

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: 90000668

Date Listed: 5/7/90

First Congregation of the Presbyterian
Church at Springfield
Property Name

Union
County

NJ
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.

Patrick Andrews
for _____
Signature of the Keeper

5/7/90
Date of Action

=====

Amended Items in Nomination:

The existing property is not directly associated with the 1780 battle. Criterion A and military as an area of significance are not applicable and should be deleted, as should Rev. James Caldwell as significant person and 1780 as significant date. The period of significance should be 1791-1875.

The non-contributing resource is a building (the 1952 office and classroom building described in the text).

The nomination is officially amended to reflect the above.

Confirmed by telephone by Bob Craig of the NJ SHPO, 5/7/90.

DISTRIBUTION:

National Register property file
Nominating Authority (without nomination attachment)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service



MAR 23 1990

NATIONAL REGISTER

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 18). 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 The First Congregation of the Presbyterian Church at Springfield
other names/site number _____

2. Location

street & number 201 Morris Avenue and 11-41 Church Mall not for publication
city, town Springfield Township vicinity
state New Jersey code 034 county Union code 039 zip code 07081

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>3</u>	_____ buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> public-State	<input type="checkbox"/> site	<u>1</u>	_____ sites
<input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> structure	_____	_____ structures
	<input type="checkbox"/> object	_____	_____ objects
		<u>4</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] 1/11/90
Signature of certifying official Date
Acting Commissioner, DEP/DSHPO
State or Federal agency and bureau

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.
 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] 5/2/90
Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Religion/religious structure

/Church school

/church-related residence

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Religion/religious structure

Religion/social hall

Religion/church-related residence

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(enter categories from instructions)

Federal

Greek Revival

Gothic Revival

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation sandstone

walls wood shingles

roof wood shingles

other aluminum steeple

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

The property of the First Congregation of the Presbyterian Church at Springfield is dominated by the landmark church building of 1791, on the corner of Morris Avenue and Church Mall, but the property also includes the 1856 chapel behind the church, the burying ground which served the church from 1784 to 1868, located across Church Mall from these structures, and the parsonage of 1844 sited at the terminus of Church Mall, some 300 feet north-northwest of the church itself. The church is the key monument of this grouping; the chapel, parsonage, and burying ground contribute to the historic significance and setting of the church. A modern (1952) office and classroom building is sited between the parsonage and burying ground. Although age makes it a non-contributing element of the church's historic ensemble, its deep setback and modest scale make it visually compatible.

The present Springfield Presbyterian Church, built in 1791, is the second church building to occupy its site. It replaced a building built circa 1762 that was destroyed by fire by British troops in 1780. The foundation of this (a. 1762) building is still intact inside the foundation of the present (1791) church.

The present building represents the architectural transition from "meeting house" to church that occurred in American communities around the end of the 18th century. The scale, window arrangement, and exterior siding of the building are identical to those that had been used in substantial houses for about fifty years while the decorative details in the gable and the steeple reflect the new developments in church architecture of the early Republic.

Exterior

The church is built on a heavy timber frame, covered with long, handcut, painted, wooden shingles. The fact that the original cladding has lasted for nearly two centuries suggests that the shingles are "swamp cedar," an exceptionally rot-resistant material mined in the 18th century from cedar logs submerged in swamps or other shallow waters. The shingles are laid in even rows, except over the windows and doors, where they are arranged to define shallow arches.

The building is 46' x 56' in plan, two-and-a-half stories tall, and possesses a wooden shingled gable roof with a ridge perpendicular to the facade. The roof

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)

Period of Significance

Significant Dates

1780, 1791-1875

June 23, 1780

Military

Architecture

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Significant Person

Caldwell, Rev. James

Architect/Builder

Unknown

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

The Springfield Presbyterian Church is of considerable architectural importance as one of few New Jersey churches to survive from the late 18th century and that illustrate the transition from "meeting house" to church. It occupies a central role in the development of Elizabethtown's outlying settlements, and its site and congregation are associated with the battle of Springfield, of June 23, 1780, one of the lesser known but vitally important battles of the American Revolution. The Federal style church and its auxiliary buildings, a Greek Revival parsonage and a Gothic Revival chapel, make an exciting visual ensemble of the changes in American architectural taste between the Revolution and the Civil War. The church complex meets Criterion C under the category "Architecture," and Criterion A under the categories "Military." The ability of the site to meet Criterion "D", for its likelihood to yield information important to understanding of both the battle of Springfield and the appearance of the pre-Revolutionary church, has not been evaluated.

The mid 17th-century settlement of Elizabethtown encompassed not only the coastal city of Elizabeth, but also the rolling farmland to the west and north, covering much of present-day Union County. Settlers to the Springfield area came from Connecticut and Long Island, and brought with them a New England (and ultimately English) heritage of language, architecture, and religion. The first known settlement of what is now the Township of Springfield occurred in 1717 with the arrival of the Briant family.

They and their neighbors walked or rode to Elizabethtown to attend church until 1730, when the Connecticut Farms Presbyterian Church was established in a nearby village now called Union. By 1745, the steady increase of population and the relative prosperity of these New Jersey farming villages caused the forming of a separate congregation in Springfield and the construction of its first meetinghouse. However, this latter congregation did not formally separate from the Connecticut Farms Church until 1786, six years after the Battle of Springfield.

See continuation sheet

9. Major Bibliographical References

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 # NJ-1
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

See continuation sheet

Primary location of additional data: N/A

- State historic preservation office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Specify repository: _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of property ±3 acres Roselle Quad

UTM References

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4	5	0	6	7	4	0
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 Zone Easting Northing

B

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 Zone Easting Northing

C

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D

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See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

The nominated property has been historically associated with the church.

See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Reverend Jeffrey A. Curtis
 organization First Presbyterian Church date February 1989
 street & number 37 Church Mall telephone (201) 379-4320; 379-3055
 city or town Springfield state New Jersey zip code 07081

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is topped by a three-stage tower that completes the south facade. The original tower, recorded by HABS in 1934, was reconstructed in 1983-84 after the original was found to be structurally unsound. The new tower precisely duplicates the appearance of the original, but the construction and materials (aluminum) are contemporary. The square base of the tower is covered with clapboard. Above it is an octagonal clock tower, with a round clock face on four sides, facing the four directions of the compass. Round-arched openings with wooden blinds fill the other four sides. The steeple is also octagonal, each side containing wooden blinds in round-arched openings. The pointed spire above is topped by a three foot diameter copper ball and weathervane. The entire composition is more squat and square in proportion than the elongated spires found in high-style churches of the late 18th century, but it effectively marks the building as a church, and offers some vertical thrust to an otherwise modestly-scaled structure.

The gable-end facade of the Springfield Presbyterian Church contains three paneled doors. The pedimented gable is enclosed with a molding in a delicate, classically-inspired interlace design (see HABS detail). The pattern seems to have originated with William Pain, an 18th century English builder and the author of several builder's books which featured adaptations of the Adamesque style. His books traveled to America before the Revolution, and were republished in America beginning in 1792. Pain's The Practical Builder published in London in 1778 first showed the interlace motif, which was quickly popularized throughout the Eastern seaboard.

