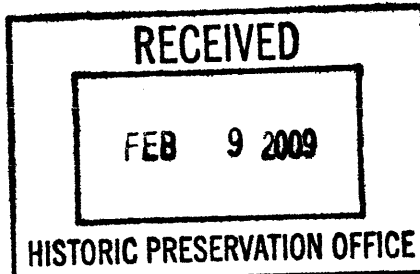


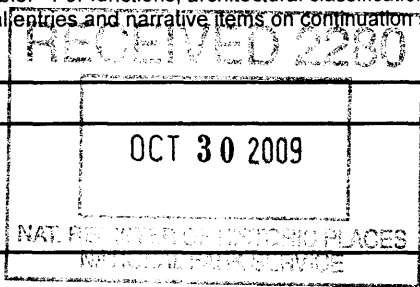
United States Department of the Interior
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NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
REGISTRATION FORM

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 All Souls Church

other names/site number First Unitarian Society of Plainfield

2. Location

street & number 724 Park Avenue

not for publication

city or town Plainfield City

vicinity

state New Jersey code NJ county Union code 039 zip code 07060

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.)

Signature of certifying official [Signature]

Date 9/29/09

Signature of 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 commenting or other official _____

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 Keeper [Signature]

Date of Action 12.11.09

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

Category of Property

(Check only one box)

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1		buildings
		sites
		structures
		objects
1		Total

Name of related multiple property listing

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

1 Van Wyck Brooks Historic District

6. Historic Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

Religion: religious facility

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

Religion: religious facility

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

Gothic: Second Gothic Revival

Romanesque: Richardsonian Romanesque

Colonial Revival

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Stone: Sandstone; Brick

walls Stone: Sandstone; Wood: Shingle, Clapboard

roof Stone: Slate; Asphalt

other Metal: copper

Narrative Description

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

See Continuation Sheet.

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 a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B** removed from its original location.
- C** a birthplace or a 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

Bibliography See Continuation Sheet

(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

1892-1953

Significant Dates

1892

1925

1929

1947

1953

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Oscar Schutte Teale, architect

Josiah T. Tubby, architect

Harry Keith White, architect

Primary Location of Additional Data

State Historic Preservation Office

Other State agency

Federal agency

Local government

University

Other

Name of repository: Avery Library, Columbia University

*Contributing resource to Van Wyck Brooks Historic District.

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property .736 acre

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

	Zone	Easting	Northing	Zone	Easting	Northing
1	<u>18</u>	<u>549400</u>	<u>4495890</u>	3	_____	_____
2	_____	_____	_____	4	_____	_____

____ 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 Stacy E. Spies

organization Stacy E. Spies, Historic Preservation Consultant

date September 2008

street & number 4 Abbott Ave.

telephone (203) 244-5367

city or town Ridgefield

state Connecticut

zip code 06877

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 First Unitarian Society of Plainfield

street & number 724 Park Avenue

telephone (908) 756-0750

city or town Plainfield state NJ zip code 07060

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.

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All Souls Church (First Unitarian Society of Plainfield)
City of Plainfield, Union County, New Jersey

NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION

Located at the intersection of two major thoroughfares, Park Avenue and Seventh Street, All Souls Church, presently known as the First Unitarian Society of Plainfield, is located on a dividing line between the commercial and residential areas of the city. The church building, constructed by the First Unitarian Society of Plainfield in 1892, is a stone, neo-medieval style church designed by Oscar Schutte Teale, a local New Jersey architect known for his prolific ecclesiastical designs in the Plainfield area. Harry Keith White dramatically redesigned the interior of the church in 1929 to reflect new 20th-century interpretations of the medieval form. A frame Parish House constructed in 1925, presently called the Parish Hall, is attached to the west end of the stone church and the frame Stevens Wing, constructed in 1958 to house Sunday school classrooms, is attached to the north elevation of the Parish Hall. There have been other minor modern alterations, none of which impact the church's ability to reflect its 1892-1953 period of significance. The church retains much original fabric and retains its integrity of location, setting, design, materials, workmanship, feeling and association.

Setting

The First Unitarian Society of Plainfield is located in the center of downtown Plainfield on the west side of Park Avenue near the intersection with East and West Seventh Streets. Park Avenue and Seventh Street are major, signalized arteries within Union County and the city of Plainfield. Located amid apartment buildings, single-family houses converted to commercial use, a parking lot, and commercial buildings, the First Unitarian Society of Plainfield faces east toward Park Avenue. Set on an L-shaped parcel of land with a 75-foot frontage on Park Avenue, the church building is located at the short end of the L with a 20-foot setback (Photograph 1). An asphalt-paved driveway and a small parking area are located along the northeast elevations of the building. A memorial garden, constructed in 1984, is located adjacent to the north elevation of the building. Beyond the garden, the yard extends north to West Seventh Street.

Exterior -- Church

The church complex is composed of three parts that form an L plan: the original 1892 stone church facing Park Avenue; the wood-frame 1925 Parish Hall attached to the west (rear) elevation of the church; and the wood-frame 1958 Stevens Wing attached to the north elevation of the Parish Hall (Photograph 2). The asymmetrically-massed church consists of a rectangular-plan body 4 bays in length, with gable ends facing east and west. A one-story octagonal projection with an octagonal hipped roof is attached to the building's northeast corner. A masonry porch with a false gable front is located at the building's east elevation facing Park Avenue. A hipped-roof porch entrance is located on the north elevation (Photograph 3). The church building rests on a rubble stone and brick foundation. Large round wood columns atop brick piers support the roof.

The north, east (main), and south elevations of the church are constructed of random-laid, rusticated buff-

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colored brownstone ashlar that ranges in size from 3.5"x13" to 12"x34." A projecting row of 8" tall stones are located 28" above grade to form a water table around the building (Photograph 4). Window sills are constructed of smoothly dressed brownstone with angled sills. The stone was repointed in 1963 with cementitious mortar. The west (rear) wall is of frame construction covered with painted wood shingles. There are no window openings on the west elevation.

The church façade is dominated by a full height, pointed arch, stained-glass window that fills the east elevation. Narrow, paired octagonal stone towers resting on stop-chamfered bases flank this large window. The towers are topped with flared octagonal roofs. The interior, truncated towers do not have roofs and are the vestigial remains of an earlier flying buttress design for the church. Triple lancet-arch stained glass windows set into rectangular wood-framed openings are located along the north and south elevations. The octagonal projection, originally used as the Ladies' Parlor and presently used as the minister's office, contains triple clear, rolled glass, lancet-arch windows set into rectangular wood frames. The east porch, originally the main entrance and presently unused, has a stone gable front pierced by a round-arch opening (Photograph 5). Stone coping and a stone finial cap the gable front. A single, squat Doric column of tooled brownstone is located on the open south elevation of the porch (Photograph 6). The north porch, presently used as the primary entrance, is supported by square-section wood piers that replaced original round columns. The porches have stone steps with wrought iron railings. The double doors are dark-stained oak with inset miter-cut tongue and groove boards and chamfered rails (Photograph 7). The porch ceilings are also constructed of tongue and groove boards.

The gable roof is punctuated by three hip dormers containing tracery windows on the north and south elevations. The hipped roofs are capped by conical metal finials. Lobed metal finials remain on two north-facing dormers and on the north porch; all of the dormers originally had finials. The east elevation has a molded wood dentil cornice. The octagonal projection has a wood box cornice. The remainder of the building has molded wood cornices. The slate roof was replaced with composition shingles in 1981, although the original gray slate remains on the dormer cheek walls.

Interior – Church

The east porch at Park Avenue leads into a small, wood-floored vestibule with a set of lancet-arch paneled wood double doors on the west wall that lead to the sanctuary. The north porch presently serves as the main entrance and leads to a wood-floored vestibule with four openings: a door leading to the minister's office; a closet; a door to the basement; and a lancet-arch double door leading to the sanctuary (Photograph 8). All of the paneled wood doors appear to be original. Exterior doorknobs are brass. Interior doorknobs throughout the church are wood with an incised detail around the circumference.

The sanctuary fills the major space of the building's interior. Rectangular in plan, the nave contains two sections of pew seating arranged along a center aisle running east and west (Photograph 9). Galleries with pointed-arch ceilings lead from the vestibules along the north and south elevations and are separated from the

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nave by pointed arch openings. The chancel is a rectangular wood platform accessed by three low steps and centered on the west wall. A carved wood pulpit is located at the southeast corner of the platform. A lancet-arch recessed bay centered behind the platform contains a painted mural of a landscape (Photograph 10). The choir is located adjacent to the north side of the platform and is separated from the congregation and the pulpit by a low, wainscoted screen with lancet arch panels. A trefoil-patterned chamfered post caps the north end of the screen. Behind the choir seating is the organ chamber that houses an organ set into a ca. 1971 blond wood frame. A doorway leading to the Parish Hall is located at the north end of the west elevation.

Paneled wainscoting is located on the west wall behind the pulpit and choir. In the recessed bay behind the chancel, the wainscoting has a three-lobed gothic design. North and south of the pulpit, the wainscoting has a lancet-arch design. Heavy molded surrounds typical of domestic Gothic Revival architecture are located at all door openings. The angled wood window sills are 12" deep. All of the woodwork is dark stained. The rough-plastered walls are painted off-white, providing contrast to the dark trim and furnishings. The vaulted modified hammerbeam ceiling, covered with false ribs, rises from curved chamfered braces and brackets with cut-out trefoils (Photograph 11). A simple flush-board cornice encircles the room. Two large electric pendant fixtures with exposed bulbs were likely added when the building was electrified; the church was originally lit with gas (Photograph 12). The fixtures pre-date the 1929 remodeling. Black cast metal sconces with serpent and rope details located in the galleries were added in 1929. A trefoil-patterned black metal light fixture is located on the ceiling of the north vestibule.

The rectangular window openings located throughout the space contain leaded glass windows arranged in clusters of one, two or three lancet windows set into a wood surround. The lancets are constructed of small squares of rolled and textured translucent glass set in lead comes. Several of the windows have pivot ventilators. Narrow bands of amber glass border the clear windows (Photograph 13).

A large stained glass window, known as the Robinson Window, dominates the eastern end of the sanctuary (Photograph 14). The window was created by Oliver Smith of Bryn Athyn, Pennsylvania and installed in 1947 as a tribute to minister Alson Robinson (minister 1919-1944). The window, 18.5' high and 14.6' wide, consists of six lancets below fourteen pieces of tracery set into a wood surround. Each lancet measures 24" wide and approximately 10' high. An inscription is incorporated into the base of the window, "Glory to God in the Highest, Peace on Earth, Goodwill toward Men." The window contains eight medallions distributed through the six lancets in a somewhat pyramidal form. At the base of the window are located medallions depicting Agriculture, Industry, Commerce and Science. At the next level are located Religion and Music and at the third level are depicted Education and Family. At the tip of the lancets are represented six major religions, from north to south: the lotus flower representing Buddhism; the star and crescent representing Islam; the six-pointed star of David representing Judaism; the cross representing Christianity; the interwoven Yang and Yin representing Chinese philosophy; and the five-faced Shiva representing Hinduism. "The window is fabricated from a rich and varied palette of full antique glass. Much of this palette may have been made at the glass works

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... at Bryn Athyn Cathedral. The glass is skillfully painted with vitreous trace and matte paint. The overall design scheme is an interesting interpretation of medieval medallion style windows.”¹

Oliver Smith also constructed the Horace N. Stevens Window installed in 1953 on the north side of the sanctuary (Photograph 15). Designed by member and artist Riva Helfond Barrett, the window is primarily red in color and consists of three lancets, each measuring 15” wide and 48” high, set into a wood surround. The design, which continues across all three panels, incorporates clasped hands, the Unitarian Universalist chalice, doves, planets and stars. The window is fabricated from a palette of full antique, rolled, and opalescent glass.

