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United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

Nat. Register of Historic Places
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 *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an 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 listed in the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name First Congregational Church of Walton

other names/site number _____

2. Location

street & number 4 Mead Street not for publication

city or town Walton vicinity

state New York code NY county Delaware code 025 zip code 13858

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

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

Bruce A. Purpurt DSHPO 6/3/15
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

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

Signature of certifying official/Title Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

entered in the National Register.
 See continuation sheet.

determined eligible for the National Register.
 See continuation sheet.

determined not eligible for the National Register.

removed from the National Register.

other, (explain): _____

Signature of the Keeper

Edson G. Boall

Date of Action

7-27-15

First Congregation Church
Name of Property

Delaware County, New York
County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property (Check as many boxes as apply)	Category of Property (Check only one box)	Number of Resources within Property (Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	Contributing	Noncontributing
<input type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input type="checkbox"/> district	<u>1</u>	<u>0</u> buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> public-State	<input type="checkbox"/> site	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u> sites
<input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u> structures
	<input type="checkbox"/> object	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u> objects
		<u>1</u>	<u>0</u> Total

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

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register
0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions)	Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions)
<u>RELIGION/religious facility, church school</u>	<u>RELIGION/religious facility, church school</u>
<u> </u>	<u> </u>
<u> </u>	<u> </u>
<u> </u>	<u> </u>
<u> </u>	<u> </u>
<u> </u>	<u> </u>
<u> </u>	<u> </u>
<u> </u>	<u> </u>

7. Description

Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions)	Materials (Enter categories from instructions)
<u>Greek Revival/Classical Revival</u>	foundation <u>concrete</u>
<u> </u>	walls <u>wood</u>
<u> </u>	roof <u>asphalt</u>
	other <u> </u>
	<u> </u>

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

First Congregational Church

Name of Property

Delaware County, New York

County and State

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 of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Narrative Statement of Significance

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

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

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

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

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

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

- architecture
- social history
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

Period of Significance

1840-1931

Significant Dates

1840; 1860; 1881; 1929; 1931

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

na

Cultural Affiliation

na

Architect/Builder

unknown
R.H Blattner and E.H. Bartoo (Binghamton), church house

Primary location of additional data

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

Name of repository:

First Congregation Church
Name of Property

Delaware County, New York
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of property Less than one acre

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1 18 489461 4668751
Zone Easting Northing
2

3
Zone Easting Northing
4

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Kathleen LaFrank, National Register Coordinator

organization New York State Historic Preservation Office date February 2015

street & number Peebles Island State Park, Box 189 telephone 518-237-8643 x 3261

city or town Waterford state New York zip code 12188

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

Additional items

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name _____

street & number _____ telephone _____

city or town _____ state _____ zip code _____

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.470 *et seq.*)

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

First Congregational Church of Walton
Walton, Delaware County, New York

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 1

The First Congregational Church of Walton is located at the corner of Mead and North Streets in the Delaware County hamlet of Walton. The small village of Walton is located in the center of the town of Walton, an interior town near the center of the county. The village spans both sides of the West Branch of the Delaware River. NY 10, one of the major northeast-southeast routes through the country, parallels the river and serves as Walton's main street, the location of its commercial resources. The church is located at the northwest corner of North and Mead Streets, a few blocks north of the river. The large church is oriented east, toward North Street, with its south, side, elevation extending along Mead. The church house, added in 1929, was appended to the rear of the building, with its main entrance on Mead. The nomination boundary includes less than one acre, which appears to be the parcel associated with the church since the early twentieth century, and one resource, the interconnected church and church house. Two other buildings, a chapel and a parsonage, are no longer extant.

Church

The First Congregational Church of Walton is a product of at least three major building campaigns (1840; 1881; 1925-31), as well as changes in several other periods that affected portions of its structure or appearance (1862; 1947; 1962). The church is of wood-frame construction with clapboard siding, a gable roof, and a raised concrete foundation. Its earliest section (40' by 58'), constructed in 1840, was extended by sixteen feet in 1862. Including the 1862 addition, which matches the original construction, the church is three bays by five bays in size, surmounted by an engaged, projecting three-stage bell tower. Fenestration is symmetrical and regular. Original tall, narrow window openings within flat wood frames survive; Victorian lintels were added and the windows themselves were replaced with stained glass in 1881. Although the church was raised nine feet in 1881, when the concrete foundation was laid and basement rooms created, it was lowered again during a 1929 renovation, leading to the current basement size. Ground level windows on the side elevations light the basement and there is a ground level entrance to the basement on the north side elevation. On the façade, the projecting portico and small vestibule were added in 1931. The pedimented portico is supported by four Doric

See continuation sheet

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

First Congregational Church of Walton
Walton, Delaware County, New York

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 2

columns and features a deep raking cornice. The portico itself is stucco and is highlighted by a central round window. The original front wall survives behind the later portico and vestibule. The three-bay façade features flushboard siding and a center entrance flanked by large-scale pilasters with Doric capitals. There are two large windows (identical to those on the side elevations) on either side of the entrance and the windows and Doric pilasters on each end. A smaller, blind window with a trabeated surround looks to be original. The entrance, which is not original, is concealed by the Colonial Revival vestibule, which is detailed by a scroll-top pediment, corner pilasters and paneled doors. The original tower includes three stages topped by a small copper hexagonal dome, which is a 1995 replacement of the original. The first stage of the tower is distinguished by a tall round-arched niche on the façade. This niche is now partially concealed by the pediment. This stage also has a projecting cornice with dentil moldings. The second and third stages have rectangular vents and molded cornices on all four sides. Small pendants (added in 1881) that once graced the corners of the two lower tower stages have been removed due to deterioration.