A taste for delicacy and simplicity characterized the English Adamesque fashion, and directly influenced the American architectural style known as Federal. Other elements on the Springfield church which show such influence include narrow modillions at the cornice; the round-arched window in the gable; and three oval windows with sinuous muntins, arranged above and to either side of of the large arched window.

The sides of the church contain six bays, with multiple-light sash windows at the first and second floor levels. Some of the windows contain original glass; other panes have been replaced. A rear exit to the church has been added, connecting it by a 20th-century hyphen wing to the 19th century chapel that stands directly east of the church.

INTERIOR

The interior of the Springfield Presbyterian Church is laid out in a traditional three-aisle plan with the pulpit at the head of the center aisle (see HABS

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plans). A narrow narthex runs across the front of the building, providing a separate entry space before entering the nave. The entry doors are unusual because they swing open not only from the side, but are hinged in the middle as well, allowing them to be folded back and providing more room in the vestibule for people to pass through. Such construction in the side doors was needed to permit access to the stairwells.

Low, elliptical arches accented by wooden keystones are set on paneled piers, to mark the entry from narthex to nave and to reinforce the division of the nave into three aisles or bays. Inside the nave itself are eleven rows of pews which are mid-19th century replacements of the original high-backed box pews, but they retain the center division characteristic of the old box pews that the church originally possessed.

A "U" shaped balcony is carried around the interior of the church on attenuated cast iron columns. The molded caps look like they would fit a much larger size column; there is no base or plinth. A wide entablature above with rather narrow moldings supports the paneled balcony enclosure. Although clearly classical in derivation and intent, the columns and entablature betray the builder's lack of experience with classical proportions and examples. A projection was added off the center of the balcony in 1972 to accommodate the new pipe organ.

The interior walls of the church are plastered above a wainscot of horizontally laid boards which runs along the exterior wall. The elliptically vaulted plaster ceiling is punctured with several modern light fixtures and vents. A projecting molded cornice encircles the church.

The interior was remodeled in 1868 in the Italianate style. The original pulpit was removed. The raised platform for the present pulpit is surrounded by paneling with deeply recessed, round arches set off by heavy quarter-round moldings. The arches are separated by applied double pendants. The Italianate style is also apparent in the applied pilasters behind the altar, with a round-arched sunken panel and round floral-motif medallions applied halfway up their two-story height.

The floor of the nave is narrow strip pine, finished with a dark varnish. The aisles are carpeted. The original flooring is extant in the balcony, where it consists of wide pine planks covered with paint.

The balcony is reached by curved stairs rising from both sides of the vestibule. Wide hand-planed boards enclose the stair below the curved railing.

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The difference between the construction at the top and bottom of the stairs suggests that the stairs, while original, were altered and at least partially rebuilt, probably when the Italianate style additions were made.

Old photographs show that in the late 19th century the interior trim was polychromed and the walls painted with trompe l'oeil arches. At some later date, the interior was repainted in dark colors with stenciled borders featuring an acanthus and acroterion motif. In the 20th century, the colonial heritage of the church was emphasized, and white paint was applied to all the trim in order to minimize the visual impact of the exuberant 19th century moldings. The walls are now painted light blue. The decorative simplicity of the interior corresponds to the exterior architecture and to the appearance that the church would have had when new.

ACCESSORY BUILDINGS

The changing architectural taste of America before the Civil War may be seen in the mix of building styles on the Springfield Church property. The Federal style church building was first complemented in 1844 by a new parsonage in the Greek Revival Style, which derived from classical sources similar to those that supported the Federal Style, but used them more boldly. Just over a decade later, the chapel was erected in a flamboyant Gothic Revival style. The Italianate renovations of the church interior rounded out the use of the pre-Civil War Romantic Revival styles at the Springfield Presbyterian Church.

PARSONAGE

The parsonage at 41 Church Mall was built in 1844 in the Greek Revival style, replacing the 18th century manse on that site. It is two and one-half stories tall, with four bays across each elevation. The western facade is marked by a flat-roofed portico supported on four, fluted, wooden columns with acanthus leaf capitals. The original clapboard siding contrasted with flush boarding in the pedimented south gable, but, at present, all exterior walls are covered with aluminum siding. The gable roof is punctuated by paired brick chimneys on the south side of the building and a single brick chimney on the north. The parsonage retains its original 6/6 sash windows on the first and second floors, and its lunette windows, centered in each gable at the attic level.

The foundation consists of large, roughly squared brownstones. On the north side of the house, the ground slopes away, offering an on-grade entry to the basement. The basement contains a fireplace with original wrought iron cooking

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crane and adjacent "beehive" bake oven and ash pit. This and the bead-edged support posts between basement rooms suggest that the cellar is a survivor from the 18th century manse. The formally finished basement stairs with balustrade matching that found on the stairway to the second floor suggests that when the house was built, the main kitchen functions continued to be carried out in the basement. The somewhat later 19th-century addition of a bay window on the north side of the house removed the chimney for the bake oven fireplace, thus signaling a change of locale for the kitchen at that time.

The center hall of the house leads to four large rooms on each floor. The woodwork in the house is a simple interpretation of the Greek Revival style. The mantles and door frames consist of broad friezes and fillets, with eared lintels found on first floor door and window surrounds. Interior doors are characteristic mid-19th century, four-paneled ones; the double doors that once filled the opening between the front and rear parlors do not survive.

The Springfield Presbyterian Parsonage is an outstanding local expression of the Greek Revival Style. It is still owned by the church, although it ceased serving as the residence of the minister in 1963.

CHAPEL

The chapel behind the Springfield Presbyterian Church was built in the Gothic Revival style in 1856 as a "Lecture Room." Although the interior has been gutted and completely renovated for use as a parish hall, the building remains an important part of the entire church complex. The creation of a lecture room indicates the growing size of the congregation, and reflects a 19th century trend toward specialization of use for church properties. Traditionally, the church itself was both sanctuary and meeting place. With the erection of the chapel, the main church seems to have been reserved for congregational worship, much as the formal parlor was reserved within a proper Victorian-era house. The 19th century witnessed the evolution of specific functions. The children were given Sunday School lessons in the chapel or lecture room; men's Bible study groups and women's Missionary Societies used the space at other times. The lecture room was also the site for numerous social events and concerts which brought together the entire community rather than just church members. A few programs from the latter 19th century, carefully preserved in the church archives, attest to the popularity, particularly among young people, of piano recitals, talent shows, costume parties, and sing-alongs held in the chapel during those years.

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The Gothic Revival style is clearly proclaimed by the chapel's tall pointed arch windows, and the long brackets under the eaves. During the recent application of vinyl siding to the exterior the original clapboards were covered and elaborate wooden corner spires were removed. These spires, along with some surviving stickwork from the eaves, remain in storage in the church basement. This exterior detailing indicates that the chapel was lavishly decorated in the Carpenter Gothic fashion. The pointed arch dormers were added in the 1930's when a general renovation of the chapel added a second floor the structure.

