," local history vertical file, Berkshire Athenaeum, Pittsfield, MA

Bartlett, William J. "Address Delivered by William J. Bartlett Upon the Occasion of the Dedication of the New Congregational Church, Housatonic, Mass., Wednesday February 4, 1894." Great Barrington: Press of the Berkshire Courier, 1894.

"Churches," local history vertical file, Berkshire Athenaeum, Pittsfield, MA

Files of the Harding & Seaver architectural firm. On file: Bradley Architects, 8 Bank Row, Pittsfield, MA. Five sheets of plans, as follows: "Alterations to the Housatonic Congregational Church, Housatonic, Mass., Sheets 1-4" and "Alterations to the Kitchen of the Housatonic Congregational Church, Housatonic, Mass."

"Housatonic Congregational Church, Program in Celebration of the 100th Anniversary, June 15-22, 1941." Pittsfield, MA: Eagle Photo Engraving, 1941.

Housatonic Congregational Church Reports, Church Records, and Parish Records. On file at the church.

Macintosh, Robert. "Methodist Episcopal Church Inventory Form," Lee, MA., Sept. 23, 1982. On file at the Massachusetts Historical Commission.

"Methodism for Two Centuries – Proclaiming Grace and freedom," ca. 1984. In "Churches" file, Berkshire Athenaeum, Pittsfield, MA

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(continued)

United States Department of the Interior
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**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Housatonic Congregational Church
Great Barrington (Berkshire), MA

Section number 9 Page 3

Parrish, James. Monument Mills National Register of Historic Places nomination, 1983.

E-mail with S. Pinel, Archivist, Organ Historical Society, April, 2001

Personal Communications:

William H. Baker, owner of William H. Baker & Co., Hatfield, MA, September, 2001

Peter Dumont, former Housatonic Congregation Church historian, January and March 2001

Barbara Krueger, Stained Glass Association of America, April 2001

James Parrish, Great Barrington Historical Commission, January-March 2001

James Stark, Housatonic Congregational Church historian, March-April 2001

Maps:

1854 Richard Clark, *Map of Great Barrington*. Philadelphia.

1858 Henry Walling, *Map of the County of Berkshire, Massachusetts*. New York: Smith, Gallup & Co.

1876 F.W. Beers. *County Atlas of Berkshire, Massachusetts*. New York: R.T. White & Co.

1904 Barnes & Farnum, Civil Engineers, compilers. *Atlas of Berkshire County, Massachusetts*. Pittsfield.

(end)

Housatonic Congregational Church

Name of Property

Berkshire, MA

County, State

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of Property less than one acre

UTM References See continuation sheet.

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1. 18 634810 4679500
Zone Easting Northing

2.
Zone Easting Northing

3.
Zone Easting Northing

4.
Zone Easting Northing

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Norene Roberts, consultant, with Betsy Friedberg, NR Director, MHC

organization Massachusetts Historical Commission date January 2002

street & number 220 Morrissey Boulevard telephone 671-727-8470

city or town Boston state MA zip code 02125

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A **sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

Additional items (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name Housatonic Congregation Church, Inc.

street & number P.O. Box 571 telephone 413-274-6343

city or town Housatonic state MA zip code 01236

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including the time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Housatonic Congregational Church
Great Barrington (Berkshire), MA

Section number 10 Page 1

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The parcel shown outlined in pencil on the accompanying plat map, Lot 4, shown on the current tax map of Great Barrington, Sheet 2.

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

The legal parcel mentioned above consists of the west portion of the lot on which the church building has historically been located. The east portion of the original church lot was broke off as a separate legal parcel in 1979 when the church parsonage to the east was sold to a private party.

