

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): _____

Patrick Andrus
Signature of Keeper 7/21/2007
Date
of Action

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

| Contributing | Noncontributing |
|--------------|------------------|
| <u>1</u> | _____ buildings |
| _____ | _____ sites |
| _____ | _____ structures |
| _____ | _____ objects |
| <u>1</u> | _____ Total |

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

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

N/A

=====
6. Function or Use
=====

Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: RELIGION Sub: religious facility

Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: RECREATION AND CULTURE Sub: auditorium

=====
7. Description
=====

Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions)

Richardsonian Romanesque

Materials (Enter categories from instructions)

foundation granite
roof slate
walls granite
other _____

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

=====
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.)

- 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.

Areas of Significance (Enter categories from instructions)

Architecture

Period of Significance 1889-1891

Significant Dates _____

Significant Person (Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

Cultural Affiliation _____

Architect/Builder Amos Porter Cutting (Architect)
Alexander Dallas (Builder)

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

=====

9. Major Bibliographical References

=====

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

Previous documentation on file (NPS)

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

Primary Location of Additional Data

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

Name of repository: _____

=====

10. Geographical Data

=====

Acreage of Property .38 Acres

UTM References (Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

| | Zone | Easting | Northing | Zone | Easting | Northing |
|---|-----------|-------------------------|----------------|------|---------|----------|
| 1 | <u>18</u> | <u>684747</u> | <u>4615004</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 James Sexton

organization _____ date 14 July 2006

street & number 274 Clinton Avenue telephone 914.235-8074

city or town New Rochelle state NY zip code 10801

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 7 Page 6

Trinity Methodist Episcopal Church
name of property
Hartford, CT
county and State

DESCRIPTION

Trinity-on-Main is a monumental and complex Richardsonian Romanesque Revival style church building, articulated in granite and slate, located on the southeast corner of the prominent intersection of Main and Chestnut Streets at the southeast edge of downtown New Britain. It was erected in 1889. The height, scale, massing, materials and decorative work employed in the design are all hallmarks of this ambitious architectural style.

Four distinct elements define the mass and functional hierarchy of the original structure. (See plans and elevations.) A 108-foot turreted square tower in three distinct sections and capped with a pyramidal roof houses the entrance vestibule and acts as the vertical focus of the building. The tower is flanked to the north by the wide sweep of the Sunday School rotunda, clearly expressing its "Akron Plan" interior, with a small attached secondary entrance. To the south, a much smaller octagonal two-story office wing flanks the tower. To the east of these three major elements is the large hip-roofed rectilinear mass of the clerestoried auditorium or sanctuary. Invisible from almost all vantage points is a small fifth element, a two-story space tucked between the office and the sanctuary. Its one distinguishing feature is a rounded southeast corner. The original portion of the church appears massive and permanent with its vast expanses of masonry and slate. The horizontality of the building, emphasized by decorative banding, acts as visual foil for the soaring tower with its red roof.

In 1935, a new organ house was added to the southeast corner of the auditorium. The hip-roof, cinder-block building abutting the eastern elevation of Trinity-on-Main, while originally built for church use in 1967, is now a legally separate as well as physically distinct property (19 Chestnut Street) that is not included in this nomination.

Two types of granite and two types of slate are used in the building to create a polychromatic design. The tower is constructed of a light gray granite and crowned by a distinctive red slate roof. (Photo 1) The western face of the secondary entrance and its northern side where it rises above the building's roof are also clad in the same stone. (Photo 2) The remainder of the original structure is dark gray granite with the same light gray of the towers used to provide decorative contrast and accentuate architectural details. This part of the building is roofed with the more typical gray slate. All the granite is stone-faced ashlar block with narrow rope joints of a reddish-brown mortar. (Photo 3) The rectangular roof slates are accented with copper gutters, downspouts, flashing and hip knobs that have weathered to a green patina. In some places on the building these elements have been replaced with different materials. The roof of the secondary entrance has terra-cotta cresting.

The exterior of the building is enlivened primarily by the different shapes and volumes of its parts and by the use of the two colors of stone

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 7 Page 7

Trinity Methodist Episcopal Church
name of property
Hartford, CT
county and State

arrayed in patterns. The walls of the auditorium, Sunday school room, and office are planar with deep set windows. Light colored bands of stones and panels of checkerboard masonry highlight the apertures and make these walls more interesting than they would have been if executed in a single color. A dentil course caps the walls just below the roof line (and at this level on the towers). (Photo 4) The horizontal banding of the masonry adds to the building's sense of weight and solidity.

The two towers with the primary entrances were handled in a different way. Here the architect used columns and turrets to distinguish these elements from the rest of the building. To balance out the more flamboyant use of decorative elements these two elements are made out of just the lighter colored granite. (The lighter colored stone also emphasizes the lightness and verticality of the entrance sections, creating tension between the towers and the heavier, dark granite elements in the structure.) The chief decorative elements that the architect employed were engaged columns, with foliate capitals, and turrets. A single column separates the doors of the main entrance at the base of the tower. They are also used, at a smaller scale, to separate a band of four windows above this entrance. Similar columns are also used to support the roof over the open porch in the third section at the top of the tower. (Photos 5 and 6) The entrance at the northwest corner of the building is also elaborated with columns. In this case, the door is flanked on each side by a group of four engaged columns while an engaged column of much greater diameter sits just to the north of the entrance, anchoring the corner of the building. (Photos 7 and 8) Both the large tower that contains the main entrance and the much smaller tower at the northwest corner have turrets at their corners that rise above the roof and terminate in pinnacles. (Photo 9) Since the roof of the smaller tower merges into the roof of the Sunday school room on its south side, only the northern corners have these pinnacles.

There are four entrances into the main building. The two primary entrances exhibit similarities in quality but differences in scale. The entrance in the tower contains two single doors with two horizontal panels and glazed uppers. Each sits under a semi-circular stained glass transom. (Photo 10) The entrance at the northwestern corner of the building is a pair of double doors under a single semi-circular transom containing gold lettering spelling out "Trinity M.E. Church." (Photo 11) A double door entrance to the cellar of the building exists at the eastern end of the northern wall of the original structure. A nine-panel door with central light was inserted in the lower half of a window in the eastern end of the southern wall of the auditorium after 1967. It lies at the top of a wheelchair access ramp with a small pent roof covering the top landing.

The building has a number of different types of windows. All are set deep within the masonry, with their location emphasized by the light grey stone, either as the lintels and sills of the rectangular windows or as light colored arches over the round top ones. When rectangular windows are vertically

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 7 Page 8

Trinity Methodist Episcopal Church
name of property
Hartford, CT
county and State

paired, they are treated as a single unit, with the two windows being separated by patterned stonework. The vast majority of the original windows contained leaded stained glass. While many of these were damaged over time, and others were removed to protect them from damage or to move them to the congregation's new home, there are still only three windows that do not now or did not at one point have colored glass in them. This does not include the cellar windows, which are not visible because they have been closed up. The majority of the windows in the building are also double-hung. In addition to the double-hung windows there are a number of rectangular, semi-circular and round-topped fixed sash.