BURYING GROUND

The burying ground is located across Church Mall from the Springfield Presbyterian Church. It contains several mature trees, and its road frontage is bordered by sycamore trees. The irregularly shaped lot, measuring 140' along the north side; 234' long the west side; 130" along the south side and 220" along the east side is surrounded on three sides by a modern cyclone fence, and by a privet hedge on the south side (facing Church Mall). Simple brick gateposts and an iron gate lead into the cemetery on the south side. The gate was dedicated to commemorate the Battle of Springfield by the New Jersey Sons of the American Revolution on June 23, 1930.

The burying ground contains a mixture of 18th century brownstone markers and 19th century gravestones in brownstone, or marble. The most interesting are those signed at the bottom by their carver, J.C. Mooney of Connecticut Farms (now Union), which date from the first two decades of the 19th century. Mooney's work is characterized by the use of a Baroque pediment form, containing the scrolled initials of the deceased at the top. Other, anonymous carvers represented in the burying ground used angel heads, death heads, and neoclassically-inspired fluted pilasters in their work, all of which are common motifs for the area's late 18th and early 19th-century gravestones.

The burying ground's earliest known graves are those of Simeon Bryant, John Muchmore, and Ephraim Taylor, all from 1784. Prior to that, the Springfield Church's congregants were interred in the "Old Burying Ground" established in 1727 about a mile away. The old cemetery gradually ceased to be used after the Revolution in favor of this burying ground near the church. The last burials in this latter cemetery were made in 1868. After 1868, burials were made.

The Springfield Presbyterian Church burying ground is an important record of the inhabitants of Springfield in the first half of the 19th century. Several stones note the foreign birthplace (chiefly England) of the deceased, and slaves

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and "colored persons" are also noted. The headstone inscriptions were recorded by genealogists in the 1920s, an invaluable act of preservation at the brownstone used in many stones has severely deteriorated since that time.

SETTING

The Springfield Presbyterian Church faces busy, four-lane Morris Avenue and the commercial center of Springfield. The church stands on a small, level corner lot, raised above the street about three feet by a rubble stone retaining wall. In front of the church, close to the corner of Morris Avenue, stands a monument commemorating the Battle of Springfield on June 23, 1780. This stone marker, erected in 1905, is in and of itself a state park, making it the smallest state park in New Jersey.

Church Mall, now a quite side street, was originally Main Street, running from Springfield to Millburn. It was truncated into a one-block cul-de-sac with the construction of U.S. Route 24 (now Interstate I-78) in the 1950s, and has been renamed Church Mall in honor of the Presbyterian Church and Methodist Church which stand along it. The noise of traffic on Route I-78 has been an intrusion into the historical environment of Church Mall, but the 1987 completion of a concrete sound baffle along the highway has ameliorated conditions somewhat.

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The first Springfield church was located about half a mile north of the present church site, and whatever simple building contained the worshipers was deemed inadequate in less than a generation. During or before 1762, it was replaced by another church constructed on the site of the present structure, in the center of the village. The fieldstone foundation of the ca. 1762 building is still evident below the existing church. The precisely laid up stones of its foundation indicate that the small building was carefully built. The survival of this foundation, suggests that the site may contain significant archaeological information both about the appearance of this building, and about the events of the battle of Springfield, during which the building was destroyed.

In June 1780, the peace and quiet of Springfield was shattered when a brigade of British soldiers under General Knyphausen advanced toward the village. The British army occupied New York City, and its leaders felt that the war-weary farmers of northern New Jersey would offer little resistance to a direct march from New York to Morristown, where General Washington and the main body of Continental troops were quartered. Knypausen's first attempt, on June 6, was rebuffed about two miles from Springfield by the Rebels' continuous sniping at his troops.

After two weeks rest in Staten Island, Knyphausen tried again, this time with a greater force of about 5000 infantry soldiers, supported by cavalry and artillery pieces. The American cause was bolstered by General Greene and two brigades of the Continental Army, brought to Springfield to protect the country after the first attack. The British forces were met east of the village, and although there was valiant effort on the part of the Americans, they were pushed back by the larger, better equipped British army. Finally, at the western edge of Springfield, the Continental troops held their ground, using the Watchung Mountain as a barrier against the advancing British. Continuous skirmishing forced the British soldiers to retreat back to Elizabethtown. This battle convinced the British that it was not practicable to storm the Americans encamped at Morristown, and no further attempts were made.

The battle not only proved the strength of Jerseymen's commitment to the Revolution, it also generated a durable legend about the role of the Springfield Church during the battle. During the fiercest fighting in the middle of the village itself, the Continental troops are said to have called out for more wadding for their hand-loaded muskets. The Reverend James Caldwell, Chaplain in Washington's army, Quartermaster General of the New

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Jersey Regiment, and pastor of the Elizabethtown Presbyterian Church, was at the battle scene. Hearing the cry, he ran into the Springfield church and gathered hymnals, which contained many hymns by the English clergyman, Issac Watts. Caldwell tore out the pages for wadding, and as he did so, he called "Put Watts into 'em Boys, give 'em Watts!"

The phrase and deed were recalled nearly a century later in Bret Harte's poem "Caldwell of Springfield" (1873), and in John Ward Dunsmore's depiction of the Battle of Springfield painted in 1908 (original in the collection of the Fraunces Tavern Museum in New York City). Rev. Caldwell and his battle cry have become closely associated with both the community and church at Springfield, although the story seems not to have appeared in print until around the Centennial.* The Battle of Springfield was certainly real, and the heroism of many on that terrifying and smoke-filled day has gone unrecorded. If Rev. Caldwell's efforts have come to stand for all of the bravery and ingenuity of American patriots on that day, then it is fitting that the church plays a pivotal role in the story, since it was central to the village, both physically and spiritually.

The Battle of Springfield was increasingly emphasized in local histories as interest in the Revolution peaked during the entire Colonial Revival movement in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. In 1905, the State of New Jersey erected a stone monument in front of the church to commemorate the Battle of Springfield. Perhaps understandably, many who read the marker and see the present church building assume that this church is the building from which Caldwell distributed hymnals. The significance of the battle and the presence of the current church building on the same site as its legendary predecessor is certainly of importance, however, in both local and state history.

As British forces retreated from Springfield, however, in their parting rage, they set fire to the village. Fire consumed the Presbyterian Church, which was being used as a shelter for Americans wounded in the fighting. Four houses in the village were spared because they belonged to known British sympathizers.

When the inhabitants of Springfield came back to the charred ruins of their village, they held services in the parsonage barn. The pastor of the church during these tumultuous times was Jacob Van Ardsdale(n), who served the congregation from 1774 to 1801. His home, the old Presbyterian parsonage, stood on the site of the present parsonage, and was one of the four buildings in Springfield not burned. Though perhaps circumspect in proclaiming his

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loyalty to the Revolution, Van Ardsdale was nevertheless loyal to his flock. Under his direction in 1786, the church was incorporated as the "First Congregation of the Presbyterian Church at Springfield."