The extant carved oak pulpit replaced the original “little yellow rococo” pulpit² that was likely original to the space. The oak pulpit appears to have begun its life as a baptismal font at the First Unitarian Society in Newton in West Newton, Massachusetts.³ Since its arrival in 1927, the pulpit has been altered twice. Originally, the pulpit featured a lower level of recessed panels with an open screen above. The screen was enclosed ca. 1929 with the addition of oak panels. An oak screen, reportedly to keep the pulpit lamp from shining in congregants' eyes, was added to the top in the 1940s (Photograph 16).

Two chancel chairs, which pre-date 1929 and may be original, are located in the recessed bay. A carved wood lectern featuring the likeness of William Ellery Channing, created ca. 1929, was once located on the chancel. The lectern now holds the guest book at the north entrance. The pews retain their original maple end caps decorated with carved foliation (Photograph 17). The oak backs and seats replaced the curved sections in 1929.

The church has a wood floor covered with red carpeting. Decorative cast iron grilles set into the floor allow heat to rise into the space. The minister's study has a built-in wood window seat at the north elevation (Photograph 18). A brick fireplace, non-functioning, is located on the south wall of the study.

Exterior - Parish Hall

The Parish Hall adjoins the west (rear) church elevation. Rectangular in plan, with the gable ends facing east and west, the wood-shingled frame structure contains 6/6 wood sash windows and recent vinyl-clad metal windows (Photograph 19). Several of the plank shutters and metal shutter dogs remain. The building rests on a parged brick foundation. A single-story shed-roofed section housing the kitchen, original to the design of the Parish Hall, is located along the north elevation of the Parish Hall. A small, cross-gabled ell containing an office is located at the southwest corner of the Parish Hall (Photograph 20).

1 Arthur Femenella, “The First Unitarian Society of Plainfield; Plainfield, NJ – Window Survey,” report dated October 2007.

2 Alson Robinson, “Notes on the Semi-Centennial of the FUSP,” 1939:17.

3 Correspondence between Gayle Smalley, Archivist, First Unitarian Society in Newton, and Stacy Spies. December 2007-January 2008. A First Unitarian Society of Plainfield member who moved to West Newton, Massachusetts in 1924, facilitated the receipt of the font/pulpit in 1927. The chancel at the First Unitarian Society in Newton was altered in 1925 and a new pulpit installed. It is unclear whether the font was part of the 1905 Ralph Adams Cram design for the Newton church or whether it came from that congregation's earlier building.

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The entrance to the Parish Hall is accessed by the ca. 1977 Powell Terrace constructed of split-face concrete block and paved with slate. A wood ramp at the northeast corner of the Parish Hall provides handicap access to the terrace and entrance. The double, 12-light, wood-frame door, located on the east elevation, is sheltered by a flat-roof wood framed projection with a metal cornice supported by shallow corbels. The Parish Hall was expanded along the length of the south elevation one bay in 1948 to provide additional classroom space that is presently used as the church office (Photograph 21). Windows in the Parish Hall are 8/8 double-hung wood framed; three of these are recent replacements.

The gabled roof with flared eaves is covered with slate shingles and supported by heavy timber trusses. Three shed dormers with 4x4 casement wood windows are located on the south elevation. Wood casement windows are also located at the west elevation.

Interior – Parish Hall

A vestibule connects the church with the Parish Hall. Two doors on the south wall of the vestibule lead to the basement and to an open balcony on the second floor presently called the crow's nest, which is accessed by a winder stair. Stage lighting and the congregation's archives are housed in the crow's nest. A door on the north wall of the vestibule leads to the kitchen. A set of late-20th-century multi-light wood doors on the west wall of the vestibule leads to a large assembly hall. The dramatic cross-braced ceiling is covered with beaded tongue and groove boards and false ribs (Photograph 22). The cross-braced timber members are connected with bronze-colored metal plates and bolts (Photograph 23). The members are connected to the rafters with bolts (Photograph 24). False half-timbering is applied to the gable peaks. A flush-board cornice encircles the room. Multi-light, wood-framed folding windows are located at the crow's nest in the north corner of the room. A multi-light, wood-framed overhead pass-through window is located at the east end of the north wall to provide access to the kitchen (Photograph 25). Vertical tongue and groove boards capped by a chair rail comprise the wainscoting that encircles the room. The dark-stained woodwork contrasts with the white painted rough-plastered walls. Metal HVAC ductwork, unattractive but removable, was routed through the trusses in the early 2000s.

A stage with a plaster proscenium fills the west end of the room (Photograph 26). The stage was extended approximately 3 feet in the late 20th century, requiring the removal of a classroom door. Windows on the west wall (at the back of the stage) have been covered up. Small classrooms and the kitchen are located along the north elevation (Photograph 27). Three of the original dark-stained multi-light wood classroom doors remain (Photograph 28). Others have been replaced with recent pine doors. Two closets and small restrooms are located along a hall at the east corner of the Parish Hall. The bathroom layout was reconfigured and the fixtures were replaced in the 1990s. Narrow blond maple tongue and groove floors are located throughout the Parish Hall, with the exception of the bathrooms, which have ceramic tile.

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Exterior - Stevens Wing

The Stevens Wing is a single-story frame building constructed in 1958 (Photograph 29). The wing is covered with painted wood shingles and contains vinyl sash windows. The wing adjoins the west end of the north elevation of the Parish Hall. An interior doorway connects the two buildings. An exterior metal door is centered on the east elevation. Multiple-light wood doors on the north elevation open onto the raised slate terrace. Windows throughout the wing are vinyl-clad metal double-hung windows. At the basement level, 8/8 wood sash windows remain. The roof is covered with asphalt shingles. A brick and stone terrace and a concrete patio are located at the north end of the building. Decorative metal light fixtures remain on the north elevation at the terrace.

Interior - Stevens Wing

The wing is arranged along a center corridor that extends the length of the building (Photograph 30). Classrooms are accessed from the corridor, which terminates in a large parlor, redecorated in the early 2000s, at the north end of the building. Multi-light double doors on the north wall lead to the terrace. An exterior entrance on the east elevation is located at the corridor midpoint. Restrooms are located at the west side of the corridor midpoint. At this location, a stair hall leads to the basement classrooms.

The walls in the hall and classrooms are covered with painted sheetrock and the floors are covered with linoleum and vinyl tile (Photograph 31). The basement floors are constructed of poured concrete. Simple wood clamshell moldings and hollow core wood doors are located throughout the wing.

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Statement of Significance

Under Criterion A, All Souls Church was closely associated with the spread of Unitarianism to New Jersey in the late 19th century. It is also significant under Criterion C for ecclesiastical architecture for the period 1892-1953. The work of important and prolific New Jersey architects Oscar Schutte Teale (c.1847-c. 1930) and Harry Keith White (1877-1966), All Souls Church is a representative example of the dominant trend of neo-medieval religious architecture in the years surrounding the turn of the 20th century. In its construction, the building illustrates the major ecclesiastical trend at the end of the 19th century: an amphitheater plan within a neo-medieval Gothic Revival and Romanesque exterior. In its alteration a generation later, the building illustrates the reactive reinterpretation of neo-medieval forms that favored the rectilinear forms and smooth, two-dimensional surfaces of the Tudor Revival. The building retains a high level of architectural integrity. With the exception of the installation of the dominant Robinson Window in 1947, the building has survived with only minor alterations to its 1929 appearance. The building's period of significance begins with its construction date of 1892 and ends in 1953 with the installation of the neo-medieval Stevens window in the sanctuary.

City of Plainfield

The origins of European settlement began in Plainfield in the 1680s when Scots from Perth Amboy established plantations along Cedar Brook. Quakers settled in the area in the early 18th century and established a meeting by 1736. The Plainfield area supported a rural farming population through the 18th century. Between 1800 and 1835 population increased to 1,030. Hat and clothing manufacturing began locally and mill and shop trades grew, building lots were laid out, stage lines moved through the town, and the Elizabeth and Somerville Railroad arrived in 1837. Plainfield thus became a railroad town, and was incorporated as a city in 1869, shortly after the railroad completed a connection with New York City, and had a population of approximately 4,000. This rail connection, combined with rising post-Civil War incomes and the growth of an affluent upper middle class, transformed Plainfield from a rural village into a fashionable New York City commuter suburb of 17,500 before 1900. Land developers, Mayor Job Male among them, subdivided land and erected dwellings throughout the municipality. Plainfield also became a desirable summer retreat with facilities like the Netherwood Hotel providing lodging. Civic boosters of the late 19th century proclaimed Plainfield as a "City of Homes." It is into this rapidly-growing community that Henry B. Wells, raised as a Unitarian in New England, and Anna Pond, the two considered to have been the instrumental persons in the organization of the Society,⁴ worked to locate like-minded citizens interested in creating a Unitarian congregation.

History of Unitarianism

Unitarianism in the United States has its origins as a reaction against the Calvinism of the New England Puritans. In the mid-18th century a gradual change began among the clergy of Boston and eastern Massachusetts. "They began to emphasize God's benevolence, humankind's free will, and the dignity rather than the depravity

⁴ Alson Robinson, "Notes on the Semi-Centennial of the First Unitarian Society of Plainfield" (1939), 28.

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of human nature.” Accelerated by the evangelical upheavals of the Great Awakening of the 1740s, many Boston-area ministers made a “deeper commitment to liberal and rational theory” and by the 1810s, many of the Puritan Congregational churches began to call themselves Unitarian.⁵ By 1820 many of the established churches had agonizingly split into orthodox and liberal wings. Writing in 1902, Unitarian historian George Willis Cooke described the nature of the split. Early Unitarians “did not desire to form a new sect. They wished to remain Congregationalists, and to continue unbroken the fellowship that had existed from the beginning in New England. When they were compelled to separate from the older churches, they refrained from organizing a strictly defined religious body...The words “denomination” and “sect” [were] repellent to them...They [wished] to establish a broad, free fellowship, that would draw together all liberal thinkers and movements into one wide and inclusive religious body.”⁶ When the division was complete ca. 1840, approximately 125 Unitarian churches existed, 100 of which were located in Massachusetts, mostly within 25 miles of Boston. Approximately 20 churches were located in New England and 5 were located in New York and further south.⁷

By the end of the Civil War, Unitarians realized that they had, in fact, moved far enough away theologically from the Congregationalists to become a distinct denomination. The National Conference of Unitarian Churches was established in 1865 as a vehicle to help unite the existing Unitarian churches and to expand the movement nationwide. The post-Civil War period until 1880 has been called the “Denominational Awakening”⁸ of Unitarianism, during which time when the denomination began to coalesce and organize. This growing “denominational unity”⁹ provided Unitarians with sufficient funds and motivation to undertake large-scale missionary work for the first time.

Steps were taken at once to revive churches in the South that had been obliged to suspend during the war; and a missionary was sent to California, who planted several churches in growing towns.

In the territory of the Western Conference, the number of churches doubled within the year; in less than four years the total number of churches increased thirty per cent; and within a year and a half some forty ministers and churches had been added to the roll. The Association at once attacked its work with a self-confidence hitherto unknown.¹⁰

Among the first results of this enthusiasm was the expansion of Unitarianism beyond New England. “College Town Missions,” the policy of planting outposts at important university towns was adopted, beginning with the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor, which was chosen for its sizeable student population.¹¹ Additional outposts followed at the new Cornell University, the University of Wisconsin at Madison, and the University of

5 David Robinson, *The Unitarians and the Universalists* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1985), 3-4.

6 George W. Cooke, *Unitarianism in America*. (Boston: American Unitarian Association, 1902), 436.

7 Earl Morse Wilbur, *A History of Unitarianism In Transylvania, England and America*. (Boston: Beacon Press, 1945 (reprinted 1977)), 436.

8 Cooke, *Unitarianism*, 221.

9 Cooke, *Unitarianism*, 224.

10 Wilbur, *A History of Unitarianism*, 472.

11 Cooke, *Unitarianism*, 214 and Joseph Henry Allen, and Richard Eddy, *A History of the Unitarians and the Universalists in the United States* (New York: Christian Literature Company, 1894), 231.

