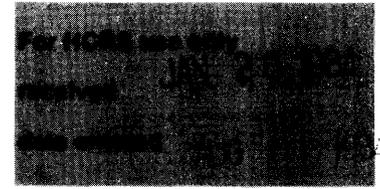


**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

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



See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic Trinity Church

and/or common Trinity Church

2. Location

street & number Main Street N/A not for publication

city, town Thomaston N/A vicinity of congressional district 6th

state CT code 09 county Litchfield code 005

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational	<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government	<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
	<u>N/A</u>	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name Trinity Episcopal Church

street & number Main Street

city, town Thomaston N/A vicinity of state Connecticut

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Plymouth Land Records

street & number 19 East Main Street

city, town Terryville state Connecticut

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title State Register of Historic Places has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date 1975 federal state county local

depository for survey records Connecticut Historical Commission, 59 So. Prospect St.

city, town Hartford state Connecticut

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved date _____
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

Over View

Trinity Church, Thomaston, Connecticut is a Stick Style structure with board-and-batten siding facing east on Main Street in the center of town. It was built in two sections in 1871 and 1880 to the designs of Richard M. Upjohn. Next door to the north is the Fire Station (1883) and beyond it is the Opera House and Town Hall (1885). The three buildings make an attractive grouping. (Photograph 1.)

The wooden church on granite ashlar foundations has a steeple with belfry and spire on the right. The slate roof is covered with asbestos shingles. The interior is largely unaltered since construction, except for embellishment of the chancel. The roof is supported by exposed king-post trusses, two of which are framed on the diagonal over the crossing. (Photograph 2.) In 1962 a one-story, brick veneer parish house addition was constructed at the rear. (Photograph 3.)

Exterior

The facade of the church is 40 feet wide. Two sets of granite steps lead up to two entrances. One is the doorway to the nave, under a central gable. The other is the doorway to the tower. The central entrance has a triangular hood surmounted by a large tripartite window and a small round window under a gently pointed arch in the gable end. The gable has an elaborate, projecting, pierced bargeboard with horizontal, vertical and diagonal braces.

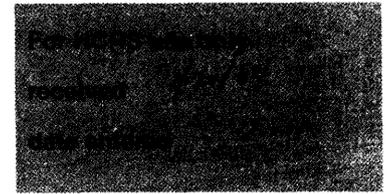
The entrance to the tower to the right has a similar hood. Above it the tower wall is pierced by two slit windows. Then the tower roof rises in the shape of a truncated pyramid to the open belfry stage. The steeple above the belfry, a tall pyramid in shape, has a gilt Celtic-cross finial matching the one on the central gable. The principal section of the tower roof still has its slate covering, with hexagonal sections exposed to the weather. The remainder of the church's roof is covered with asphalt shingles.¹ (Photograph 4.)

The granite steps to both entrances have five risers and heavy iron railings and newel posts. (Photograph 5.) The central entrance has a rectangular double door of vertical boards, while the tower entrance has an arched single wooden door of matching material. The bargeboards of the hoods over the doors are pierced by a four-leaf floral (tooth) motif. This motif is repeated in the gable-end bargeboard and is a major decorative motif in the design of the church. The central doorway hood has brackets with valances of spindles, while on the tower entrance hood the corresponding section has the pierced tooth motif.

Other elements of the facade include rectangular windows left and right of the central entrance. These windows have wooden frames over the

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Description

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glass, with trefoil tops. The trefoil is repeated at the tops of the tripartite windows in the gable end and in the shape of the open belfry. The bottom of the siding boards are cut in a saw-tooth line above the foundations. This saw-tooth line is repeated near the bottom of the gable end over the central entrance, and under the slit windows of the tower. In these two instances the saw-tooth line is the lower edge of an added layer of vertical boards. A tall, slender, square brick chimney rose to the left of the central gable as late as 1939, and probably was original.