In 1789, the Van Ardsdale and the trustees of the Springfield Church submitted bills to Congress for damages suffered at the hands of the British. Van Ardsdale claimed substantial personal losses from December 18, 1776, during the first British occupation of New Jersey, "between 50 and 70 volumes of his library," "Dining and tea table furniture," and assorted items of clothes and food for man and beast. He also claimed losses from the 23rd of June, 1780, chiefly two hogs, some tools, and a lantern. The Trustees succinctly noted the loss on that same date of "1 Meeting House 57 by 42 burnt," valued at 1000 pounds. No evidence exists of any reimbursement, but a letter of 1840 shows the church trustees wrote again to their Congressman at that late date to inquire if monies would be forthcoming for recompensing the Revolutionary War loss.

No reliable description of this Springfield Church is known, but the first churches in most villages and small towns had been domestically scaled buildings, well deserving of the name meeting "house." Similar in most aspects to houses the congregants lived in, the meetinghouse typical of Protestant denominations was austere and simply detailed, more noticeable by its location in the center of town than by its architecture. After the American Revolution, there was a general rebuilding movement, and churches everywhere were erected that were larger, more stylish, and more obviously ecclesiastical than had existed before. But most significantly, after the years of economic depression during and immediately following the war, the increasing prosperity of the new nation enabled congregations to construct substantial churches following new architectural tastes.

In 1791, the present church building was erected in accordance with that trend, and the congregation moved from the barn to a substantial house of worship. According to one record, the congregation hoped to construct a brick and stone church to avoid the danger of fire, but their means proved inadequate. They settled on a cladding of cedar shingles, which remains to this day.

The Adamesque-Federal detailing the church, especially the traceried oval gable windows and the cornice's interlace motif, derive from 18th-century English pattern books or builders' books. Although their community was largely destroyed at the hands of British soldiers, the American builders of the new Springfield Church apparently saw no irony in using English sources

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for rebuilding. In fact, England was still looked to for guidance in architecture, fashion, and culture long after the Revolution. The interlace motif found at the Springfield Church is identical to that used on the First Presbyterian Church in Elizabeth (rebuilt 1784-86 after destruction during the Revolution), suggesting a common carpenter or sharing of published sources between these closely-allied congregations. The bell tower was fitted with a bell contributed by Samuel Tyler, a Springfield Church elder.

A sermon commemorating the history of the Springfield Church delivered in 1876, recounts the original appearance of the building:

"Some of you will remember this church as it was originally, just as it came from the hands of that earnest band of workmen. You have in your memory an unfading picture of its old fashioned, straight-backed pews; its broad center aisle, its middle seats that had no partition running through them...its narrow side aisles which made a passage for the benefit of the wall seats only... You have not forgotten, either, the quaint old circular pulpit, mounted upon a high column like a huge barrel, elevated so as to overlook the body of the church, and at the same time, seek the galleries. And you will remember also, the great sounding board, back of the pulpit, and directly over the preacher's head, that caused you always to think of the wings that overshadowed the Mercy Seat..."

Gradually, the 19th century brought changes, both within and without the Springfield Church.

In 1801, the Morris and Essex Turnpike was chartered as a toll road from Elizabeth to Phillipsburg. It ran right past the church, taking the route of present-day Morris Avenue. It brought more traffic to Springfield, and more people to the church. The 1804-1818 ministry of Reverend Gershom Williams saw a great increase in the congregation, chiefly through "revivals". In 1818, a Sunday School was established by Miss Catherine Campbell, Miss Eliza Campbell, and a Miss Duyckinck. This was the first Sunday School in the area, and was regarded with some suspicion. People feared that it would compete with, not enhance, the church, and the fact that women were involved with it from the beginning led men to take a dim view of its success. Nevertheless, the Sunday School was soon a vital part of the Springfield Church's activities, and by 1856, the Gothic Revival style "Lecture Room" was built behind the church to house it.

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Extensive renovations were made to the church in 1868, including the installation of a furnace and new pews without doors. Wooden posts under the gallery were removed and replaced with cast iron columns. Windows on either side of the pulpit were removed, indicating that artificial light was available to the preacher, for reading his Bible. Church records make no mention of the dismantling of the raised pulpit and sounding board, although the Italianate style detailing of the present altar and lectern suggest that it was installed simultaneously with the pews of the same style. At about the same time, the walls of the church were stenciled and the woodwork painted polychromatically, to bring the interior into fashion with Victorian-era taste.

The church served both social and service functions in the latter 19th century. The Ladies' Benevolent Society was established in 1875, and the Christian Endeavor Society was formed in 1886. To accommodate their work, the church enlarged the "Lecture Room" in 1875, and added a kitchen and electric lighting in 1899. Among the social events at the church were musicals and chaperoned socials for young people at the turn-of-the-century.

The Springfield Presbyterian Church has always been conscious of its history, and proud of its historic building. The first sermon on the history of the church, unfortunately now lost, was preached by the Reverend Elias Crane during his tenure, 1820-1826. To commemorate the Fourth of July, 1840, the Reverend John C. Hart preached a sermon on the history of the church. He included recollections of the oldest residents of the community, giving personal detail to a description of the battle of Springfield. His description of the circumstances leading to the battle and of the battle itself is excellent. Significantly, he does not mention Caldwell and the "Give 'em Watts" story.

As part of the great Centennial celebration of 1876, the Reverend Henry Teller delivered a "Historical Discourse", again dwelling on the Battle of Springfield (without Reverend Caldwell), and chronicling the pastorates of the 19th century. It was this sermon that so lovingly memorialized the former appearance of the church - a sermon made just eight years after the extensive "Victorianizing" alterations to the interior.

In 1891, 1930, 1941, 1945 and again in 1980, major celebrations were held to commemorate the history of the Springfield Church and the Battle of Springfield. In 1934, the church was the first structure in New Jersey to be recorded by the Historic American Building Survey. During the 1930s, the church modernized its heating and electrical systems, and in the process,

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"restored" the interior to a colonial appearance by painting out the decorative wall stencils.

In late 1983, deterioration of the foundation sill and the lower part of the tower support posts led to removal of the original steeple down to the base of the clock tower. In a tremendous effort to keep the historic appearance while adjusting to the realities of a deteriorating structure, an exact duplicate of the steeple was painstakingly crafted of aluminum and reinstalled in January 1985. The rest of the building was repaired and reinforced to insure its existence for at least the next two centuries. (See Appendix A)

* The 19th century book most likely to carry the story of Caldwell and "Give 'em Watts" is Henry Watson's 1850 collection of stories about the Revolution. Presented as the reminiscences of soldiers telling tales to battle around the campfire, the book has a chapter on the Battle of Springfield. While one of the lead characters is named Caldwell, the story is primarily a discussion of merits of General Greene v. General Wayne. The burning of the village is mentioned, but of the fighting parson there is not a word.

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Watson, Henry C. Camp-Fires of the Revolution: or the War of Independence
Illustrated by Thrilling Events and Stories. New York: James Miller, 1850.

Various minute books, photographs newspaper clippings, letters, and other
miscellany relating to the Springfield Presbyterian Church, largely dating
from the latter 19th century and through the 20th century were examined.
They can be found in the present church office at 37 Church Mall, Spring-
field, New Jersey.