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Iowa, Iowa City. By 1894, 12 outposts had been established, "making a most serviceable propaganda in a wide field of influence."¹²

At the time the First Unitarian Society of Plainfield was founded, Unitarians sought "to attempt the practice of a religion wholly free of ecclesiasticism or dogma; in equal alliance with every form of modern thought or learning; open to criticism or to instruction from every quarter; aiming, without prejudice of discipline or creed, to give its own interpretation of a Divine kingdom upon earth."¹³ The major theological issues concerning Unitarians at the time were evolution and Higher Criticism. First, with Darwin having died just seven years earlier, in 1882, the debate over evolution was a topical and a central concern for the new congregation. Looking back from 1939, a member stated, "...scientific theories of this sort had no terror for the founders of this Society. If the prevailing religious dogmas of the time couldn't stand the penetrating light of such proposals, it was, in the opinion of the pioneers of this place, just too bad for the creeds, the Bible, and arbitrary attitudes with which they were so frequently associated.... The preaching from this pulpit [in 1889] was predicated, as it is today, upon the assumption that the creation of the earth and of man was not marked by some special act by a capricious Deity, but is to be understood only in the light of the cosmic process which is still in effect."¹⁴ Second was the adoption of Higher Criticism with regard to the Bible. "[T]he text and the statements of fact which appear in the Old and New Testaments are to be subjected to the same sort of examination and analysis as may be applied to any other historical record... Faith comes from God, from one's intelligence, and not from the literal and slavish acceptance of what any individual or race, however high minded, has bequeathed to his spiritual descendants."¹⁵

Organization of the First Unitarian Society of Plainfield

The First Unitarian Society of Plainfield is the oldest Unitarian congregation in New Jersey. Only one congregation predated Plainfield: a Unitarian congregation was formed in Vineland, Cumberland County, in 1865, but disbanded in the 1930s. In addition to Plainfield, several Unitarian congregations were organized at the turn of the 20th century:

First Unitarian Church of Essex, Orange (1890);
Church of Our Father, Rutherford (1891);
All Souls Church of Passaic (1892);
Unitarian Society of Ridgewood (1896);
Unity Church of Montclair (1897);
Hackensack Unitarian Church (1898);
All Souls Unitarian Church, Elizabeth (1902); and,

12 Allen and Eddy, *History of the Unitarians*, 231-232.

13 Allen and Eddy, *History of the Unitarians*, 242.

14 Robinson, "Notes on the Semi-Centennial," 6.

15 Robinson, "Notes on the Semi-Centennial," 6.

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All Souls Church, Summit (1906).¹⁶

The organization of the First Unitarian Society of Plainfield did not begin smoothly. In spite of counting among their members the four-term mayor of Plainfield, Job Male, and other prominent citizens, the Plainfield community was generally of an orthodox viewpoint and the Unitarians' liberal outlook was not warmly embraced. On May 12, 1889, the First Unitarian Society of Plainfield was organized and held its first service at the Seventh Day Baptist Church in Plainfield. "The Unitarians in Plainfield are quite numerous and include many prominent citizens... An attempt is now being made to effect an organization of those who disbelieve in the Trinity and who believe that God exists in only one person: and last evening the first of a series of preparatory sermons was delivered by the celebrated preacher Rev. Robert Collyer." Many of the early members were "of New England training," and had been raised as Unitarians.¹⁷ The novelty of Unitarianism prompted overflowing crowds in the massive Seventh Day Baptist Church, which seats 800 people. "The church was crowded to its utmost capacity, even the aisles being filled with people for whom portable chairs were provided."¹⁸ Unfortunately, the new group's debut in Plainfield did not go well. Rev. Collyer managed to offend their hosts with an ungainly joke during the service.¹⁹ The Seventh Day Baptists responded by denying the Society further use of the building, stating that Unitarianism "is a menace to all other denominations in Plainfield."²⁰ More than a year later, local clergy refused to attend the installation of the Society's second minister, Rev. Hobart Clark.²¹ Horace Stevens, speaking on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the First Unitarian Society of Plainfield, extended greetings to "those older members of our Society who were pioneers in the Unitarian Faith in [Plainfield]. Being criticized as they were and going through the unpleasantness that they did..."²² The less-than-warm welcome likely encouraged First Unitarian Society of Plainfield Minister William Tilden to write a letter to the editor of the local newspaper in February 1890, "We have not organized as the antagonist of any church or society organized here."²³

Undeterred, the congregation of 44 men and women continued to meet in a music store and piano warehouse on East Front Street, and eventually in a house at 4 Second Place owned by Job Male, who removed interior walls to create a meeting space for 150 persons.²⁴ In 1890, a building committee led by David Pond was appointed to

16 New Jersey Historical Records Survey Project. *Inventory of the Church Archives of New Jersey: Unitarian* (Newark, New Jersey: Historical Records Survey, 1940), 11-25.

17 American Unitarian Association, *Sixty-Fifth Anniversary of the American Unitarian Association with the Annual Report of the Board of Directors* (Boston: American Unitarian Association, 1890), 47.

18 "Unitarians to Organize." Undated newspaper clipping. Scrapbooks. First Unitarian Society of Plainfield (FUSP); and, Announcement card in scrapbook indicates that service took place May 12, 1889 under the auspices of the New York Unitarian Conference. Scrapbooks. First Unitarian Society of Plainfield.

19 Robinson, "Notes on the Semi-Centennial," 23.

20 Robinson, "Notes on the Semi-Centennial," 32.

21 Charles A. Selden, "Semi-Centennial of the First Unitarian Society of Plainfield, New Jersey." (1939), 17.

22 Robinson, "Notes on the Semi-Centennial," 21.

23 Tilden, letter to editor. *Plainfield N.J. Almanac-Program* (Feb. 20, 1890). Scrapbooks. FUSP.

24 American Unitarian Association, *Sixty-Fifth Anniversary...*, 48.

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secure subscriptions for a new building.²⁵ Late that year, Job Male purchased the 75'x200' Park Avenue lot for the Society, promising to transfer title to the Society once the building could be constructed free of debt.²⁶ This prominent location on Park Avenue presented the Society as a respectable institution within the community. Hobart Clark, minister 1890-1896, "having had an opportunity to study English cathedrals during his successful pastorate at Cardiff, Wales, lent his aid to the consultations."²⁷ In February 1891, the congregation voted to build a stone structure not to cost more than \$10,500 for the building alone or not more than \$12,500 including pews, heating plant, and furniture.²⁸

On May 28, 1891, architect Oscar Schutte Teale was chosen as architect. The building committee, having held a number of meetings, and after consultations with architects and the society, "finally submitted to the society at a meeting ... a plan and elevation in stone, designed by Oscar S. Teale."²⁹ Teale was born in 1847 in Huntington, Long Island, and was one of five children of Marietta and John P. Teale.³⁰ At age sixteen Teale was admitted to The Cooper Union in New York City. A year later, Teale apprenticed in the New York office of Charles Duggin and continued to work there after he received his diploma from Cooper Union in 1866. Teale worked at a series of public offices and private firms³¹ until beginning an independent practice at 247 Broadway.³² His first known independent commission was a large Queen Anne style masonry house overlooking Lake Ontario in Oswego, New York in 1883. In later years, Teale was an instructor at Columbia University and the Mechanics Institute in New York and authored three books on the subject of architectural drawing.

In addition to his work as an architect, Teale had a significant avocational career as a magician, authoring two books on the subject that included many tricks of his design and serving as President of the Society of American Magicians. Teale's father owned an iron bail manufacturing company and was the proprietor of a large hall that was often used by traveling artists and entertainers, including magicians. While working at the hall, young Teale soon learned the secrets of the magicians and began to make up magic tricks himself. A personal friend of Harry Houdini, Teale is reported to have acted as ghostwriter for a number of Houdini's books, pamphlets,

25 "All Souls Dedicated. The Handsome New Church Devoted to the Service of God." *Plainfield Daily Press* (May 12, 1892), Scrapbooks. First Unitarian Society of Plainfield.

26 "All Souls Dedicated. The Handsome New Church Devoted to the Service of God." *Plainfield Daily Press* (May 12, 1892), Scrapbooks. First Unitarian Society of Plainfield.

27 Robinson, "Notes on the Semi-Centennial," 24.

28 Leaflet outlining building plans. August 1891. Scrapbooks. FUSP.

29 David Pond, "Report of the building committee of the First Unitarian Society of Plainfield." Undated. Scrapbooks. FUSP.

30 1900 United States Census, Essex County, New Jersey.

31 In 1869 Teale became an assistant in the architect office of the Brooklyn Board of Education, where he stayed for two years before moving to become Chief Assistant to J. Cleveland Cady, another New York City architect, where he remained until 1878. Teale married in 1869 and by 1879 he was living on Grove Street in North Plainfield, New Jersey. In 1879, Teale took a position as assistant to yet another New York City architect, James F. Wac. He was promoted to Chief Assistant the next year and then left in 1881 to join the office of Lamb & Rich as an Assistant, where he remained only briefly.

32 He remained at that address until 1891. Dennis Steadman Francis, *Architects in Practice: New York City 1840-1900* (New York: Committee for the Preservation of Architectural Records, 1980) 74.

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articles, and papers. Teale designed Houdini's memorial in 1927, shortly before his own death in 1930.

Teale's work centers on the New York City and central New Jersey region, although Teale had commissions as far away as the Endion M.E. Church in Duluth, Minnesota and a hotel project in Knoxville, Tennessee. His work includes dozens of residential designs and scattered projects for commercial buildings and warehouses; However, it is Teale's prolific designs for religious institutions that have come to define his career as an architect. The most productive period of Teale's career began in Plainfield, New Jersey.

Teale's earliest known church project was the Congregational Church (1883) on West Seventh Street in Plainfield. In Plainfield and North Plainfield, the last fifteen years of the 19th century were vigorous in terms of church construction, and Teale was able to capitalize on that activity. Of the 24 extant church buildings in Plainfield and North Plainfield in 1895,³³ only eight were constructed before 1879. The remaining sixteen church buildings were constructed between 1880 and 1895; Teale designed ten of those sixteen buildings:

Congregational Church, Plainfield (1883) (demolished);
Bethel Chapel, Crescent Ave. Presbyterian Church, Plainfield (1884)*;
First Presbyterian Church, Plainfield (1888)*;
First German Reformed Church, North Plainfield (1886);
Vincent Chapel, Methodist Episcopal Church, Plainfield (1888)*,
Mary E. Wilson Memorial Union Chapel, Watchung³⁴ (1889);
Monroe Avenue Chapel, Methodist Episcopal Church, Plainfield (1891) (demolished);
All Souls Church (First Unitarian Society of Plainfield) (1892)*;
Park Place, Methodist Episcopal Church, North Plainfield (1892); and,
Seventh Day Baptist Church, Plainfield (1890-1894)*.³⁵

* Known auditorium plan interior.

Teale also designed churches in neighboring communities: First Presbyterian Church, Roselle (1891)*; Presbyterian Church at Bound Brook (1896)*; and Second Reformed Church, Somerville (1893). The interior of the First Presbyterian Church in Roselle appears to be the closest contemporary to the original interior design for All Souls Church. Teale also designed three schools in Plainfield as well as the Lincoln School in nearby Westfield, New Jersey. As the number of commissions began to increase, Teale established a second office in Newark, New Jersey in 1886.³⁶ By 1889, Teale and his family were residing in a house of his design in the elegant Washington Park section of North Plainfield. In 1892, at which time All Souls Church, Park Place Methodist Episcopal, and Seventh Day Baptist were simultaneously under construction, Teale took on a partner

33 Rev. A.H. Lewis, *Plainfield, New Jersey Illustrated* (Plainfield, N.J.: Plainfield Daily Press, 1895), n.p.

34 Watchung was part of North Plainfield Township until 1926.

35 Teale's Plainfield projects included here are free-standing structures and substantial additions to existing buildings. Smaller interior remodeling projects are not included.

36 Parsekian, Ann, Dennis Bertland, Janice Armstrong (Dennis Bertland Associates), "Presbyterian Church at Bound Brook National Register of Historic Places Nomination" (2006), citing Plainfield City Directory 1886/1887.