Interior

On the ground floor are seven distinct spaces: two entryways, two offices (which may have originally been parlors), the stairs, the Sunday school room, and the sanctuary. These spaces are arranged around the main entrance hall or narthex. (See plan) To the south of the hall are two offices flanking the building's stairs. To the east is the sanctuary and to north is the apsidal Sunday school room. The secondary entrance to the building is on the north side of the Sunday school room. The arrangement of rooms on the ground floor, with the Sunday school room and the sanctuary adjoining, is characteristic of a plan type known as "the Akron plan." The second story contains two more rooms over the ground floor offices while the cellar contains a series of interconnected spaces. A consistent set of materials -- golden oak trim, plaster walls, and stained glass -- was used throughout the building to finish the above grade interiors. In contrast to the rough, weighty exterior of the building, the resulting interior spaces are warm and filled with light and delicate elements.

While the above-grade finished spaces in the building all employ the same elements, there is a distinct hierarchy created by the different volumes of the spaces and the way in which these materials are used within them. The most highly decorated of the spaces are the sanctuary and Sunday school room. The next level of finish is used for the entryways, stairs, and offices. And the simplest rooms are the two on the second floor. The cellar has been refinished on several occasions; its original appearance is difficult to discern.

The sanctuary and Sunday school room are clearly the grandest spaces in the building. It is here where the warmth and lightness of the building is most evident. These two rooms are the only multi-story finished spaces in the building.

In the sanctuary the room rises from the flat auditorium floor to a luminous wooden ceiling with arcing rafters and beadboard infill that rises in two gentle curves from plaster walls. (Photo 12) The octagonal plan of the room and the pairs of dormers in both the north and south slopes of the roof make this a very complex ceiling. In the sanctuary, eight cast iron pilasters and four cast iron columns support the ceiling. The pilasters and eastern columns

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 7 Page 9

Trinity Methodist Episcopal Church
name of property
Hartford, CT
county and State

are painted to resemble oak; the two western columns were clad in oak during renovations in the 1960s. (Photo 13) All of the original pilasters and columns have foliate capitals. (Photo 14)

The focal point of the room is the chancel. (Photo 15) While this area was incrementally modified, mainly in the years from 1935-1967, it has remained in harmony with the original parts of the sanctuary. Most of the religious furniture was moved out of the building when the congregation moved into the modern addition. However, the marble topped altar and a low rail remain in place on a platform centered on the eastern wall. (The platform rises in two stages, with the railing at the level of the first step and the altar three steps higher.) This raised section is flanked by two square rooms partitioned off at each corner of the wall. These run from the exterior walls to just inside the support columns and do not quite reach the level of the ceiling. The partitions have paneled wainscoting on their lower level with gathered fabric behind a wooden framework above. (Photo 16) They were added during a renovation in the 1960s. Behind the southern partitions is the 1935 addition that housed the organ installed at that time.

Opposite the chancel, the western wall of the room is dominated by the sliding doors that link the sanctuary and Sunday school room. (Photos 17 and 18) (This arrangement is the cornerstone of the Akron plan design.) The glass panels include abstract floral designs and figurative religious imagery. The combination of the glass and the oak of the doors and their surround create a bright and lively counterpoint to the chancel. The angled walls flanking the connection to the Sunday school room contain paired doors into the two entry spaces.

The northern and southern walls of the sanctuary are dominated by stained glass. In each case, a band of tall double-hung windows with non-figurative designs dominates the wall to the beginning of the ceiling. The northern wall has pairs of windows flanking a group of three in the middle. (Photo 19) On the southern wall, the central section contains a matching trio of windows but the pair to the east has been modified to include an exterior door and the western expanse of wall included only a door to the eastern office. Above the central trio of windows on both walls is a large demi-lune window, each with a clearly religious subject. In the ceiling above each of these is an abstract tripartite window, with a round-headed window flanked by a pair of rectangular ones. The floor of the auditorium is filled with tilt-up theater-type seating arranged in four arcing sections with three aisles running from wall to wall and facing the altar. (Photo 20) As with the other woodwork in the sanctuary, the seating is constructed of golden oak. As with many of the other decorative elements in the building, ends of the seats repeat elements and shapes used on the exterior of the building. In this case, both arches and pyramidal finials were used to decorate the seating. (Photo 21) Lanterns suspended from the ceiling appear to have been some of the early lighting in this space. (Photo 22) The floors in this room, and throughout the ground floor, are mostly

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 7 Page 10

Trinity Methodist Episcopal Church
name of property
Hartford, CT
county and State

covered with carpet. Where they are visible, they are diagonally laid, painted wood.

Similar materials are used in the Sunday school room to create an equally striking room. In this case, the apsidal shape of the room leads to a slightly simpler ceiling but one that relies on the same decorative approach of exposed rafters and beadboard infill. The ceiling of the Sunday school room is interrupted by a band of stained glass clerestory windows. The roof of the Sunday school room is supported on a series of wooden columns that also support the room's balcony. The balcony and all of its visible elements, including the stairs, banisters and balusters are fashioned from oak. (Photo 23) The underside of the balcony is treated in the same way as the ceilings of the two main spaces. The walls on both levels are finished with elaborate oak wainscoting below plaster walls. A series of modern partitions were added under the balcony to create small rooms. Double hung, non-representational stained glass windows provide natural light to both levels of the room. (Photo 24)

The entries, stairs and ground floor offices all have a similar decorative program. The walls in these spaces are plastered above wainscoting, with elaborate wooden trim around windows and doors. In the eastern office, the wainscoting, trim and fireplace surround all maintain their golden oak finish; in the office to the west of the stairs all of the woodwork has been painted white. (Photo 25) It is thought that both offices originally had golden oak woodwork. The two entries also receive oak trim and wainscoting. Neither has a fireplace. The stairs were also trimmed with oak and bordered by oak wainscoting. (Photo 26) With the exception of the office to the east of the stairs the windows, where they remain, are all stained glass. These windows are all non-representational. (Representational designs were only used in the glazing that was visible from the sanctuary.) The majority of the windows are double hung, although there are some fixed windows as well. The doors are all oak and when they retain their glazing it includes colored elements. While the eastern office has no stained glass windows, the door between it and the auditorium does contain a large stained-glass panel. Combination gas and electric sconces, like the one on the landing between the first and second floor are thought to represent the earliest lighting in this part of the building. (Photo 27) The ceilings of the entryways match the ceilings in the two main rooms, with exposed joists or rafter and bead board infill. In the entryways, however, the beadboard has been painted white. (Photo 28) The ceilings in the offices are obscured by modern dropped ceilings.

On the second floor, the two rooms and landing are decorated with some but not all of the elements used on the ground floor. The eastern room does not have any stained glass. Above the wainscoting, plaster rises to the ceiling in all the spaces up to the second floor. In the room over the office the walls are plaster from the baseboard to the ceiling. There is no wainscoting but there all of the windows have stained glass. The landing between the two rooms

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 7 Page 11

Trinity Methodist Episcopal Church
name of property
Hartford, CT
county and State

is also without wainscoting, with the exception of the northern wall which is sheathed with beadboard. While the ceilings of the offices on the ground floor are obscured by modern materials, on the upper floor, some of the panels of the dropped ceiling in the western room had been moved out of place. Above these was an elaborate plaster cornice. (Photo 29) It is thought that similar cornices may occur in the offices on the ground floor.