Correspondence with Dennis Conrad, Associate Editor of the Nathanael Greene
Papers for the Rhode Island Historical Society, concerning Greene's involve-
ment at the Battle of Springfield and primary evidence of Reverend Cald-
well's activities during the battle.

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VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

This nominated property of the First Presbyterian Church (as shown on the attached Springfield Township Tax Map occupies Block 9 Lots 1.02, 2 and 9, and Block 10, Lots 4 and 48.01.

The Sanctuary and connecting Chapel building is located on a square plot of ground on the NE corner along the streets of Church Mall and Morris Ave. in Springfield, N.J. From this corner the property extends approximately 172 feet east long Morris Avenue and 168 feet north along Church Mall.

The Old Presbyterian Cemetery is located on the west side of Church Mall approximately 108 feet north of Morris Avenue, and extends 220 feet north to an alley between the cemetery and the Parish House, and 130 feet west to border on Walnut Court.

The Old Manse and Parish House are also located of Church Mall approximately 337 feet north of Morris Avenue, then extending 210 feet west and 220 feet north. This property is not square but bounded on the northern side by Route 78 and its 20' concrete sound barrier wall.

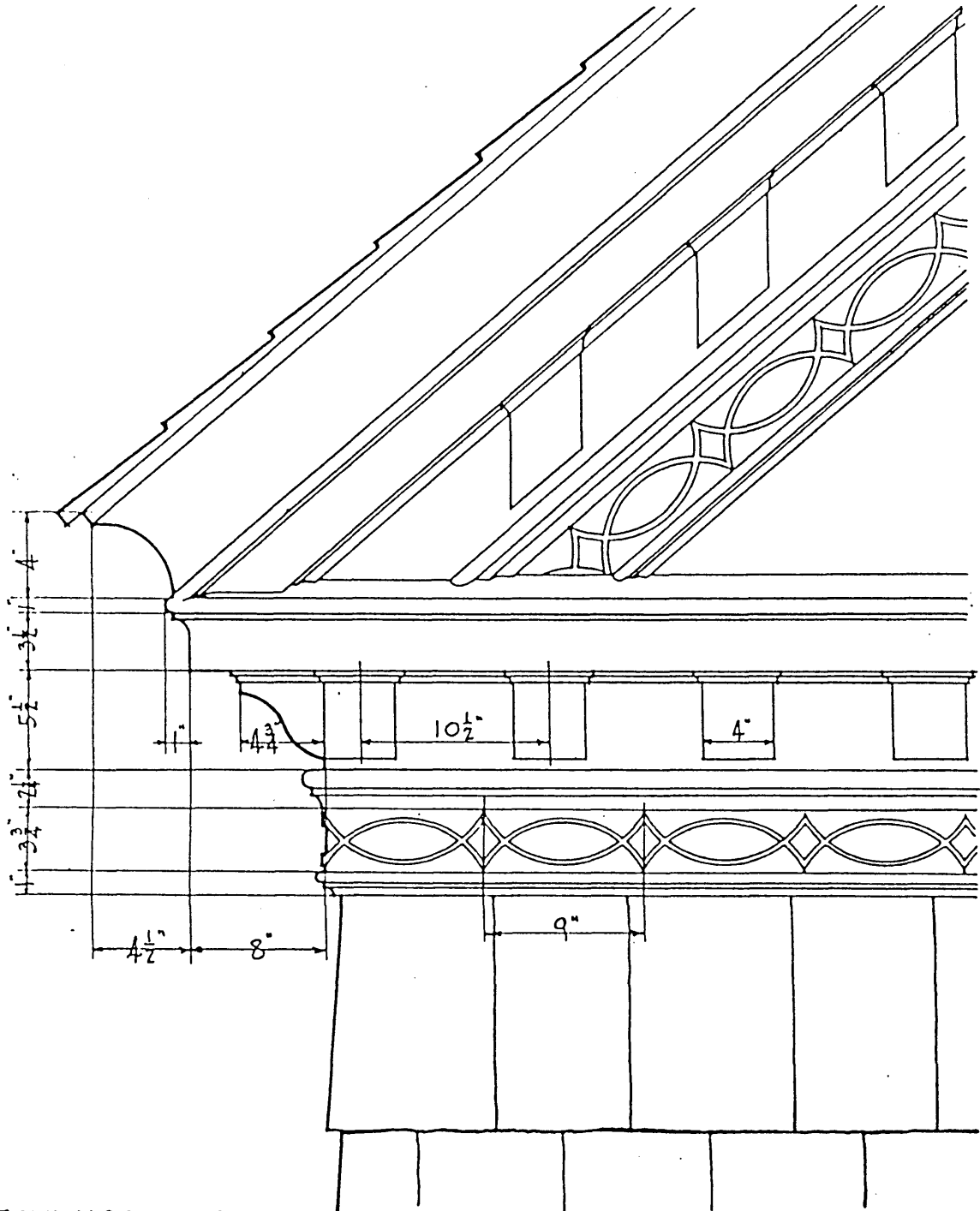
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LESLIE M DENNIS DEL.
NEW JERSEY DISTRICT