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in his New York office. However, by 1894, Teale was again a sole proprietor.³⁷ Beginning in 1899, Teale's work focused on Centenary Collegiate Institute seminary in Hackettstown, New Jersey consisting of a large Beaux-Arts Classicist administration building flanked by two Italian Renaissance dormitory buildings. The Centenary College commission dominated his time until its completion in 1901.

No documentation has been uncovered regarding how David Ball and the building committee specifically came to select Oscar Teale to design a building for the First Unitarian Society of Plainfield in 1891. The committee distributed a leaflet outlining the building plans for the congregation that stated, "All that is now required to assure the rapid and permanent establishment of a strong and influential Society in a city with many liberal influences, but no other liberal church, is the speedy erection of an attractive and convenient building for the various activities."³⁸

Teale's original design for All Souls Church is very similar to the church as constructed, with the plan largely the same and the Eclectic Gothic design intact.³⁹ (See Supporting Materials following.) This first design, rejected as too costly by the Building Committee, had, in addition to the building as constructed, a projecting masonry hood over the large leaded glass window that fills the east elevation. The paired towers that flank this window were taller and were capped by slender spires. A similar spire capped the southeastern entrance to the building and a small steeple was centered on the gable roof. False flying buttresses connected the towers to the cornice line and segmental arch windows defined by voussoirs filled the first floor openings. The north, entrance was enclosed with a stone projection similar to that constructed at the southeast entrance. A one-story projection intended to contain the organ and a "retiring room" for the minister, as seen in the plan, extends from the rear of the church. This first plan was noteworthy for Teale; this design was featured in Teale's advertisements for his services.⁴⁰

By the fall of 1891, "definite bids from builders have shown that some modifications in the plans ... must be made to reduce the cost of the building. Considerable time has been required to make the necessary changes."⁴¹ A second plan, existing as a fragment of a blueprint pasted into a scrapbook in the archives of the First Unitarian Society of Plainfield, shows changes that would have addressed the concerns for economy stated by the committee. The towers were shortened and their spires replaced by crenellated caps and the rear (west) extension was removed. A row of clerestory windows is also included; it is unclear in the drawings whether the clerestory was part of the original design. In the final design, the clerestory was omitted in favor of dormer windows.

37 Dennis Steadman Francis, *Architects in Practice: New York City 1840-1900* (New York: Committee for the Preservation of Architectural Records, 1980) 74.

38 Leaflet outlining building plans. August 1891. Scrapbooks. FUSP.

39 Leaflet outlining building plans. August 1891. Scrapbooks. FUSP.

40 Oscar S. Teale Scrapbooks. Ca. 1912. Avery Library, Columbia University.

41 Flyer dated September 28, 1891. Building committee of the First Unitarian Society. Scrapbooks. FUSP.

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On September 28, 1891 a contract was signed with Teale. “[A]t last the committee has bids within the limit of \$10,500, and hopes to have ground broken within a few days and the foundations in very soon.⁴² The plan as constructed features shortened spires, a flat façade instead of the projecting hood, no steeple, a frame porch instead of a masonry enclosure at the north entrance, dormers instead of the clerestory, and flat-head windows at the first floor instead of the segmental-arched design. I.W. Pangborn won the bid as mason and the carpenter chosen was John Abbott.⁴³ By October 2, 1891 ground was broken and the cornerstone was laid on November 8.⁴⁴

On April 8, 1892, architect Teale certified that the building was complete and the deed was placed on record. The total cost of the church building, exclusive of the land, was \$12,487.⁴⁵ As funds allowed, a pipe organ manufactured by the Hook & Hastings Co. was installed in June 1901, at a cost of \$1,500. At this time, a small extension was added to the northern end of the rear (west) elevation of the church to enclose the organ.⁴⁶

On Wednesday May 12, 1892, All Souls Church of the First Unitarian Society of Plainfield was formally dedicated. Numerous newspaper accounts of the dedication provide details of the new building’s construction. The building is constructed of stone, and

“finished with a rock face, ...which produces a pleasing effect in the changing lights and shadows falling upon it... The front of the building is forty feet from the street and has a total width of 62 feet. The main entrance [is] through the arch ... which is part of an artistic porch that merges gracefully with the main walls of the building. Another entrance is at the side... The outer doors at both entrances are of oak. They open into ample vestibules, in each of which are two sets of swinging double doors, one leading into the auditorium, and the other into the Sunday school room. As the last statement indicates, the interior is arranged to serve a double purpose. The front part is to be used by the Sunday school, the room being 31 feet wide by 24 feet deep. It is arranged so as to become part of the main room, when desired. The auditorium is 49 feet wide and 35 feet deep, with pews made in a semi-circular form.... A ladies’ parlor is provided in the octagonal portion of the building; and below it is a kitchen with such conveniences as a connection with the city water mains, a dumb-waiter, and the like. The building is warmed by a hot-air furnace, and is lighted by gas. The wood-work throughout is of pine, finished in oil. The pews and pulpit furniture are made of birch with a cabinet finish. When the walls are decorated, as proposed, there will be a harmony of colors very pleasing to the eye.”⁴⁷

42 Flyer dated September 28, 1891. Building committee of the First Unitarian Society. Scrapbooks. FUSP.

43 David Pond. “Report of the building committee of the First Unitarian Society of Plainfield.” Undated. Scrapbooks. FUSP.

44 “All Souls Dedicated. The Handsome New Church Devoted to the Service of God.” *Plainfield Daily Press* (May 12, 1892). Scrapbooks. FUSP; and, “A New Church in Plainfield: The Cornerstone Laid for a Unitarian Edifice,” *New York Times*. (Nov. 9, 1891).

45 “All Souls Dedicated. The Handsome New Church Devoted to the Service of God.” *Plainfield Daily Press* (May 12, 1892). Scrapbooks. FUSP.

46 Unattributed clipping. Scrapbooks. FUSP.

47 “All Souls Church of Plainfield: Dedication Service.” Newspaper clipping. Scrapbooks. FUSP.

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The “seats of the church are arranged in amphitheater form, with two broad aisles one on either side. In the rear of the church is quite a large extension which is designed to be used hereafter for the Sunday-school and which will be shut off from the church proper by folding doors.”⁴⁸ (The doors were never installed; instead, a very large curtain divided the space at least until the construction of the Parish Hall.)⁴⁹ The auditorium was designed to accommodate 260 persons and the Sunday school room was designed to accommodate 140 persons.⁵⁰

All Souls Church of the First Unitarian Society of Plainfield is the oldest Unitarian church building in New Jersey constructed by, and currently in use by, its original congregation. Contemporary congregations also constructed buildings as they became established:

First Unitarian Church of Essex, Orange (1893);
Church of Our Father, Rutherford (1892);
All Souls Church of Passaic (1893);
Unitarian Society of Ridgewood (1900);
Unity Church of Montclair (1904);
Hackensack Unitarian Church (1902);
All Souls Unitarian Church, Elizabeth (1910); and,
All Souls Church, Summit (1913).⁵¹

All Souls Church in the Context of Religious Architecture at the Turn of the 20th Century

All Souls Church is a representative example of the dominant trend of neo-medieval religious architecture in the years surrounding the turn of the 20th century. In its construction, the building illustrates the major ecclesiastical trend for Protestant denominations at the end of the 19th century: an amphitheater plan within a neo-medieval Gothic Revival and Romanesque exterior. In its alteration a generation later, the building illustrates the reinterpretation of neo-medieval forms that favored the rectilinear forms and smooth, two-dimensional surfaces of the Tudor Revival. Reaction against the auditorium plan and redesigning the sanctuary to create what was considered a more serious and more appropriate manner was in line with mainstream Protestant trends of the time.

Over the course of the 19th century, both the architecture and worship within the Protestant evangelical church underwent a “distinct revisioning... consisting of radical transformations in architectural style, space and spatial arrangement, and furnishing and ornamentation.”⁵² As Jeanne Halgren Kilde discusses at length in her

48 “Dedicated to Worship. The New Unitarian Church Opened with Impressive Service Last Evening.” *Plainfield Courier* (May 12, 1892). Scrapbooks. First Unitarian Society of Plainfield.

49 Robinson, “Notes on the Semi-Centennial,” 17. Also, verbal communication, Mary Vic Griswold to Fred Lange.

50 “A Church Dedicated. The Unitarian Society in their new home.” *Plainfield Evening News* (May 12, 1892). Scrapbooks. First Unitarian Society of Plainfield.

51 New Jersey Historical Records Survey Project. *Inventory...*, 11-25.

52 Jeanne Halgren Kilde, *When Church Became Theater* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 8.

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study of the transformation of evangelical architecture and worship in the 19th century, in the early part of the 19th century, Congregationalists -- which at the time included the soon-to-be Unitarians --

would have gathered on Sundays to listen to the minister offer prayer, read Scripture, and deliver a [two-hour] sermon explicating Scripture. The congregation might recite... a psalm or hymn with the help of a precentor, and occasionally a tune might have been presented by a violinist... By the 1880s, however, the services of evangelical Protestants had changed significantly... The sermon... had shrunk to a mere half hour, and it often addressed social topics quite afield from Scripture... The congregation now engaged in recitative exchanges with the minister, [to] voice either a psalm or a prayer of petition or praise. Music had become a more prominent part of the service. [M]ost... not only listened to stirring organ solos and their own voluntary choir but also heard performances by professional quartets hired for the service.... As U.S. Protestants modified their religious beliefs and practices to better address their changing lives, they also altered their church buildings.⁵³

This shift also took place within the Unitarian denomination. In the last two decades of the 19th century there occurred an increased use of "simpler Christian rites" in Unitarian churches, which included the adoption of responsive readings. As described in 1902, this was a move "away from the bare and unattractive service of Puritan churches, which was the acme of individualism in worship, towards the more social conception that brings the whole congregation to join in the act and in the spirit of devotion."⁵⁴ Hymns and religious poems became more numerous especially beginning ca. 1885.

Auditorium Plan

Teale's use of the amphitheater plan for All Souls Church placed it decidedly within the trends of religious architecture of the late 19th century. Among Protestants, the axial plan that had served through the colonial period had given way to early, fleeting, experiments in the auditorium plan by urban revivalist preachers of the Second Great Awakening during the 1820s-1830s.⁵⁵ The auditorium plan for churches has its origins in the use of theater spaces by these preachers to reach large audiences.

These advantages -- a large meeting room, good sightlines and acoustics, a strong visual focus, more physical freedom for preachers, and greater intimacy between preacher and audience -- coincided with and helped advance... the religious agenda of individual moral responsibility and the charismatic power of preachers. Highly democratizing, these same features, along with the need to share the space with other civic and religious organizations, served to construct ... a new type of institution within the urban landscape. By opening its stage to the sweep of public debate on political and social issues, the [auditorium plan] carved out a new role for religion within the

53 Kilde, *When Church Became Theater*, 9.

54 Cooke, *Unitarianism*, 242.

55 Kilde, *When Church Became Theater*, 20.

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public sphere.⁵⁶

These designs for auditorium-plan churches, which briefly appeared during the 1820s and 1830s, disappeared during the 1830s. The auditorium plan resurfaced in Chicago in 1866 in new churches designed by the First Baptist Church and the First Congregational Church and this time, the plan caught the attention of architects and rapidly spread to hundreds of Protestant congregations over forty years.⁵⁷ After the Civil War, “readoption of the amphitheater in the form of the neo-medieval auditorium church” occurred, becoming “an icon of bourgeois evangelical religion and, many felt, a symbol of respectable middle-class religious participation within a democratic society.”⁵⁸ The Unitarians availed themselves of the use of theaters during the “Denominational Awakening” of 1865-1880.⁵⁹ In 1866, an evening course of lectures by seven Unitarian ministers at the Cooper Institute, New York was well attended.⁶⁰ (Oscar Teale attended Cooper Union 1864-1866.) Series of lectures were repeated in Washington, D.C., Boston, Lawrence, Salem, Springfield, Providence, Chicago and San Francisco, and elsewhere.⁶¹ Efforts were made to organize the theater congregations into “unsectarian societies,” resulting in “unions” in Boston, Providence, Salem, Lowell, Cambridge, New Bedford, New York and elsewhere.⁶²

By the 1880s, the amphitheater plan dominated evangelical church building nationwide⁶³ and was erected by both liberal and conservative Protestant congregations. In spite of the liberal nature of the Unitarian denomination, the First Unitarian Society of Plainfield’s choice of building form was very much in the mainstream. Architects like Teale used the same plans interchangeably among Unitarian, Congregational, Baptist, Methodist, and Presbyterian churches.⁶⁴ These churches were typically constructed with monumental stone facades and featured an eclectic mix of medieval vocabularies.

