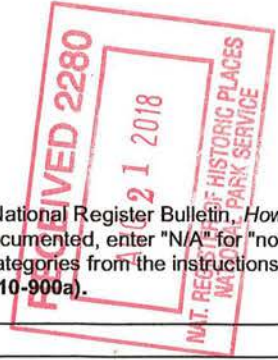


United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form



This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. 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 certification comments, entries, and narrative items on continuation sheets if needed (NPS Form 10-900a).**

1. Name of Property

historic name First Unitarian Church

other names/site number Unitarian Universalist Church / 52-01739

Name of Multiple Property Listing _____

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

2. Location

street & number 10 South Gilbert Street not for publication

city or town Iowa City vicinity

state Iowa county Johnson zip code 52240

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,

I hereby certify that this x 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 x meets ___ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance: ___ national ___ statewide x local

Applicable National Register Criteria: ___ A ___ B x C ___ D

[Signature] Signature of certifying official/Title: Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer Date 20 AUG 2018

State Historical Society of Iowa
State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of commenting official Date

Title State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register determined eligible for the National Register
- determined not eligible for the National Register removed from the National Register
- other (explain:)

[Signature] Signature of the Keeper Date of Action 10/5/2018

First Unitarian Church
Name of Property

Johnson Co., Iowa
County and State

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
		site
		structure
		object
1	0	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register: 0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

RELIGION/Religious Facility

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

WORK IN PROGRESS/commercial

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

LATE 19th and EARLY 20th CENTURY
REVIVAL/Tudor Revival

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions.)

foundation: Stone
walls: Brick/Wood/Stucco
roof: Composition Shingles
other: _____

First Unitarian Church

Johnson Co., Iowa

Name of Property

County and State

Narrative Description

Summary Paragraph

First Unitarian Church is a 1½-story brick Tudor Revival building constructed in 1908 in downtown Iowa City on the northwest corner of Block 44, bounded by Iowa Avenue on the north and South Gilbert Street on the west. Designed by Boston architect Edwin J. Lewis, Jr., the church has no bell tower or steeple and more closely resembles a large residence than an ecclesiastical building. In plan, the church is an irregular T-shape with an intersecting gable roof and a raised basement supported by a rubble stone foundation. The building measures 80 ft. along the east-west axis (Iowa Avenue) and 65 ft. along the north-south axis (Gilbert Street). Exterior walls are constructed of common brick and ornamented with champ buttresses. Gable ends are clad in stucco with vertical half-timbering. Window openings are set on limestone sills with flat wood lintels or segmental brick arches. The interior design, which is intact, reflects the Arts and Crafts style popular at the time. A parsonage was constructed in 1909 adjacent to the church on the south. This house was razed to clear space for constructing an education wing in 1962, which also has been razed. Only the church remains, and it retains its historic integrity, including character-defining interior features. In 2017, First Unitarian Church was designated a local historic landmark.

Narrative Description

Description

Iowa City, the original state capital, is located in east central Iowa. The church is situated on the eastern edge of the downtown area and three blocks directly east of Old Capitol, a National Historic Landmark. The surrounding area is a mix of commercial, civic, and residential buildings, as it was when the church was built (Figs. 2, 3). However, the scale of urban development has changed. To the north, across Iowa Avenue, sits the State Historical Society of Iowa-Iowa City and, next to it on the east, a new apartment building. Diagonally across the intersection of Iowa Avenue and Gilbert Street, the University of Iowa is constructing a new building to house the School of Psychological and Brain Sciences. To the west, across Gilbert Street, there is a four-story parking structure with commercial offices on the street level. City offices, including a fire station, are located south of the church. A near-downtown residential area begins on the east side of the church. This residential area holds an abundance of late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century homes, many of which have been converted to apartments to accommodate University of Iowa students.

First Unitarian Church

Johnson Co., Iowa

Name of Property

County and State

The modest size of the church amply suited the needs of the Iowa City parish at the time it was constructed, in 1908. Its design reflects the “church home” aesthetics favored by the Western sisterhood of women ministers, more fully discussed in Section 8. Its restrained Tudor Revival design is the work of architect Edwin J. Lewis, Jr., who was drawn to vernacular medieval architecture and often worked in revival styles influenced by the Arts and Crafts Movement.¹ Exterior walls are constructed of common brick laid in Flemish bond pattern, except the limestone-capped champ buttresses, where the brick is laid in running bond. The gable ends are decoratively clad in stucco with vertical half-timbering and surrounded by triangular fascia soffits with dentil detailing. A moderately pitched roof has shallow overhangs with exposed eaves and is covered with composition shingles.

On the north façade, the main building block is flanked, on the east, by a front-facing half-timbered gable with a central chimney, and, on the west, by a front-gabled entrance portico. In the original design, the building entrance was at the top of a two-tiered set of steps. In 1987, the steps were removed to create a grade-level entrance, more fully discussed below. A recessed rear entrance, located at the far east end, is covered with a shed roof that tucks up under the east-west axis of the main gable. Three small triangular window dormers are embedded in the north roof slope above the main block. On the main level, groups of three, fixed-sash windows emphasize the building’s dominant horizontality, with champ buttresses lending a vertical counterpoint. Window openings are slightly recessed, with limestone sills and flat wood lintels or segmental brick arches. Stained glass windows are designed in a simple diamond pattern with the lead comes holding amber-streaked glass panes.

The west elevation more clearly shows the 1987 extension of the portico gable, each side of which is embellished with fixed-sash windows similar to the historic stained glass windows but with clear diamond-paned lights. Three tall stained glass windows rise into the gable end, appearing to substitute for a church steeple inasmuch as a tiny spire pierces the gable peak directly above. The lower three-fourths of each window is fixed, while the upper one-fourth is a hopper window that opens inward for ventilation.

On the south elevation, the pattern of three triangular window dormers is repeated on the roof slope. Likewise, the pattern of groups of three stained glass windows separated by champ buttresses repeats on the main level. On the lower level, the champ buttresses separate more practical windows. Two four-light hopper windows are located on the west side, followed by three, six-over-one double sash windows on the east side. The lower level windows appear to rest on a limestone belt course, and all windows are topped with segmental brick arches.

The east elevation presents a nearly blank wall, interrupted by only two small windows. When the church was built, a residential dwelling was located only a few feet from the east end wall.

First Unitarian Church

Johnson Co., Iowa

Name of Property

County and State



Figure 1. First Unitarian Church, north and west elevations, as built, c. 1910 (parsonage front porch visible at far right). Courtesy State Historical Society of Iowa-Iowa City.

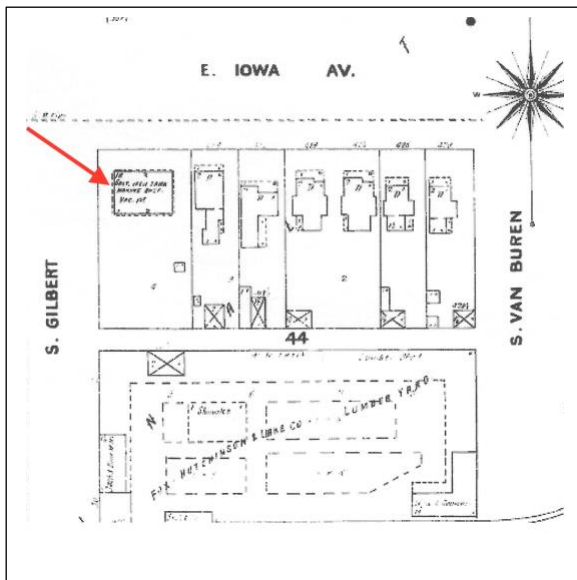


Figure 2. Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, 1906 (depicts storage building removed to build the church)

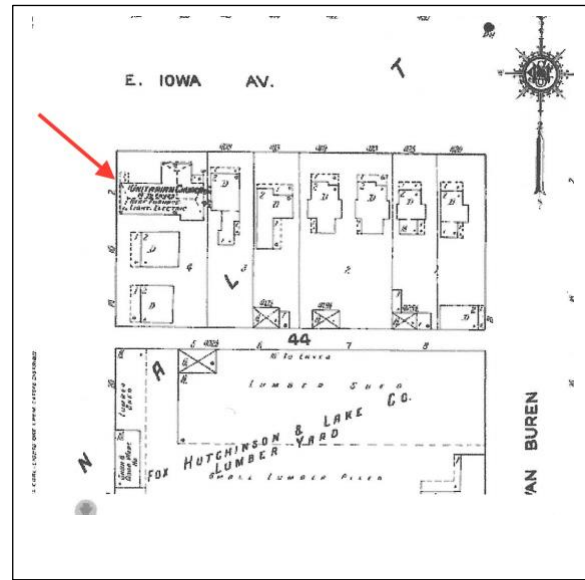


Figure 3. Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, 1912 (2-story parsonage is adjacent to church on the south)

First Unitarian Church

Johnson Co., Iowa

Name of Property

County and State

The interior design reflects the Arts and Crafts style popular at the time, with spaces that are decidedly domestic in character. Notably, the easternmost portion of the sanctuary opens to an anteroom, called the Fireside Room, in the north wing, which seats approximately 40 people. A brick fireplace is set into a slightly projecting central bay along the north wall of the anteroom. During the 1960s, the central bay was modernized with the application of floor-to-ceiling wood paneling surrounding the fireplace. At the same time the fireplace was repaired and slightly redesigned. The original wrought iron chandelier also was replaced.² The sanctuary itself, which faces east, contains 22 pews in the nave and seats about 150 people. The narthex, at the west end of the building, has room to seat another eight people. In all, the sanctuary and Fireside Room comfortably hold 200 people.³

At the eastern end is a small chancel, lit by a skylight, and set apart from the nave with a plaster-moulded blunt Gothic archway. The chancel walls are ornamented with darkly stained wood-panel wainscoting. The pulpit is located to the left of the chancel. To the right sits a pipe organ manufactured by A.B. Felgemaker of Erie, Pennsylvania. The larger pipes are arrayed above and to the left of the organ along the south wall of the chancel, while smaller pipes are hidden from view in a closet to the right of the organ. Andrew Carnegie donated \$500 toward the \$1,450.00 cost of the organ, which was purchased and installed in 1909.⁴ The organ was restored in 1991.⁵ The open ceiling treatment, darkly stained scissors trusses with exposed rafters, seems to cocoon the whole space rather than lift one's gaze upward.



Figure 4. Sanctuary, c. 1910.
Courtesy State Historical Society of Iowa-Iowa City.



Figure 5. Fireside Room, c. 1910.

Downstairs is a large open room (called Channing Hall beginning in 1980), the east third of which is raised with a three-step platform to create a space that can be used as a stage or enclosed by extending a double set of four-panel wooden pocket doors. A brick fireplace centered along the east wall of the raised space gives it the feel of a parlor when the pocket doors are extended. The hall area, west of the stage, has space enough to seat 80 people at tables. A large kitchen is located in the north wing (below the Fireside Room). To the east of the kitchen is the furnace room.

First Unitarian Church

Johnson Co., Iowa

Name of Property

County and State



Figure 6. Downstairs Hall and Parlor/Stage, c. 1910.
Courtesy State Historical Society of Iowa-Iowa City.