A rambling basement fills nearly the whole footprint of the building. This space has undergone a number of renovations. It now houses a kitchen, the former choir room, bathrooms, storage and the building's furnace.

The design of Trinity Methodist Episcopal Church relies on a limited number of elements to establish a lively design animated by interplay between contradicting elements. The heavy masonry of the building, weighed down by the large slate roof, is balanced by the soaring tower. The horizontal banding of the building's dark low walls under the grey slate roof contrasts with the vertical thrust of the light colored tower with its red roof. And the planar walls of the majority of the building make the highly elaborated entrance towers stand out. The inside of the building provides a similar experience. The light and airy interior creates a surprising contrast with exterior. This difference is highlighted by the bright colors of the spaces and the light filtering through the many stained glass windows. It is also emphasized by the choice of materials, with the many wooden surfaces being pleasant to the touch in contrast to the rough stone of the exterior.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 8 Page 12

Trinity Methodist Episcopal Church
name of property
Hartford, CT
county and State

For more than 110 years 69 Main Street in New Britain was the home of the Trinity Methodist Episcopal Church; it is now being re-used as a performing arts center. Constructed by the congregation during the community's heyday as a manufacturing center, this church is a stellar and extremely intact example of the Richardsonian Romanesque Revival style and one of the highlights of the career of architect Amos P. Cutting (1839-1896). Cutting's design, undertaken by a group of local contractors and builders, displayed one of the prevailing architecture styles of the period on the exterior while containing a classic example of the "Akron Plan" on the interior.

The church was built over the course of three years, from the cornerstone laying in 1889 to the dedication of the church in October of 1891. It was the third Methodist building constructed on this site. While the first meeting of the Methodists in New Britain took place in 1816 they did not acquire a site for their first church until 1828. This building was erected in the 1830s; it was replaced in 1855. By 1889 the congregation felt that a new structure was needed.¹

HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE

Methodism had a rocky start in New Britain. According to tradition, the group was so disliked by the community that the land for the original church needed to be purchased by someone unrelated to the congregation because no one would sell to the Methodists.² The congregation grew steadily, reaching more than 430 members and a Sunday school of more than 450 by 1888.³ The growth of the congregation continued for many years after the construction of the new building. By 1915 the church had 630 members; in 1952 that number was up to 1310 members.⁴ The early 1950s appear to have been the highpoint for church membership. By 1965 the numbers had decreased to 1001 and in 1975 it was down to 699. While attrition accounted for some of the decrease, the church's own history suggests another cause as well:

Massive redevelopment within a radius of a mile from the church has eliminated the living quarters of many people. Loss or transfer of industry from the area has had its impact on the decrease of population through the city. The throes of the recession the 1970's and the consequent loss of jobs have likewise had an adverse affect

¹ Ione O. Proctor, *140th Anniversary History of the Trinity Methodist Church, 1815-1955* (self published, 1955).

² "Golden Jubilee of M.E. Church," *New Britain Herald* (April 11, 1940), n.p. (From folder in the files of the New Britain Public Library.)

³ Ibid.

⁴ Proctor, [14, 21]

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 8 Page 13

Trinity Methodist Episcopal Church
name of property
Hartford, CT
county and State

upon the membership of the church.⁵

The numbers have continued to decrease in the three decades since Ralph Gantz wrote the above. It was this decrease in membership that was one of the driving forces behind the congregation moving into the modern addition and selling the original structure.

The replacement of the church in 1889 reflects the community's prosperity at the end of the 19th century. While the area was originally settled in the 1660s it would take many steps before it would grow into the small city that it is today. The area was first part of the town of Farmington. It was designated as part of the Great Swamp Parish, later renamed Kensington, in 1705. Parts of this parish were combined with land from two adjacent societies, Farmington and Newington, to create the "New Briton" ecclesiastical society in 1754. In 1785 New Britain, Kensington and Worthington separated from Farmington and formed the new community of Berlin.⁶

By the end of the 18th century manufacturing of tinware had begun in the area. It was this industry (and related ones that grew out of it) that would drive the transformation of the sleepy farming community into a bustling manufacturing center. By 1850 Berlin was a fractured community with the majority of the population and industry in the New Britain Society and the majority of the wealth in the parishes of Kensington and Worthington. As a petition presented to the state legislature seeking Borough status for New Britain indicated, "'the greater portion' of the village's population 'was engaged in manufacturing pursuits and in the mechanical arts, and that within the limits of said society (New Britain is estimated one of the most extensive manufacturing villages in said state).'"⁷ This made it quite different from the adjoining parishes, which were still fairly rural. The dissension in the community was settled by the establishment of the separate town of New Britain in 1850. By 1870, the community's population reached 10,000 people, and the town became a city.⁸

Driven by the factories that earned New Britain the nickname "the Hardware City," the community prospered and grew. By the time that the Methodist congregation sought to build a new church in the late 1880s, the city was a wealthy manufacturing center with such well known manufacturers as Stanley and the Russell-Erwin Company. The congregants seem to have sought an architect and a building that reflected this wealth.

⁵ Ralph M. Gantz, "The Methodist Church in New Britain, 1965-1975." (From folder in the files of the New Britain Public Library.)

⁶ Patrick Thibodeau, *New Britain, The City of Invention*, (Chatsworth, Ca: Windsor Publications, 1989), p. 20-30.

⁷ Thibodeau, p. 25.

⁸ Herbert E. Fowler, *A History of New Britain*, (New Britain: The New Britain Historical Society, Inc., 1960), p. 89.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 8 Page 14

Trinity Methodist Episcopal Church
name of property
Hartford, CT
county and State

Amos P. Cutting

Amos P. Cutting was approaching the end of his career when he was chosen to design Trinity United Methodist Church. Just five years after the building was completed *The American Architect & Building News* would report his death in Los Angeles. The obituary states, "Although a man of quiet ways, he had a very large practice, and is known to have built seventy-five churches in and about Massachusetts."⁹ These include churches like the Harvard-Epworth United Methodist Church in Cambridge, Massachusetts (1891), which bears a striking resemblance to Trinity-on-Main.¹⁰ Cutting is also known to have designed the C. A. Dresser House, in Southbridge, Massachusetts (1872); New Hampshire State Library (1889); and the Kellogg-Hubbard Library in Montpelier, Vermont (1894/95).¹¹ His designs were also published in *Bicknell's Cottage and Villa Architecture* (New York: William T. Comstock, 1881).

An incident from the Cutting's final year demonstrates the regard in which his work was held. Cutting, along with the noted firms of Peabody & Stearns and Carrère and Hastings, competed to design the Worcester City Hall. While Cutting did not win the commission (Peabody & Stearns submitted the winning design), the design committee awarded a prize for the excellence of his entry.¹² He was a regionally significant architect.