Common features of the auditorium plan were square, semi-circular, or octagonal plans -- sometimes with raked floors, curvilinear seating, slender iron columns to reduce visual obstructions, and a large preaching platforms at

56 Kilde, *When Church Became Theater*, 41.

57 While the term “Akron Plan” has come to be used as a common term for any church space in which curved seating is used, including auditorium plan sanctuaries, the term specifically refers to Sunday school designs that were popularized by the design of the First M.E. Church of Akron, Ohio Sunday School building, completed in 1868. As discussed in Kilde, pp. 176-177, in Akron, Lewis Miller, a lay minister and Sunday school superintendent, took it upon himself to solve his congregation’s Sunday school space problem. In the Akron prototype, tiers of small class rooms on a raked floor were divided from one another and from the sanctuary with recessible partitions and rolling overhead doors. All grades could participate in opening and closing exercises but individual classes could be conducted without interrupting other classes or the adult service. In All Souls Church, the original desire to have rolling partitions that would separate the Sunday school classes at the back of the sanctuary from the adult service is a pared-down expression of this design.

58 Kilde, *When Church Became Theater*, 20.

59 Cooke, *Unitarianism*, 215.

60 Peter Cooper attended All Souls Church (Unitarian), New York City. Cooke, *Unitarianism*, 408.

61 Cooke, *Unitarianism*, 215.

62 Cooke, *Unitarianism*, 216.

63 Kilde, *When Church Became Theater*, 19.

64 Kilde, *When Church Became Theater*, 20.

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the front that replaced elevated pulpits, along with prominently placed organ pipes and an elevated choir loft. All Souls Church featured an auditorium plan, as indicated by drawings and photographs, into which one entered through the southeast corner entrance and featured semi-circular pews arranged in concentric circles. The pews faced a large, semicircular platform centered on the west wall. Slender compound columns supported the roof. Within a few years of construction an organ was prominently placed to the right of the platform.

The democratizing effect of the auditorium plan was well suited to the growing Unitarian denomination. For Unitarians, the congregation-oriented nature of the auditorium plan represented the connection, as opposed to the distance, between the divine and the individual.

Liberal Protestants asserted a continuity between the divine and the human individual rather than the rigid distinction that had characterized Calvinism. For them, God was a loving, benevolent deity, whose redeeming grace was revealed through human culture and progress. Shunning creeds that attempted to define God in human terms and language..., liberals argued that Christians should live individually moral lives and work for the advancement of society secure in the knowledge that they thus worked toward creating a Kingdom of God.⁶⁵

Gothic Revival and Romanesque Architecture

Teale's eclectic use of the Gothic Revival and Romanesque forms placed him decidedly within the trends of religious architecture of the late 19th century. By the mid-19th century, the neo-medieval architectural style had become the dominant style for the majority of Protestant churches constructed during the last quarter of the 19th century. For many evangelical denominations, use of the Gothic Revival "legitimized modern Christianity, particularly Protestantism, by historicizing it."⁶⁶ Although not noted in First Unitarian Society of Plainfield Building Committee notes, one can speculate that providing this new, liberal congregation with the outward signs of established history and solidity may have been appealing, given the community's perception of the congregation as radical.

Around the middle of the 19th century, Gothic Revival architecture began to appeal to evangelical congregations, who removed the formal aspects of the Gothic Revival long-used by Roman Catholic and Anglican churches and constructed churches closer in design to the domestic architecture of the new American suburbs, such as Plainfield, in the late 19th century. The exteriors of the houses being built by the wealthy, both Gothic Revival and Romanesque in form, were typically irregular floor plans with picturesque facades and featured stone, towers, turrets, balconies, gables, half-timbering, shingles, bargeboards, and finials. Architects like Teale and H.H. Richardson, ten years Teale's senior, "experimented with random ashlar walls of rough-faced stone... Stone arches, often defined by polychromatic voussoirs resting on compressed columns, sheltered doors and main windows... Complex perspectives marked by multiple masses pierced by numerous windows filled with

65 Kilde, *When Church Became Theater*, 140.

66 Kilde, *When Church Became Theater*, 76.

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stained glass also characterized the style, and buttresses, lancet windows, finials, and crenellations lent a distinctly medieval aura to the buildings.⁶⁷ The exteriors of churches were soon in alignment with these residential designs.

Construction of the Parish House

By the second decade of the 20th century, it became apparent that additional space was needed for the congregation, especially for the Sunday school, for which the Society rented space next door at the Truell Inn. In September 1922, Westfield, New Jersey architect and artist Josiah T. Tubby was engaged to design a "Parish House," now commonly referred to as the Parish Hall, for the Society. Although often stated to have been a member of the congregation, Tubby was a friend of the Society but never signed the membership roll. His wife and daughter, however, did become members of the Society in 1929. His daughter Ruth Tubby was still a member at the time of the First Unitarian Society of Plainfield centennial in 1989. Tubby (ca. 1875-1958) received his architectural training at Columbia University and the *Ecole des Beaux Arts*. Beginning in 1900, Tubby began a partnership with his brother as W.B. Tubby and Brother designing public buildings, including several libraries in Brooklyn, the Westport, Connecticut Y.M.C.A., schools, and residences. J.T. Tubby also designed the World War I monument in the Westfield, New Jersey traffic circle in 1923. Tubby moved to Maine in later years and served as chairman of the Maine Art Commission and as secretary-treasurer of the Maine Chapter of the American Institute of Architects.

Tubby's design for the Parish House was deemed "adequate for present needs and may be enlarged in accordance with future demands...There are rooms [which] may be adapted for the use of separate classes; an ample auditorium with stage for concerts and dramatics; provision for the needs of the [Women's'] Alliance; a light, modern kitchen."⁶⁸ Two years later, in December 1924, plans were finalized and the construction contract was awarded to Anthony Albert of Scotch Plains. The cornerstone was laid in January 1925 and the work speedily completed. The Parish House was dedicated on June 7, 1925. The work was completed at a final cost of \$17,975.⁶⁹

At the time of the Parish Hall construction, the choice of Colonial Revival and Tudor Revival motifs by Tubby was timely. By the 1920s, the Victorian interpretations of medieval forms of the previous generation were long gone and the use of Colonial Revival and Tudor Revival forms in residential buildings was at its peak popularity. Tubby's understated Colonial Revival design for the Parish Hall exterior is domestic in scale with wood shingles and wood casement and sash windows. The flared ends of the overhanging eaves provide a subtle Tudor Revival element to the exterior. In contrast, Tubby's design for the interior of the Parish Hall is a much more dramatic architectural statement, with bolted cross-braced trusses, the false half-timbering treatment in the gable peaks, exposed rafters, and dark wainscoting and trim against light-colored plaster walls.

67 Kilde, *When Church Became Theater*, 104.

68 Flyer outlining need for Parish House and showing proposed plans. [Ca. 1922.] Scrapbooks. FUSP.

69 "An Account of the Building of the Addition to the Parish House..." (n.d.) Archives. FUSP.

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Tubby's use of the Tudor Revival marked a change in stylistic direction for All Souls Church toward smoother surfaces, darker wood, and rectilinear shapes. While still invoking the preference for medieval forms, the three-dimensional rustication and curved forms of the church's original design had given way to smooth, two-dimensional forms. These new features would be called upon for the reworking of the sanctuary to reflect a new generation's shift in tastes and ideas of appropriateness.

Reworking of Interior of All Souls Church

No sooner was the Parish House constructed than the congregation set about reworking the sanctuary to meet this new idea of what an appropriate sanctuary should look like. At the annual meeting of the Society in 1927, it was voted to authorize \$6,500 to "carry out the plans proposed." "The changes contemplated consist ... of a rearrangement of the pews to fill in the main body of the church, a simplification of the interior to bring it into accord with the Gothic exterior, the lowering of the pulpit platform, and other changes at this point, including a permanent enclosure at the organ, a thorough overhauling and cleaning of the organ itself, and a complete redecoration of the walls and ceiling of the church auditorium with the adjacent lobbies. The existing pews are to be reconstructed with straight backs and the present cushions altered to meet the new conditions. After these changes have been completed, all of the interior woodwork including the pews, it to be finished in one color of pleasing tone. New electric fixtures will be installed as required. All of this work will be done under the personal supervision of our fellow member, the well known architect Mr. Harry Keith White."⁷⁰

Harry Keith White

Harry Keith White, born in Brattleboro, Vermont in 1877, began his architectural career at McKim, Mead and White (no relation) shortly after graduation from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in 1899. While there, White worked on large-scale residential and smaller institutional projects. White stayed at McKim, Mead and White until 1907, when he went into partnership with a co-worker from that firm, Walter Robb Wilder, and set up an office in downtown New York City. At about the same time, White moved to Plainfield, where his sister was teaching, and married into one of Plainfield's substantial families (that of Mayor Fitz Randolph).⁷¹ White lived in Plainfield for the rest of his life. He also became active with the First Unitarian Society about this time, as did his sister and mother. White became a member of the Society in 1920 and served on the Board of Trustees between 1924 and 1930, and as Chairman in 1924. Wilder and White dissolved their partnership in 1930. White maintained his own firm for ten years and then joined York & Sawyer, architects, in a supervisory capacity until 1963. White died in 1966 at age 89.

Wilder and White are best known for a massive project that was atypical for their firm as a whole: the design and development of the Washington State Capitol Complex, which they won as a result of a nationwide

⁷⁰ Letter to congregation from All Souls Decorating Fund Committee, (n.d). Archives. FUSP.

⁷¹ Norman Johnston, *Washington's Audacious State Capitol and its Builders* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1988), 26.

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competition in 1912. “The architectural solutions the partners offered their clients were unpretentiously traditional and classical, reflecting both their own design loyalties and the training and tempo of their times. None of their commissions offered them opportunities for work of a monumental scale, either in the early years of the partnership or later – with the single exception of [the State of Washington] Capitol group.”⁷² Nevertheless, it has been stated that the capitol is where “the American Renaissance in state capitol building reached its climax.”⁷³ In their working relationship, records show that “Wilder may have been more of the designer; White filling a managerial and production role... Both did contact work in search of clients; in this White may have been more successful, as many of their larger commissions were for schools and institutions in the Plainfield area.”⁷⁴ White’s local projects include the Plainfield Library, the Evergreen, East End, and Emerson Schools in Plainfield, as well as the Plainfield High School. The firm designed numerous schools and residences in New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, and Vermont.⁷⁵

Wilder was the on-site architect for the Capitol complex, which included the Temple of Justice, the Legislative Building, and associated buildings, as well as site planning for the complex. The capitol project was stalled by studies, changes in administration, and WWI, until groundbreaking began in 1922. The capitol was completed in 1928 with the legislature installed in the building by the winter of 1929. While Wilder was in Washington supervising the construction of the capitol complex, White was busy in 1929 with designs for the reworking of the All Souls Church sanctuary.