Figure 7. Downstairs Stage/Parlor, c. 1910.

Local contractors and tradesmen performed all of the construction and finish work. George Graeff was awarded the contract for excavating as well as stone and brickwork. Charles Mentzer received the contract for carpentry, plastering, and painting.⁶ The original pews, pulpit, and steam heat registers are intact. Likewise, the original woodwork remains. Floors, where exposed, are narrow plank oak, surrounded by wide darkly stained baseboards. The prominent door style is a two-panel solid wood door with beveled inset panels of beadboard plank. Sometimes the upper panel contains a window, and sometimes the doors are double doors. Doors and windows are trimmed with darkly stained stacked flat panels.

When the church was dedicated, the local paper noted its “great simplicity of architecture” and called it a “cottage church . . . arranged with the idea of comfort for the members.” The article also called attention to the capacious lower level and its suitability for the “young people’s society” with a “comfortable social room, elevated above the rest so that it can be thrown open and used as a stage for entertainments of various kinds.” Overall, the new church was deemed to be “one of the most cozy and homelike in the city.”⁷

Alterations

Modifications have been minimal. In 1987 the front entrance was modified to enclose the stairs leading to the sanctuary. This alteration, designed by Iowa City architect William Nowysz, extended the portico by several feet. Its gable roof tucks under the projecting gable of the original entrance portico, creating a framed gable which harmonizes the addition with the original design. The existing four-panel wooden entrance doors were incorporated into the alteration, with the addition of a custom made leaded glass transom and a segmental arch lintel. On the interior, the concrete steps were replaced with a wooden stairway which closely resembles the interior stairway inside the rear entry at the northeast corner.

First Unitarian Church

Johnson Co., Iowa

Name of Property

County and State

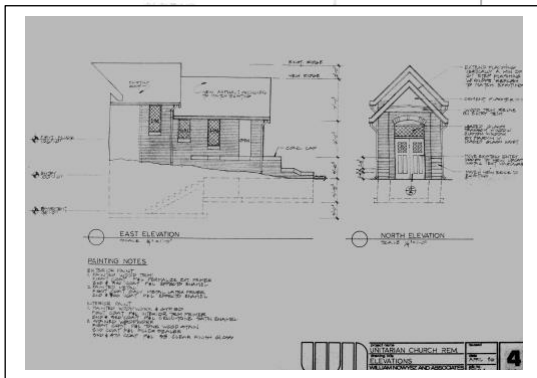


Figure 8. 1987 Alteration to Front Entrance, East and North Elevations. Iowa City Public Library, Building Plans Collection.

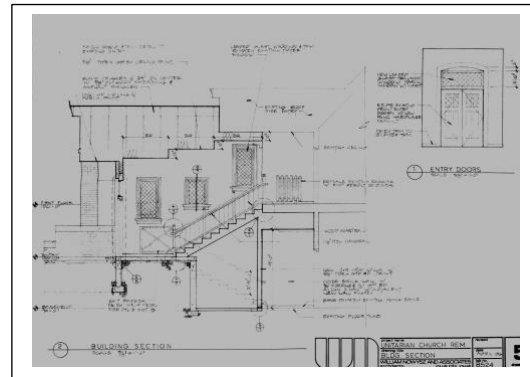


Figure 9. 1987 Alteration to Front Entrance, Building Section View.

In 1962, a portion of the rear wall at the east end was removed to construct an enclosed walkway connecting the church to a newly constructed education building dedicated as Worthley House. A second section of the rear wall was removed in 1996 to install an elevator that made all levels of both buildings accessible.⁸ When Worthley House was demolished in 2016, the elevator also was removed, and these openings in the rear wall were filled in with concrete blocks.

A brick retaining wall with a limestone cap is located along the south rear of the church. This feature may have been constructed at about the same time as Worthley House inasmuch as the brickwork is unlike that of the church and obviously of more recent vintage. The wall contains a stone plaque inscribed with “Universalist Centenary 1870.”

Integrity

First Unitarian Church remains in its original location. Integrity of design is good; the most substantive alteration, the entrance portico, honored the original by retaining the original portico gable roof, incorporating the original entrance doors, and matching the original brickwork as closely as possible. Integrity of materials is good; nearly all of the original materials are intact, with the obvious exception of concrete block infill on the south elevation where the 1962 education building was tied into the church and where an elevator was installed. Integrity of workmanship also is good, displaying abundant evidence of early twentieth century building techniques and skills. As a downtown church, the building has always been situated among commercial buildings, although the scale of urban development has increased significantly. In this respect, the setting has been compromised. Similarly, integrity of association was compromised with the loss of the church’s associated parsonage in the 1960s. Oddly, however, as the scale of urban development as increased, it also has intensified the cottage-like feel of the church; in this respect, integrity of feeling may be deemed intact.

First Unitarian Church

Johnson Co., Iowa

Name of Property

County and State

Future Plans

The current owner, Augusta Place LLC, is in the process of constructing a seven-story residential and parking structure on adjacent lots to the east and south, which will hem the church on the east side and south rear. The north façade and west side, the two elevations that define the building architecturally, will still be clearly visible. The church will be rehabilitated for commercial use. New construction will include an elevator and stairway entrance on the south elevation in the same location where the 1962 education building was tied into the church and where an elevator was later added.

Section 7 Endnotes

¹ Anthony Mitchell Sammarco, “Edwin J. Lewis, Jr., architect (1859-1937)” in *Milton* [Massachusetts]: *A Compendium* (Mt Pleasant, SC: Arcadia Publishing, 2010).

² Mary Bell Glick, “Furnishings and Friends, 75 Years, 1908-1983,” pp. 15-16, R9: Records of the Unitarian Universalist Society of Iowa City, Iowa, 1856-2011 [hereafter UUSIC Records], Box 6, Folder 39, State Historical Society of Iowa-Iowa City [hereafter SHSI-IC].

³ Information on seating capacity provided by Sue Eberly, Iowa City, personal communication, January 25, 2018.

⁴ Minutes, FUSIC Board of Trustees Meetings, February 7, 1909, and May 10, 1909, Secretary’s Book of Minutes, January 24, 1908-April 12, 1948, UUSIC Records, Box 3.

⁵ *From Within These Walls: 100 Years at 10 South Gilbert, 1908-2008* (Iowa City: UUSIC, 2008), 10-11.

⁶ Minutes, FUSIC Board of Trustees meetings, March 17, 1908, and April 10, 1908, UUSIC Records, Box 3.

⁷ “Unitarian Church was Dedicated Last Evening,” *Iowa City Republican*, October 26, 1908.

⁸ *From Within These Walls*, 49.

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 grave.
- D a cemetery.
- E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F a commemorative property.
- G less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions.)

ARCHITECTURE

Period of Significance

1908

Significant Dates

1908

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

Cultural Affiliation (if applicable)**Architect/Builder**

Edwin J. Lewis, Jr.

First Unitarian Church
Name of Property

Johnson Co., Iowa
County and State

Statement of Significance

Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph

The First Unitarian Church is significant at the local level under Criterion C and Criteria Consideration “A” as a religious property that derives primary significance from its historic architectural importance. The church exemplifies specific guidelines for constructing dignified yet inexpensive houses of worship that were promulgated by the American Unitarian Association. Boston architect Edwin J. Lewis, Jr., who was instrumental in developing these guidelines, also designed the Iowa City church. Additionally, the building is an outstanding example of the “church home” architectural aesthetic, which is closely associated with a small but influential group of liberal women ministers who practiced in Iowa and surrounding states roughly between 1880 and 1930. The acknowledged leaders of this group were Rev. Mary Safford and Rev. Eleanor Elizabeth Gordon, the latter of whom served as minister to the Iowa City congregation from 1896 to 1900 and was directly involved in the financing and construction of the Iowa City church. The period of significance is 1908, the year the church was constructed.

Narrative Statement of Significance**Introduction: Historical Overview**

The Unitarian Universalist Society has been part of the religious life of Iowa City since the city’s founding. When Iowa City was platted in 1839, four half-blocks were set aside for church buildings. In the early 1840s, several newly formed congregations took advantage of the availability of free lots and built churches in the city center. Methodists built the first church, in 1841, on the southwest corner of Iowa Avenue and Linn Street. At about the same time, the Methodist Episcopal congregation built the second church, located on Dubuque Street north of Jefferson Street. In 1842, St. Mary’s Catholic parish built its church on the northwest corner of Jefferson and Linn streets. The First Universalist Society of Iowa City, organized in 1841, constructed a small brick church at the southeast corner of Iowa Avenue and Dubuque Street, in the same half-block occupied by the Methodist church. The Universalists occupied this building from 1843 to 1868, when a fire destroyed it.⁹ None of these 1840s church buildings are extant. However, several active churches are still located in the downtown area, and four historic church buildings have previously been listed on the National Register of Historic Places: North Presbyterian Church (aka Old Brick), constructed in 1856 at 26 E. Market Street; the second St. Mary’s Catholic Church, built in 1869 in the same location as the first; the Congregational Church, constructed in 1869 at 30 North Clinton Street; and Trinity Episcopal Church, built in 1871 at 320 E. College Street. A fifth NRHP-listed church, Bethel AME Church, was constructed in 1868; it is located several blocks

First Unitarian Church

Johnson Co., Iowa

Name of Property

County and State

east of the downtown area at 411 South Governor Street; in 1868, this location would have been on the far eastern edge of the city.

The First Unitarian Church at 10 South Gilbert Street is the third church building to serve the Unitarian Universalist Society of Iowa City (UUSIC), as it has been called since 1961 when the American Unitarian Association (AUA) and the Universalist Church of America formally merged, although the two denominations have a long history of intermingling. After fire destroyed the first Universalist church in 1868, services were held in borrowed or rented quarters until the parish erected a new church at the northeast corner of Iowa Avenue and Clinton Street, in closer view of the old state capitol, which by then housed most of the operations of the State University of Iowa.¹⁰ In 1878, the Universalists agreed to make this church available to the American Unitarian Association, headquartered in Boston, which had just sent Rev. Oscar Clute to Iowa City. In practice, however, ministers identifying with Universalist, Unitarian, or liberal Christian canons had served the parish at different times up to this point. After Rev. Clute arrived, the parish reorganized, briefly, as the Universalist Unitarian Society of Iowa City.

Another reorganization took place in January 1881, again under Rev. Clute's leadership, when the First Unitarian Society of Iowa City (FUSIC) was formally organized. Beginning in 1881, Unitarian and Universalist services were held separately in the Clinton Street church. The Universalists, however, legally owned the church property until 1896, when the congregation sold it to the Iowa Universalist Convention to retire outstanding debts. Subsequently, in 1899, the Iowa Universalist Convention sold the property for \$3,500 to the Iowa Association of Unitarian and Other Independent Churches (IAU), located in Des Moines.¹¹ In this fashion, the AUA, which had paid a portion of the Unitarian minister's salary since 1878, and its Iowa affiliate, which now owned the church property, came to have significant interests in the future of the FUSIC.