(end)

PHOTOGRAPHS

1. View facing northwest from Main Street (Norene Roberts, February 2001)
2. View facing northeast from Main Street (NR)
3. View north-northwest of foundation wall of church horse stables (James Parrish, May 1998)
4. Interior view south of sanctuary and south wall (JP)
5. Detail of carvings on curved pews (JP)
6. View southwest of west wall of sanctuary, showing pulpit and organ (JP)
7. Interior view southeast from pulpit showing tower entry (JP)
8. View south-southwest of elevation of church and parish hall (JP)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION

PROPERTY Housatonic Congregational Church
NAME:

MULTIPLE
NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: MASSACHUSETTS, Berkshire

DATE RECEIVED: 3/07/02 DATE OF PENDING LIST: 4/01/02
DATE OF 16TH DAY: 4/17/02 DATE OF 45TH DAY: 4/21/02
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 02000377

REASONS FOR REVIEW:

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

COMMENT WAIVER: N

☒ ACCEPT ☐ RETURN ☐ REJECT 4.18.02 DATE

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

RECOM./CRITERIA _____

REVIEWER _____ DISCIPLINE _____

TELEPHONE _____ DATE _____

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



Housatonic Congregational Church

1089 Main St. Village of Housatonic
Berkshire County, Great Barrington MA.

Photographer: Norene Roberts

February, 2001

Negative: Great Barrington Historical Commission

View facing northwest from Main St.

PHOTO #1



Housatonic Congregational Church
1089 Main St. Village of Housatonic
Berkshire County, Great Barrington MA.

Photographer: Norene Roberts

February, 2001

Negative: Great Barrington Historical Commission

View facing northeast from Main St.

PHOTO # 2



Housatonic Congregational Church
1089 Main Street, Berkshire County, MA.

Housatonic, MA. 01236

James N. Parrish, May. 1998

Roll 2/34 . 33 of 35 .

View NNW. of foundation wall of Church Horse Sheds at the rear of the present
Buildings, Now used as a car park. Iron horse tie up rings along the wall.

Negative: Great Barrington Historical Commission

Photo # 3



Housatonic Congregational Church
1089 Main Street.

Housatonic, MA, 01236

James N. Parris, May 1998

Roll 1/17, 19 of 35.

View South of Sanctuary and South Wall

Showing Arched Stained glass windows and small Rosette windows.

photo #4



Con Housatonic Congregational Church.

1089 Main Street

Housatonic, MA 01236

James N. Parrish, May. 1998

Roll 1/25 26 of 35.

Detail of Carving on curved pews.

Note the Cast Iron and Wood Hymnal Rack.

photo #5



Housatonic Congregational Church
1089 Main Street.

Housatonic, Ma. 01236

James N. Parish, May 1998

Roll 1/23, 17 of 35

View SW. of West Wall of Sanctuary showing Pulpit and
Johnson + Sons Pipe Organ, Opus. 805.

photo #6



Housatonic Congregational Church.
1089 Main Street

Housatonic, MA. 01236

James N. Parrish. May. 1998.

Roll 1/20, 21 of 35.

View. SE. from pulpit of Sanctuary showing Aisles + Tower entry.
Note cast iron Support Columns.

