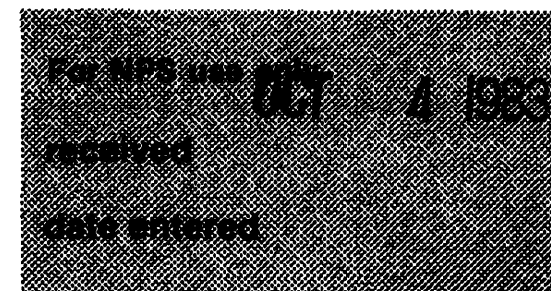


**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

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



Continuation sheet 122

Item number 7

Page 122

NAME: St. Paul's Church
LOCATION: 50 Park Place
OWNER: St. Paul's Church Corporation
50 Park Place
Pawtucket, RI 02860

CONDITION: Good; altered; original site

DESCRIPTION:

ST. Paul's Episcopal Church, a 1901 stone building of Gothic Revival style, is located on the easterly side of Wilkinson Park, in a once-fashionable residential neighborhood now eroded by commercial uses and heavy traffic. The church building occupies the southwestern corner of its large, sloping lot; a 1915 Guild House has been attached to its rear; while a 1963 office and school building stretches off from its northern rear quarter. All three sections of the complex are designed in some form of the Gothic Revival style.

The 1901 church building is patterned after the Gothic churches of fifteenth century England. Basically rectangular in plan (roughly 60 feet wide by 75 feet long) the body of the church is covered by a double-pitched gable roof, broken by gabled transepts near the eastern end, and by a range of gabled clerestory dormers between the transepts and the building's facade. A buttressed and battlemented southwestern corner tower, 24 feet square at the base, rises to a height of some 80 feet, and forms the building's principal exterior feature. Exterior walls are of a local seam-faced stone of a gray-brown tint, laid in red mortar in a random rubble pattern. The essentially flat faces of the stone impart a rather thin "papery" quality to the exterior walls. Carved brownstone trim is used extensively--for molded beltcourses, window reveals, mullions, tracery, wall and buttress coping, etc. Roofs are covered with dark gray slates. Window and door openings are of a rather blunt, pointed-arch form. The clerestory and aisle windows are doubled, as are the large, louvered openings in the belfry stage of the tower. Small, single windows appear chiefly in the middle stage of the tower, while more elaborate triple windows with traceried heads are used in both the eastern and the western ends of the nave and in both transept ends. All of these windows are filled with stained glass, most of which has been added in the years since the building was first completed.

The principal entrance into the church is through the base of the southwestern tower. A narrow baptistry stretches northward from the tower behind the building's facade; a staircase beyond the baptistry's northern

(See Continuation Sheet # 123)

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

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

For NPS use only
received OCT 4 1983
date entered

Continuation sheet 123

Item number 7

Page 123

end leads to the single, western gallery. Gothic arcades on octagonal piers separate the nave from the two side aisles in the body of the church. A handsome (if non-functional) "hammer-beam" roof covers the nave and is continued into the chancel beyond the plastered transverse arch which marks the farther side of the crossing. Walls, piers, and spandrels are white-painted plaster; the wooden roof trusses and boarding have been given a dark stain; some modest stenciling appears on some of the woodwork. An open, wooden rood screen in the form of a lacy Gothic arcade was added about 1919; the woodwork in the chancel beyond dates from a post-World War Two remodeling.

The northeastern corner of the main building contains a sacristy and clergy vestry; the opposite (southeastern) corner contains a small morning chapel. Incorporated into this chapel are a variety of architectural fragments from the original (1816-17) building erected for this parish: a Federal-style Palladian altar window enframing, with mid-nineteenth-century stained glass; three sunken-panel Federal doors; Federal pew paneling reused as wainscot; and a delicate Federal cornice, appropriately reused beneath a coved, plastered ceiling. Other relics salvaged from the original building can be found in other portions of the church: the 1817 Paul Revere bell was rehung in the 1901 belfry; the original, white marble baptismal font has been reused in the baptistry; a pair of mid-nineteenth-century marble plaques, memorials to Samuel Slater and David Wilkinson, have found a new home in the vestibule; and an exquisite mid-nineteenth-century crystal chandelier, given to the church by Samuel Slater's widow, now hangs above the northern aisle.