The construction of the building was undertaken by a group of local workmen led by general contractors Alexander Dallas and George and Cornelius Tracy of Waterbury. Forman H. Young of New Britain provided much of the woodwork, while John Pinches, also of New Britain, provided all the mill work, built the stairs, chancel rail, and the woodwork of the galleries. John Boyle of New Britain was responsible for the painting and varnishing and F.H. Sneath of Farmington was the contractor for the slate roof.¹³

For New Britain, Cutting produced a design that combined the Romanesque Revival designs popularized by H.H. Richardson with an interior plan that met the needs of the congregation. Cutting seems to have been influenced specifically by Richardson's masterwork, Trinity Church in Boston (1874-1877), in his design of both the exterior and interior. The Romanesque Revival style

⁹ *American Architect and Building News*, vol. LI, no. 1052, February 22, 1896.

¹⁰ Transcription of "The C.A. Dresser House A Hotel in Which Southbridge Takes Pride," *The Southbridge Journal*, Oct 1896 at <http://www.dickwhitney.net/PaulCoiteuxCollection.html>; Henry F. Withey & Elsie Rathburn Withey, *Biographical dictionary of American architects (deceased)*, (Detroit, MI : Omnigraphics, 1994); "Alternatives for Historic Structures," *Possibilities for Management of Vermont's Built Environment*, Special Report, No.1, April 1976, p. 7.

¹¹ *The American Architect and Building News*, v. LI, no. 1071, (July 4, 1896), n.p.

¹² Robin Spencer, "Trinity Methodist marks special centennial," *New Britain Herald*, (May 12, 1990), n.p. (Taken from the vertical files of the New Britain Public Library.)

¹³ Brother Christopher Stephen Jenks, "The Akron Plan Sunday School," *Common Bond*, vol. 11, no. 3 (December 1995), p. 2-3.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 8 Page 15

Trinity Methodist Episcopal Church
name of property
Hartford, CT
county and State

became popular during the last quarter of the 19th century, especially for institutional or commercial buildings in Connecticut. It can be seen in Richardson's own designs for the New London train station as well as the Cheney Block in Hartford. Elsewhere, architects inspired by Richardson produced Romanesque Revival designs for communities as diverse as Southport, Norfolk, and Winsted. Wherever it is used, the style imparts a sense of romantic grandeur and solidity.

Cutting's design is a clear statement of the elements that define Richardsonian Romanesque buildings - a sense of weight and solidity from masonry and massing, a complicated collection of roof types, round-headed windows and doors, and an off-center tower. All of these disparate elements are combined in a design that is at once both unified and clearly articulated. It is clear that this is a single building with a variety of different parts, each with a different use. The architect accomplishes this by subtly differentiating among the various parts of the structure. Each element has a different roof type and different fenestration. In the case of the tower, the architect further distinguishes this element by making it out of a granite of a slightly different color.

On the interior the building is distinguished by its plan. Not only does the clear organization of the exterior continue on the interior but the plan includes an important element of 19th century ecclesiastical design: the Akron Plan. Following an innovation introduced in 1870 at the First Methodist Episcopal Church in Akron, Ohio, the Sunday school section of the church is made up of a collection of small class rooms arranged around an open space.¹⁴ This set up allowed for both large group meeting, and the division of the children into separate classes by age. In the case of Cutting's design for New Britain the class space is placed at the rear of the sanctuary, separated by large sliding doors and incorporating a balcony, to allow for teaching and seating on two levels. (The arrangement also meant that the Sunday school area could be pressed into service as a seating area for overflow crowds.) Sunday school played a large part in late 19th century Methodism; in 1862 Rev. Joseph Smith announced, "the conversion of our children is the grand object of our aim."¹⁵ Cutting's plan reflects this.

Over its nearly twelve decades of existence the church has been only slightly modified. A brick addition was built off the south east corner of the sanctuary to house a new organ in 1935 and a large masonry addition was added to the north east corner of the building in 1967. As each of these expansions

¹⁴ Jenks, 2-3.

¹⁵ "Golden Jubilee of M.E. Church," *New Britain Herald* (April 11, 1940), n.p. (From folder in the files of the New Britain Public Library.)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 8 Page 16

Trinity Methodist Episcopal Church
name of property
Hartford, CT
county and State

was undertaken with a minimum of destruction, the building has retained a great deal of architectural integrity. Even the recent deterioration of the building's exterior envelope has not yet compromised architectural integrity of the church. There are places where water infiltration has damaged plaster and woodwork but these areas are limited. In general, the structure has the characteristics, materials, and furnishings that it would have had when it first opened.

Trinity Methodist Episcopal Church remains a strong reminder of New Britain's past and of the history of the congregation. Its prominent location and striking design testify to a time when the city was at the height of its economic power, and when the congregation was robust and optimistic. The design that they chose, combining a Richardsonian Romanesque exterior with an Akron plan interior captured a moment when each of these approaches to design was at its zenith. The architect, Amos Cutting, was also at the height of his design skills. The building remains a testament to this history.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 9 Page 17

Trinity Methodist Episcopal Church
name of property
Hartford, CT
county and State

Bibliography

"Alternatives for Historic Structures." *Possibilities for Management of Vermont's Built Environment*, Special Report, No.1, April 1976, p. 7.

American Architect and Building News, v. LI, no. 1071, (July 4, 1896).

American Architect and Building News, vol. LI, no. 1052, February 22, 1896.

Fowler, Herbert E. *A History of New Britain*. New Britain: The New Britain Historical Society, Inc., 1960.

Gantz, Ralph M. "The Methodist Church in New Britain, 1965-1975." (From folder in the files of the New Britain Public Library.)

"Golden Jubilee of M.E. Church." *New Britain Herald* (April 11, 1940). (From folder in the files of the New Britain Public Library.)

Jenks, Brother Christopher Stephen. "The Akron Plan Sunday School." *Common Bond*, vol. 11, no. 3 (December 1995).

Proctor, Ione O. *140th Anniversary History of the Trinity Methodist Church, 1815-1955*. Self published, 1955.

Spencer, Robin. "Trinity Methodist Marks Special Centennial." *New Britain Herald*, (May 12, 1990). (Taken from the vertical files of the New Britain Public Library.)

"The C.A. Dresser House A Hotel in Which Southbridge Takes Pride." *The Southbridge Journal*, Oct 1896 (Transcription at <http://www.dickwhitney.net/PaulCoiteuxCollection.html>.)

Thibodeau, Patrick. *New Britain, The City of Invention*. Chatsworth, Ca: Windsor Publications, 1989.