From the main entrance, stairs lead to the up to the vestibule and sanctuary. Three sets of large wood-panel doors covered in leather provide entrance into the auditorium. Stairs to the gallery are also present in the vestibule. In appearance, the auditorium reflects changes made in 1881 and in subsequent twentieth-century redecorations. The general plan dates to 1881. The sanctuary is a rectangular space divided by center and side aisles. There are two rows of wood pews, which feature simple scrolled backs. These are ash, originally two-toned, refinished in 1929, and painted white with mahogany trim in 1961. At the rear, a semi-circular gallery supported on four metal columns with Doric capitals is also an 1881 feature. Pews in the gallery are similar to those below except that they are semi-circular in shape. Ash beaded-board siding was added to the walls below the window sills in 1881, but this has either been removed or concealed by later heaters (no longer operational), which now line the lower walls. The walls above the heaters are undecorated plaster, painted grey. Church records indicate that the 1881 remodeling included decorative painted or frescoed walls, as would have been

See continuation sheet

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

First Congregational Church of Walton
Walton, Delaware County, New York

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 3

typical for the period, and an undated postcard confirms this treatment. These were probably painted over in 1925, when hardwood floors were laid and the exterior was painted white. However, the sanctuary was also redecorated and painted in 1947 and 1962, and the 1962 color scheme was described as grey walls and red carpeting. Red carpeting remains; however, it may be a replacement of the 1962 installation. The side walls also feature tall rectangular windows within flat frames. The openings are original; however, small-paned windows were replaced with stained glass in 1881. Glazing consist of wide central panels of panes in one geometric pattern framed by narrower panels in a slightly different in pattern and hue. Each window is surmounted by a stained-glass panel featuring a religious/liturgical symbol within a circle. At the front of the church is a typical three-part raised wooden platform, consisting of a central seating/reading area flanked by a pulpit or lectern and an area set aside for the organ and choir. This platform type is typical of the 1880s and probably dates to 1881; however, the actual paneled construction appears to date to the 1920s and is Colonial Revival is style. The pipes for the organ form a backdrop for the center of the platform. The church has had several organs and the chimes have been in this location or in the gallery. Lights apparently date to the 1925 remodeling.

The lower story of the church is accessed from the Mead Street entrance and features a kitchen cloakroom, library, and sexton's room. Overall, the church retains substantial historic integrity, reflecting all three of its major construction periods.

Church House

The church house is a large addition consisting of three sections and incorporated into the rear wall of the church. It is oriented perpendicular to the church so that its main entrance is on Mead Street. The part facing Mead Street is of wood-frame construction and consists of two parts: a smaller, two-story connector wing with gabled roof immediately behind the rear elevation of the church, and a larger-scale, two-story pavilion with

See continuation sheet

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

First Congregational Church of Walton
Walton, Delaware County, New York

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 4

hipped roof and gabled dormer behind the connector. Both have deep concrete foundations similar to the church. The connector wing is distinguished by wood clapboard siding, wood quoins, a large Palladian window filling much of the second story, and a projecting pedimented entrance at ground story. This is the main entrance to the church house. It features regular double-hung wood-frame sash with six-over-six lights, pilasters with Doric columns dividing the bays, wood quoins, and a group of three windows unified by a semi-circular window above. The gabled dormer features a round window similar to that on the church's 1931 pediment. The other distinguishing feature is the exterior brick chimney, which is exceptionally wide on the first story but tapers to a normal width above. On the interior, the church house includes a parlor with a Federal-inspired mantelpiece, a small kitchen, office and classrooms upstairs. The church house also retains an excellent level of integrity. The third part of the church house (fellowship hall), a rectangular pavilion with a gable roof, extends north from the hipped roof section. This part, known as the fellowship hall is constructed of concrete block covered with a smooth stucco finish and features regular fenestration. It houses classrooms above and meeting space in the basement.

The church retains a remarkable level of integrity from all of its building periods.

See continuation sheet

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

First Congregational Church of Walton
Walton, Delaware County, New York

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 1

SUMMARY

The First Congregational Church of Walton is significant for its long and important association with the history of Walton and as a distinctive example of mid-nineteenth century church architecture that was successively modified over nearly a century to mirror new ideas about ecclesiastical architecture and Protestant worship while maintaining an overall faithfulness to its Neoclassical original design. The founding members of this church, who hailed from Long Island and Connecticut, were Walton's earliest settlers, and they constructed two churches in Walton's original settlement area prior to building the nominated building in the new center of the community in 1840. The early members brought their strict Calvinist faith with them, and they formed under Presbyterian sponsorship, as there was no Congregational association west of the Hudson River in the late eighteenth century. The 1840 church, said to be designed by an as yet undiscovered Boston architect, exemplified the Wren-Gibbs church type, a broad category of religious architecture named after the work of seventeenth-century English architects Sir Christopher Wren and James Gibbs, whose prolific Neoclassical churches incorporated forms specifically appropriate to Protestant worship. Wren-Gibbs churches are typically rectangular in form with prominent central towers and Neoclassical ornament. The 1840 Walton church, with its original three-bay by four-bay form, central engaged tower, and classical embellishment, was a typical example.