According to one account, Dr. Duran Ward, church pastor from 1900 to 1906, initiated the idea of a new church, built "on the order of Jenkin Lloyd Jones's Lincoln Center in Chicago with the church on the second floor and stores on the first floor." Both the FUSIC board of trustees and the IAU vetoed the idea, and Ward then left Iowa City for a pastorate in Denver.¹² The parish was without a minister for a year, but the IAU proceeded with plans for a new church. Construction of the Gilbert Street church building was largely the collaborative effort of Rev. Robert S. Loring, whom the AUA sent to Iowa City from Boston in 1907, and Rev. Eleanor Gordon, who had served as minister to the Iowa City congregation from 1886 to 1900 and was then in Des Moines serving as the IAU field secretary. They were assisted by Rev. Mary Safford, pastor of the Des Moines Unitarian Church.

Events which led to the church's construction began in May 1906, when the IAU sold the Clinton Street property to the State of Iowa for university use.¹³ Importantly, the State of Iowa paid the IAU \$18,000 for the property, \$4,000 more than the property's believed market value, but the university needed room for expansion, and state legislators were willing to pay a premium. Subsequently, the windfall created tension between the IAU, which held that the money should be used to fund the organization's general purposes, and the FUSIC, which felt that the entire \$18,000 should go into the Iowa City building fund.¹⁴

For more than a year the parish searched for a suitable new location while carrying on a protracted discussion over whether the disputed \$4,000 would go into the Iowa City building fund (it did not). Finally, in December 1907, the IAU purchased the lot at the corner of Iowa Avenue and South Gilbert Street for \$5,300.¹⁵ Three months later, in February 1908, the IAU and the FUSIC signed an agreement

First Unitarian Church

Johnson Co., Iowa

Name of Property

County and State

whereby the IAU agreed to allocate \$9,000 for the erection of a church building and the FUSIC agreed to construct the building as designed by Boston architect Edwin J. Lewis, Jr.

It was further agreed that if the Iowa City society wished to spend more than \$9,000 on the new church, it could mortgage the north 70 ft. of the lot (the church site) for not more than \$2,000 and, further, sell all or some portion of the south 80 ft. of the lot in order to pay off the mortgage.¹⁶ This was a fairly detailed financial arrangement, which later events were to further complicate. However, Rev. Loring was doing his best to manage a divided congregation, dependent upon the IAU for financial backing but chafing under the strings that were attached to it. He and Rev. Gordon wanted a formal agreement that would help quell internal strife and also assure potential contractors that funding was secure. It worked. Construction began in April 1908 and finished in October. The new church was dedicated on October 24 with a ceremony designed in part to restore good relations between the FUSIC and IAU. Rev. Gordon brought greetings from the Iowa Unitarian Conference and AUA President Samuel Eliot delivered the sermon at the Saturday evening dedication. Gordon gave the first sermon in the sanctuary the following morning.¹⁷ In a letter dated four days after the dedication, Loring penned a heartfelt thank you to her: "Without your tactful acts, and your thorough understanding of all the business matters involved, it would not have been possible to have brought the matter to a conclusion so eminently satisfactory both to the conference [IAU] and to the church."¹⁸

Statement of Significance

The design of the Iowa City church represents the coming together of complementary strands of thinking about modern church architecture, both of which were influenced by the Arts and Crafts movement with its embrace of traditional craftsmanship and pre-industrial forms and styles. One strand is an architectural idiom promulgated by the American Unitarian Association to aid small parishes in constructing modest yet dignified churches. The other strand is what has been called the "church home" aesthetic, historically linked to a group of women ministers who were active in the Midwest in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. In broader context, the building follows the meetinghouse tradition, domestic in form and massing, with an emphasis on the horizontal, entrance on the side, and, on the interior, a pulpit but no altar. The term "meetinghouse" implies "neutral public space," or a place that erases the distinction between sacred and secular, rather than a house of God, or a place where a deity resides.¹⁹ In a more general sense, the church also reflects the popularity of eclectic revival styles influenced by the Arts and Crafts movement during the period 1880 to about 1940. Tudor Revival churches are said to have been "widely distributed" in the Northeast and Old Northwest states.²⁰

The architect, Edwin J. Lewis Jr., was a member of the American Unitarian Association as well as the First Parish Unitarian Church in Dorchester, Massachusetts. After graduating from Massachusetts Institute of Technology in 1881 with a degree in architecture, he accepted a position with the prominent Boston architectural firm of Peabody and Stearns. This affiliation was brief, as he was financially able to establish his own practice. From 1887 until his death in 1937, he maintained his office at 9 Park Street on Beacon Hill. Lewis was primarily known for his suburban residential architecture, but during his long career, which spanned more than fifty years, he designed at least thirty-five churches, most of them located in the Northeast United States and Canada. He appears to have secured many commissions through his Unitarian connections. Although he worked in many architectural styles, he had a particular interest in medieval architecture and was known for his Georgian, Gothic, and Tudor revival designs.²¹

First Unitarian Church
Name of Property

Johnson Co., Iowa
County and State

At least three buildings designed by Lewis have been listed on the National Register of Historic Places: the 1888 Wollaston Unitarian Church in Quincy, Massachusetts (Shingle Style), the 1902 Unitarian Church of Houlton, Maine (eclectic with Gothic features and heavy medieval-style timberwork), and Greystones Hall, built in 1929 as a retreat for Unitarian clergy on Fisherman’s Island, Maine (Tudor Revival).

In 1902, the AUA commissioned Lewis and two other men “to select and collect plans and designs of convenient, attractive, and inexpensive churches” which were published under the title of *Plans for Churches*. The purpose of this 35-page booklet was to “aid the smaller societies of the Unitarian Fellowship to build for themselves convenient, attractive, and inexpensive churches.”²² It contained ground plans and perspectives for three suggested designs, the second of which (Figs. 10, 11) resembles the Iowa City church. In addition to suggested designs, the booklet also contained photographs and ground plans for four more churches that had been constructed in various locations: Ridgewood, New Jersey; Gouverneur, New York; Midland, Michigan; and Ottawa, Canada. All of the designs were meant to exemplify what could be achieved on a modest budget, and the authors included several specific recommendations. Among them was a caution “not to expend money in towers or steeples” for “the church-like character can be had without too much expense in this direction.” Ordinary building materials such as wood or a combination of wood and stone were to be preferred, but concrete or “common brick laid in common mortar” also were “capable of good results.”²³ On the interior, it was “recommended that the constructional timbers be permitted to show.” Not only was such treatment inexpensive, but it also lent visual interest. Natural wood floors were preferred without carpeting, “except in the aisles.” Pews should be built “to be comfortable without cushions.” The “ignorant use of stained glass” was to be avoided. Windows could be made “things of beauty” by using “pale amber-colored cathedral glass, cut and leaded in diamond-shape pattern.”²⁴ Repeatedly, the plan book urged parishes to hire an experienced architect in order to achieve simple, harmonious buildings that “convey to the mind the thought of worship.”



Figure 10. Suggestion Two, Perspective
Plans for Churches (1902)

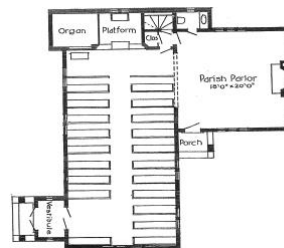


Figure 11. Suggestion Two, Ground Plan

These guidelines and recommendations were entirely in keeping with the architectural preferences of a small but influential group of liberal women ministers (Unitarians and Universalists) who were active in Iowa and surrounding states from about 1880 to 1930. Historian Cynthia Tucker uses the term “church home” in association with approximately twenty churches constructed in Iowa and surrounding states between 1880 and 1913 under the leadership of liberal women ministers affiliated with either the

First Unitarian Church

Johnson Co., Iowa

Name of Property

County and State

Universalist or Unitarian societies. The term does not denote a particular architectural style, according to Tucker, but rather an “insistent statement that the liberal church should above all else be homelike.”²⁵ In practical building terms, this typically meant a church without a steeple, but as the church home aesthetic became more philosophical, the interior spaces, at least, were designed to create a domestic atmosphere.

The “church home” aesthetic was undergirded by liberal protestant theology but particularly inspired by the 1895 publication of *The House Beautiful*, a collection of short essays by Unitarian minister William Channing Gannett. After serving ministries in Milwaukee, Minneapolis, and Hinsdale, Illinois, Gannett settled in Rochester, New York, where he and his wife, Mary Thorn, became leaders in the suffrage movement and other social reform activities. Gannett also was a prolific writer of essays, poems, hymns, and church school lessons, all of which were source materials for Unitarian ministers and church leaders. In *The House Beautiful*, Gannett promoted, with rhetorical overtones of high morality, the ideal of a beautiful home as a “domestication of the infinite,” arranged and furnished with “simplicity and repose” and tastefully appointed with pictures, flowers, and books.²⁶ Frank Lloyd Wright, who came from a Unitarian family, helped popularize the book by republishing it in 1897 with his own illustrations of nature. Tucker argues that Gannett’s “praise of the home as a holy space encouraged a good deal of collateral talk about the church being a home.” More specifically, she asserts, Mary Safford, Eleanor Gordon, and other members of the Western sisterhood “moved boldly beyond the metaphor to make their churches functional centers for congregational family life.”²⁷

Tucker states that Unitarian churches in Iowa associated with the Western sisterhood and church home ideals were located at Humboldt, Perry, Sioux City, Des Moines, and Iowa City. A closer examination of the church buildings in these towns and cities underscores the looseness of the “church home” attribution in relation to architectural design. One must be mindful that the term referred primarily to the functioning of a church, with the outward appearance of the building reflecting the ideals that guided the work of the parish. The church at Humboldt (non-extant) was under construction when Mary Safford accepted the pastorate there in 1879; her responsibilities included raising funds to complete its construction. The wood frame, Gothic Revival building, with a prominent bell tower set into the corner of its front gable, was a common architectural idiom of late- nineteenth-century Protestant churches, so common in the Midwest that the sub-genre has its own name: Prairie Gothic.²⁸ Likewise, the church at Perry, constructed in the early 1890s (non-extant), was of Gothic Revival design.²⁹

The churches at Sioux City and Des Moines were constructed when Safford was in residence as the minister, with Gordon as associate minister and sometimes acting minister. Neither church is extant, although historic photographs reveal that both were eclectic revival in architectural style. The Richardsonian Romanesque design of the brick-and-stone church at Sioux City, constructed in 1889, could be mistaken for an institutional building were it not for a squat bell tower/entrance portico set into the gable front. In this respect, it shares the utilitarian qualities of the three-story brick, Federal style, Unitarian church at Davenport, constructed in 1898, and both buildings accommodated the kinds of community outreach activities more closely associated with settlement houses during this era.³⁰

First Unitarian Church

Name of Property

Johnson Co., Iowa

County and State



Figure 12. Unity Church, Humboldt;
from Snyder, *Unitarians in Iowa*.



Figure 13. Sioux City Unitarian Church;
from Snyder, *Unitarians in Iowa*

First Unitarian Church at Des Moines, constructed in 1905, was Classical Revival in design with a pedimented front entrance that featured three Romanesque arches. Its architect is unknown, but the building shared architectural characteristics of more prominent suburban churches constructed in Des Moines at about the same time, namely First Methodist Episcopal Church (1905) and the Greek Orthodox Church of St. George (1906), both designed by Proudfoot and Bird in Classical Revival styles, and both listed on the National Register.