Withey, Henry F. and Elsie Rathburn Withey. *Biographical Dictionary of American Architects (deceased)*. Detroit, MI: Omnigraphics, 1994.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 10 Page 18

Trinity Methodist Episcopal Church
name of property
Hartford, CT
county and State

Verbal Boundary Description

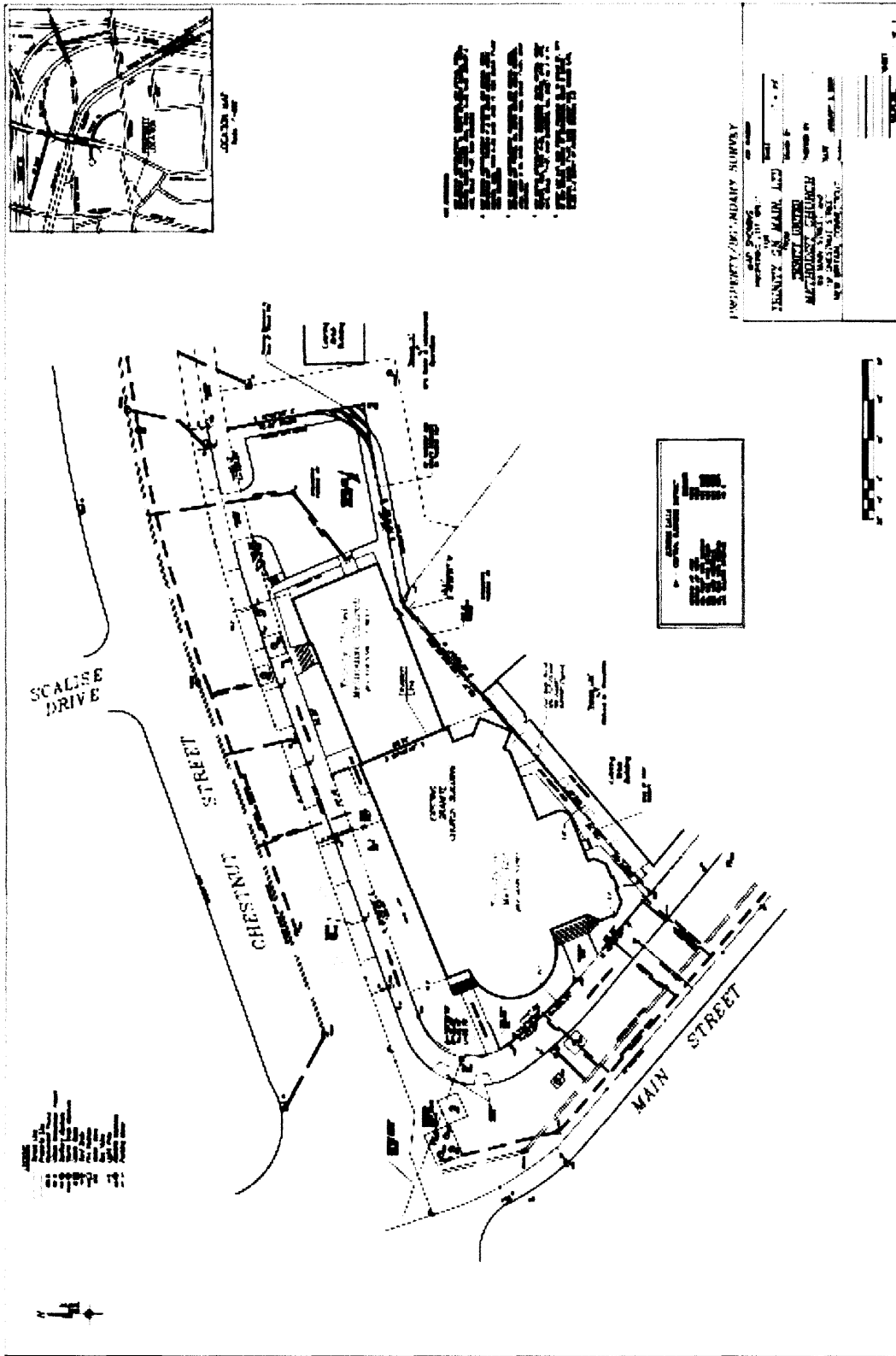
The boundaries match those of the Trinity-on-Main property, New Britain Map-Block-Lot number 382- 97- 995. (See map 2.)

Boundary Justification

The boundaries include the historic elements of the Trinity Methodist Episcopal Church building.

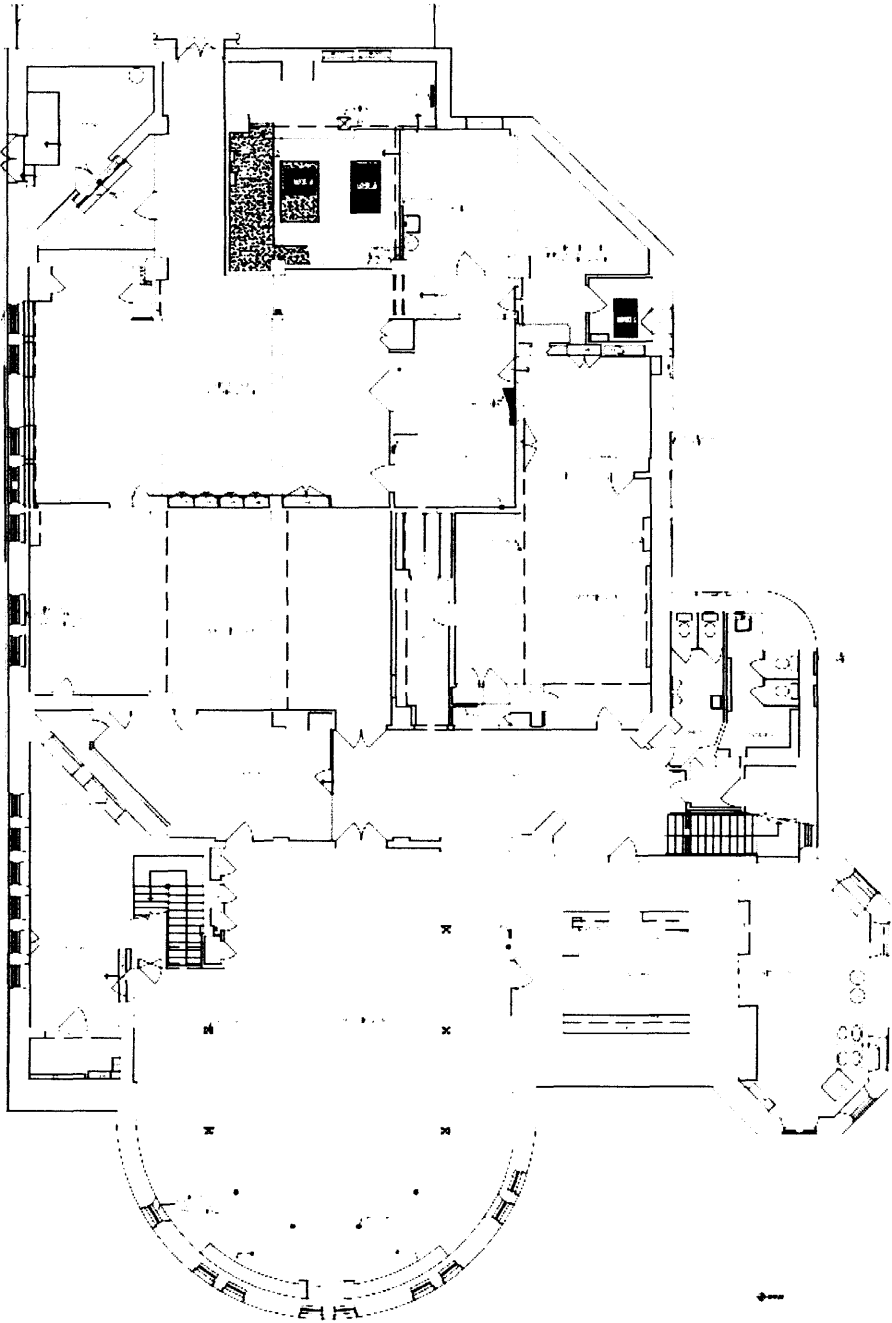


Map 1 -- The red arrow indicates the location of Trinity Methodist Episcopal Church in New Britain, CT.