In 1881, partly in response to new directions in Protestant worship that called for comfortable interiors with good acoustics, clear sight lines, and rich decoration, the interior was remodeled to create an auditorium plan, characterized by an open interior, curved gallery, and low horizontal pulpit platform with reading desk, pulpit, and space for a choir. Decorative changes included frescoed walls, ash wainscoting and pews, and colorful stained glass. In order to respond to the new emphasis on Sunday school classes and other gatherings that accompanied these reforms, the entire church was raised nine feet to create basement rooms. Although the exterior was given an overlay of modest Victorian embellishment, none of the original classical elements were

See continuation sheet

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

First Congregational Church of Walton
Walton, Delaware County, New York

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 2

removed. Thus, when the congregation desired a return to classicism in the 1920s, it was easy to paint the exterior white, drop the church lower to the ground and obscure or remove some of the Victorian embellishment. Religious practices did not return to early traditions, however, and the final addition, a large Colonial Revival Church House (1930), increased the classroom and meeting room space. The final addition, a projecting pedimented portico in the style of James Gibbs, was added to the front of the church in 1931, reinforcing the Neoclassical design in a twentieth-century context. The First Congregational Church is an interesting blend of three distinct stylistic idioms, while still presenting an overall, unified, classically inspired appearance.

Walton¹

Delaware County was formed in 1797 from Ulster and Otsego Counties, and the town of Walton was established soon after. Walton's original boundaries extended west from a line slightly north of the village of Delhi to the Broome County line, taking in parts of Delhi, Hamden, Franklin, Masonville, and Tompkins. The south boundary was the West Branch of the Delaware River, as it is today. By 1825, other towns had been divided off and the town had achieved its current boundary. The town takes its name from William Walton, who, in 1770, obtained a 20,000-acre patent for a two-mile-wide strip between the Susquehanna River on the north (now the Otsego County line) and the Delaware River on the south. The town of Walton includes the southern half of this patent, as well as a portion of the Livingston patent on the east and the Rapalje Patent on the west. Like much of Delaware County, Walton is characterized by steep mountains broken by streams, with three of them, East, West and Third Brooks, converging into the river at the village of Walton. The land was originally densely covered with trees, especially pine and hemlock. These formed the basis of the town's earliest industry, lumbering, as logs could be marketed via the West Branch of the Delaware River, which flows

¹ This section derived from "Town of Walton," W.W. Munsell, *The History of Delaware County 1797-1880*, transcribed by Patti Smith, Steve McNeil and Richard, <http://www.dcnhistory.org/books/munwalt.html> and Hon. T. Sanderson, *Centennial History of Delaware County: 1797-1897*. <http://www.dcnhistory.org/books/murraypart1113.html#walton>

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

First Congregational Church of Walton
Walton, Delaware County, New York

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 3

through the center of the village. The hemlock trees also supported a tanning industry, and a number of tanneries were operational in the village by the mid-nineteenth century.

Walton's earliest settlers were Long Islanders, in particular, Dr. Platt Townsend, who purchased 5,000 acres at the south end of Walton's patent in 1784. Townsend paid for his land in part by surveying the tract, and his parcel, which he then subdivided and sold to others, included what is now the entire village. In c1785 twenty settlers followed Platt from Long Island to Walton. Other settlers followed, some from Long Island, but others from New England, mainly New Canaan, Connecticut. The earliest settlers included members of the North, Townsend, and Pine families, as well as William Farnum, and Michael Goodrich. Early travel to the region was achieved partially by river, via the east and west branches of the Delaware, and partially by new roads cut through the wilderness. By 1799 (using the current boundaries of the town), Walton had a population of 460, and by 1815 the village alone contained 165 people. The earliest gristmills were built within one or two miles of the village: two by 1798 and four by 1808; their stones were carried from Schoharie or Albany. The first child born in the settlement, Samuel North, was born in 1787, and the first frame house was built in 1788. The riverbanks and the flats of the three brooks also supported rich alluvial farms and Walton later became a leading town in agriculture. An abundance of hay and grain were grown, and the town developed a prosperous dairy industry, first exporting great quantities of butter and then, with the coming of the railroad in the mid-nineteenth century, large quantities of milk.

The first town meeting was held in 1797. A library was established in 1802 and the town was organized into twelve original school districts in 1813. A four-room academy was constructed by 1853 and a Union school by 1868. Walton was incorporated as a village in 1851. Tourism was also a viable industry, with several hotels along the Delaware in the late nineteenth century. Local histories report that most Walton residents owned their

See continuation sheet

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

First Congregational Church of Walton
Walton, Delaware County, New York

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 4

own land and thus had little sympathy with those in the southeastern portion of the county whose small farms had long been held in lease and sought land reform during the Anti-Rent wars of the mid-nineteenth century

First Congregational Church of Christ in Walton

The congregation of the First Congregational Church of Walton was the community's first religious organization. In 1791, only six years after settlement, a log meeting house was constructed on Pleasant Hill, an elevated area now in the northeast corner of the village. Pleasant Hill was also known as "old Walton" and was the town's first settlement area. The log building served as both meeting house (without a church organization) and school for the settlement families. The first town meeting took place there in 1797.