Figure 14. First Unitarian Church,
Des Moines; postcard view.

The Iowa City church is the only one of the four churches associated with the Iowa ministries of Safford and Gordon that is extant.³¹ It also is the building in Iowa that most closely represents the church home aesthetic, although more research would be required to fully understand how church home ideals were translated into architectural design, and what distinguishes church home aesthetics from broader trends in modern church architecture. As Tucker acknowledges, the trend toward “simplicity and utility” in church buildings also was promoted by Midwestern ministers who were men.³² In addition to Gannett, other outspoken male ministers on this matter included Rev. Jenkin Lloyd Jones, founder of All Souls Unitarian Church in Chicago and long-time secretary of the Western Unitarian Conference, and Rev.

First Unitarian Church

Johnson Co., Iowa

Name of Property

County and State

Arthur Judy, pastor of the Davenport Unitarian Society for more than two decades. As a side note, Rev. Jones's nephew, Frank Lloyd Wright, designed Unity Temple in Chicago (1906-1909), which is considered one of the classic architectural expressions of form following function.³³ Thus, it seems that many Unitarians were pondering the question of church architecture in relation to the mission of the society at the parish level.

Returning to the church at Iowa City, Eleanor Gordon supervised its financing and construction while she served as field secretary of the Iowa Association of Unitarian and Other Independent Churches, located in Des Moines. Prior to assuming this post, she had served as minister of the Iowa City church at its second location. Thus, she was personally known to the Iowa City congregation. Edna Wilson, one of the church elders, called Gordon "the Mother and Big Sister of many a struggling Iowa church. She was a good organizer, and her mission was to get the Iowa City church back on its feet—which she did."³⁴ It was during her time in Iowa City that the IAU purchased the Clinton Street property from the Iowa Universalist Convention. To effect this purchase, Gordon and Mary Safford devised a plan to raise \$500 a year for seven years (\$3,500) from various donors throughout Iowa.³⁵

Safford also had previously directed fundraising efforts to finish the Unitarian church in Humboldt as well as construct the church in Sioux City. Thus, both she and Gordon had acquired considerable executive experience to complement their ministerial roles. When the Iowa City parish was ready to construct a new church, Gordon was in a position to help, and because the IAU owned the Clinton Street property, the Iowa City congregation needed to work with her. Given the financial circumstances, the church stood to benefit from Gordon's position as IAU field secretary. Some in the congregation evidently thought that benefit would extend to capturing the entire \$18,000 purchase price of the Clinton Street property for the building fund, and there was disgruntlement when this did not happen.

Safford and Gordon considered their churches to be centers for community work and social reform, attributes they shared with the women of the Western sisterhood as well as other Unitarian ministers outside the Boston sphere of influence. Both women had known one another since their childhoods in Hamilton, Illinois, and their careers intertwined for much of their lives. Gordon studied for a year at the State University of Iowa (1873-74), then taught school at Centerville, Iowa, from 1875-77. She returned to Hamilton in 1878 to teach. A year later she and Safford established a Unitarian church in their hometown. The success of this church led to an offer for Safford to serve as pastor to the new Unity Church in Humboldt, Iowa. Thus, in 1879, Safford and Gordon moved to Humboldt, where Safford was ordained. Gordon became principal of the local public schools, where she caused a minor flap for introducing the concept of evolution to a physiology class. She also served as assistant minister. In 1885, the pair moved to Sioux City after Safford was offered the pastorate there. By this time, Safford had become known for her energy and command of the pulpit, and she emerged as the central figure of the Western sisterhood. Gordon once again served as Safford's assistant, and she is credited with helping to form Unitarian societies at Rock Rapids, Cherokee, Ida Grove, and Washta. She also began studying for the ministry, and, after attending Cornell University for one term, was ordained in 1889 at Sioux City.³⁶

In 1896, Gordon stepped out of Safford's shadow when she received an offer to serve the Iowa City church, where she remained until 1900. From Iowa City she went to Burlington (1900-1902) and then Fargo, North Dakota (1902-1904). In 1904, she rejoined Safford in Des Moines when Safford became pastor of the Des Moines Unitarian Church and executive director of the Iowa Association of Unitarian and Other Independent Churches. Gordon ministered to the Roadside Settlement House for a time, once again served as assistant pastor to Safford, and also served as field secretary of the IAU from 1907 to

First Unitarian Church

Johnson Co., Iowa

Name of Property

County and State

1910. Additionally, from 1891 to 1908 Gordon coedited and contributed to *Old and New*, the IAU's newsletter/journal. After 1910, Safford and Gordon split their time between Hamilton and Orlando, Florida, where they once again served in tandem to a new Unitarian church established by former members of the Sioux City society. To each parish they served, Safford and Gordon brought their advocacy for women's rights. Of the two, Gordon was more political, serving as president of the Iowa Equal Suffrage Association from 1907 to 1909. Among other activities, she organized a women's suffrage parade for the 1908 state convention, held in Boone. Dr. Anna Howard Shaw, president of the National American Woman Suffrage Association, and also an ordained Methodist minister, marched with the Iowa women.³⁷

Although Gordon and Safford had spent six months in Boston in 1888, the link to architect Edwin Lewis seems to have been Robert Loring, whom the AUA sent to Iowa City as pastor to oversee the church project. Rev. Wilson M. Backus, secretary of the Western Unitarian Conference, located in Chicago, had been charged with finding a suitable minister for the Iowa City parish, although approval had to come from AUA President Samuel A. Eliot. After interviewing several prospects, Backus recommended Loring, who was deemed to possess "all the possible educational advantages" and had "fine business ability." He also had previously worked with Gordon on the Missionary Council.³⁸ Additionally, Loring apparently had just overseen the construction of a small church at Derby, Connecticut.³⁹

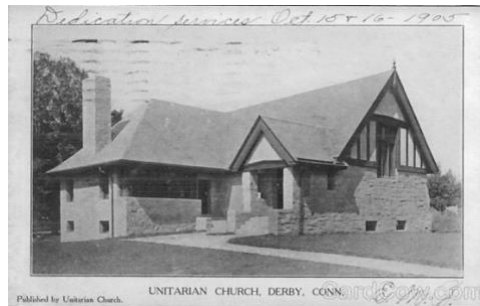


Figure 15. Derby, CT, Unitarian Church
Postcard view, 1905.

As it happens, the Derby Unitarian Church (1905) bears a striking resemblance to Suggestion Two in *Plans for Churches* and Lewis's Tudor Revival design for the Iowa City church. The Derby church building is extant, although it has been used as a veteran's memorial building since 2005.⁴⁰

Loring saw to it that Lewis's architectural design was carried out, although some modifications were made to save money. His business acumen was helpful, if not critical, for building an architect-designed church on a tight budget. In January 1908 he reported to Gordon that he was making every effort to reduce construction costs:

We are going through the specifications and wherever we can paint one coat less, or omit sheathing, or substitute a brick pier for an iron pillar [sic], or cut down the number of lighting fixtures, it is being done. The choir was cut in half some time ago, and now if organ builders to whom I have written, reply that some day an organ could be put in a reduced space we shall change the roof over the choir, lowering it, and saving over \$150.00. It is no easy job to build a church dignified enuf [sic] for a college town, and constructed strongly enuf to last fifty or more years, all for \$10,000.⁴¹

First Unitarian Church

Johnson Co., Iowa

Name of Property

County and State

The audit of building expenses suggests the extent to which Loring oversaw all aspects of construction as he was reimbursed multiple times for personally covering small sums for miscellaneous expenses.⁴² According to one of the church elders, Loring ran “a one-man show—but he did it well and the church just let him.”⁴³ This is not entirely true. Minutes of the Board of Trustees indicate that the trustees were fully involved in all contractual and financial matters necessary to build and furnish the church.⁴⁴ Additionally, the Woman’s Alliance raised money to help pay for furnishing the parlors, hall, and kitchen. The Young People’s Society provided a piano.⁴⁵ By actively engaging church leaders in the process, Loring began to bring the entire congregation together during the church project. The cost of the building was approximately \$11,300.00, including interior fixtures and furnishings as well as the architect’s fee of \$350. Together with the cost of the lot (\$5,300), the total cost came to approximately \$16,500, of which the IAU paid about \$14,500.⁴⁶

Correspondence between Gordon and Loring further reveals that they were conscious of raising the status of the Unitarian Society in a university town. The Iowa City church had always attracted university faculty and students, but it also was considered a “missionary” church, not large enough to support a pastor on its own. An unstated goal of building the Gilbert Street church seems to have been strengthening the congregation, both in terms of membership and financial soundness, by cultivating more formal ties with the academic community. Toward that end, Loring organized a new board of trustees shortly after he arrived, and three of the five members were State University of Iowa professors.⁴⁷ Additionally, when the IAU temporarily transferred title to the FUSIC so the church could more easily obtain a bank loan locally to finish the church building, the IAU required an agreement that bound the FUSIC to “actively and continuously carry on religious and ethical work of a kind specially suited to the religious needs of a university town.” The agreement defined “religious and ethical work” as “regular and suitable Sunday religious services” at least forty times a year and other “services, meetings, sociables, religious and ethical study classes” similar to those “conducted by Unitarian churches in such university towns as Ann Arbor, Mich.; Madison, Wis.; Lawrence, Kansas; Palo Alto, California; [and] Lincoln, Nebraska.”⁴⁸

Gordon worked closely with Loring to deliver a handsome “church home,” as she called it when the church was dedicated on October 24, 1908. In her dedicatory remarks, she recalled the “loyal support of the women of the then small and struggling church” during her pastorate. She also revealed the tough businesswoman side of her character by reminding the congregation that “the two secretaries of the Iowa Unitarian Association who raised every penny of the money to pay for this church property [Safford and Gordon], were women.”⁴⁹ Dr. Samuel Eliot, who gave the sermon, emphasized the intellectual work of the parish: “We rejoice that the church at this academic center is now so nicely housed, especially as it has a special work to do.”⁵⁰

Available evidence falls short of supporting a claim that First Unitarian Church represents one of the best architectural expressions of the church home aesthetic. Further research would be necessary to fully understand how the church home *idea* was translated into design guidelines or principles. Further research also would be necessary to establish how many Unitarian churches associated with liberal women ministers were constructed during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and how many of these buildings still exist. This study suggests that most of them are gone. These caveats, however, do not diminish the building’s significance. First Unitarian Church reflects the combined expertise and efforts of Eleanor Gordon and Robert Loring to realize the architectural design of Edwin J. Lewis, Jr., who, it might be noted, never traveled to Iowa City. The result was a building, exterior and

First Unitarian Church

Johnson Co., Iowa

Name of Property

County and State

interior, that embodies the church home aesthetic embraced by the Western sisterhood of liberal ministers, of which Gordon was a notable proponent. In broader context, the building also reflects general trends in church architecture and utilitarian design principles, which the American Unitarian Association felt were well suited for smaller parishes.

