

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number \_\_\_\_\_ Page \_\_\_\_\_

SUPPLEMENTARY LISTING RECORD

NRIS Reference Number: 91001847

Date Listed: 12/27/91

Mount Carmel Congregational Church  
and Parish House  
Property Name

New Haven  
County

CT  
State

N/A  
Multiple Name

This property is listed in the National Register of Historic Places in accordance with the attached nomination documentation subject to the following exceptions, exclusions, or amendments, notwithstanding the National Park Service certification included in the nomination documentation.

  
Signature of the Keeper

12/27/91  
Date of Action

=====  
Amended Items in Nomination:

8. Statement of Significance: Period of Significance

The documented period of significance for the property is the same as the significant dates, 1840; 1870; 1912.

This information was confirmed with John Herzan, National Register Coordinator, CTSHPO, by telephone.

DISTRIBUTION:

- National Register property file
- Nominating Authority (without attachment)

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 of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in *Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms* (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

### 1. Name of Property

historic name Mount Carmel Congregational Church and Parish House  
other names/site number \_\_\_\_\_

### 2. Location

street & number 3280 & 3284 Whitney Avenue; 195 Sherman Avenue  not for publication  
city, town Hamden  vicinity  
state Connecticut code CT county New Haven code 009 zip code 06518

### 3. Classification

Ownership of Property	Category of Property	Number of Resources within Property	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	Contributing	Noncontributing
<input type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input type="checkbox"/> district	<u>2</u>	<u>1</u> buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> public-State	<input type="checkbox"/> site	_____	_____ sites
<input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> structure	_____	_____ structures
	<input type="checkbox"/> object	_____	_____ objects
		<u>2</u>	<u>1</u> Total

Name of related multiple property listing: N/A  
Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

### 4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this  nomination  request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria.  See continuation sheet.

Signature of certifying official [Signature] Date 11/7/91  
State or Federal agency and bureau Director, Connecticut Historical Commission

In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria.  See continuation sheet.

Signature of commenting or other official \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal agency and bureau \_\_\_\_\_

### 5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

entered in the National Register. [Signature] 12-27-91  
 See continuation sheet.

determined eligible for the National Register.  See continuation sheet.

determined not eligible for the National Register.

removed from the National Register.

other, (explain:) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

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**6. Function or Use**

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Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

RELIGION/church/religious structure

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Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

RELIGION/church/religious structure

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**7. Description**

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Architectural Classification

(enter categories from instructions)

MID-19TH CENTURY/Greek Revival

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20TH CENTURY REVIVAL/Colonial Revival

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Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation granite (church)

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walls weatherboard

---

roof asphalt shingles

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other brick foundation (Parish House)

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**Describe present and historic physical appearance.**

The Mount Carmel Congregational Church and Parish House are located on a level site slightly above the west side of Whitney Avenue in the Mount Carmel section of Hamden. The church is a Greek Revival-style building constructed in 1840 (Photograph #s 1, 2, 3, 4; Exhibit A). To the north of the church is the 1911 Colonial Revival-style parish house (Photograph #5). Directly to the rear of this building is a non-contributing circa 1925 house (Photograph #6). Although used as the church sexton's house, this building was acquired by the church after World War II and therefore it is not historically associated with the church. A historic sycamore, reputed to be 241 years old, is located just to the southeast of the church.

Until 1979 the site was divided by Sherman Avenue, which passed between the church and the parish house. When the road was relocated to its present route on the north side of the parish house, several houses to the west of the church site were moved and a rail fence was installed between the church and the parish house along the Whitney Avenue side of the site. The south-facing sexton's house now presents its rear elevation to the new road.

The temple-fronted facade of the church has a flushboarded pediment which is supported by a colonnade. The four fluted columns have Ionic capitals embellished with egg and dart molding. They are surmounted by a stepped architrave and a plain frieze, which continues on the other elevations. A square two-stage bell tower rises from the front of the ridge of the gabled roof. Set on a low base, its first stage displays full cornices and paired pilasters framing rectangular louvered openings. The second stage is similar in design with glazed openings. The facade behind the portico has two six-panel doors with wide board surrounds on either side of a central 15-paned triple-hung window. Similar windows are displayed on the other elevations: three on the sides and two on the rear. Small enclosed entryways are found on the rear and south elevations.