photo #7



Housatonic Congregational Church

1089 Main Street

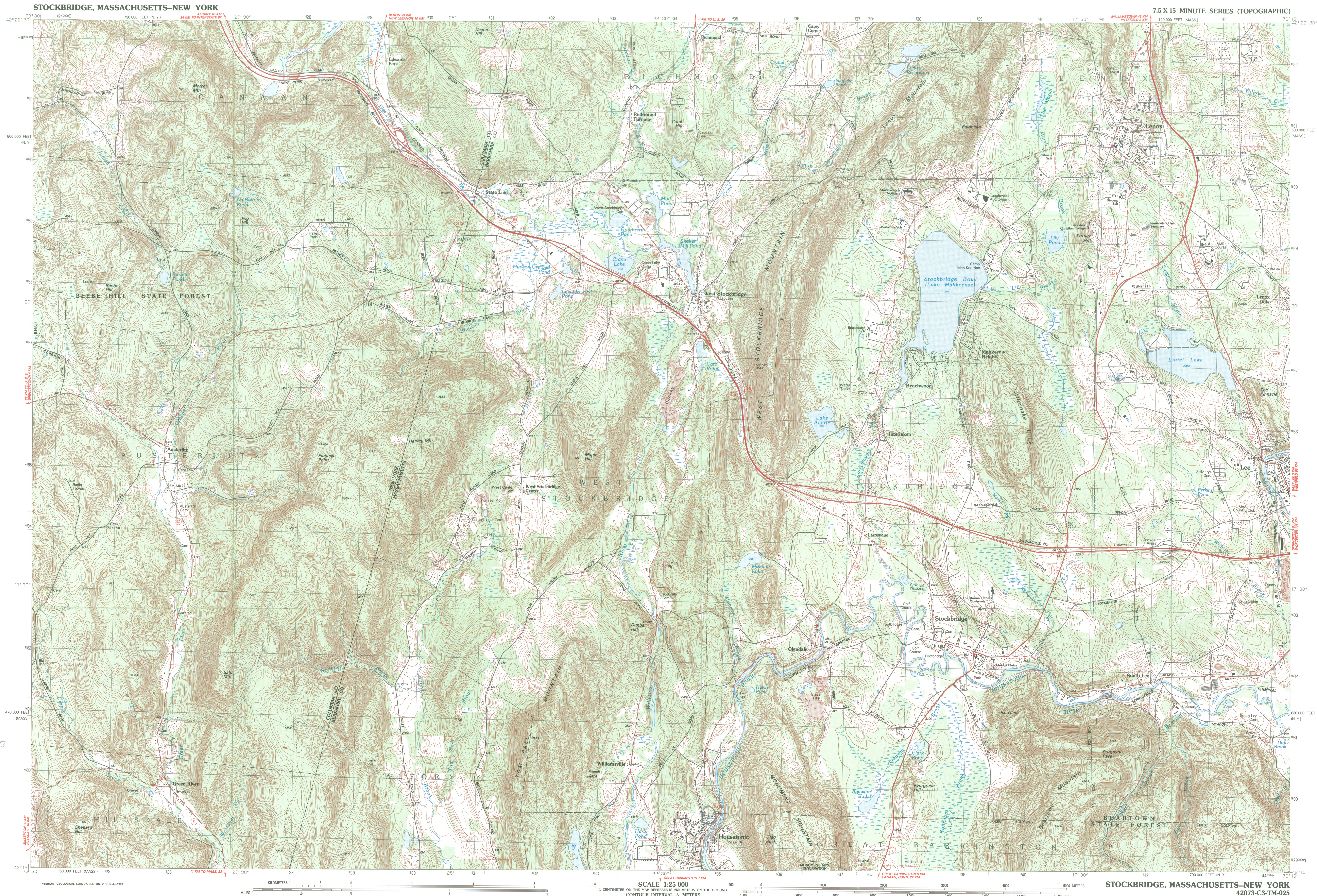
Housatonic Ma. 01206

James N. Parrish, May 1998.

Roll 11, 7 of 35

View SSW. of East Elevation of Church and Parish Hall
Showing gables.

Photo #8

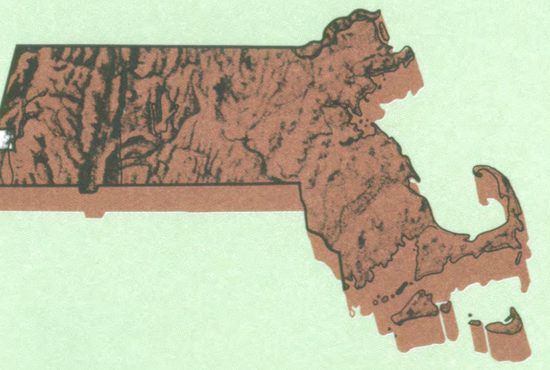


Housatonic Congregational Church
1089 Main St.
Housatonic, Berkshire Co, Massachusetts
Stockbridge, Massachusetts - New York
Scale: 1:25,000
UTM: 18 634810 4679500

Stockbridge

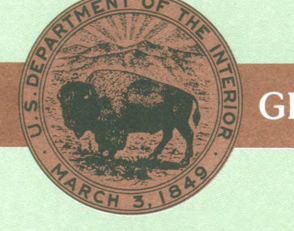
MASSACHUSETTS-NEW YORK

1:25 000-scale metric topographic map



7.5 X 15 MINUTE QUADRANGLE SHOWING

- Contours and elevations in meters
- Highways, roads and other manmade structures
- Water features
- Woodland areas
- Geographic names