The gable over the central entrance of the facade is the gable end of the principal roof, whose ridge line is perpendicular to the street. There are three pairs of cross gables, at the front, in the middle and at the back. The middle pair of gables provide for the crossing on the interior of the church, and have in their gable ends the same tripartite and round windows as seen in the front gable end and the same bargeboards. This gable-end treatment is repeated at the back of the church, over the chancel; it appears on all four elevations. The pitch of the roof changes to become much less steep, almost a shed roof, in the areas on either side of the central cross gables. (Photograph 6.)

On the south elevation there is a single rectangular window with trefoil frame in the gable end of the front cross gable. Two pairs of such windows are found under the first section of shed roof, and one pair under the second shed roof. In the rear cross gable, which is the section of the church added in 1880, nine years after it was built, there is a hooded door reached by steep wooden steps and flanked by hooded windows. Each flanking window consists of a lancet window over paired windows.

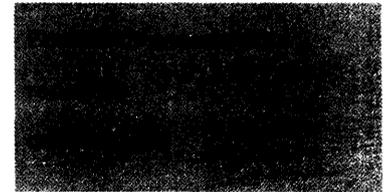
The ground slopes off to the south, making the visible foundation wall higher on this elevation than on the front. Near the front there is a projecting, gabled basement-entrance vestibule with bargeboard like those over the front entrances. The high granite basement wall has six pairs of rectangular windows with granite lintels and sills that light the rooms under the sanctuary.

On the north elevation, the tower has a slit window with pointed top at the first-floor level and two similar but rectangular windows at the second floor. The north elevation of the church repeats the south elevation in large measure. Whereas the south elevation is easily visible because of the space now used as a parking lot, the north elevation is not only somewhat obscured by the tower but also is so close to the Fire Station that it scarcely can be seen from the street.

The north elevation has the same central cross gable with tripartite window and the same single and double windows under the shed roofs. On both elevations the shed roofs are supported by small consoles or shaped rafter ends. There are two windows under hoods, like those on the south elevation, in the rear cross gable, separated by an exterior brick chimney that appears not to be original. The basement windows are similar to those on the south.

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In the rear elevation the large window grouping is visible above the 1962 addition. The addition obscures a 21-foot-wide section that projects three feet beyond the rear cross gables. (See Sketch Map.)

The one-story, brick-veneer parish house, approximately 53 x 68 feet in size, was constructed at the rear of the church in 1962. At the same time the former parish hall in the basement beneath the sanctuary was renovated. The two spaces function as a unified facility for offices, meeting rooms and classrooms.

During the summer of 1981 it is planned that the exterior of the church will be covered with aluminum siding. The aluminum will be cut and shaped to fit over the board-and-batten siding with a view to maintaining the historical appearance as much as possible. The pierced bargeboards, according to the plan, will be removed and replaced with sheet aluminum molded and shaped to replicate the existing wood in appearance.

Interior

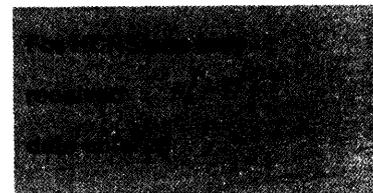
The central aisle under the high roof leads directly from the double front door to the chancel. (Photograph 7.) The roof trusses above the aisle are as important visually as they are structurally to the interior of the church. Curved braces rise from clustered posts to the bottom of the king trusses. There are three trusses before the crossing. At the crossing, formed by the central cross gables, curved braces reach out on the diagonal from each of the four corners to support horizontal beams and a vertical post with braces. (Photograph 2.) One more truss the same as the first three occurs at the west end of the crossing.

On either side of the central aisle there are two sections of simple wooden pews, finished in a dark color. Clustered posts, connected by long arcs, rise from the divisions between the sections of pews. The second section of pews on each side is under the low-pitched parts of the roof. These pews are entered from aisles along the walls. The flooring is made up of boards about six inches wide. Cast-iron hot-air grilles with granite surrounds are in place in the floor. The walls have a dark dado of vertical, narrow, beaded boards. A band of recessed quatrefoils runs above the windows on the side walls and above the arcs that connect the columns. (Photograph 8.) The posts and walls are painted rose pink and the plastered ceiling a pale green.