PERIOD: 1900-

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE: Architecture, Religion

SPECIFIC DATES: 1901, 1915, 1963, and fragments of 1816-17

ARCHITECT: Saunders & Thornton (Providence);
Gorham Henshaw (Providence);
Milton Nelson (Providence)

SIGNIFICANCE:

St. Paul's Church is architecturally significant as a representative example of the style of Gothic Revival church architecture popular in this country at the turn of the century; it is, as well, the repository of a variety of handsome architectural fragments salvaged from the original, Federal-style church on this site. Historically, St. Paul's is significant as the present home of the Episcopal parish founded by Samuel Slater and David Wilkinson in 1815. The first Episcopal parish in Pawtucket (and the fifth in Rhode Island) St. Paul's has spawned no fewer than ten

(See Continuation Sheet # 124)

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

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

For NPS use only
received OCT 4 1977
date entered

Continuation sheet 124

Item number 7

Page 124

additional parishes in the Blackstone Valley area. Although St. Paul's is a church-owned property and would not, therefore, ordinarily be eligible for inclusion in the National Register, the property derives its primary significance from its architectural character and historical associations and it is nominated on that basis.

St. Paul's parish in Pawtucket was organized in 1815 as an offshoot of St. John's in Providence. Two of the principal patrons of the new parish were Samuel Slater, the English-born "Father of American Manufacturers,"¹ and David Wilkinson, the almost equally famous "Founder of the American Machine-Tool Industry."² Slater became the first Senior Warden of St. Paul's; Wilkinson was named a vestryman; both men made heavy financial contributions to the fledgling parish. Samuel Slater had founded one of the first American "Sunday schools" in Pawtucket in the 1790s. This was originally organized along the lines of the schools established by Robert Raikes in England and was initially conceived as a way to educate Pawtucket's juvenile mill-workers while curbing their alleged rowdiness on their single day off from work. By the 1810s, however, Slater's Sunday School had evolved into a church-run effort chiefly devoted to the memorization of Bible verses. With the formation of St. Paul's in 1815, the earlier Sunday School was absorbed into the activities of the new parish.

The original wooden church building of St. Paul's was erected on the easterly side of Church Hill in 1816-17. The building's plan is said to have been drawn by the first rector, Rev. John L. Blake; the master carpenter appears to have been Elias Dunbar of Providence. A Gothic Revival tower (probably designed by the Providence architects, Tallman & Bucklin) was added in 1843; the building survived in this form until the turn of the century. The stone church building which replaced it in 1901 was designed by Saunders & Thornton of Providence. The 1915 Guild House, erected of brick in the Tudor Revival style, was designed by Gorham Henshaw, also

¹Rivard, Paul E., Samuel Slater: Father of American Manufacturers (Pawtucket: Slater Mill Historic Site, 1974).

²Kulik, Gary and Malone, Patrick M. "A National Historic Mechanical Engineering Landmark: The Wilkinson Mill, 1811, Pawtucket, Rhode Island" (The American Society of Mechanical Engineers, 1977), p. 5.

(See Continuation Sheet # 125)

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

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

For NPS use only
received OCT 4 1983
date entered

Continuation sheet 125

Item number 7

Page 125

of Providence, while the 1963 brick office wing came out of the office of C.E. Maguire & Associates, Engineers (Milton Nelson, project architect).

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION:

The nominated property is Pawtucket Assessor's Plat 53B, lot 530, and includes St. Paul's Church, Guild House, and office wing and their immediate surroundings.

ACREAGE: less than one

LEVEL OF SIGNIFICANCE: Local

UTM: A 19 301890 4638520

(See Continuation Sheet #126)