The interior of the church consists of two rooms, a foyer across the front (east end) and the nave (Photograph #7). The nave is divided by two aisles between rows of wooden pews. On the end of each pew is a number at the center of a cloverleaf cross. The pulpit at the west end is set on a dais, partially recessed and framed by an arched opening trimmed with molding (Photograph #s 7, 8). The ceiling,

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installed in 1870, is pressed tin bordered by a deep cove panel, also tin, around the perimeter and extending down the walls. The organ and choir loft at the east end over the foyer is accessed by winding stairs on either side (Photograph #8). The lower basement floor of the building is partitioned for classrooms. In a few places the original granite rubblestone foundation is exposed.

The original main block of the parish house is almost square (32' x 28'). In order to accommodate vaulted ceilings on the interior, the building was designed with high studded walls and a steeply pitched hip roof. There is a Colonial Revival-style portico on the facade and a dormer with three diamond-paned windows on the rear slope of the roof. The rest of the fenestration consists of tall multi-paned windows. Modillions trim the soffit of the overhang. When a small rear one-story original ell at the southwest rear corner was enlarged and extended to the north in the 1970s, the original floorplan was altered (Exhibit A). Presently, a large north meeting room extends the full depth of the building on the north side. It has wainscotting around the perimeter and a stage across the rear. On the south side there is a parlor with a large fieldstone fireplace, and a kitchen to the rear (Photograph #9). The plastered vaults are presently hidden throughout by dropped ceilings but part of the cased framing supporting the vaulting is visible in the parlor.<sup>1</sup> The framing consists of two beams which run the width and length of the original building at the level of the plate and meet at the center to form a cross.

1. Information supplied by the caretaker, who has viewed the vault framing and lathing from above. The area under the roof is now accessible only through the rear dormer windows.

**8. Statement of Significance**

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

nationally  statewide  locally

Applicable National Register Criteria  A  B  C  D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions)  A  B  C  D  E  F  G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)

ARCHITECTURE  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Period of Significance

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Significant Dates

1840;1870;1912  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Cultural Affiliation

N/A  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Significant Person

N/A  
\_\_\_\_\_

Architect/Builder

Unknown  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

The Mount Carmel Congregational Church and its associated parish house are architecturally significant as well-preserved examples of their respective styles and periods. Considered to be one of Hamden's most fully developed examples of the Greek Revival style, the church is also one of the best regional examples of a rural temple-form meetinghouse.<sup>1</sup> Because of its unusual design and form, the parish house is an exceptional example of the institutional Colonial Revival style, and it echoes the church in its finishes and detailing.

Historical Background

In 1757 the Mount Carmel Ecclesiastical Society was formed with the permission of the General Assembly as a parish of the Town of New Haven. Typically for societies formed in this period, there were difficulties encountered in building the meetinghouse and obtaining a settled minister. The first meetinghouse, which was located to the north of the present site, was begun in 1761 but not finished until after the Revolution. When Hamden was incorporated as a separate town in 1786, the first town meeting was held there. The first settled minister, Nathaniel Sherman, the brother of Roger Sherman, accepted the call to be the minister of the Mount Carmel Society in 1768. Although Sherman built a house nearby, he was dismissed after serving for only two years.<sup>2</sup>

Plans to build the present church were made in the 1830s. After a two-year debate about its location, land for the church was purchased from Amos Dickerman in 1839 (HLR 18:417). The quarter-acre lot was bordered at that time on the west by the Farmington Canal. The church was completed in 1840 and money was raised to retire the debt by the sale of pews. The historic sycamore to the south of the church became known as the "bell tree." Tradition holds that before the tower was finished, the church bell was delivered and temporarily hung from this tree. A parsonage, which was built in 1855 about three-quarters of a mile to the south on Whitney Avenue, remained in use until at least 1920. When the church interior was remodeled in 1870 at a cost of \$2000, the pipe organ was installed. In 1910 the first reference to the need for a parish house appeared in the church records. Plans were drawn (no architect named) and ground broken by September of that year. In October, 1911 the first meeting was held in the building.

See continuation sheet

**9. Major Bibliographical References**

Becker, Martha May and Sasche, Nancy Davis. Hamden: Our Architectural Heritage. Hamden, Connecticut: Whitney Press, 1986.