In the 1880 front part of the church there is a Hook and Hastings pipe organ dating from 1890. Benches for the choir are in front of the altar, left and right. A series of photographs published in the church's centennial history shows that in 1918 the chancel had no decorative woodwork along its walls but did have two large chairs with high pointed backs for the clergy and a heavily carved wooden altar. In 1925 the decorative panels with trefoil tops were in place against the wall, with the chairs and altar unchanged, but in 1969 the chairs were gone and the present high altar had been installed.

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The present chancel railing with its curved C braces is clearly visible in the 1925 picture and may be there in the 1918 photograph, suggesting that it may be original to the 1880 addition. The end wall behind the chancel is itself trefoil shaped.

The four large gable-end windows, seen from the outside to be tripartite under a round section,³ are perceived from the interior to be unified compositions. The scene of the Resurrection in the window over the altar is a memorial window given in 1909. The other three gable-end windows, and most of the small windows, are glazed in a diagonally-leaded monotone gray with borders in deep blue, crimson and green. Four of the small windows are memorials depicting scenes in stained glass.

The first floor of the tower serves as a foyer for the church. This room has a modern dropped ceiling and its walls are covered with plywood.

1. The original slates are thought to be still in place under the asphalt shingles on the balance of the roof. -- Interview with the Rev. Richard C. Williams, pastor; May 20, 1981.

2. Trinity Parish Centennial Year 1969, p. 10.

3. The round window is in the shape of a many-pointed star or sunflower, quite similar to the motif that Upjohn used extensively in the masonry and fenestration of the Connecticut State Capitol (1872-79). Upjohn also used the tooth motif in the Capitol.

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A phone call to the pastor elicited information that the church indeed had gone ahead with the aluminum siding, and the work was nearing completion. Accordingly, a return visit to the site was made November 5, 1981. The attached pictures were taken that day.

In conversation with the workmen it was learned that the job had been in progress for eight or nine weeks, and was now 95% or better complete. The general idea had been to bend and shape sheet aluminum to fit over all the flat surfaces. Some decorative parts, including the stars, finials, spindles and belfry columns, obviously could not be covered by that technique. Therefore, such parts had been replicated in cast aluminum. Parts had been removed from the building and taken to a foundry where they served as patterns for the molds.

The attached pictures show the largely-completed job, and give some details on how it was carried out.

The contractor was Martin's Aluminum Products of Oxford, CT. The parts were cast by a Bridgeport foundry.

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National Park Service**

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For NPS use only
received *6/11/84*
date entered

Impact of New Sheathing and Parish House

The impact on the integrity of Trinity Church of the covering of the exterior walls with sheet aluminum was minimal. The addition of the exterior sheathing did not alter Upjohn's original design for the overall appearance of the structure.

The original exterior wooden sheathing exists under the aluminum. While some of the smaller, shaped components such as stars and spindles have been replaced, they have been replicated in appearance, and the new material as a percentage of the total fabric is very small. The original materials are substantially all preserved.

The exterior design, the structural elements of Trinity Church and the interior are all intact. Only exterior decorative details, minor in volume, have been replaced, and so far as concerns appearance, they have been replicated. Consequently, it is considered that the building has not lost its architectural integrity.

The 1962 parish house addition at the rear is, of course, from a different era than the main body of the church, and is entirely different in design. The parish house was a needed addition that was constructed in the mode of its times. It remains to be seen whether over time it may be determined to have architectural significance as characteristic of its type. Fortunately, the parish house was added to the Upjohn building off the church's rear elevation without damaging the earlier fabric and without damaging Trinity Church's presence in the streetscape. Both physically and visually the parish house was constructed in such a way as to result in no adverse effect on the original structure.