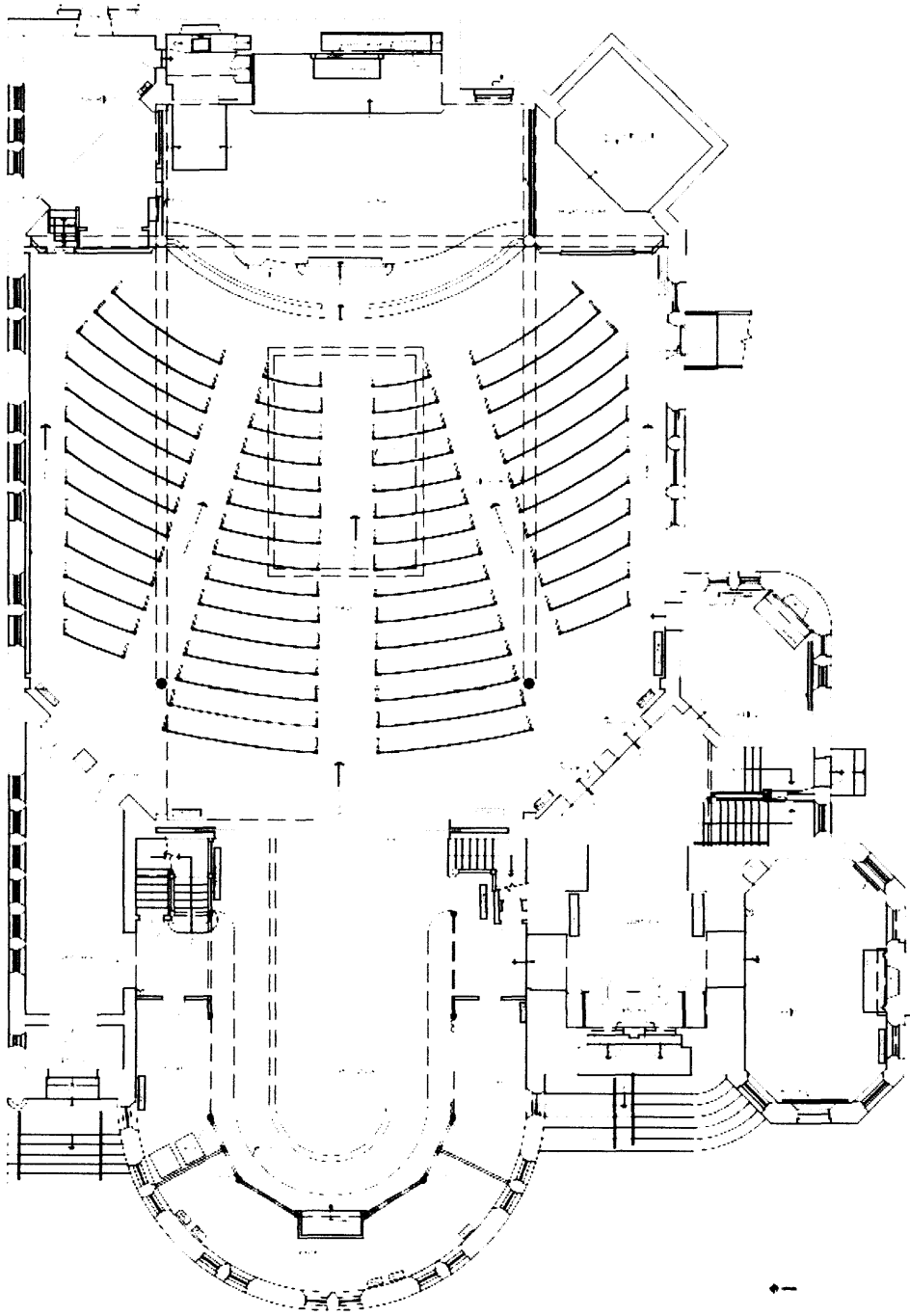
Map 2 -- The plot map for Trinity Methodist Episcopal Church in its new incarnation as Trinity-on-Main. (Courtesy of Gibble, Norden, Champion, Brown Engineers.)