Parsonage and Worthley House

Two non-extant buildings also are part of the property's land-use history: a parsonage and Worthley House, built in 1962 to house classrooms, a conference room, and staff offices. In 1908, as the church was being completed, Robert Loring also was negotiating with Eleanor Gordon and others at the IAU to fund construction of a parsonage on the south side of the church.⁵¹ After multiple discussions with the IAU Board of Trustees, Loring was able to secure a second agreement that enabled the FUSIC to borrow \$5,000 from the AUA loan fund, \$2,000 of which went to retire the outstanding debt on church construction and \$3,000 of which financed the construction of a parsonage. The loan was to be repaid from house rental receipts.⁵² A second audit of the building fund reveals that construction costs for the parsonage totaled slightly more than \$3,500, and the house was being rented as of September 1, 1909.⁵³

By the early 1950s, both the church and the parsonage were in need of extensive repairs. Although the IAU, which still held title to the property, did not neglect building maintenance, costs mounted as the buildings aged, and the backlog of deferred maintenance began to grow. Additionally, the 1951 appointment of a minister with a family of young children required a larger parsonage. These circumstances stirred the congregation to action. A small group of members formed a joint venture and loaned the congregation \$5,000 to purchase a residence at 1033 Woodlawn Avenue to be used as a parsonage. Additionally, members donated more than 500 hours of labor to make mandatory repairs to the church, paint and clean the old parsonage in preparation for renting a portion of the house as an apartment, and renovate the downstairs "front room" for use as the church office. The parish also requested that the IAU deed the Gilbert Street property to the FUSIC, in return for which the parish would assume an existing mortgage. The IAU Board of Trustees approved this request, and the transaction was completed by April 1952.⁵⁴

A revitalized parish coincided with growth in the membership. By 1961, eight classes of church school were vying for space, and attendance was projected to grow from 85 to 150 students during the next three years. The parish needed more room, and the options were to take over the old parsonage, which would accommodate about 50 children, or construct a new building. The parish opted for a new building.⁵⁵

The parsonage at 1033 Woodlawn was sold in 1961 for approximately \$11,000 to help pay for the education building. To make room for the addition, the old parsonage was razed. Designed by architect Richard Jordison, also a member of the church, the new three-story, brick and reinforced concrete building was constructed in 1962. Its unadorned modern style was a complete contrast with the Tudor Revival cottage-like church. Rectangular in plan, the building measured 32 ft. x 65 ft. and had a very low-pitched gable roof facing Gilbert Street. A one-story enclosed walkway connected the addition to the church through a new door opening at the east end of the raised basement along the south (rear) wall. The sheltered open space created by the walkway and the two buildings became a small courtyard which children called the "Secret Garden."⁵⁶

First Unitarian Church

Johnson Co., Iowa

Name of Property

County and State

The building was dedicated on April 20, 1963, as Worthley House in honor of Rev. Evans Worthley, who had served as minister from 1931 to 1951.⁵⁷ Worthley House, too, was razed after the parish decided in 2015 to build a new church.⁵⁸

Archaeological Assessment

No archaeological assessment has been conducted. Another building was removed from Lot 4 prior to construction of the church. The 1899 and 1906 Sanborn maps indicate that the earlier building was being used for storage during that period. The 1888 and 1892 Sanborn maps identify the building as an old vacant church. It was located within the approximate footprint of First Unitarian Church. Excavation for the church basement would have greatly disturbed the site and probably obliterated any historic archaeological remains.

Endnotes/Section 8

⁹ Marybeth Slonneger and others, *Finals: A View of Downtown Iowa City* (Iowa City: Hand Press, 2015), 31-32.

¹⁰ In 1857, the state capital was moved from Iowa City to Des Moines; in negotiating this move, state legislators agreed to leave the state university in Iowa City. As a result, the university acquired the former capitol building.

¹¹ James E. Jacobsen, "Universalism and Unitarianism in Iowa City," unpublished MS, 1979, see esp. pp. 3-5, 11-15, 22-24, 46-49, R9: Records of the Unitarian Universalist Society of Iowa City, Iowa, 1856-2011 [hereafter UUSIC Records], Box 1, State Historical Society of Iowa-Iowa City.

¹² "Edna E. Wilson and the Church Chart—Reminiscences" (c. 1932), 7, UUSIC Records, Box 5.

¹³ The university renamed the building Unity Hall; it was demolished in 1933.

¹⁴ Jacobsen, 54-55. See also Henry H. Griffiths (attorney for the IAU) to Robert S. Loring, October 20, 1910, UUSIC Records, Box 7, Folder 10.

¹⁵ "Statement Adopted by [IAU] Board of Trustees, at Davenport, Iowa, October 17, 1906," which includes a lengthy statement by Rev. Mary Safford explaining why the IAU was justified in retaining \$4,000 of the \$18,000 sale price, UUSIC Records, Box 7, Folder 6; Citizens Savings and Trust Company to Iowa Ass. of Unitarian and Other Independent Churches, Lot 4 in Block 44, Iowa City, Iowa, December 13, 1907, Johnson County Deeds, Book 93: 154.

¹⁶ "Agreement between Iowa Association of Unitarian and Other Independent Churches and the First Unitarian Society of Iowa City, Iowa, February 26, 1908"; R. S. Loring to Rev. Eleanor E. Gordon, January 28, 1908; Loring to Gordon, February 27, 1908; Loring to Gordon, February 28, 1908; all UUSIC Records, Box 7, Folder 8.

¹⁷ "Iowa Unitarian Church Dedicated October 24, 1908," and "Address Given by Rev. Eleanor E. Gordon, Secretary of Iowa Unitarian Association," *Old and New* 16, no. 9 (November 1908); "Unitarian Church Was Dedicated Last Evening," *Iowa City Republican*, October 26, 1908, p. 1.

¹⁸ Loring to Gordon, October 28, 1908, UUSIC Records, Box 7, Folder 8.

¹⁹ Peter W. Williams, *Houses of God: Region, Religion, and Architecture in the United States* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1997), 5-7 (quote, 5); see also Marilyn J. Chiat, *America's Religious Architecture: Sacred Places for Every Community* (New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc.), 21.

²⁰ Jeffery Howe, *Houses of Worship: An Identification Guide to the History and Styles of American Religious Architecture* (San Diego: Thunder Bay Press, 2003), 258.

²¹ Anthony Mitchell Sammarco, "Edwin J. Lewis, Jr., architect (1859-1937)" in *Milton [Massachusetts]: A Compendium* (Mt. Pleasant, SC: Arcadia Publishing, 2010).

First Unitarian Church

Johnson Co., Iowa

Name of Property

County and State

²² Edwin J. Lewis, Jr., Enoch Powell, and Rev. Albert Walkley, *Plans for Churches* (Boston: American Unitarian Association, 1902), 3, Andover-Harvard Theological Library and Archives, Harvard University.

²³ *Ibid.*, 6-7.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 8-9.

²⁵ Cynthia Grant Tucker, *Prophetic Sisterhood: Liberal Women Ministers of the Frontier, 1880-1930* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994), 102.

²⁶ William C. Gannett, *The House Beautiful*, (Boston: James H. West Co., 1895); "William C. Gannett," in Rochester (NY) Regional Library Council, *Western New York Suffragists: Winning the Vote*, <https://rrlc.org/winningthevote/>, accessed December 17, 2017; "Wright Studies: The House Beautiful, 1896-1898," in *The Wright Library*, website, <http://www.steinerag.com/flw/index.htm>, accessed December 17, 2017.

²⁷ Tucker, 104-105.

²⁸ Williams, 212-213.

²⁹ Tucker, 101.

³⁰ Charles E. Snyder, "Unitarianism in Iowa," *Palimpsest* 30 (November 1949): see photographs.

³¹ The Sioux City Unitarian Church was located at the intersection of 10th and Douglas Streets; the Des Moines Church was located at the intersection of 10th and High Streets. Neither church appears in the historic site survey records maintained at the Iowa SHPO, and a Google map check confirmed that both buildings are gone. Unity Church in Humboldt was razed to make space for an apartment building; Travis Goedken, email correspondence, January 19, 2018. The Perry church, which was not associated with either Safford or Gordon, does not appear in the historic site survey records at the Iowa SHPO office in Des Moines; Perry Historic Preservation Commission members Jeanette Peddicord and Judy Marckres confirmed that the church is no longer standing, email correspondence, January 15-16, 2018.

³² Tucker, 106.

³³ Howe, 290-292; Williams, 181-182.

³⁴ "Edna E. Wilson and the Church Chart," typescript of an interview conducted c.1933, p. 6, UUSIC Records, Box 5.

³⁵ Statement of Mary Safford presented at the IAU Board of Trustees meeting, October 17, 1906, UUSIC Records, Box 7, Folder 6; Henry H. Griffiths to Dr. Chas. E. Snyder, Iowa City, February 17, 1948, UUSIC Records, Box 3. See also an unattributed statement [probably written by Eleanor Gordon] regarding Mary Safford's role in building Unitarian churches in Iowa, written shortly after Safford's death on October 25, 1927, UUSIC Records, Box 7, Folder 13. See also, Tucker, 107-108.

³⁶ Tucker, 206; Linda Loos Scarth, "Eleanor Elizabeth Gordon," and Sarah Oelberg, "Mary Augusta Safford," in David Hudson, Marvin Bergman, and Loren Horton, eds., *The Biographical Dictionary of Iowa* (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 2008), 192-194, 432-434; Peter Hughes, "Eleanor Elizabeth Gordon," and Celester DeRoche, "Mary Augusta Safford," in *Dictionary of Unitarian and Universalist Biography*, <http://uudb.org>, accessed December 19, 2017; Pearl Gordon Vestal, typescript notes for a biography of Eleanor Gordon, May 1949, Records of the Iowa Unitarian Universalist Association and Affiliations (R10), SHSI-IC, Box 6.

³⁷ *Ibid.*

³⁸ Samuel A. Eliot to Eleanor Gordon, May 27, 1907, and Wilson M. Backus to Eleanor Gordon, May 31, 1907 (quote), both in Records of First Unitarian Universalist Church, Des Moines, 1869-1993, Box 1, Folder 13, State Historical Society of Iowa-Des Moines.

³⁹ Tucker, 109-110; see also Susan Eberly, "Celebrating 100 Years in 'The Little Church that Looks Like a House,'" in *From Within These Walls*, 34 [NB: documents that associate Loring with the Derby, CT, church have not been located].

First Unitarian Church

Johnson Co., Iowa

Name of Property

County and State

⁴⁰ Derby, CT, website, <http://www.electronicvalley.org/derby/quiz/quizarchives.htm>, accessed December 20, 2017.

⁴¹ Loring to Gordon, January 28, 1908, UUSIC Records, Box 7, Folder 8.

⁴² "Audit of Building Fund Accounts," November 23, 1908, UUSIC Records, Box 7, Folder 6.

⁴³ "Edna E. Wilson and the Church Chart," 8.

⁴⁴ Minutes, FUSIC Board of Trustees Meetings, January 31, 1908; March 17, 1908; April 10, 1908; June 5, 1908; June 22, 1908; August 1, 1908; September 25, 1908; and October 23, 1908, Secretary's Book of Minutes, January 24, 1908-April 12, 1948, UUSIC Records, Box 3.

⁴⁵ Loring to Gordon, January 28, 1908.