June 3, 1984

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the basement was renovated in connection with the addition of the brick-veneer structure at the rear to serve as a new parish house. In recent years the financial position of the church has weakened. A pastor is now shared with St. Peter's Church, Plymouth, the parish that originally sponsored Trinity as a mission. Heating and maintenance costs have become particularly burdensome, and it is in an effort to come to terms with these difficult problems that the aluminum siding is being planned.

Architecture

Trinity Church, Thomaston, depends in large measure on the architect's use of complex decorative motifs in a simple and restrained manner on both the exterior and the interior. The board-and-batten siding is simple but effective, with its verticality balanced by the horizontal saw-tooth lines. Bracketed door hoods and gable bargeboards are intricate and feature diagonal braces in recognition of the popularity of the Stick Style, but are well organized and contained.

The four-leaf floral (tooth) design, pointed arches, and trefoils and quatrefoils are Gothic motifs. The trusses that dominate the interior are primarily structural but at the same time are graceful and decorative in the tradition of Gothic architecture, combining frankly-expressed construction purpose with artistic effect of a high order. Gothic forms and allusions appeared in the Stick Style throughout its life.

The work of the Upjohns provided a fine example of Gothic Revival architecture leading to the Stick Style. "Richard Upjohn, whose Trinity, New York, represents the Gothic Revival at its most 'correct,'" Whiffen notes, "had a line in small country churches of wood that are at least as much Stick Style as they are Gothic."⁸ Richard M. Upjohn designed a country church for Thomaston that carried the trend somewhat further from the Gothic Revival toward the Stick Style.

In addition to continuing in his father's footsteps stylistically, Richard M. Upjohn added to the substantial number of Episcopal churches of Upjohn design. Four other churches similar to Trinity, Thomaston, are known to have been constructed to the son's designs. They are the following: (Photograph 9.)⁹

- 1863 - St. Luke's Church, Charlestown, New Hampshire
- 1863 - St. John's Church, Boonton, New Jersey
- 1871 - Church of the Reconciliation, Webster, Massachusetts
- 1878 - St. John's Church, Youngstown, New York¹⁰

All four are constructed with board-and-batten siding and pyramidal steeples, and three with gable bargeboards. The Church of the Reconciliation, Webster, is the most similar to Trinity Church, Thomaston.

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Like Trinity, it has a tower to the right, cross gables for the crossing, two front entrances and tripartite windows in the gable ends. It was constructed in the same year, 1871.

St. Luke's Church, Charlestown, like Trinity Church, Thomaston, was enlarged. Originally built in 1863 to the design of Richard Upjohn, it was increased in size in 1869 according to plans drawn by Richard M. Upjohn. It was cut in half, the halves moved apart, and a transept under typical cross gables was inserted. The picture shows that the principal pyramidal tower roof is covered with grey slate of a single shade, like the corresponding roof at Trinity Church, Thomaston, while the sanctuary roof has bands of slate in different colors. Apparently, Trinity never had the variegated slate colors as a rather poor picture from the 1930s, taken before the asphalt shingles were applied, indicates the entire roof was a single shade of grey slate.

The two St. John's churches, built 15 years apart, are similar in size (seating 150 to 200 people), shape, plan and design. The chief difference is in the shapes of the apertures.

Trinity Church, Thomaston, embodies many of the architectural features found in the four other churches, but it is the only one with the combination of three pairs of cross gables, two entrances on the facade, and a cluster of hooded openings on the side elevation. Unfortunately, information is not at hand for comparison of the interiors. Collectively, the group of board-and-batten country churches forms an important chapter in the history of ecclesiastical Stick Style architecture. Trinity Church, Thomaston, the largest and most elaborate, appears to be the outstanding member of the group.

1. Potter, p. 8.
2. This list appears in Curry, p. 104. E.M. Upjohn was the grandson of R.M. Upjohn.
3. The former Methodist church was moved next door where it served as a furniture store until 1979 when it was demolished to make way for a new library.
4. Mattoon was paid \$1000, Dutton \$8375. -- Potter, p. 9.
5. Potter, p. 9.
6. Potter, p. 11.
7. The cost was \$2271.73. -- Potter, p. 12.