Peaking in the 1890s, auditorium-plan churches were considered obsolete by 1920. After the turn of the 20th century, the popularity of the auditorium church began a rapid decline. As it had in its construction, All Souls Church kept pace with architectural trends and set about removing its auditorium plan in the late 1920s. In the Late Gothic Revival that replaced the auditorium churches, the pendulum-swing of architects and designers “once again championed the aesthetic preeminence of historicized facades and the functional superiority of clergy-oriented plans.”⁷⁶ As comprehensively as had the auditorium plan come into use, so did its removal. Richardsonian rusticated stone gave way to the smooth vertical forms of Ralph Adams Cram at the head of the movement. The “vast majority” of the Gothic Revival churches “abandoned both the auditorium plans and the pulpit platforms... In these longitudinally oriented naves, often featuring vaulting supported by columns, rectilinear pews were divided by a center, processional aisle.”⁷⁷ Congregationalist-turned-Unitarian minister Von Ogden Vogt of Chicago deplored the “family-at-home feeling” of the auditorium churches, “asserting that

72 Johnston, *Washington's Audacious State Capitol*, 26.

73 Johnston, *Washington's Audacious State Capitol*, 122, citing Henry-Russell Hitchcock and William Seale, *Temples of Democracy: The State Capitols of the U.S.A.*, 257.

74 Johnston, *Washington's Audacious State Capitol*, 26.

75 The Harry White Photograph and Drawings Collection is housed at the University of Washington Library Special Collections.

76 Kilde, *When Church Became Theater*, 204.

77 Kilde, *When Church Became Theater*, 207.

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the proper aesthetic was 'stern and rigorous... restrained and austere'.⁷⁸ "Neo-medieval auditorium churches became the bane of many congregations and, in the opinion of a new flock of commentators on religious art and architecture, the curse of Protestantism and America alike."⁷⁹ These changes are explicitly seen in the changes undertaken in the First Unitarian Society of Plainfield during the 1920s.

Although the word "redecorating" was consistently used by the church committee, White's designs for the interior of the sanctuary involved a more extensive reworking of the sanctuary interior than the description implies. Typical of the manner in which auditorium plan churches were reworked in the 1920s, Teale's lighter, blonde finishes on the ceilings, walls and pews, semi-circular forms, and amphitheater plan were straightened and darkened, and the space enclosed, bringing the sanctuary's design more in line with the Parish House interior created by J.T. Tubby.⁸⁰ The semi-circular pew layout, with open space for Sunday school classes at the east end of the sanctuary, was removed and replaced by two columns of straight pews with a longitudinal orientation that extends the length of the room. The semi-circular layout had filled the space from north to south, with pews extending beyond the columns. The compound columns that ran parallel to the north and south walls were encased with stuccoed frame piers to define the present-day galleries. Semi-circular arches were altered to pointed arches. The raised, semicircular platform centered on the west wall of the Sanctuary was removed. A new pulpit platform, rectangular in plan and reached by three steps, was installed in its place. A dark paneled oak baptismal font, a gift of the First Unitarian Society in Newton, Massachusetts in 1927, was put into use as a pulpit and placed at the southeast corner of the chancel. On the plastered ceiling, which featured a quadripartite vaulted plaster ceiling with false ribs, a design often used by Teale, false rafters were installed throughout to resemble the Parish Hall ceiling. The original pews ends were removed, stained dark, and reattached to new straight pew backs and seats. Vestibule doors at the rear of the sanctuary that led to the Sunday school space were removed. The overhead light fixtures were reused. The final cost for the project was \$7,850 for construction and \$1,950 for renovation of the organ.⁸¹

In the recess behind the pulpit, the skylight was removed and a mural painting on canvas was created for the space by the congregation's own Jonas Lie (1880-1940). Lie is known as a landscape and marine painter and his most common subjects were ships, harbors, and coastlines. A native of Norway who immigrated to the United States as a child, Lie studied at the Arts Students League of New York and at the National Academy of Design in 1912. Lie continued his association with the Academy as a National Academician in 1925 and served as President of the National Academy from 1934-1939.⁸² For All Souls Church, Lie painted rugged mountains

78 Kilde, *When Church Became Theater*, 207, citing Van Ogden Vogt, *Art and Religion* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1921), 203, 208, quoted in David Ralph Bains, "The Liturgical Impulse in Mid-Twentieth-Century American Mainline Protestantism" (Ph.D. dissertation, Harvard University, 1999), 73.

79 Kilde, *When Church Became Theater*, 207.

80 Historic photographs and architectural drawings of the First Unitarian Society of Plainfield by Harry K. White in the archives of the Society.

81 "An Account of the Building of the Addition to the Parish House..." (n.d.) Archives, First Unitarian Society of Plainfield.

82 Lie also painted the mural in the Plainfield City Hall Library in 1931, although his work was usually limited to smaller canvases. Lie was active in the artistic community, assisting in the organization of the famous Armory Show of 1913. He enjoyed critical

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backlit by streaming sunlight. The painting's title, "I Will Lift Up Mine Eyes Unto the Hills," is lettered in gold paint along the bottom of the painting at the wainscoting. Lie described the painting: "The light may symbolize courage, hope, vision, reaching out toward the infinite. But if it is to be of value to you aside from its possible aesthetic enjoyment, each one must make his own interpretation and create his own symbols according to his needs."⁸³ The mural was dedicated on October 19, 1930.

The reworking of the sanctuary was complete with the installation of the stained glass Robinson Window in 1947 and the Stevens Window in 1953. On June 8, 1947, the Robinson window was dedicated for Rev. Alson Robinson (minister 1919-1944). Replacing the window designed by Teale, the new window was created by Oliver Smith of Bryn Athyn, Pennsylvania. First Unitarian Society of Plainfield member and illustrator Cateau deLeeuw,⁸⁴ who chaired the committee that commissioned the window, described it as such:

"There are eight medallions in the window, distributed throughout the six lancets in a somewhat pyramidic form. At the base there are four – Agriculture, Industry, Commerce and Science. They represent man's meeting, in his daily life and work, with other men and with Nature. Above these come Religion and Music, for it is largely through the creative spirit that man reaches for both to his God and to his fellow man. Still higher, you will see the twin medallions of Education and Family, for it is only through understanding and love that we can truly integrate these other facets of our lives, that we can truly live by our text. At the tips of the lancets the six great ethnic religions of the world are symbolized. The lotus of Buddhism, the star and crescent of Islam, the six-pointed star of David, the cross of Christianity, the intertwined Yin and Yang of Chinese philosophy, and the five-faced Shiva of the Hindus. Six religions through which men –

support from the early 1910s well into the 1930s, during which time he enjoyed numerous solo exhibitions throughout the country. While living in Panama in 1913, he painted scenes of the construction of Panama Canal, which later became part of the permanent collection of the U.S. Military Academy at West Point. Lie's works are in the collections of: Cornell Fine Arts Museum; Phoenix Art Museum; Everson Museum of Art, Syracuse; San Diego Museum of Art; Corcoran Gallery of Art; Museum of Fine Arts, Boston; Brooklyn Museum of Art; and the Metropolitan Museum of Art.

⁸³ "Do You Know....," Pamphlet in archives of FUSP, Citing "Booklet on dedication of Robinson Window [sic]."

⁸⁴ The Adele and Cateau DeLeeuw papers are in the de Grummond Collection of the University of Southern Mississippi and include material for fifty-six novels written by one or both of the De Leeuw sisters. The collection includes professional work as well as papers related to community organizations. Papers relating to the First Unitarian Society of Plainfield include correspondence and notes regarding the design and installation of the Robinson Window. Born in Ohio, Cateau De Leeuw (1903-1975) attended the Metropolitan Art School and the Art Students' League. As described in the finding aid for the collection, the sisters traveled extensively as children throughout South America, Europe, Africa and the Far East. Holland and the Dutch East Indies appear frequently as backdrops for their novels. Adele worked as a librarian in Plainfield, New Jersey and began writing and selling short stories for the adult market, frequently collaborating with Cateau. By 1924, Adele had begun publishing books. Cateau De Leeuw became a professional portraitist, and had studios in Paris, New York City and Plainfield, New Jersey. During the Depression, financial constraints forced her to take up illustrating. She began illustrating her sister's books, and eventually drew for her own books and for travel magazines. Cateau began writing and published her first book, *Betty Loring, Illustrator*, in 1943. Both sisters lectured extensively at women's groups, art associations, and libraries. www.lib.usm.edu/~degrum/html/research/findaids/deleeuw.htm accessed Nov. 12, 2007.

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all over this world of ours – are striving, in different ways but with the same eager desire, to worship God.”⁸⁵

Oliver Smith (1896-1980), born in Lynn, Massachusetts, attended the Rhode Island School of Design (RISD) and earned a degree in painting. Smith met and married Hope Fales Dimond, who was a stained glass artisan while at RISD and is credited with the more delicate designs for the glass that Smith and Dimond created together. In 1921-1922 Smith toured Europe and studied at the London School of Arts & Crafts. Smith established a studio in Bryn Athyn as early as 1929. Smith became closely associated with Bryn Athyn Cathedral and executed a number of windows there. His windows are also located at Temple Emanu-El, New York City; Princeton Chapel, Princeton University; Clothier Memorial Hall, Swarthmore, Pennsylvania; Weaver Chapel, Wittenberg College, Ohio; Reformation Lutheran Church, Washington, D.C.; and, Temple B’Nai Brith, Los Angeles, California. Smith’s work is in the arts and crafts style with heavy medieval overtones, which was representative of the work at Bryn Athyn. The religious community of Bryn Athyn brought together a group of artisans in the manner of medieval craft guilds to construct the Bryn Athyn Cathedral (1919). In addition to the architectural design studio, shops were set up for metal and stone work, stained glass, woodcarving, and plaster models. The numerous glass artisans worked to specifically replicate the colors and mechanical methods of medieval glasswork.

On April 26, 1953 a window dedicated in memory of Horace Stevens was installed on the north elevation of the church building. Riva Helfond (1920-2002), a painter and chairperson of the arts committee, designed the window.⁸⁶ Oliver Smith was again called on to create the window. In the window, decorative doves signify

⁸⁵ Dedication of Robinson Window. Pamphlet. June 8, 1947.

⁸⁶ Helfond was a prolific multimedia artist whose career spanned six decades. Helfond conducted private studio classes, taught advanced printmaking at New York University, and managed, with her husband, the Barrett Art Gallery in Plainfield, New Jersey. Educated in New York at the School of Industrial Art and the Art Students League (1928-1940), Helfond taught in the College Art Association Program (1933-36), the predecessor to the WPA Federal Art Project. She taught printmaking at the Harlem Art Center and served on the creative staff of the WPA/FAP Graphics Division (1938-41). She worked in the media of woodcuts, lithography, embossing, intaglio, and collagraph, and was one of the early innovators in silkscreen (serigraphy). Helfond’s works are in the collections of the Smithsonian American Art Museum; Metropolitan Museum of Art; Cornell University; Princeton University; and, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston and have been shown at the Museum of Modern Art, New York City.

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man's desire for peace and clasped hands represents the cooperation possible among men. The stars and planets symbolize the broad concepts of these ideals. In addition, Mr. Stevens' hobby was raising roses and because of this the dominant color is red.

As the post World War II population increased, so did the number of children at the Society. Enrollment in the Sunday school doubled from 54 children in 1945-1946 to 102 in the fall of 1947, with an average of 70 children each week.⁸⁷ In 1948, under architect White's guidance, the Parish House was expanded to the south to contain present-day office and restrooms.⁸⁸ The contract was awarded to Adam Valentine and cost \$11,200. This addition proved to only be a temporary solution and in 1956 steps were taken to acquire additional property and eventually erect of a building to house the Church school... By 1956, religious education enrollment had more than tripled since 1946 and the number of classes had doubled. Attendance at the church was 50 percent higher than in 1951.⁸⁹ In 1958, the Stevens Wing, also designed by White, was completed. The wing contains Sunday school classrooms, a meeting room, two nursery rooms, and rooms for older children.

Beginning in the fall of 1974, a three-year period of fund raising took place to refurbish the Society buildings. The kitchen, yard, vestibule, and Parish Hall were refurbished. In 1977 the porch at the Parish Hall entrance was given in memory of Priscilla S. Powell. The iron railing was a gift of Ruth Tubby. The adjacent planters were a gift of the religious education classes.

⁸⁷ "An Account of the Building of the Addition to the Parish House..." n.d.

⁸⁸ Elizabeth Mitchell, "On the Occasion of the Centennial Celebration of the First Unitarian Society of Plainfield" (1989), 4.