In 1793, eight members of different churches came together to agree on articles of faith and form a Church of Christ in Walton. The Rev David Huntington, a missionary from the General Association of Connecticut, helped to organize the church.² Once the requisite forty members had agreed to join, a church was founded on October 12, 1793. Three days later, on October 15, 1793, an ecclesiastical society associated with the church (or a union society) was formed with the Rev. David Harrower, ordained by Northern Associate Presbytery of New York. An association with the Presbyterians was necessary because the Congregational society had no organization west of the Hudson River. Harrower stayed with the union society for ten years. During his tenure, a revival in 1799 added another forty members to the new church.

First church 1800-1802 – no longer extant

In 1795, three acres of land on Pleasant Hill were purchased from Stephen Hogeboom, of Claverack, to construct a church, town house, Sabbath Day house, and horse sheds and to establish a cemetery. Of those, only the church and cemetery are mentioned immediately. The Sabbath day school was established in 1815 in the old

² *Manual of the First Congregational Church, Walton, N.Y.* (Walton: Wm. A. White & Son, 1890), 4.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceFirst Congregational Church of Walton
Walton, Delaware County, New York

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 5

log church.³ The church, constructed in c1800-1802, was described as: “nearly square in structure without a steeple...painted white except the roof, which was red.” It had a high pulpit with a large sounding board and galleries facing the audience on three sides. “[People were] seated in square pews, the tops of which came nearly to the shoulders of those who sat there..... [The gallery was supported by] turned pillars...painted white with slight splashes of blue...”⁴ As was typical of the era, the church was financed by selling the pews. At some point the congregation purchased ten acres near the new church for a parsonage and academy, but the latter was not built. A parsonage was built in 1807 but burned in 1824. With it was lost all of the early records of the church. There were revivals in 1807 and 1821, adding 125 members to the church.

NOMINATED BUILDING

First Building Campaign 1840-1860

In 1834, a new parsonage was constructed to replace the one that had burned. Rather than build next to the existing church, which was apparently in need of repairs, the new parsonage was constructed on land donated by John Townsend on North Street near the corner of Mead, only a few blocks from the river and the developing commercial district along Delaware Street (NY 10), which paralleled the river. The move was an indication that the center of the village was shifting from “old Walton,” the town’s original settlement area, to “new Walton,” the community growing up along the river. Thus, when it came time to build a new church, in 1840, the congregation purchased a half-acre of Townsend’s land on the south side of the parsonage, on the corner of North and Mead. The new meetinghouse was to be 40 feet wide by 58 feet deep with a “steeple...to project 3 or 4 feet from the front of the house.”⁵

³ *Manual of the First Congregational Church, Walton, N.Y.*, 1914, 4.

⁴ *History of the Church and Her Organizations: Commemorating the One Hundred Fiftieth Anniversary of the Organization of the First Congregational Church, Walton, New York*, 1943, 15-16.

⁵ *History of the Church*, 1943, 34-36.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

First Congregational Church of Walton
Walton, Delaware County, New York

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 6

Despite the decision to build a new church on a less secluded site, many of the members did not want to see the old church, which had served as the center of political and religious life in the old settlement for four decades, destroyed. The “Old church on the Hill” continued to be used for many years as an educational and civic center (no longer extant). The last service was held in the old church on May 3, 1840, and the first mention of service at the new church appears in the minutes of Nov. 24, 1840. No new cemetery was established at North and Mead, so apparently burials continued in the old cemetery on the hill. The fate of this original cemetery is unknown. There is little evidence of a burial site today and church members now use the Walton Cemetery, established on the south side of the river in 1852. Early interments may have been moved to the newer cemetery and research is underway to determine their location.

The new church exemplified the Wren-Gibbs type that was popular for Protestant churches, especially Congregational congregations, in the first half of the nineteenth century. The Wren-Gibbs type originated with the architecture of Sir Christopher Wren (1632-1723). Working after the great fire of London (1666), Wren oversaw reconstruction of many of the city’s old, medieval churches. He sought to design a new kind of church that was more appropriate to seventeenth-century Protestant liturgy and clearly distinguished from the Roman Catholic model. Wren’s churches featured more open and well-lit interiors and pulpits placed to amplify the minister’s voice. Wren’s exterior designs rejected the Gothic for a more rational, Classical vocabulary, and he reimagined the Gothic tower as a central, engaged Classical steeple. These churches were particularly popular among the Congregational congregations that brought the new Protestant worship to New England.⁶ The original three-bay by four-bay Walton church with its three-stage tower, multi-pane clear glass windows and Neoclassical embellishment is a good example of this type.