GEOLOGICAL SURVEY

1987

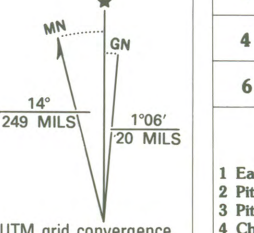
42073-C3-TM-025

Produced by the United States Geological Survey in cooperation with Massachusetts Department of Public Works
Control by USGS, NOS/NOAA, and Commonwealth of Massachusetts agencies
Compiled by photogrammetric methods from aerial photographs taken 1980. Field checked 1981. Map edited 1987
The west half of this area also covered by 7.5-minute 1:25,000-scale map: State Line dated 1973
The east half of this area supercedes Stockbridge 1:25,000-scale map dated 1973
Projection and 1000-meter grid, zone 18
Universal Transverse Mercator
10,000-foot grid ticks based on Massachusetts coordinate system, mainland zone and New York coordinate system, east zone
1927 North American Datum
To place on the predicted North American Datum 1983, move the projection lines 5 meters south and 36 meters west as shown by dashed corner ticks
There may be private inholdings within the boundaries of the National or State reservations shown on this map

CONTOUR INTERVAL 3 METERS
NATIONAL GEODETIC VERTICAL DATUM OF 1929

CONTROL ELEVATIONS SHOWN TO THE NEAREST 0.1 METER
OTHER ELEVATIONS SHOWN TO THE NEAREST 0.5 METER

THIS MAP COMPLIES WITH NATIONAL MAP ACCURACY STANDARDS

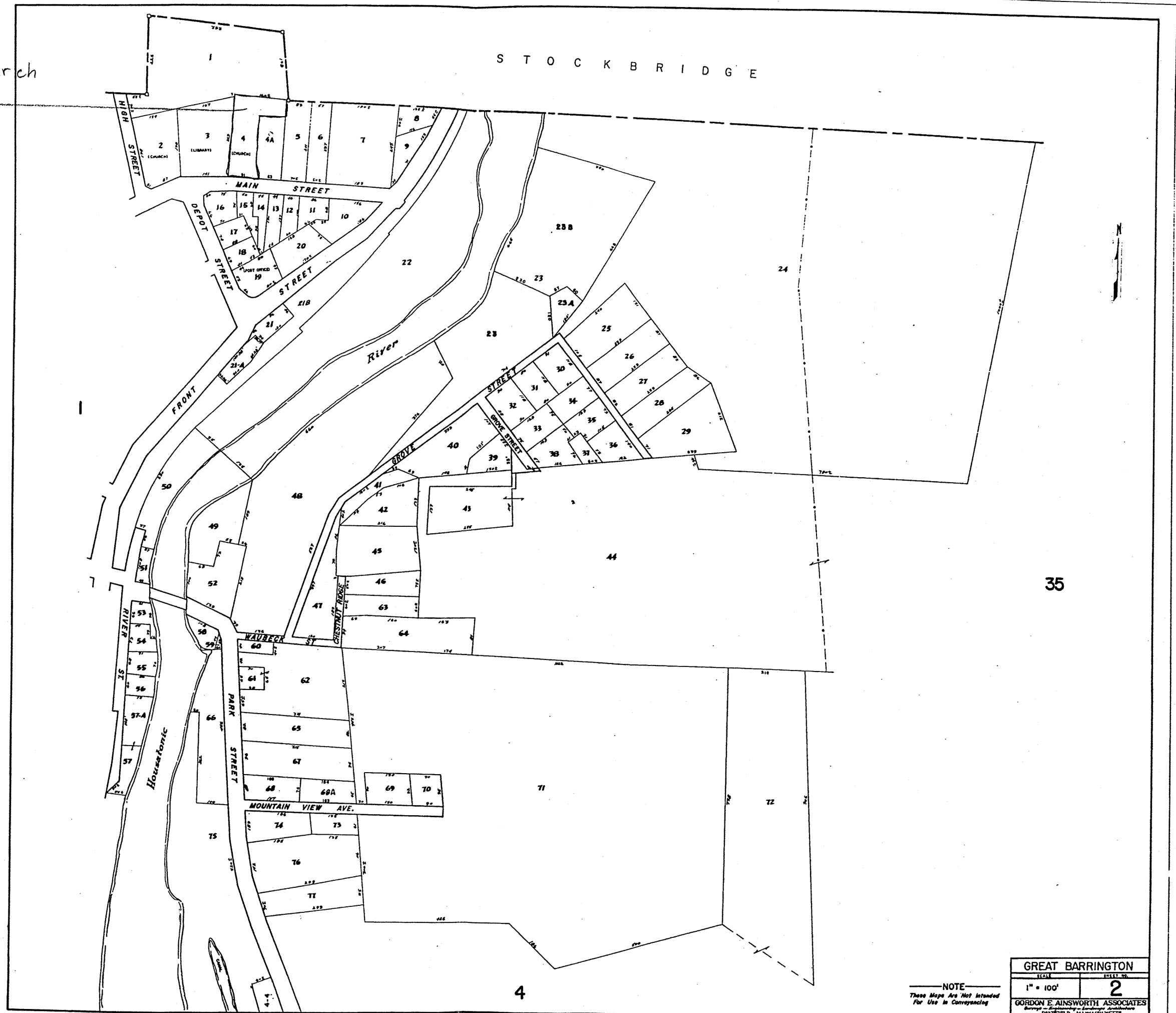
CONVERSION TABLE		DECLINATION DIAGRAM		ADJOINING MAPS			
Meters	Feet			1	2	3	
2	6.5617			4	5		
4	13.1234			6	7	8	
6	19.6852						
8	26.2469						
10	32.8086						
To convert meters to feet multiply by 3.2808		UTM grid convergence (GN) and 1983 magnetic declination (MD) at center of map		1 East Chatham 1:24 000 2 Pittsfield East 3 Pittsfield West 4 East Lee 5 West Lee 6 Great Barrington 7 One			
To convert feet to meters multiply by 0.3048		Diagram is approximate					