⁴⁶ Audit of Building Expenses for Church at Iowa City, Reported and Received February 23, 1909, UUSIC Records, Box 7, Folder 6.

⁴⁷ The three board members associated with the State University of Iowa were Prof. Karl E. Guthe, Prof. Bohumil Shimek, and Mr. A. G. Worthing; Loring to Gordon, January 28, 1908.

⁴⁸ "Contract between I.U.A. and First Unitarian Society of Iowa City, Iowa," October 8, 1908, UUSIC Records, Box 7, Folder 8.

⁴⁹ "Address Given by Rev. Eleanor E. Gordon, Secretary of Iowa Unitarian Association," *Old and New* 16, no. 9 (November 1908).

⁵⁰ "Unitarian Church was Dedicated Last Evening," *Iowa City Republican*, October 26, 1908.

⁵¹ Loring to Gordon, October 28, 1908; Loring to Gordon, December 10, 1908; Loring to Gordon, April 7, 1909, UUSIC Records, Box 7, Folder 8.

⁵² "Letter or proposition of February 22, 1909 from Iowa City church re parsonage matter mtg. for \$5000 to A.U.A." and "Contract dated February 23, 1909 between I.U.A. and 1st Unitarian Society of Iowa City, IA, as to building parsonage and mortgage to A.U.A. for \$5000," UUSIC Records, Box 7, Folder 9.

⁵³ "Final Report: Iowa City Unitarian Church Building Committee," July 1910, UUSIC Records, Box 7, Folder 10.

⁵⁴ Joint Venture Agreement, June 1, 1951; Sidney G. Winter to Paul R. Olson, Treasurer, First Unitarian Society of Iowa City, April 8, 1952; [Sidney G. Winter], "Report - Iowa City Church," typescript, ca. June 1952; and Winter to Olson, June 4, 1952, all UUSIC Records, Box 5. See also Allin Dakin to Roman Hruska, September 8, 1951; Dakin to Hruska, October 24, 1951; and "Memorandum: Necessary Repairs and Improvements on the Unitarian Church Property in Iowa City," October 25, 1950, UUSIC Records, all Box 3.

⁵⁵ Notice of "Special Meeting," Sunday, April 16, 1961; Dee Norton and Dick Jordison, "Some Facts About the Church School and the Proposed New Building," [April 1961]; *The Iowa City Unitarian* [newsletter], September 17, 1961, December 10, 1961, March 25, 1961, April 1, 1962, April 26, 1962, May 13, 1962, and May 20, 1962, all UUSIC Records, Box 5.

⁵⁶ Minister's Annual Report [Khoren Arisian, Jr.], 1961-62; Proposed Addition to the Unitarian Church, Preliminary Plan, R. R. Jordison, Architect, February 1961; Fred W. Stamler, President FUSIC Board of Trustees, to Iowa Unitarian Association, October 25, 1961; "Plan Addition to Unitarian Church," *Iowa City Press-Citizen*, January 17, 1962, all UUSIC Records, Box 5. Information about the courtyard name, "Secret Garden," comes from Sue Eberly, personal communication, January 25, 2018.

⁵⁷ *The Iowa City Unitarian*, ca. April 15, 1963; Thomas Mikelson, "History of the Iowa City Unitarian Universalist Society," December 1981, UUSIC Records, Box 5.

⁵⁸ Tim Anderson, "Society Members Moving On and Moving Forward," *Iowa City Press-Citizen*, February 10, 2015.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

Chiat, Marilyn J. *America's Religious Architecture: Sacred Places for Every Community*. New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

Dictionary of Unitarian and Universalist Biography. <http://uudb.org>.

First Unitarian Church of Des Moines, Records of. State Historical Society of Iowa-Des Moines.

From Within These Walls: 100 Years at 10 South Gilbert, 1908-2008. Iowa City: Unitarian Universalist Society of Iowa City, 2008.

Gannett, William C. *The House Beautiful*. Boston: James H. West Co., 1895.

Glick, Mary Bell. "Furnishings and Friends, 75 Years, 1908-1983." In R9: Records of the Unitarian Universalist Society of Iowa City, Iowa, 1856-2011, Box 6, Folder 39.

Howe, Jeffery. *Houses of Worship: An Identification Guide to the History and Styles of American Religious Architecture*. San Diego: Thunder Bay Press, 2003.

Hudson, David, Marvin Bergman, and Loren Horton, eds. *The Biographical Dictionary of Iowa*. Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 2008.

Iowa City Building Plans Collection. Iowa City Public Library.

Iowa Unitarian Universalist Association and Affiliations, Records of. R10, State Historical Society of Iowa-Iowa City

Jacobsen, James E. "Universalism and Unitarianism in Iowa City," unpublished MS, 1979, State Historical Society of Iowa-Iowa City. In R9: Records of the Unitarian Universalist Society of Iowa City, Iowa, 1856-2011, Box 1. Jacobsen's history incorporates two early accounts written by Ruth Irish Preston—"The Universalist Church in Iowa City" (1907) and "Personal Recollections of the Organization of the First Unitarian Church of Iowa City" (1908)—along with substantial additional research presented in lengthy annotations.

Mikelson, Thomas. "History of the Iowa City Unitarian Universalist Society." Typescript, December 1981. In R9: Records of the Unitarian Universalist Society of Iowa City, Iowa, 1856-2011, Box 5.

Plans for Churches. American Unitarian Association, 1902. Andover-Harvard Theological Library, Harvard University.

Sammarco, Anthony Mitchell. *Milton [Massachusetts]: A Compendium*. Mt. Pleasant, SC: Arcadia Publishing, 2010.

Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps. 1888, 1892, 1899, 1906, 1912.

Slonneger, Marybeth, with guest writers. *Finials: A View of Downtown Iowa City*. Iowa City: Hand Press, 2015.

Snyder, Charles E. "Unitarianism in Iowa." *Palimpsest* 30 (November 1949): 345-376.

Tucker, Cynthia Grant. *Prophetic Sisterhood: Liberal Women Ministers of the Frontier, 1880-1930*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994.

Unitarian Universalist Society of Iowa City, Iowa, Records of. R9, State Historical Society of Iowa-Iowa City.

Williams, Peter W. *Houses of God: Region, Religion, and Architecture in the United States*. Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1997.

"Wright Studies: The House Beautiful, 1896-1898." In *The Wright Library*.
<http://www.steinerag.com/flw/index.htm>.

Previous documentation on file (NPS): n/a

- 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 # _____
- recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # _____

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State Agency
- Federal Agency
- Local Government
- University
- Other
- Name of repository: _____

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): 52-01739

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of Property less than one acre

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates

Datum if other than WGS84: _____
(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

1	<u>41° 39' 39.8" N</u> Latitude	<u>91° 31' 47.8" W</u> Longitude	3	_____ Latitude	_____ Longitude
2	_____ Latitude	_____ Longitude	4	_____ Latitude	_____ Longitude

Verbal Boundary Description

The north 85 feet of Lot 4, Block 44, Iowa City, Iowa.

Boundary Justification

These boundaries include the footprint of the church, the new south entrance addition that will be constructed, and a 10 foot setback that would be required if the land on which the church is located were hypothetically separated from the development parcel.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Rebecca Conard date March 21, 2018
organization for Friends of Historic Preservation (Iowa City) telephone 615.975.0593
street & number 2186 Port Talbot Pl. email rebeccaconard@gmail.com
city or town Coralville state IA zip code 52241

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

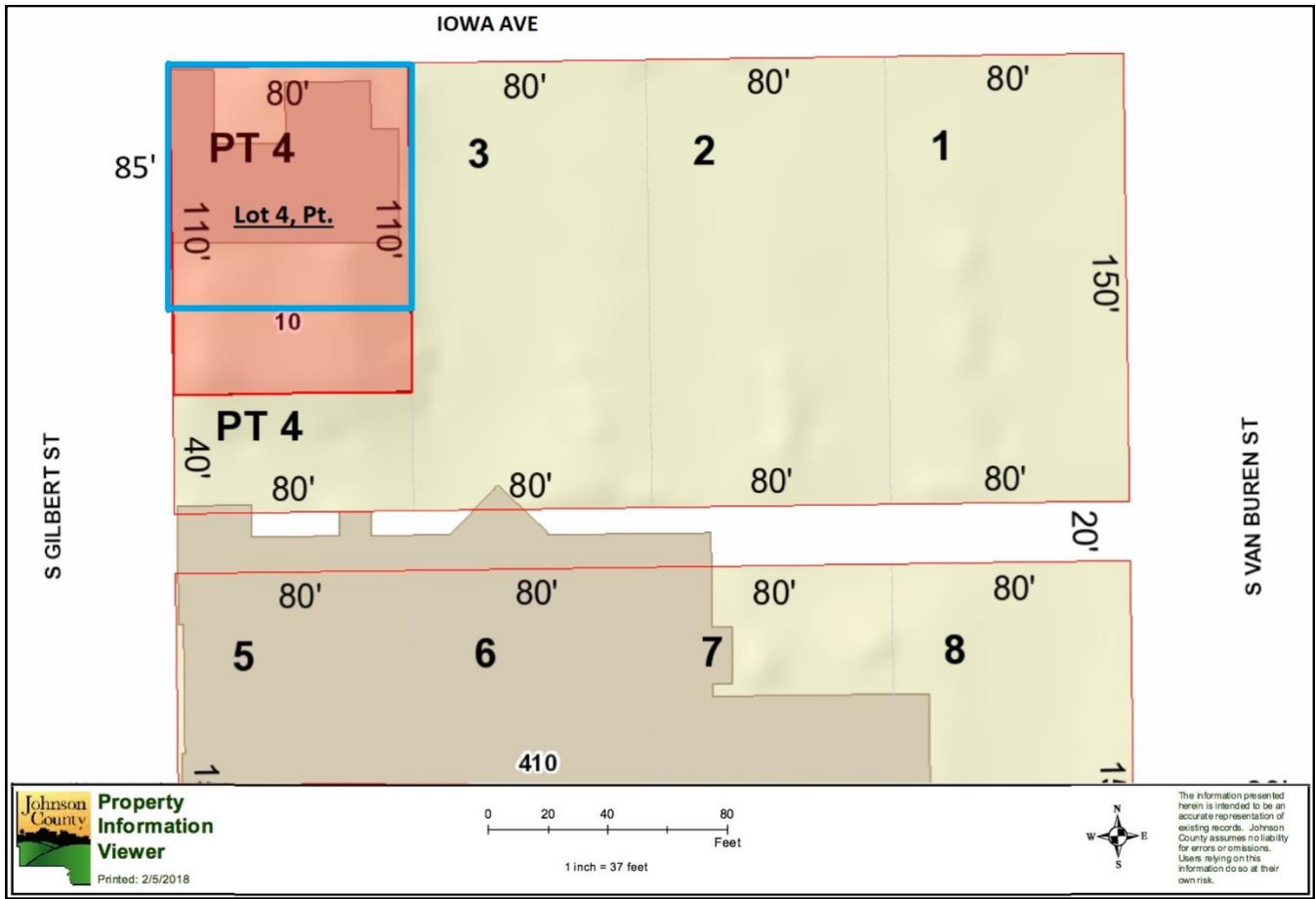
GIS Location Map (Google Earth or BING)



First Unitarian Church (10 South Gilbert Street) in relation to Iowa River (far left), Old State Capitol/Pentacrest (left center), and downtown area.