⁶ Jennifer Walkowski, *First Congregational Church of Albany, Albany County, National Register Nomination*, 2013.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

First Congregational Church of Walton
Walton, Delaware County, New York

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 7

In the late 1850s, a “lecture room,” or chapel, was constructed on the lot between the church and the parsonage. This building, three bays wide and one story tall with a steep gable roof, is shown in its original location in a nineteenth-century rendering. In 1860-1862, an a sixteen-foot extension was added to the rear elevation of the church. Since there were several remodelings after 1862, this addition is indistinguishable from the earlier building on the exterior, and later changes to the foundation and sanctuary have removed any interior evidence (except possibly in the attic framing, which was not inspected). However, the addition was also accompanied by interior changes. In the early 1860s, the pulpit was moved from the front of the building to the rear (or, from the rear of the auditorium to its front) and new seats were installed. This change may have necessitated, or prompted, the sixteen-foot addition. In 1878-80, the church received title to the so-called “Crawley property,” which was located to the west of (or behind) the church and parish house. At this time the sheds were moved to the lot at rear of the parsonage, and the lecture room (chapel) was moved to a site west of the church (facing on Mead Street). This can be seen in a slightly later illustration; however, the chapel was eventually demolished to construct the church house.

Second Building Campaign 1881-1902

The second major building program commenced in 1881, when the Rev Granville W. Nims was pastor. In [April?] of that year, the congregation invited a Boston architect to submit plans, estimates and ideas for remodeling. On May 11th the plans were approved and a building committee was appointed and authorized to proceed as soon as \$5,000 had been raised. This must have been accomplished quickly, as on December 10, 1881, the congregation offered a resolution of thanks to the building committee for the work done that summer. The congregation first met for worship in the new church on December 11, 1881.

Although the “Boston architect” was not identified in church records, those records do contain a reference to the stained glass installation being supervised by Thomas Silloway. This presents a tantalizing hint that the 1881

See continuation sheet

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

First Congregational Church of Walton
Walton, Delaware County, New York

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 8

remodeling may have been the work of Thomas Silloway (1828-1910), a Massachusetts architect and Unitarian minister known for his designs of more than four hundred churches in the eastern United States. Silloway, born in Newburyport, was raised a Methodist and apprenticed as a house wright and clerk. In 1844 he was ordained a Unitarian minister, fully adopting that religion's inclusive theology. In 1847, he moved to Boston and studied architecture under renowned mid-nineteenth century American architect Ammi B. Young. In 1857, perhaps recommended by Young, Silloway received the commission for his masterwork, the Vermont State Capitol in Montpelier. Sanford White later called this building the "finest example of Greek Revival architecture in America."⁷ Following completion of the statehouse, Silloway served several churches in New Hampshire and Boston, while also executing more than 25 commissions for churches, remodeled churches, residences and schools. He retired from the ministry to devote full time to architecture in 1867.

Although best known for his Greek Revival statehouse, Silloway, like many nineteenth century architects, was adept in all the revival idioms typical of the Victorian era. Indeed, his design for the Roslindale Baptist Church (1884) in Boston is a near perfect example of the Stick Style, while in 1886 he restored the earthquake-damaged Gothic Revival Unitarian Church in Charleston. Among his other commission are notables examples of Gothic, Classical and Victorian forms. More research will be undertaken to determine whether the 1881 alterations are the work of Silloway.

The remodeling of the Walton church was substantial and seemed primarily intended to effect significant changes to the interior. First, the entire church was raised nine feet and a new "*cement*" foundation was constructed beneath it. The exterior of the new high, raised basement was covered in horizontal clapboard siding and large windows marked the bays in the basement, which was created to accommodate rooms for a

⁷ "Thomas W. Silloway: Allston-Brighton's Master Builder." Brighton Allston Historical Society
<http://www.bahistory.org/HistorySilloway.html>

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

First Congregational Church of Walton
Walton, Delaware County, New York

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 9

Sunday school, cloakroom, library, kitchen, hall, sexton's room, and a stair connecting with the pulpit and orchestra above. Some of the rooms were apparently separated by movable glass and panel partitions so that they could be combined into larger spaces. The overall exterior classical form and details of the church were retained; however, the raised basement and a light overlay of Victorian era decoration gave the building a new look. Changes include new multi-paneled entrance doors surmounted by decorative scrollwork, decorative lintels on the original and basement windows, pendants on the tower, the stained glass, and the insertion of a foliate roundel into the niche in the first stage of the tower. In addition, church records indicate that the church was painted, and a colorized postcard suggests a two-tone pink and green scheme.

The main entrance, now at ground level, was through Victorian multi-panel doors. From the entrance, stairs led either down to the basement or up to the vestibule and the newly raised sanctuary. In the vestibule, two sets of stairs provided access to the gallery and three doors entered the sanctuary. The sanctuary itself was completely transformed. According to a description excerpted from church records:

“To this room is added a fine horseshoe extending out over the hall.” All the seats, including those in the gallery, were replaced with “comfortable” ash pews trimmed with black walnut and “finished in good taste.” Ash wainscoting also covered the lower walls of the church. A pastor's room was located near the pulpit and a broad platform now extended across the front featuring a pulpit, reading table and room for the choir. “In artistic skill and materials, the orchestra and desk are models of perfection.” The plain glass in the small-paned windows was replaced with “extra fine, leaded cathedral glass, each with an appropriate emblem.” And finally, the “frescoing [was] skillfully executed” The church was now lit with gas and a Bartlett lamp had been installed near the front door on an iron lamp post. In addition, most of the rooms and the church were carpeted