DETAIL OF MAIN CORNICE

From The First Presbyterian Church, Springfield, N.J.
HABS NJ-1

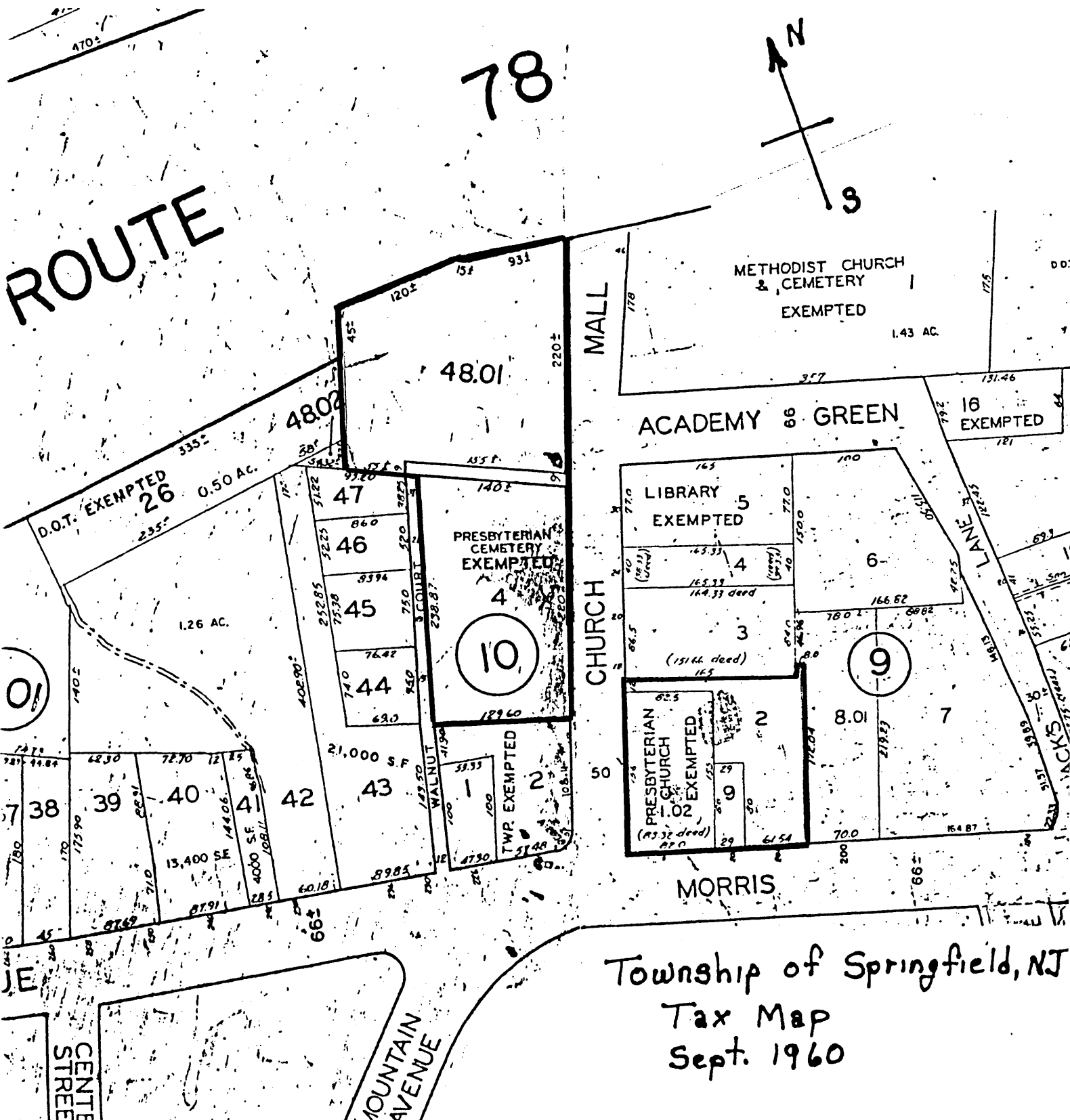
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Township of Springfield, NJ
Tax Map
Sept. 1960

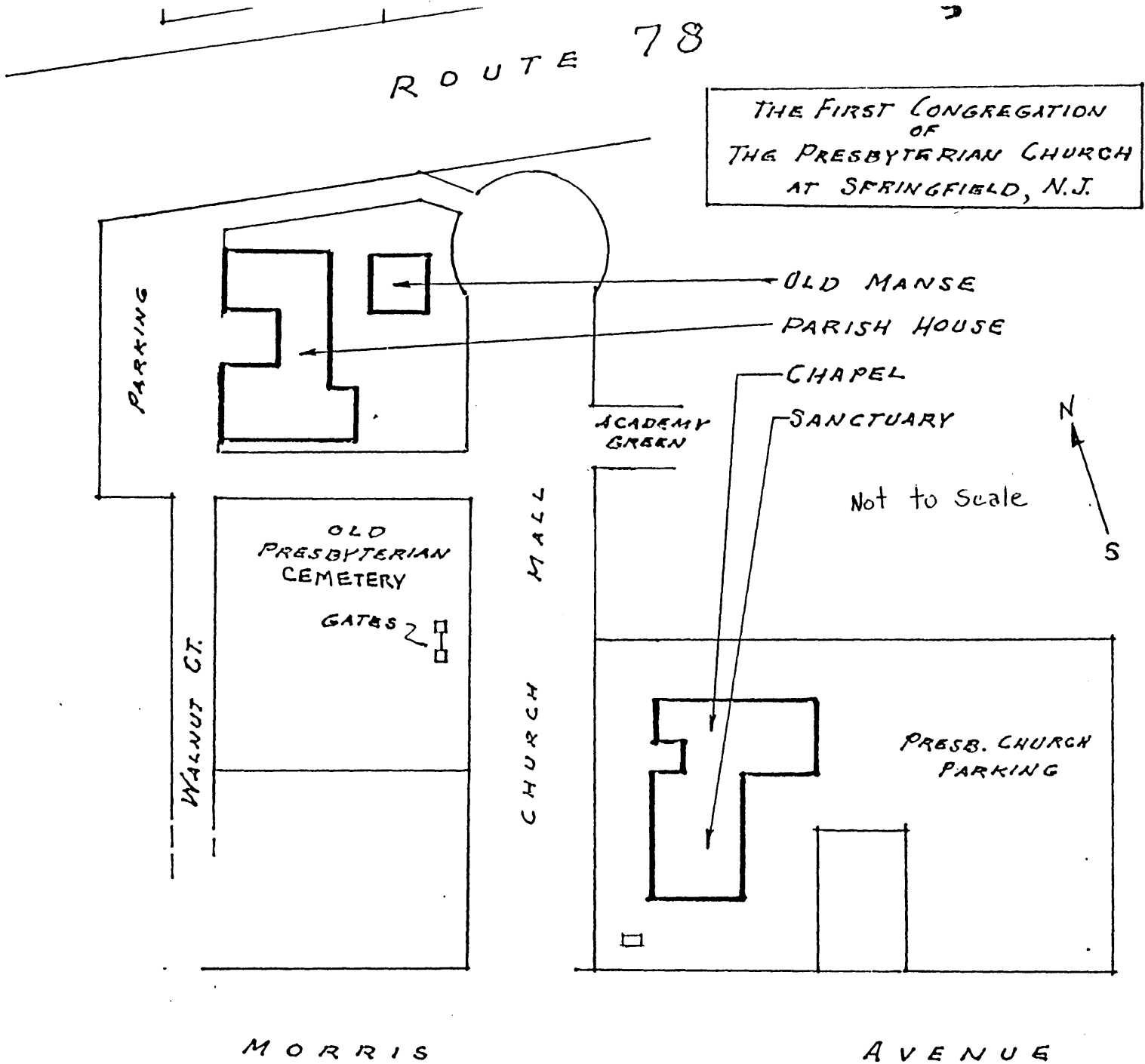
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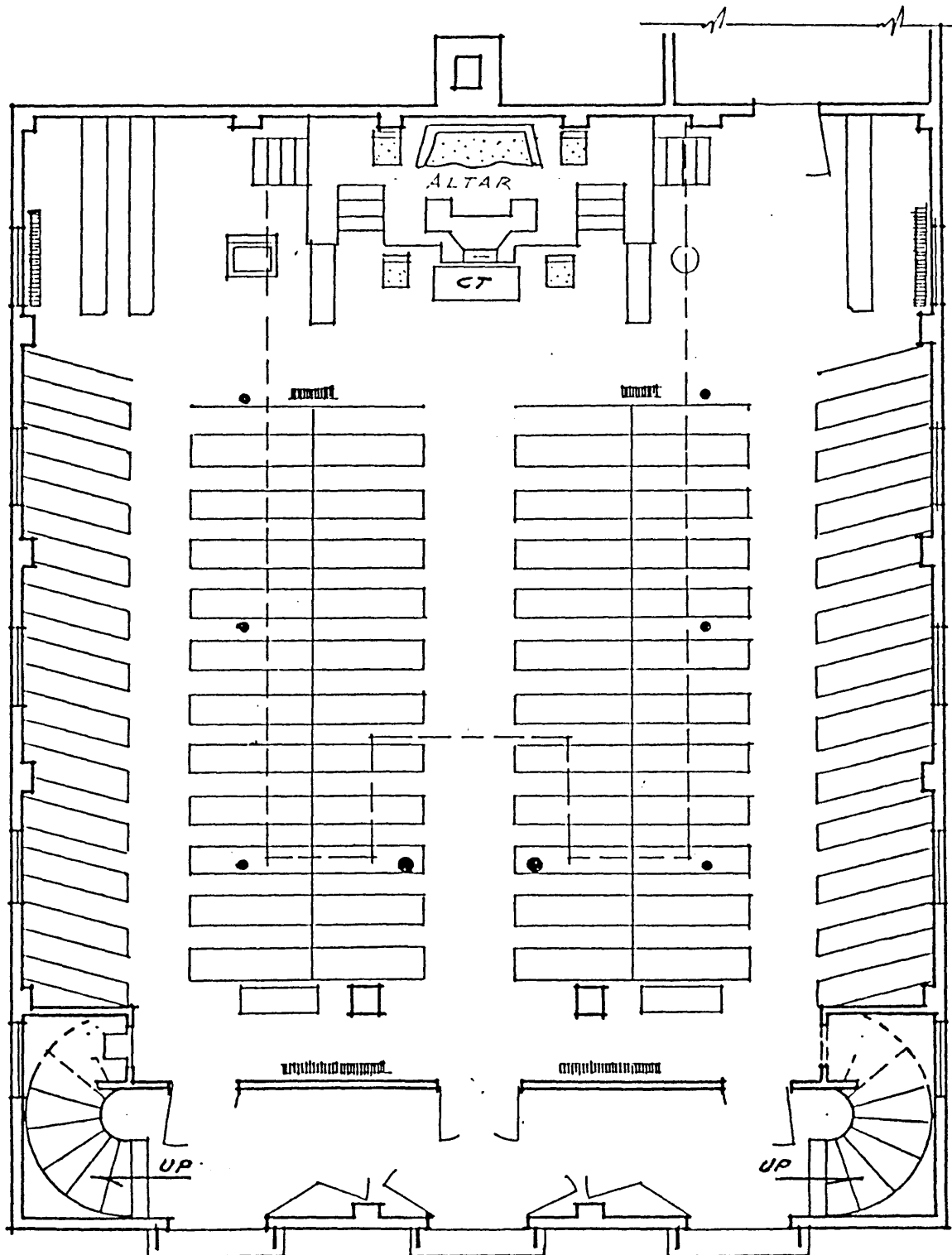
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· SANCTUARY FLOOR PLAN
SCALE $\frac{1}{8}$ " = 1'-0"