Topographic Map Symbols	
Primary highway, hard surface	
Secondary highway, hard surface	
Light-duty road, hard or improved surface	
Unimproved road; trail	
Route marker: Interstate, U. S.; State	
Railroad: standard gauge; narrow gauge	
Bridge: drawbridge	
Footbridge; overpass; underpass	
Built-up area: only selected landmark buildings shown	
House; barn; church; school; large structure	
Boundary	
National, with monument	
State	
County, parish	
Civil township, precinct, district	
Incorporated city, village, town	
National or State reservation; small park	
Land grant with monument; land section corner	
U. S. public lands survey; range, township, section	
Range, township, section line: location approximate	
Fence or field line	
Power transmission line, isolated tower	
Dam; dam with lock	
Cemetery; grave	
Campground; picnic area; U. S. location monument	
Well; water well; spring	
Mine shaft; prospect; adit or cave	
Control: horizontal station; vertical station; spot elevation	
Contour: index; intermediate; supplementary; depression	
Disturbed surface: strip mine, lava, sand	
Bathymetric contours: index; intermediate	
Perennial lake and stream; intermittent lake and stream	
Reefs; large and small; lido, large and small	
Swamp; marsh	
Submerged marsh; land subject to controlled inundation	
Woodland; scattered trees	
Scrub; meadow	
Orchard; vineyard	

A pamphlet describing topographic maps is available on request
FOR SALE BY U.S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY
DENVER, COLORADO 80225, OR RESTON, VIRGINIA 22092

Housatonic Congregational Church
 1089 Main St.
 Village of Housatonic
 Berkshire County
 Great Barrington, MA.





The Commonwealth of Massachusetts
William Francis Galvin, Secretary of the Commonwealth
Massachusetts Historical Commission

January 29, 2002

Ms. Carol Shull
National Register of Historic Places
Department of the Interior
National Park Service
Mail Stop 2280, Suite 400
1849 C Street, NW
Washington, DC 20240

Dear Ms. Shull:

Enclosed please find the following nomination form:

Housatonic Congregational Church, Great Barrington (Berkshire), MA

The nomination has been voted eligible by the State Review Board and has been signed by the State Historic Preservation Officer. The owners of the property were notified of pending State Review Board consideration 30 to 45 days before the meeting and were afforded the opportunity to comment.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Betsy Friedberg".

Betsy Friedberg
National Register Director
Massachusetts Historical Commission

enclosure

cc: Norene Roberts, consultant
James Parrish, Great Barrington Historical Commission
Edward Morehouse, Board of Selectmen
Rev. Anne Alvord, Housatonic Congregational Church
Donald Goranson, Planning Board