See continuation sheet

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

First Congregational Church of Walton
Walton, Delaware County, New York

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 10

“in good taste,” and all the seats were cushioned with felt.⁸ The redecorated church was apparently quite colorful. A total of \$9,288 was spent on the remodeled church, which was dedicated April 23, 1882.⁹ Although the minutes and descriptions don’t reveal the congregation’s intentions for the remodeling, the 1881 church interior clearly exemplifies the concert or auditorium plan church type, which was highly recommended by writers and architects for Protestant church architecture during this period. The designs of concert plan churches, which were a product of nineteenth-century revival movements, reflected the new conception of worship that emerged from these revivals. Worshipers came to hear the service and to pay attention to the minister. Interiors were intended to be comfortable spaces with good acoustics that would enhance the congregation’s inclination to listen and worship. Churches built in this mode generally featured open plans, unobstructed sight lines, circular seating oriented to a central pulpit and colorful and textural decorative finishes. Elaborate combinations of colored glass, wallpaper, decorative painting, and stenciling were used to create a “worshipful atmosphere.” The building committee acknowledged this, noting: “This attitude to decoration contrasts with that of the earlier Calvinist sects, which denounced decorative art as too papist. The focus on creating an atmosphere is also reflected in the new emphasis on music, illustrated by the prominent placement of organ and choir on the platform.”¹⁰

One of the most important features of the auditorium church was the relocation of the minister, who was no longer elevated in a pulpit but preached to the congregation from its own level. Wide platforms only several steps off the floor spanned the area in front of the congregation. Simple lecterns provided space for the minister to move around in the course of his sermon and relate to the congregation in a more personal, emotive manner. These platforms could also accommodate additional ministers or other individuals who wished to participate in conducting the service, and they had space for an organ and choir, no longer relegated to the rear gallery. Some

⁸ *History of the Church*, 1943, 63.

⁹ *History of the Church*, 1943, 63-64.

¹⁰ *History of the Church*, 194, 63.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

First Congregational Church of Walton
Walton, Delaware County, New York

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 11

have likened the arrangement of meeting space and platform to an auditorium and stage.¹¹ Most churches built in this mode had broad vestibules and many had three entrances into the auditorium, regardless of the number of exterior doors.

The Walton Congregational Church interior illustrates the auditorium plan in its triple entrance doors from the vestibule, the open auditorium with unobstructed sightlines, curved gallery, and broad pulpit platform with accommodation for the choir. The decorative stained-glass windows, which replaced the original small panels of clear glass, were also part of this decorative program, as were the ash pews with comfortable cushions, wainscoting, and frescoed walls. Despite later changes that have obscured some of these features, the basic elements of the auditorium plan survive.

Third Building Campaign 1925-1940.

The third building campaign was executed under the pastorates of the Rev. Stuart North (1922-1927) and the Rev. William N. Tuttle (1927-1940). Although accomplished over a fifteen-year period, as a whole, these changes seem intended to enlarge the physical plant of the church and to return to a more Classical appearance that was both closer to the style of the original church and consistent with period preferences. The first stage occurred in 1925, when the building was refurbished. The exterior of the building was painted white to conform with “its New England type of architecture.”¹² The walls were redecorated, probably eliminating whatever remained of the colorful Victorian era decoration. Pews were refinished and hardwood floors laid. Cushions were recovered and new runners provided for aisles. The lighting system was also overhauled and new electric features installed. Records note that three additional buildings (parsonage, church hall and shed?) were also painted and the parsonage received a new heating plant¹³ On October 11, 1925, the church celebrated its 123rd

¹¹ James F. White, James F. *Protestant Worship and Church Architecture* (New York: Oxford UP, 1964), 121-129.

¹² *History of the Church, 1943*, 71.

¹³ *First Congregational Church, Walton, New York, 132nd Anniversary, A Service of Rededication, October 11, 1925* [program].

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

First Congregational Church of Walton
Walton, Delaware County, New York

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 12

anniversary.¹⁴ At some point in the early twentieth century, the platform was either replaced or redecorated in a paneled Colonial mode.

By the late 1920s, the congregation finally resolved to construct a substantial church house, and a lengthy report was prepared detailing the entire project, including recommendations for an architect [not named].¹⁵ On April 17, 1929, the congregation voted to proceed with the plan; however, shortly thereafter, a second plan to “lower” the church was accepted and incorporated into the church house proposal.¹⁶ The plan to lower the church involved removing about half of the 1881 raised basement and dropping the sanctuary closer to ground level (but not as low as when built). As the basement rooms were retained, this suggests that additional basement was dug out below the church. The entire church was now uniformly re-sided in clapboard, and the part of the basement left exposed was parged with concrete to match the concrete foundation of the new church house. The new basement windows were smaller and lacked lintels, and they were much less prominent than the Victorian-era basement windows.