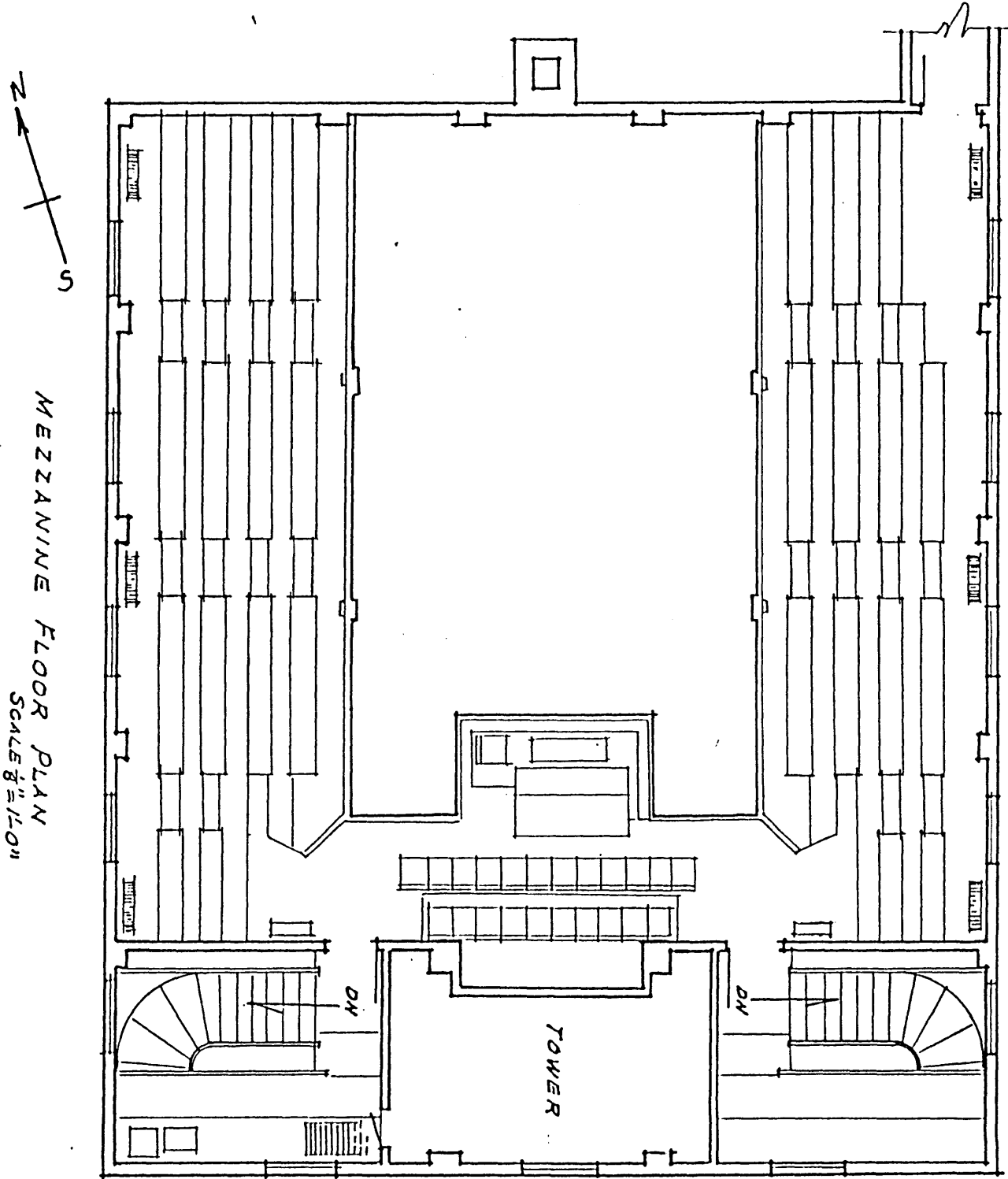
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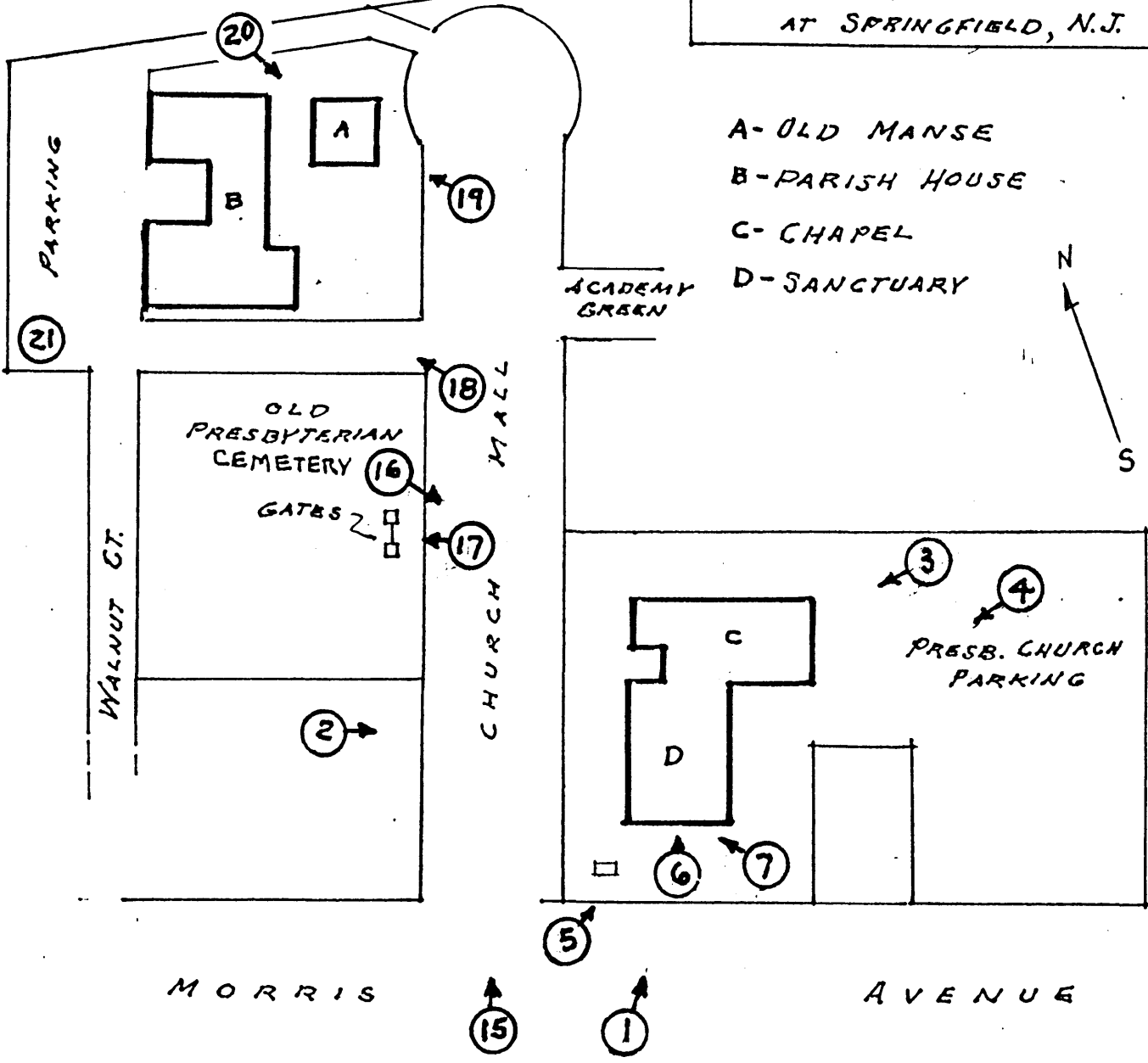
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ROUTE 78