Plans and Elevations



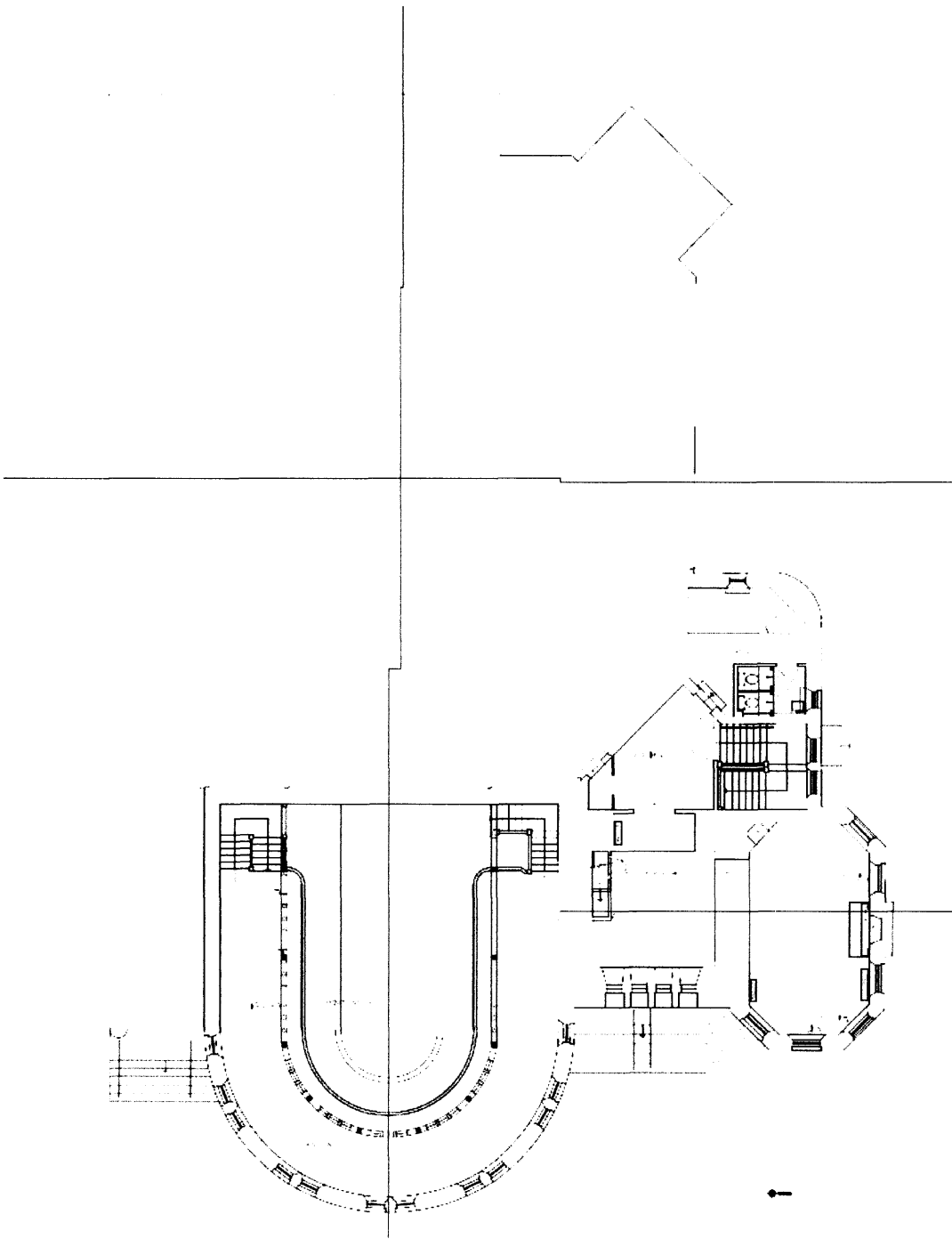
① EXISTING BASEMENT LEVEL FLOOR PLAN

Plan of the basement. (Drawings by Asbuilt Services. Courtesy of Gibble, Norden, Champion, Brown Engineers.)



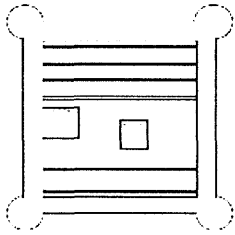
① EXISTING ENTRY LEVEL FLOOR PLAN

Plan of the First Floor. (Drawings by Asbuilt Services. Courtesy of G.N.C.B. Engineers.)

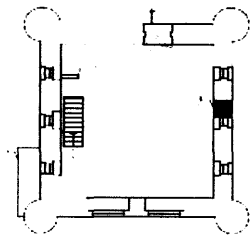


① EXISTING SECOND LEVEL FLOOR PLAN

Plan of the First Floor. (Drawings by Asbuilt Services. Courtesy of G.N.C.B. Engineers.)



3 EXISTING TOWER LEVEL TWO FLOOR PLAN



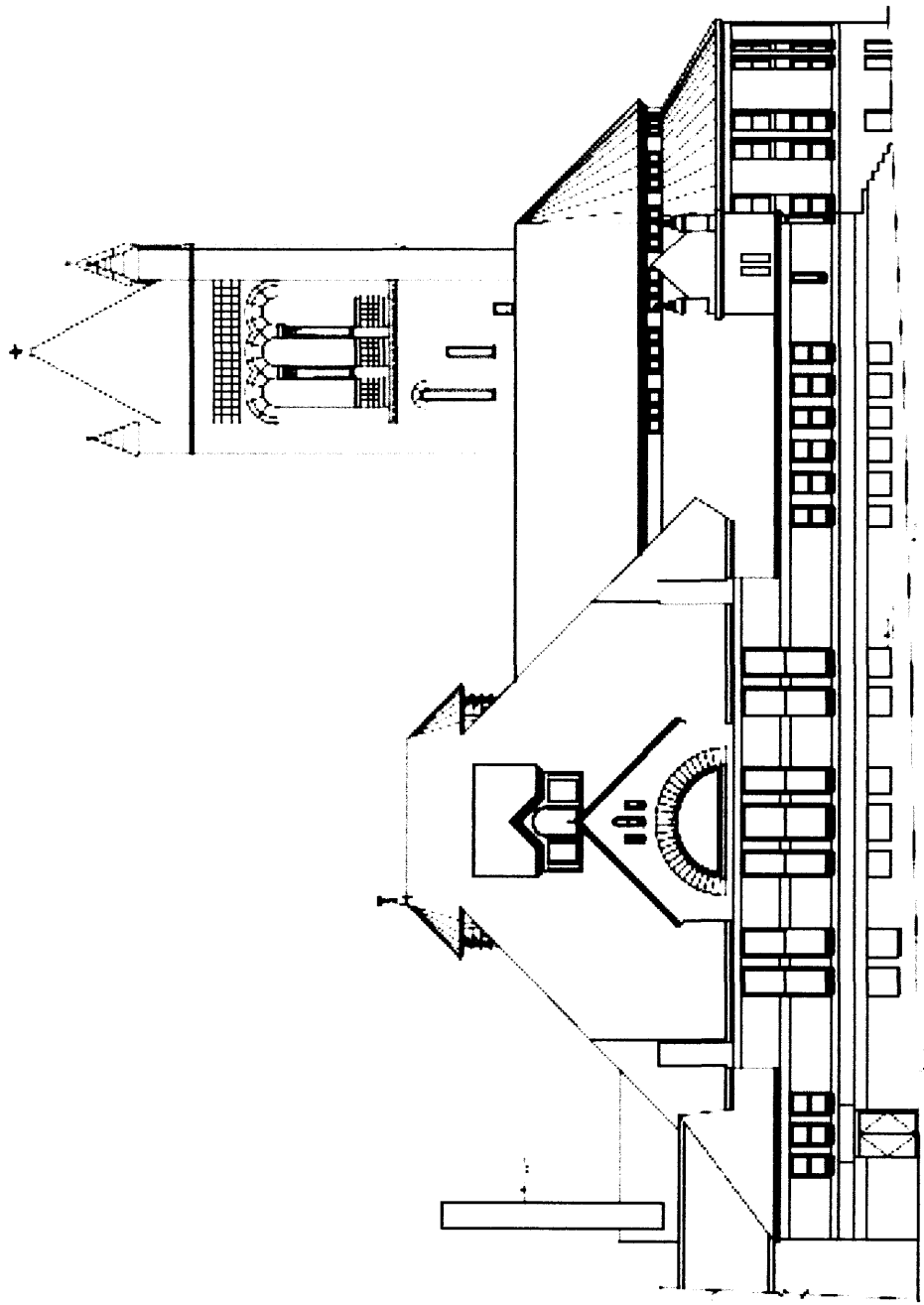
2 EXISTING TOWER LEVEL ONE FLOOR PLAN

Plan of the tower levels. (Drawings by Asbuilt Services. Courtesy of G.N.C.B. Engineers.)