The church house (completed 1930) was added across the rear elevation of the church and oriented to Mead Street. The large building featured clapboard siding and was clearly Colonial Revival in style. Among its distinctive features are a hipped roof, a large Palladian window, six-over-six windows, quoins, and pilasters. Entrance is through a pedimented portico. The interior features a parlor with Federal-inspired mantel, gym or meeting space, and second floor classrooms. All moldings and trim are classical in style. The church house also included the fellowship hall addition, a rectangular block that was constructed of concrete block with stucco cladding and surmounted by a gable roof.

¹⁴ *History of the Church*, 1943, 71-72.

¹⁵ *History of the Church*, 1943, 73.

¹⁶ *History of the Church*, 1943, 73.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

First Congregational Church of Walton
Walton, Delaware County, New York

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 13

The last major project undertaken by the congregation was the addition of the “Granville Webster Nims Memorial,” dedicated in 1931. The pediment was designed by prominent Binghamton architect Alfred H. Bartoo. The pedimented portico is supported by four Doric columns and features a deep raking cornice. This project added a substantial projecting portico supported on four Doric columns to the façade of the church. The pedimented had a raking cornice and a blind ocular window in its gable, and it obscured the 1881 roundel in the tower. It rested on a full-width bluestone porch, now two steps from the sidewalk. Victorian era doors were replaced and now concealed by a small exterior wood portico with a scrolled ornament on top. The new construction, referred to as the “Granville Webster Nims Memorial,” was said to typify Nims’s character.¹⁷ The portico enhanced the church’s reference to the Wren-Gibbs type. James Gibbs (1683-1774) is credited with refining Wren’s work and bringing it to a wider audience. His masterpiece, St. Martin-in-the Fields (1726), in London, introduced the large projecting entry portico. This design was widely disseminated in Gibbs’s illustrated *A Book of Architecture* (1728).¹⁸

The sanctuary was also redecorated several times in the second half of the twentieth century; records note work in 1947, and in 1962, the pews and woodwork were painted white and the walls grey. New red carpet and seat cushions were also installed.¹⁹ Today, the First Congregational Church retains features reflecting all three of its important building campaigns within an overall, unified, classically inspired design. Each stage reflects a distinct era in ecclesiastical design and Protestant worship. The church represents the oldest congregation in the village and its earliest settlers, a group that built two church buildings before the current building was constructed. The nominated building has carried these close ties between the settlers, the congregation, and village history forward for more than two centuries.

¹⁷ *History of the Church*, 1942, 74.

¹⁸ Walkowski.

¹⁹ *First Congregational Church, Walton, NY, Bicentennial 1973-1993*. Walton: First Congregational Church, 1993, 2.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

First Congregational Church of Walton
Walton, Delaware County, New York

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 9 Page 1

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<http://www.bahistory.org/HistorySilloway.html>

See continuation sheet

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

First Congregational Church of Walton
Walton, Delaware County, New York

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 9 Page 2

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See continuation sheet

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

First Congregational Church of Walton
Walton, Delaware County, New York

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 10 Page 1

Verbal Boundary Description

The boundary indicated by a heavy line on the attached map with scale.

Boundary Justification

The boundary was drawn to include the parcel associated with the church since the early twentieth century and includes all related features.

See continuation sheet

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

First Congregational Church of Walton
Walton, Delaware County, New York

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number photos Page 1

Photographer: Nancy Reach

Date: March 2015

Tiff Files: CD-R of .tiff files on file at
National Park Service
Washington, D.C.
and
New York State Historic Preservation Office
Waterford, NY

Photo list

0001. façade and south (side) elevation
0002. south (side) elevation showing 1929 church house addition
0003. north (side) elevation of church and east elevation of church house addition
0004. interior, auditorium, looking from rear toward platform pulpit
0005. interior, auditorium, looking from front toward seating and gallery
0006. interior, entrance to church house from Mead Street
0007. church house parlor
0008. church house, basement meeting room