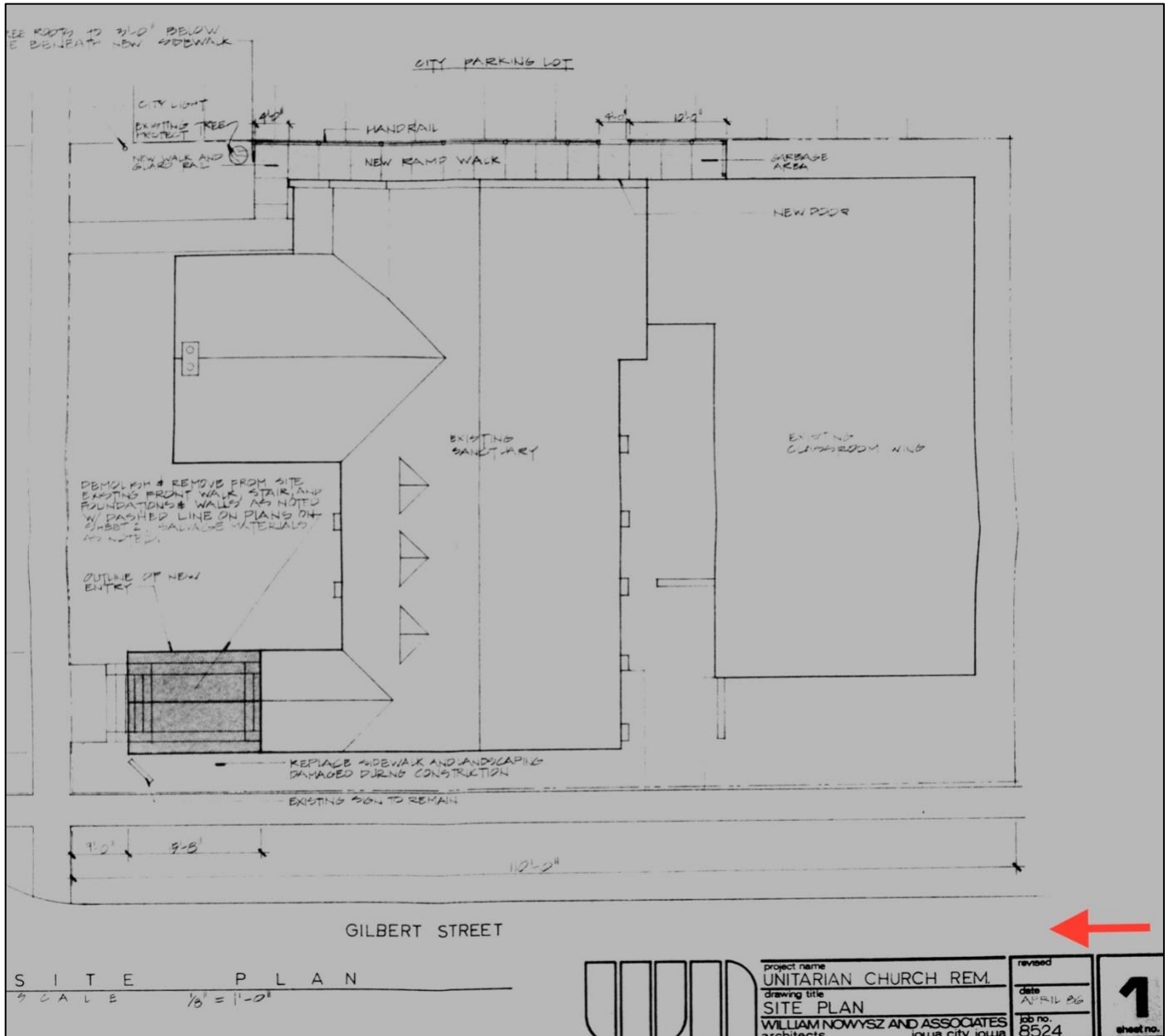
Latitude 41°39'39.8" N Longitude 91°31'47.8" W

Local Location Map



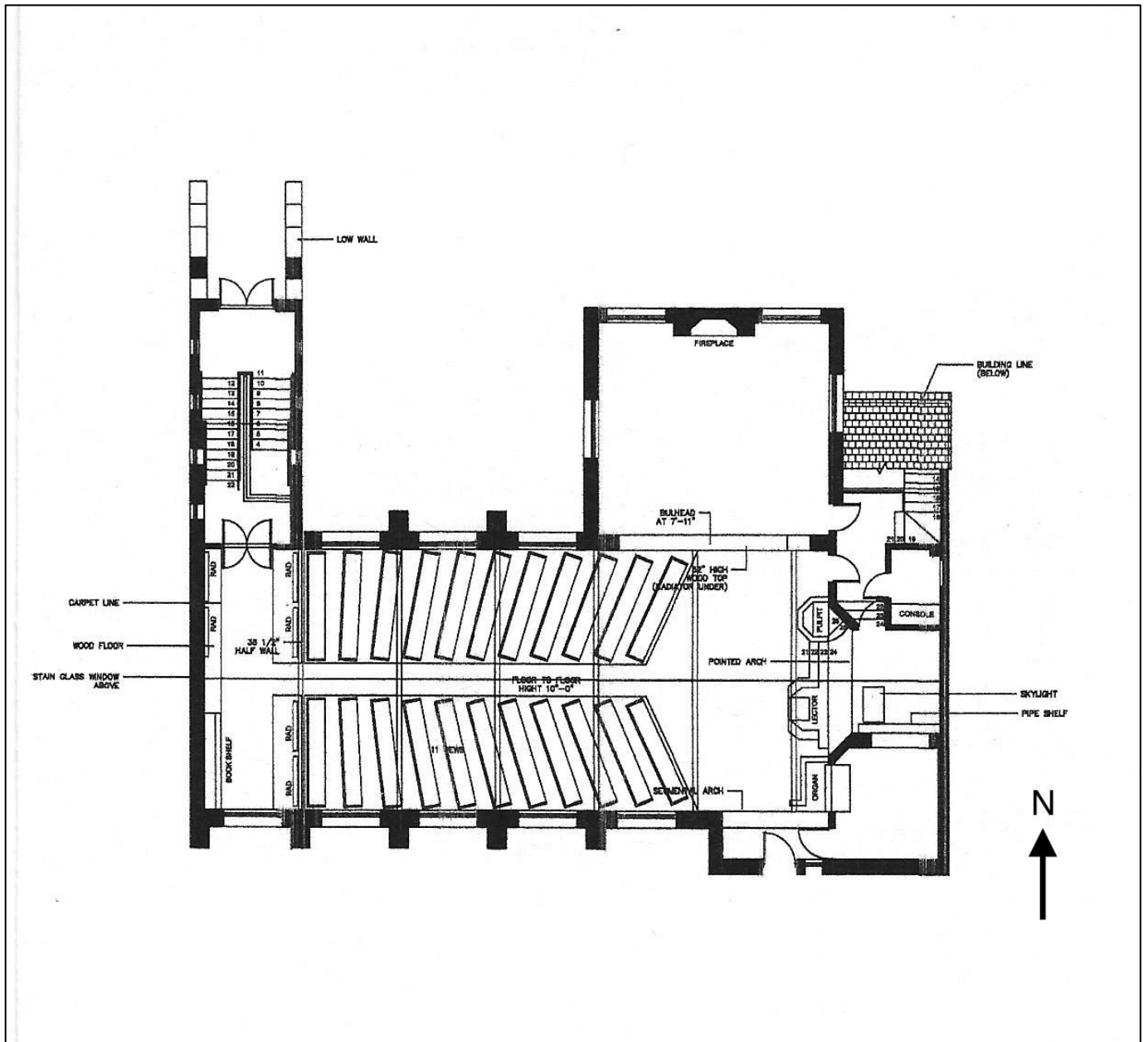
Iowa City Plat Map (2018), Block 44. The 85' x 80' portion of Lot 4 that constitutes the boundaries of the church is bordered in blue.

Site Plan

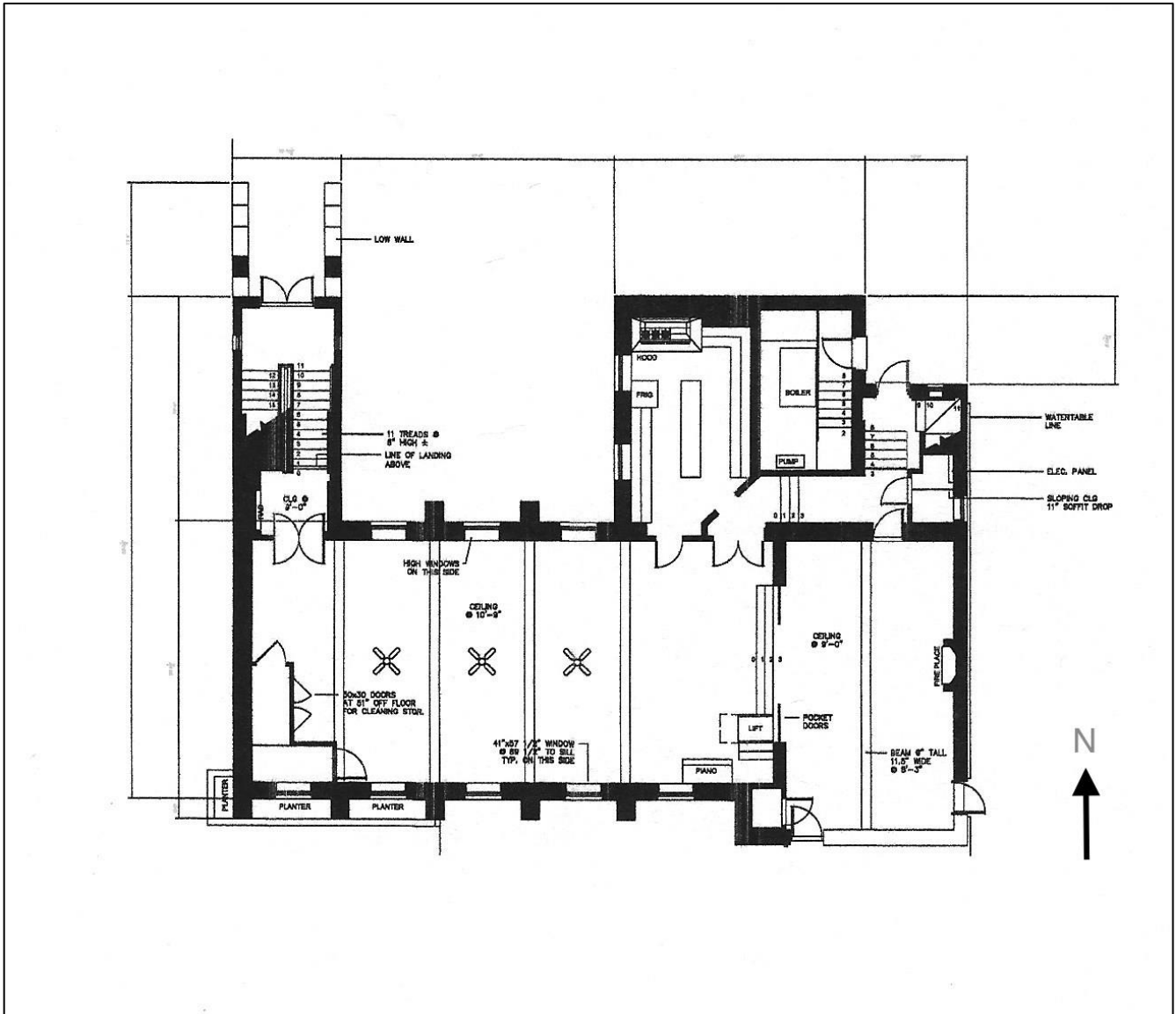


Site Plan from 1986 Architectural Drawings, William Nowysz, architect, showing the front entrance extension at the lower left corner, non-extant Worthley Building on the right, and non-extant ADA ramp at the top. Source: Iowa City Public Library, Building Plans Collection.