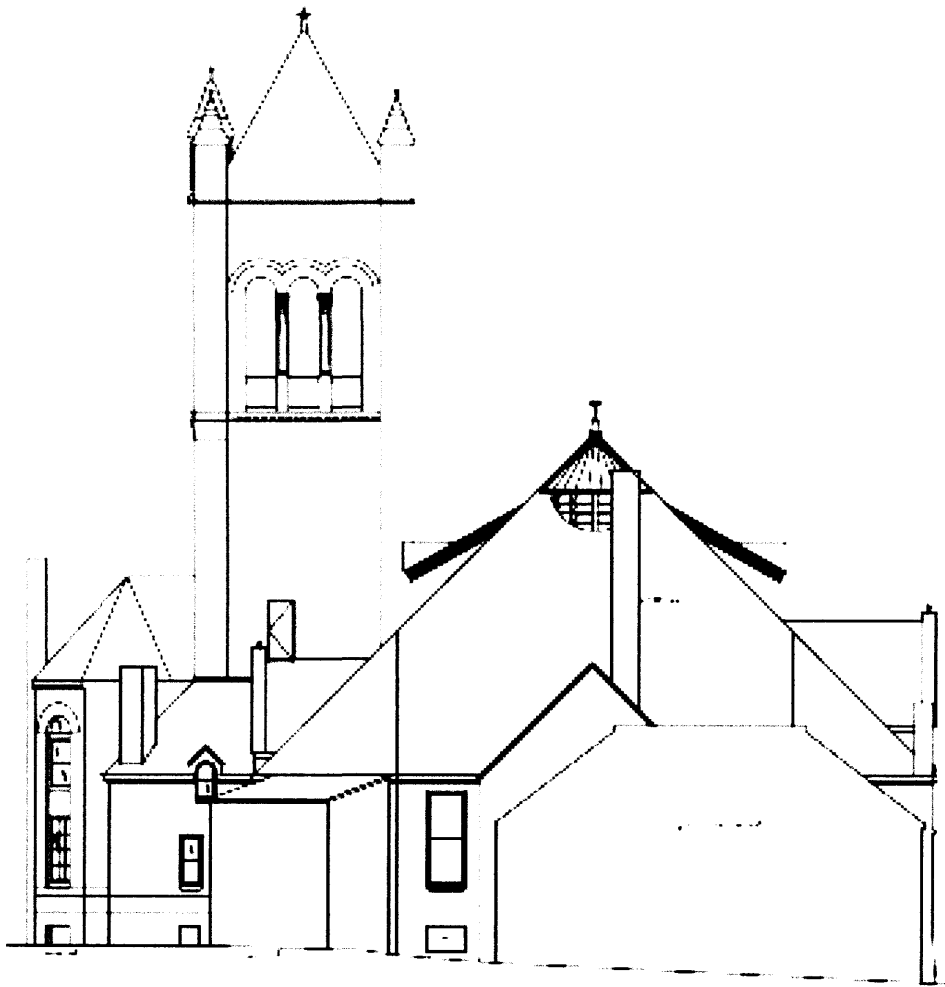
EXISTING WEST ELEVATION

West elevation. (Drawings by Asbuilt Services. Courtesy of G.N.C.B. Engineers.)



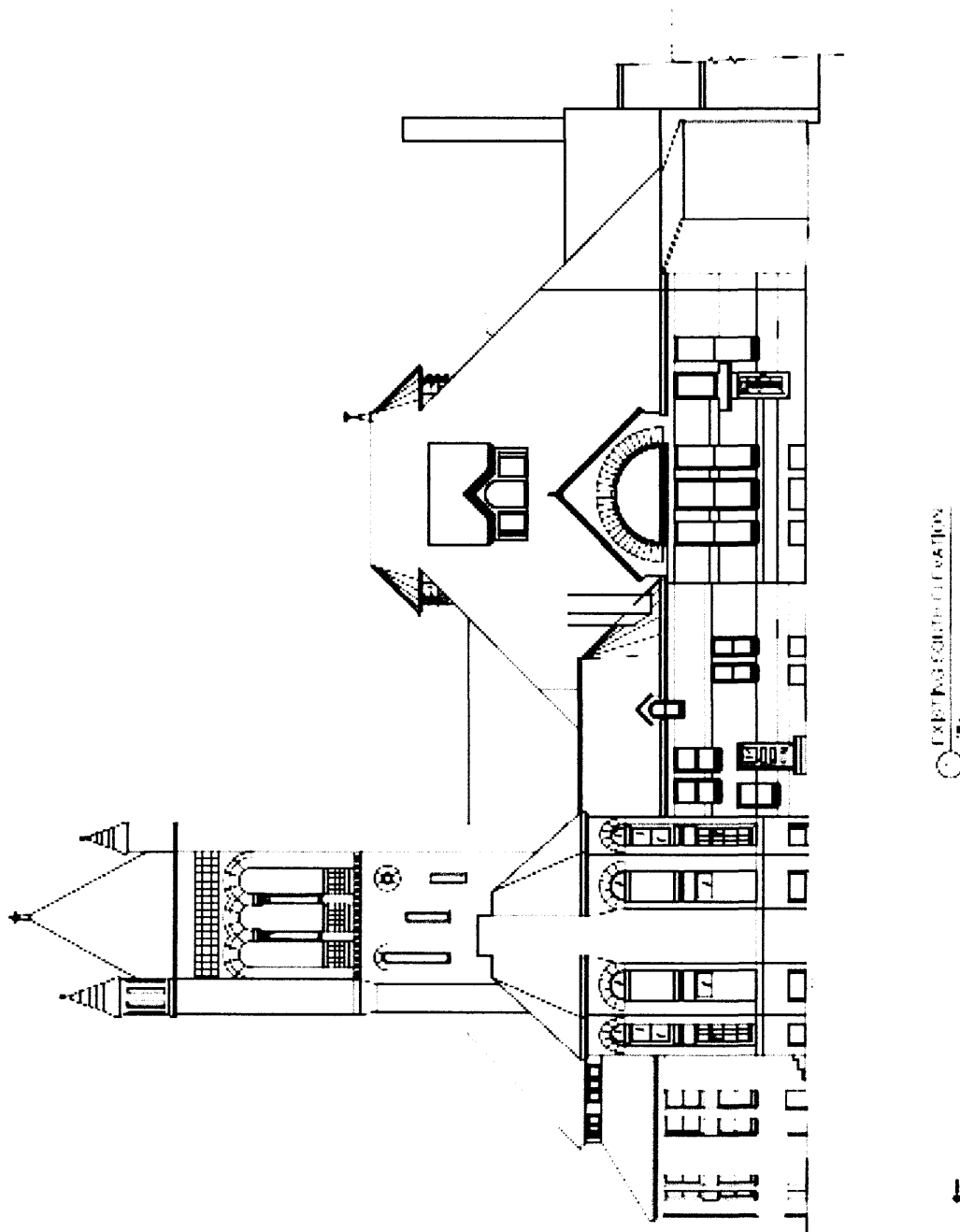
EXISTING NORTH ELEVATION

North elevation. (Drawings by Asbuilt Services. Courtesy of G.N.C.B. Engineers.)



EXISTING EAST ELEVATION

East elevation. (Drawings by Asbuilt Services. Courtesy of G.N.C.B. Engineers.)



South elevation. (Drawings by Asbuilt Services. Courtesy of G.N.C.B. Engineers.)