THE FIRST CONGREGATION
OF
THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
AT SPRINGFIELD, N.J.



- A- OLD MANSE
- B- PARISH HOUSE
- C- CHAPEL
- D- SANCTUARY



MORRIS

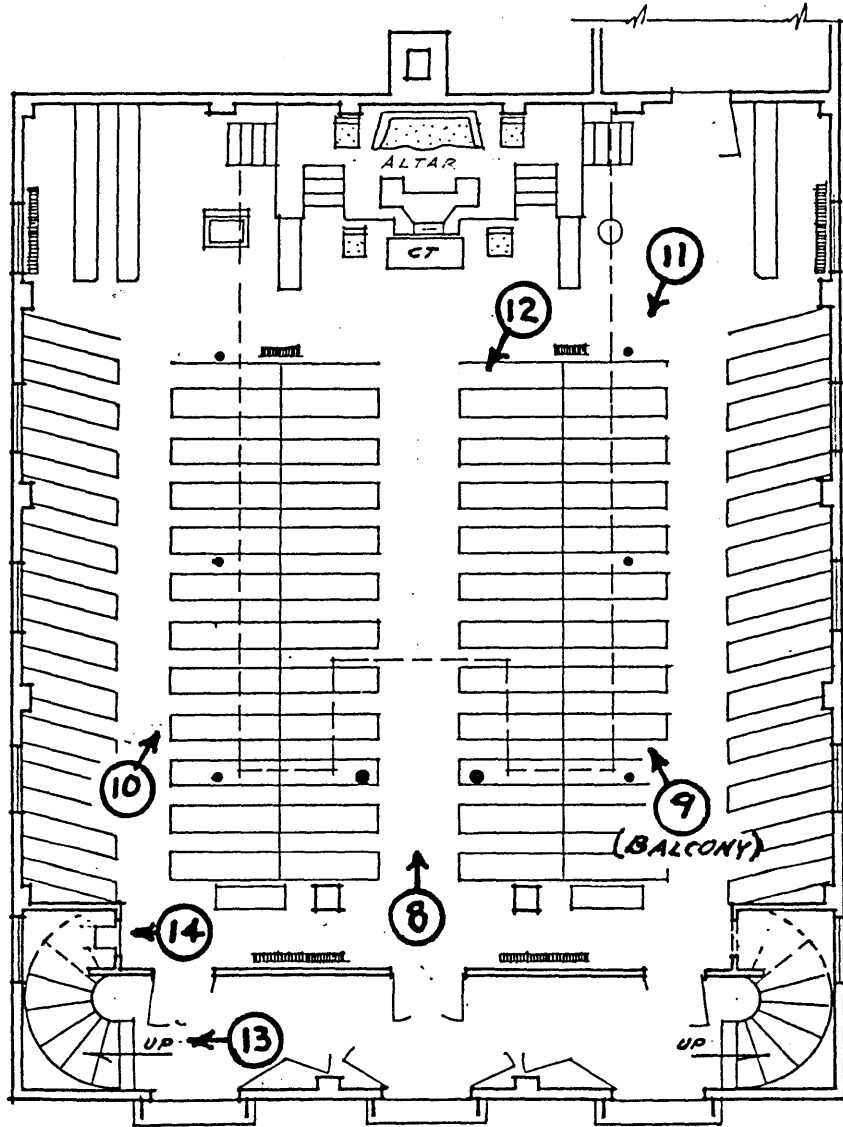
AVENUE

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FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
SPRINGFIELD N. JERSEY.
~ SANCTUARY FLOOR PLAN ~