Floor Plans (As Applicable)



Upper Level Floor Plan. Courtesy Neumann Monson Architects and Iowa City Neighborhood and Community Development Department.



Lower Level Floor Plan. Courtesy Neumann Monson Architects and Iowa City Neighborhood and Community Development Department.

First Unitarian Church
Name of Property

Johnson Co., Iowa
County and State

Photographs:

Photo Log

Name of Property:	<u>First Unitarian Church</u>		
City or Vicinity:	<u>Iowa City</u>		
County:	<u>Johnson</u>	State:	<u>Iowa</u>
Photographer:	<u>Jessica Bristow – Exterior</u>	<u>Rebecca Conard – Interior & Streetscape</u>	
Date Photographed:	<u>July 25, 2017</u>	<u>December 5, 2017 & March 19, 2018</u>	

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera:

Exterior

- Photo 1 of 27: North Elevation, facing SE
- Photo 2 of 27: West Elevation, facing E
- Photo 3 of 27: South Elevation, facing NE
- Photo 4 of 27: East Elevation, facing W
- Photo 5 of 27: Front Entrance, North Elevation, facing S
- Photo 6 of 27: Rear Entrance, North Elevation, facing S
- Photo 7 of 27: Window and Gable Detail, North Elevation, facing SE
- Photo 8 of 27: Buttress and Window Detail, South Elevation, facing NNE

Interior

- Photo 9 of 27: Front Entry, facing S
- Photo 10 of 27: Front Entry, facing N
- Photo 11 of 27: Narthex, facing N
- Photo 12 of 27: Sanctuary and Chancel, facing E
- Photo 13 of 27: Fireside Room, facing NNE
- Photo 14 of 27: Detail of Chancel and Organ Pipes, facing SE
- Photo 15 of 27: Detail of Felgemaker Organ, facing NE
- Photo 16 of 27: Detail of Organ Pipes in Closet to Right of Organ, facing NE
- Photo 17 of 27: Detail of Pulpit, facing NE
- Photo 18 of 27: Detail of Windows, Sanctuary, facing NE
- Photo 19 of 27: Detail of Triangular Window, Sanctuary, facing NW
- Photo 20 of 27: Channing Hall, Downstairs, facing W
- Photo 21 of 27: Stage-Parlor, Downstairs, facing E from Channing Hall
- Photo 22 of 27: Detail of Pocket Door between Channing Hall and Stage-Parlor, facing SW

First Unitarian Church
Name of Property

Johnson Co., Iowa
County and State

Photo 23 of 27: Kitchen, Downstairs, facing N

Photo 24 of 27: Rear Entrance Stairway, facing SW

Streetscapes

Photo 25 of 27: Iowa Avenue & Gilbert Street, facing SE

Photo 26 of 27: Iowa Avenue & Gilbert Street, facing SW

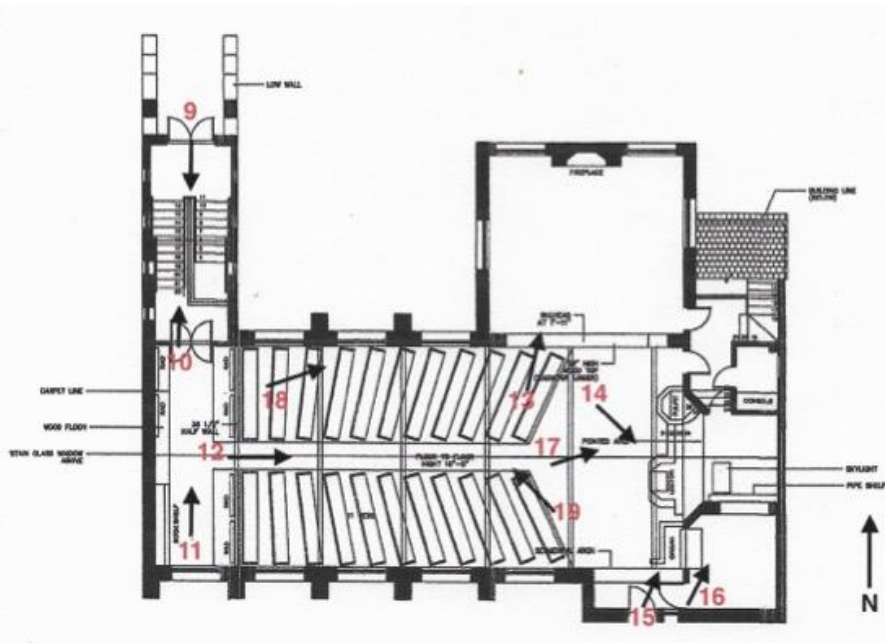
Photo 27 of 27: Iowa Avenue & Gilbert Street, facing NE

First Unitarian Church

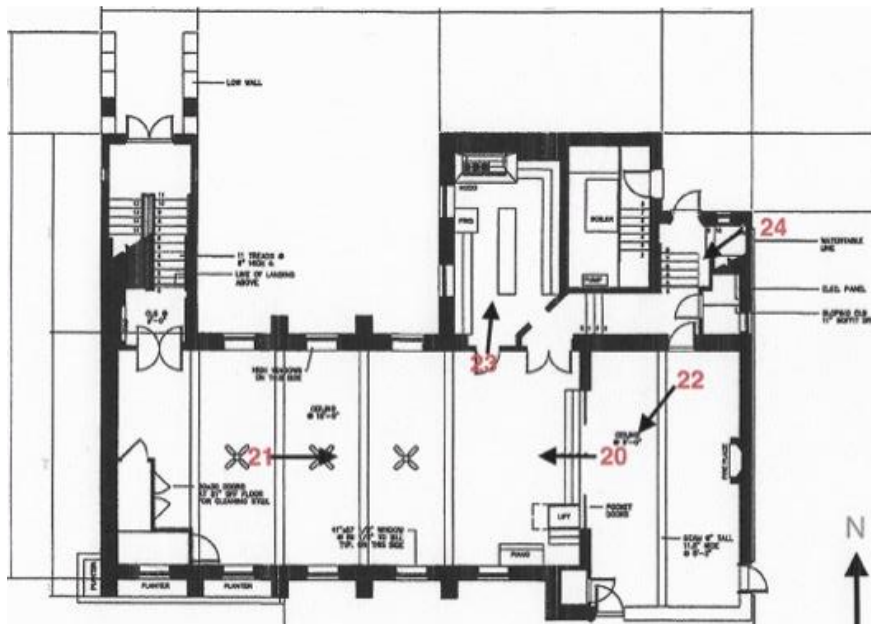
Johnson Co., Iowa

Name of Property

County and State



Photograph Key, Upper Level



Photograph Key, Lower Level



NO PARKING
12 AM TO 5 AM
7 AM TO 10 AM
LOADING ZONE
15 MINUTE LIMIT
8 AM TO 5 PM

Unitarian Universalist Society

♿
ACCESSIBLE
ENTRANCE







PAVING
RESERVED FOR
PUBLIC SAFETY
VEHICLES ONLY

PAVING
RESERVED FOR
PUBLIC SAFETY
VEHICLES ONLY

IOWA CITY
POLICE

911

911




ACCESSIBLE
ENTRANCE
←









EXIT



Please use
left door





EXIT









61. C P 11 S

















Iowa Ave

P
Parking





PARKING

NO PARKING
IN THE
LOADING ZONE
OR UNLOADING ZONE
EXCEPT FOR
DELIVERY AND PICKUP

10th Ave

10th St

NO PARKING

NO PARKING

NO PARKING

NO PARKING

NO PARKING

NO PARKING

NO PARKING

NO PARKING

NO PARKING

NO PARKING

NO PARKING

NO PARKING

NO PARKING

NO PARKING

NO PARKING

NO PARKING

NO PARKING

NO PARKING

NO PARKING

NO PARKING



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

Requested Action:

Property Name:

Multiple Name:

State & County:

Date Received: 8/21/2018 Date of Pending List: 9/14/2018 Date of 16th Day: 10/1/2018 Date of 45th Day: 10/5/2018 Date of Weekly List: 11/9/2018

Reference number:

Nominator:

Reason For Review:

Accept Return Reject 10/5/2018 Date

Abstract/Summary
Comments:

Recommendation/
Criteria

Reviewer Control Unit Discipline _____

Telephone _____ Date _____

DOCUMENTATION: see attached comments : No see attached SLR : No

If a nomination is returned to the nomination authority, the nomination is no longer under consideration by the National Park Service.

CHRIS KRAMER, ACTING DIRECTOR

August 20, 2018



IOWA ARTS
COUNCIL

PRODUCE
IOWA

STATE HISTORICAL
SOCIETY OF IOWA

STATE HISTORICAL
MUSEUM OF IOWA

STATE HISTORICAL
LIBRARY & ARCHIVES

STATE HISTORIC SITES

STATE HISTORIC
PRESERVATION
OFFICE OF IOWA

IOWA HISTORICAL
FOUNDATION

Joy Beasley, Keeper of the National Register of Historic Places
National Park Service
National Register of Historic Places
1849 C Street, NW, Mail Stop 7228
Washington, DC 20240

Dear Ms Beasley:

The following National Register nomination(s) from Iowa are enclosed for your review and listing if acceptable.

First Unitarian Church

The First Unitarian Church is significant at the local level under Criterion C and Criteria Consideration A as a religious property that derives primary significance from its historic architectural importance. The church exemplifies specific guidelines for constructing dignified yet inexpensive houses of worship that were promulgated by the American Unitarian Association. Boston architect Edwin J. Lewis, Jr., who was instrumental in developing these guidelines, also designed the Iowa City church. Additionally, the building is an outstanding example of the "church home" architectural aesthetic, which is closely associated with a small but influential group of liberal women ministers who practiced in Iowa and surrounding states roughly between 1880 and 1930. The acknowledged leaders of this group were Rev. Mary Safford and Rev. Eleanor Elizabeth Gordon, the latter of whom served as minister to the Iowa City congregation from 1896 to 1900 and was directly involved in the financing and construction of the Iowa City church. The period of significance is 1908, the year the church was constructed.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Laura Sadowsky
State Historian and National Register Coordinator
State Historical Society of Iowa

Enclosures.