Blake, William P. History of the Town of Hamden, Connecticut with an Account of the Centennial Celebration June 15th 1886. New Haven: Price, Lee & Co., 1888.

Hamden Historical Society. "Records of the Mount Carmel Ecclesiastical Society." MS, Vol. 6, 1830-1866, Vol. 8, 1900-1912.

Martley, Rachel M. 200th Anniversary of the Mount Carmel Congregational Church. Hamden, 1964.

See continuation sheet

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

Specify repository:

Miller Memorial Library, Hamden, CT  
Hamden Historical Society Archives

**10. Geographical Data**

Acreage of property 2

UTM References

A 

1	18
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6	7	5	3	0	0
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4	5	8	6	6	2	0
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Zone Easting Northing

C 

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B 

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Zone Easting Northing

D 

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See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

The boundaries of the nominated property are delineated on the attached site map drawn to scale from maps located in the Tax Assessor's Office, Hamden Town Hall.

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

The nominated property includes the land and buildings historically associated with the Mount Carmel Ecclesiastical Society and the Mount Carmel Congregational Church. Inc.

See continuation sheet

**11. Form Prepared By** Reviewed by John Herzan, National Register Coordinator

name/title Jan Cunningham, National Register Consultant

organization Cunningham Associates Ltd. date May 15, 1991

street & number 37 Orange Road telephone (203) 347 4072

city or town Middletown state CT zip code 06457

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### Architectural Significance

The Mount Carmel Church is a fine representative example of Greek Revival architecture, the prevailing style for institutional and domestic buildings in the mid-nineteenth century. This style dominated American architecture in this period because of its associations with the Greek Revolution for independence and democratic ideals espoused by classical Greece. With little variation most churches of this period were constructed on the same model and built to simulate a Greek temple. This exceptionally well-preserved example embodies all the characteristic features of the style, from its temple-fronted facade with pedimented portico to its flushboarding, which was intended to resemble marble. While many churches in this style have been remodeled with new towers or spires, particularly in the Colonial Revival period, this church has retained its original bell tower.<sup>3</sup> Its proportions, two-stage design, and simple detailing are also typical of this style. The remodeling of the interior was mainly cosmetic and generally limited to the installation of the tin ceiling, the only patterned surface in an otherwise plainly finished nave. The original layout of the nave and loft was preserved.

The parish house, an unusual example of a quite different architectural genre, has a complimentary association with the neighboring church. Although Colonial Revival in style, the pedimented portico echoes the pediment of the church. The tall multi-paned windows, similar to those of the church, make it evident that this building has an institutional rather than a domestic function. The extensions to the building have been relatively isolated from the main block, thus preserving its original massing and appearance. These additions have, however, impacted on the original floorplan and interior finishes to a significant degree. Of particular importance are the vaulted ceilings, a feature which was central to the original design and massing of the building. Today the vaults are hidden by dropped ceilings, but fortunately this is a reversible alteration.

1. Townwide Historic and Architectural Survey of Hamden, Connecticut, Hamden Historical Society/Connecticut Historical Commission, 1985, Site 460.
2. Although Sherman had expected to be settled for life, this custom had begun to die out starting in the 1750s. Many ministers of much longer tenure were dismissed in the decade prior to the Revolution and immediately afterwards. Sherman's grievances with the society were not settled until well after the war when the General Assembly voted to pay him an indemnity, a decision influenced by the fact that he had loaned money to the Colonial cause. Sherman's house was moved from its site south of the present church in the twentieth century.
3. For Hamden examples, see the c. 1896 dome on the 1834 Whitneyville Congregational Church and the 1921 steeple which replaced the spire of the 1821 Grace Episcopal Church, which has been attributed to David Hoadley.