⁸⁹ "Unitarian Church Board To Seek Building Site." *Plainfield Courier-News* (March 20, 1956). Scrapbooks. FUSP.

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Verbal Boundary Description

The property contains the three contiguous buildings, the parking area, and the yard on the north side of the property. The L-shaped lot is an area fronting 95 feet on Park Avenue, 170 feet west from Park Avenue to the rear lot line, 271 feet along the rear lot line parallel to Park Avenue, 97 feet along West Seventh Street, 174 feet south parallel to Park Avenue to the edge of the driveway at the property line, and 59 feet east to Park Avenue to the point of beginning.

Boundary Justification

The boundary is defined by the property historically and currently owned by the First Unitarian Society of Plainfield and recorded in deeds in the Union County Courthouse.

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PHOTOGRAPHS

For all photographs:

Property Name: All Souls Church (First Unitarian Society of Plainfield)
Property Location: City of Plainfield, Union County, New Jersey
Photographer: Stacy E. Spies
Date: January 2008

1. East elevation of Church, looking southwest from Park Avenue. Stevens Wing visible at right.
2. East and North elevations of church, looking south from Park Avenue. From left to right: Church; Parish Hall; and, Stevens Wing.
3. North elevation of Church and east and north elevations of Parish Hall, looking south from Park Avenue.
4. Stonework on east elevation. Note water table, stop-chamfered tower base, dressed stone at window sill.
5. East porch (Park Avenue) entrance to Church, looking north toward Park Avenue.
6. Detail, tooled brownstone column at east porch.
7. Exterior door to north porch, seen from north vestibule. Doors to Sanctuary visible at left.
8. Doors leading from Sanctuary, looking northeast to north vestibule. Carved oak lectern visible at right.
9. Sanctuary, looking southwest toward chancel.
10. Chancel, looking southwest. Pulpit at left.
11. Bracket detail.
12. Original pendant light fixture.
13. Dormer detail.
14. Robinson Window, looking northeast.
15. Stevens Window, looking northwest.
16. Pulpit and south gallery, looking south.
17. Pew detail.
18. Minister's study window seat, looking north.
19. Exterior entrance to Parish Hall, looking south.
20. Parish Hall office ell at south corner of building, looking northwest.
21. Parish Hall south elevation and Church west and south elevations, looking northeast.
22. Parish Hall, looking northeast from stage.
23. Parish Hall, cross-bracing detail.
24. Parish Hall, detail of connection between bracing and rafters.
25. Parish Hall, looking north toward kitchen, crow's nest, and vestibule to Church.
26. Parish Hall, looking southwest toward stage from crow's nest.
27. Parish Hall, original door and wainscoting.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

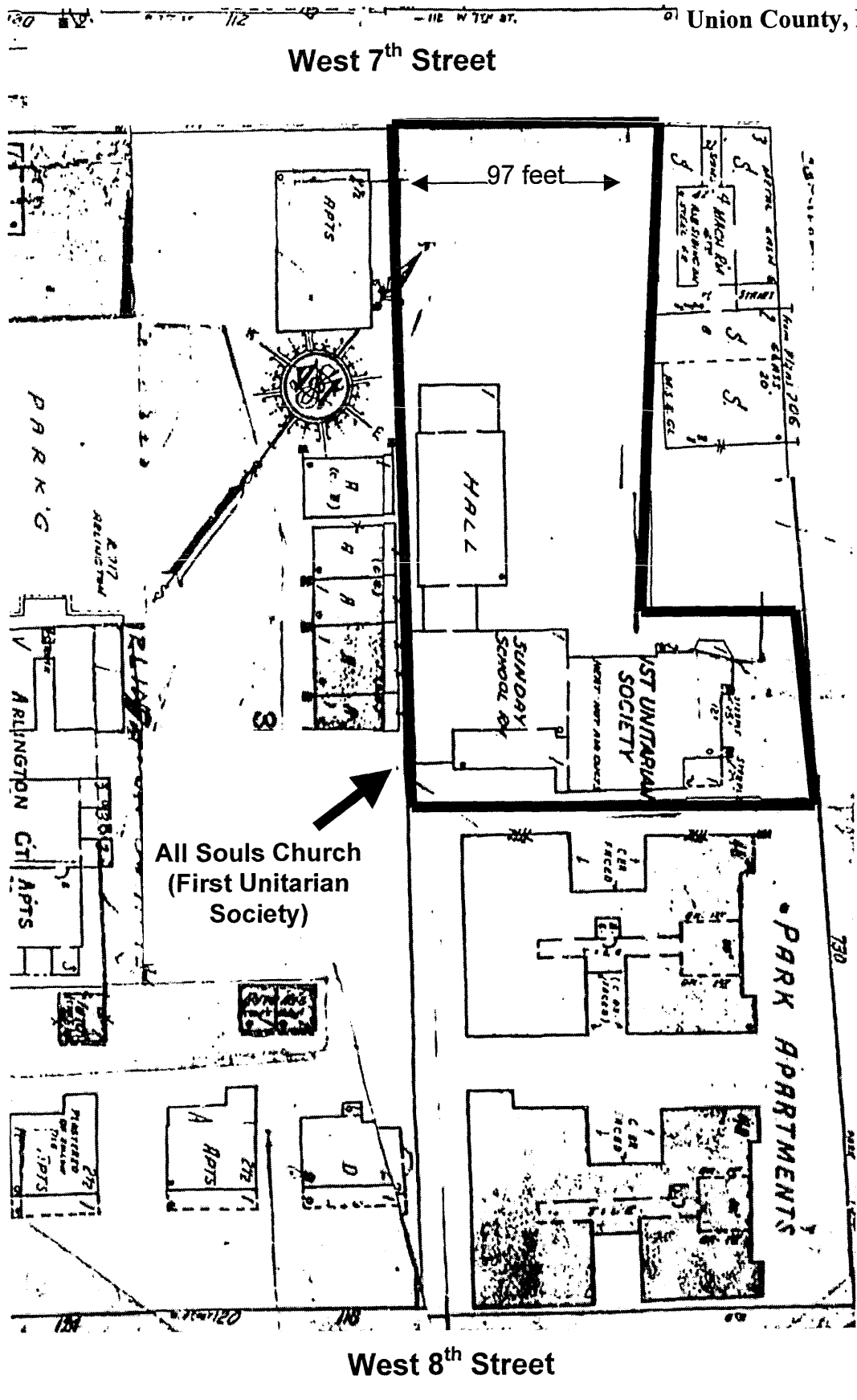
NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section Photographs Page 2

All Souls Church (First Unitarian Society of Plainfield)
City of Plainfield, Union County, New Jersey

-
28. Parish Hall, typical classroom, now used as coat room.
 29. Stevens Wing at right. Parish Hall visible at center. Church visible in background at left.
 30. Stevens Wing corridor, looking northeast to north entrance.
 31. Stevens Wing, typical classroom.

All Souls Church
Plainfield City
Union County, New Jersey
Site Plan



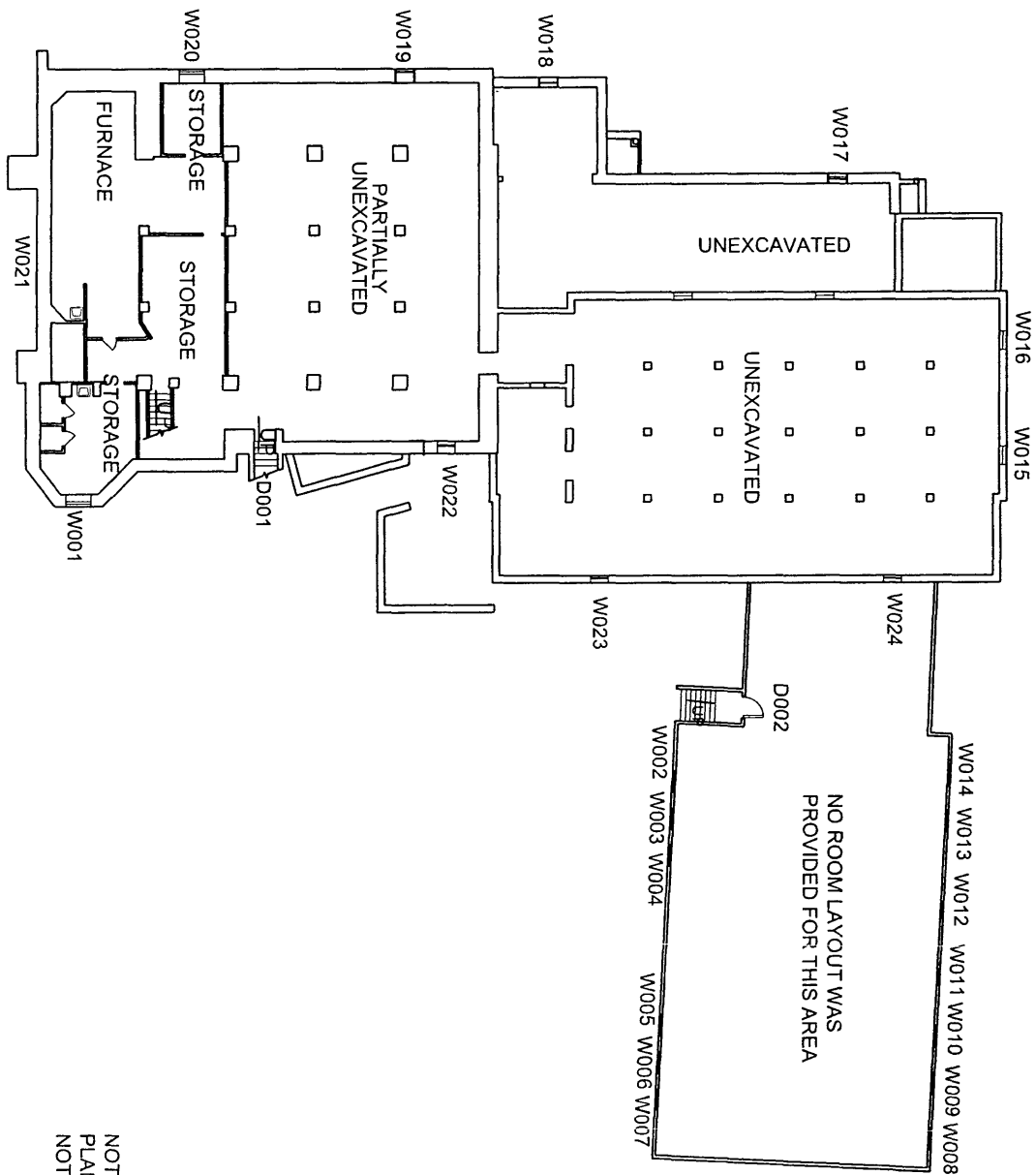
West 7th Street

Park Avenue

All Souls Church
(First Unitarian
Society)

West 8th Street

PARK APARTMENTS



NOTE:
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 Certificate of Authorization # AC 245 Expires 01/31/2008

Preservation Plan
First Unitarian Society of Plainfield
 724 Park Avenue
 Plainfield, New Jersey 07060

Revisions & Submissions	Date
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_____	_____