See continuation sheet

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

First Congregational Church of Walton
Walton, Delaware County, New York

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number photos Page 1



1840 church

See continuation sheet

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

First Congregational Church of Walton
Walton, Delaware County, New York

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

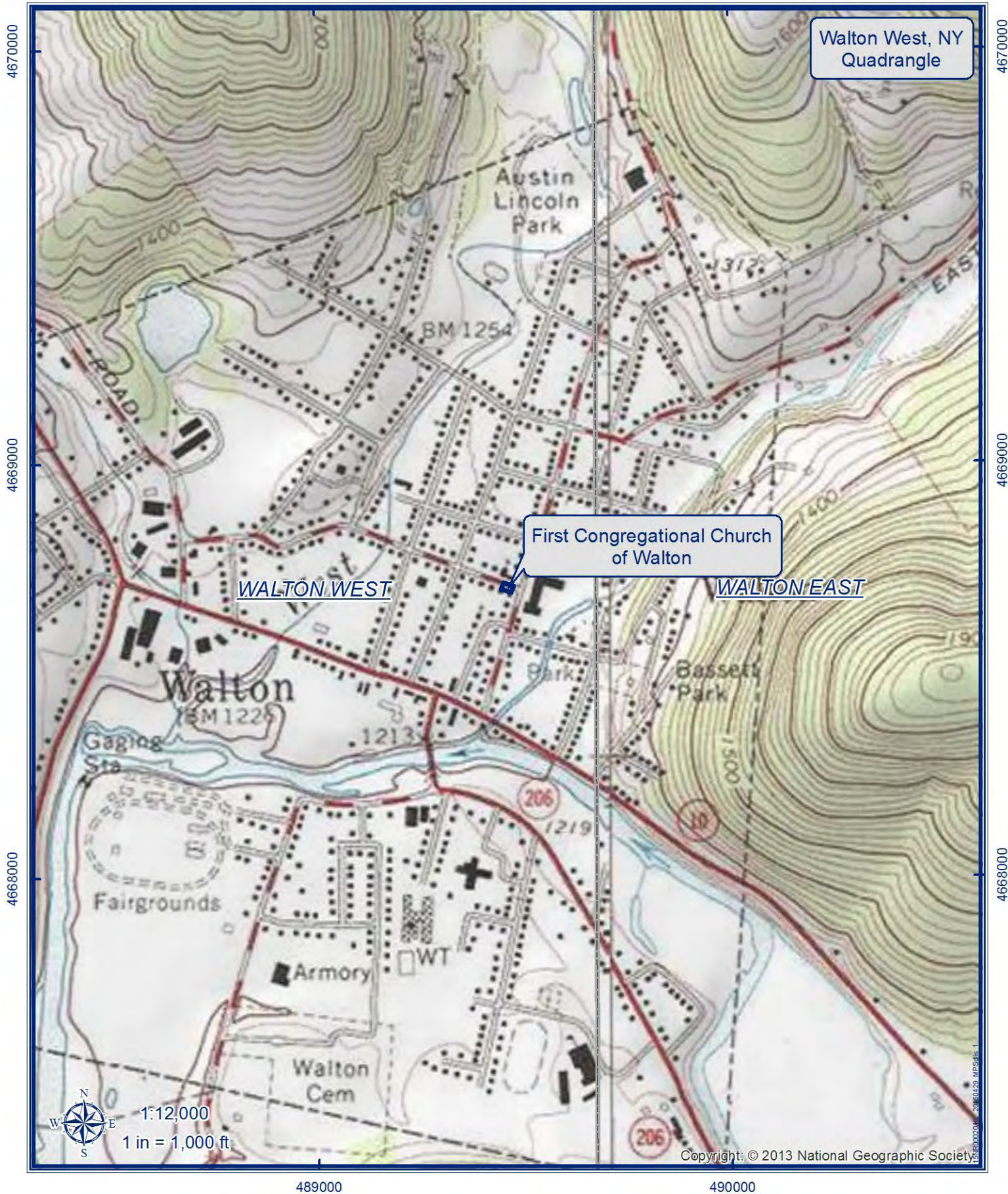
Section number photos Page 2



1881 church

See continuation sheet





Coordinate System: NAD 1983 UTM Zone 18N
Projection: Transverse Mercator
Datum: North American 1983
Units: Meter



Parks, Recreation
and Historic Preservation



God is still speaking.

FIRST
CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
WORSHIP SERVICES
DR. JANET SCHWENGER
"CONFIRMATION"
HANDICAPPED ACCESSIBLE

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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION

PROPERTY NAME: First Congregational Church of Walton

MULTIPLE NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: NEW YORK, Delaware

DATE RECEIVED: 6/12/15 DATE OF PENDING LIST: 7/07/15
DATE OF 16TH DAY: 7/22/15 DATE OF 45TH DAY: 7/28/15
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 15000476

REASONS FOR REVIEW:

APPEAL: N DATA PROBLEM: N LANDSCAPE: N LESS THAN 50 YEARS: N
OTHER: N PDIL: N PERIOD: N PROGRAM UNAPPROVED: N
REQUEST: N SAMPLE: N SLR DRAFT: N NATIONAL: N

COMMENT WAIVER: N

ACCEPT RETURN REJECT 7-27-15 DATE

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

Entered in
The National Register
of
Historic Places

RECOM./CRITERIA _____

REVIEWER _____ DISCIPLINE _____

TELEPHONE _____ DATE _____

DOCUMENTATION see attached comments Y/N see attached SLR Y/N

If a nomination is returned to the nominating authority, the nomination is no longer under consideration by the NPS.



**Parks, Recreation
and Historic Preservation**

ANDREW M. CUOMO
Governor

ROSE HARVEY
Commissioner

RECEIVED 2280

JUN 12 2015

Nat. Register of Historic Places
National Park Service

3 June 2015

Alexis Abernathy
National Park Service
National Register of Historic Places
1201 Eye St. NW, 8th Floor
Washington, D.C. 20005

Re: National Register Nominations

Dear Ms. Abernathy:

I am pleased to submit the following four nominations, all on disc, to be considered for listing by the Keeper of the National Register:

Charles H. Coons Farm, Columbia County
Former Parsonage of the Reformed Dutch Church of Coeymans, Albany County
Brigadier General David McCarty Stone Cottage, Albany County
First Congregation Church of Walton, Delaware County

Also enclosed are new discs for the Waccabuc Historic District, Westchester, County, which was returned to us for more information. A new cover sheet was not requested.

Please feel free to call me at 518.268.2165 if you have any questions.

Sincerely:

Kathleen LaFrank
National Register Coordinator
New York State Historic Preservation Office