SHERMAN AVENUE

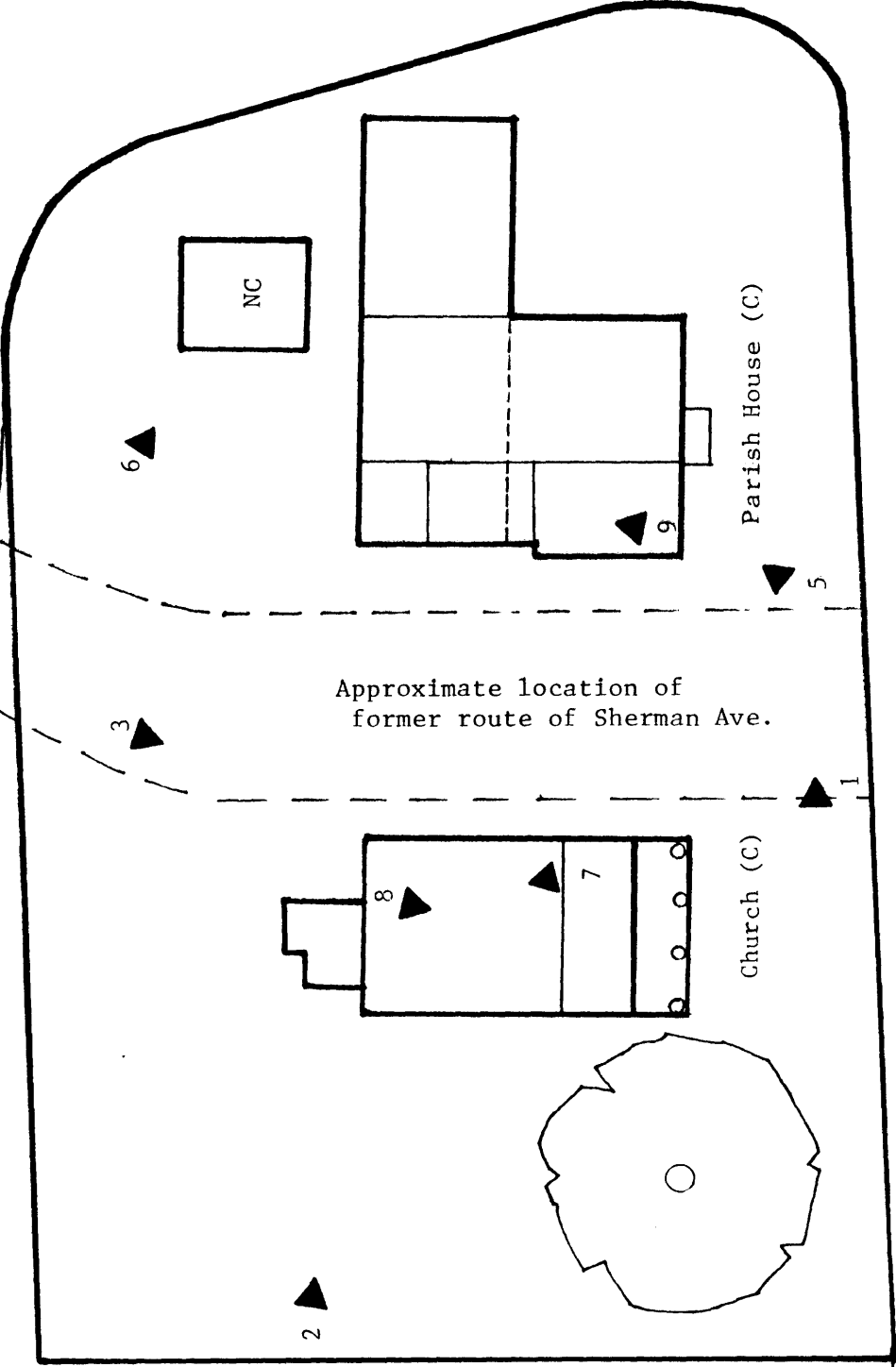


EXHIBIT A: SITE OF MT. CARMEL CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH & PARISH HOUSE

Scale: 1" = 40'

Boundaries of nominated site in bold.

▲ Photograph views

W H I T N E Y A V E N U E



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List of Photographs

Property: Mount Carmel Congregational Church and Parish House

New Haven County, Hamden, Connecticut

Photographer: Cunningham Associates Ltd.

Date: 4/91

Negatives on file: Connecticut Historical Commission

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| 1. Church facade<br>Facing: SW             | 2. South elevation<br>Facing: NE   |
| 3. Rear and north elevations<br>Facing: SE | 4. Site from the rear<br>L-R: Sexton's House, Parish<br>House, and Church<br>Facing: E |
| 5. Parish House<br>Facing: NW              | 6. Facade of Sexton's House<br>Facing: NE  |
| 7. Church interior<br>Facing: SW           | 8. Church interior<br>Facing: NE   |
| 9. Parish House Parlor<br>Facing: NW       |  |