Date:
12/31/07

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CB

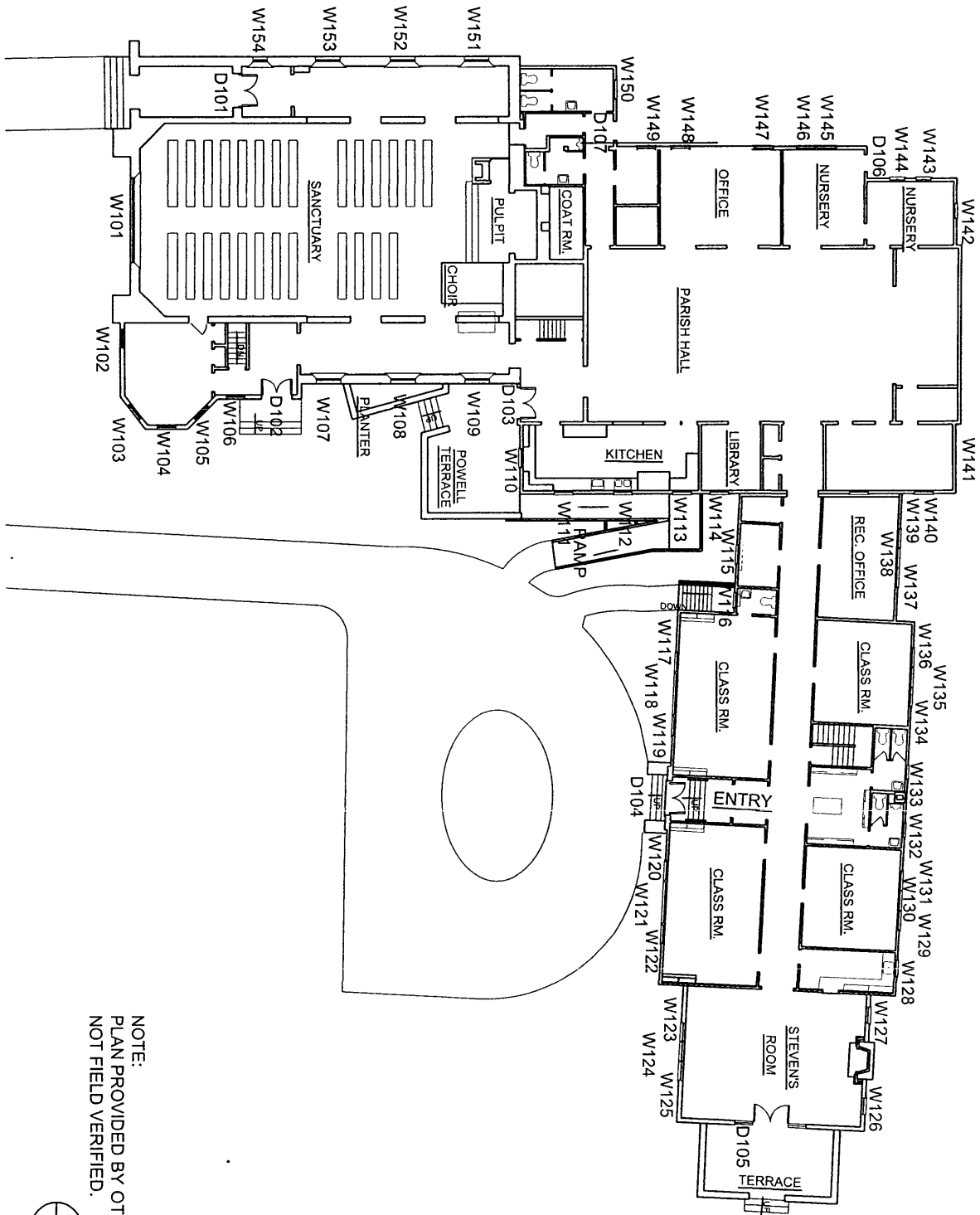
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ANNABELLE GADOLFI-TOSNER P.A. NJR A1 13715
 MICHAEL CALAFATI P.A. NJR A10029

BASEMENT PLAN

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All Souls Church (First Unitarian Society of Plainfield)
 Union County, New Jersey



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ANNABELLE RADCLIFFE-FREEMER P.A. NLP A112776
 MICHAEL CALAFATE P.A. NLP A109207

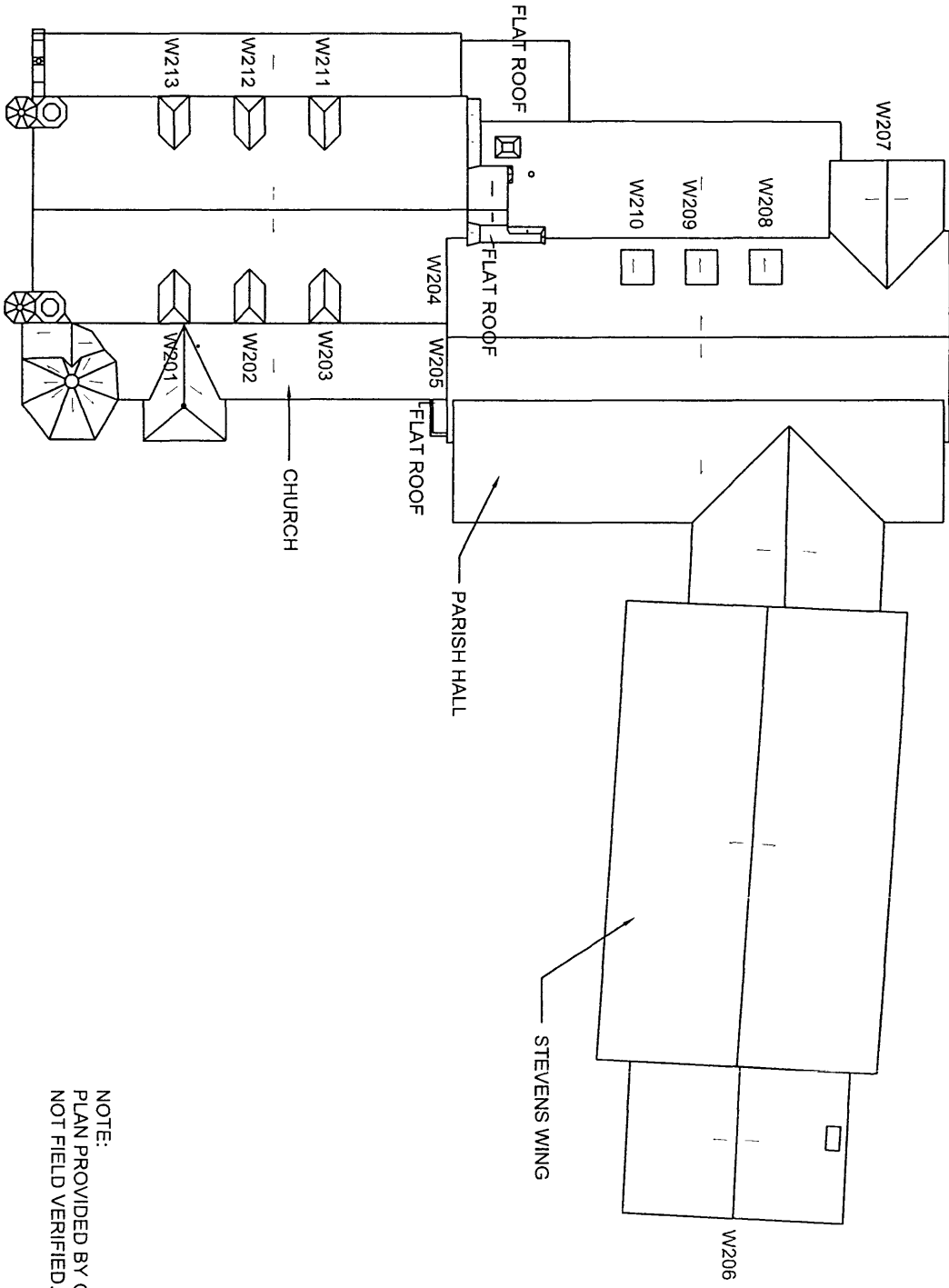
Preservation Plan
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FIRST FLOOR PLAN

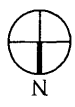
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All Souls Church (First Unitarian Society of Plainfield)
 Union County, New Jersey



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Date:
12/31/07

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Scale:
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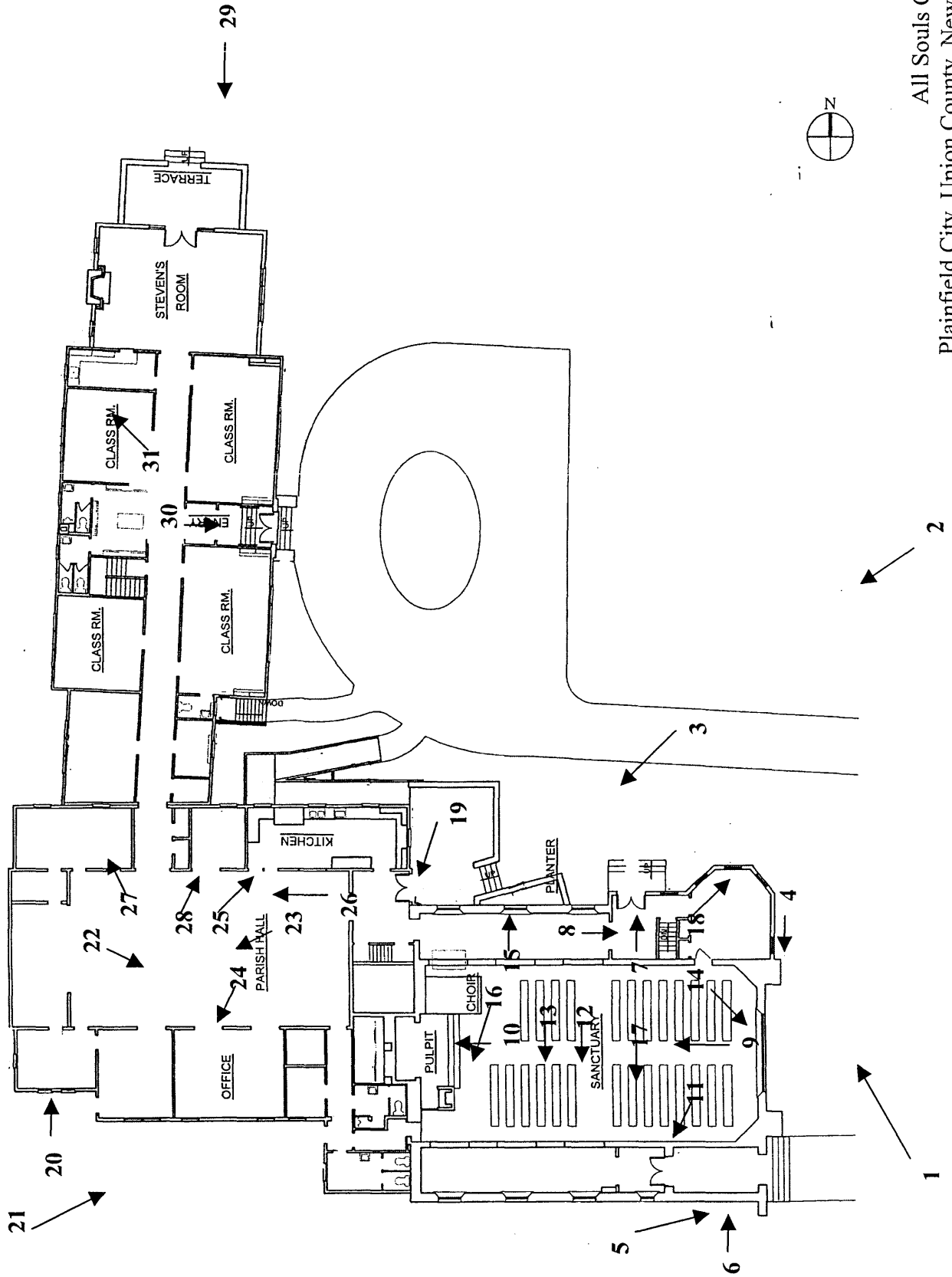
ANNABELLE RADCIFF-TREHNER P.A. NJ# AJ 13774
 MICHAEL CHAKRABARTI P.A. NJ# 480907

ROOF PLAN

A-1.20

All Souls Church (First Unitarian Society of Plainfield)
 Union County, New Jersey

Photo Key



All Souls Church
Plainfield City, Union County, New Jersey

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

All Souls Church (First Unitarian Society of Plainfield) City of Plainfield, Union County, New Jersey

Accompanying Documentation

First design for First Unitarian Society of Plainfield by Oscar Schutte Teale. Teale used this design in one of his many advertisements. Oscar S. Teale Scrapbooks, Avery Library, Columbia University.



Second design for First Unitarian Society of Plainfield by Oscar Schutte Teale. Scrapbooks, Archives, First Unitarian Society of Plainfield.