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8. Whiffen, p. 111.

9. The Everhard M. Upjohn list includes five other wooden and ten churches of unspecified building material. Inquiries to these 15 churches brought responses from the four wooden churches discussed and from three masonry churches. Only one of the inquiries was returned as undeliverable, indicating that 14 are still going churches.

10. Dates and other factual information about these four churches were conveyed to the author in letters received in response to the inquiries outlined in note 9. See bibliography.

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Continuation sheet Bibliography

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Whiffen, Marcus, American Architecture Since 1780, A Guide to the Styles, Cambridge, Massachusetts: M.I.T. Press, 1969.

8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
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<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		

Specific dates 1871, 1880 **Builder/Architect** Richard M. Upjohn

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

Criterion C - Architecture

Trinity Church, Thomaston, is an excellent example of Stick Style ecclesiastical architecture. The church was designed by the New York architect Richard M. Upjohn whose most famous work is the Connecticut State Capitol. Trinity Church, to date, enjoys outstanding integrity as it has been very little changed on either the interior or exterior since it was built in 1871 and 1880, except for addition of aluminum siding.

History

The evidence that Richard Mitchell Upjohn (1828-1903) designed Trinity Church, Thomaston, is two-fold. First, a 1919 church history refers to a parish meeting's vote, July 20, 1871, to accept the plan of Mr. Upjohn of New York.¹ Second, the church is included in a list of the works of R.M. Upjohn prepared by Everard M. Upjohn.² R.M. Upjohn practiced architecture with his more famous father, Richard Upjohn, from mid-19th century. As the firm of R. & R.M. Upjohn was not officially dissolved until 1872, technically Trinity Church in 1871 probably was the work of the firm, but R.M. Upjohn had replaced his father as the leading force in the firm some years earlier.

Trinity Church turned to Upjohn for plans for its new sanctuary two years after becoming an independent parish in 1869. Prior to that time Trinity had been a mission of an established church in nearby Plymouth, Connecticut, holding services in a small, former Methodist Church.³ The cornerstone for the new church building was laid September 25, 1871 and consecration services were held April 3, 1872. \$9375 was raised to pay for the new structure. Charles Mattoon was the mason and John Dutton was the carpenter or master builder.⁴ Donations in kind were received in the form of stained glass, the pulpit and desk, and timber and flooring for the basement.⁵

Toward the end of the first decade, further construction activity was undertaken. A parish meeting June 25, 1879 "voted to go on and make an enlargement of the Church according to the plans of Mr. Upjohn."⁶ The present chancel, choir, organ loft and vestry room were added at that time, and the seating capacity was increased from 350 to 400. The financial capability of the parish to undertake the building program probably was related to the period of prosperity that was being enjoyed by the town whose principal industry, the Seth Thomas Clock Co., was vigorous and growing at the time.

The next major change in the church building occurred in 1962 when

9. Major Bibliographical References

See Continuation Sheet.

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property 0.6 acres

Quadrangle name Thomaston

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UMT References

A

1	8	6	6	0	2	0	0	4	6	1	5	0	0	0
Zone		Easting				Northing								

B

Zone		Easting				Northing								

C

Zone		Easting				Northing								

D

Zone		Easting				Northing								

E

Zone		Easting				Northing								

F

Zone		Easting				Northing								

G

Zone		Easting				Northing								

H

Zone		Easting				Northing								

Verbal boundary description and justification

See Continuation Sheet.

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries N/A

state code county code

state code county code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title David F. Ransom, Consultant, edited by John Herzan, National Register Coordinator

organization Connecticut Historical Commission date July 4, 1981

street & number 59 South Prospect Street telephone 203 521-2518

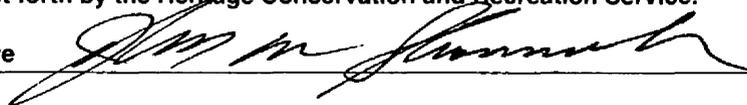
city or town Hartford state Connecticut

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

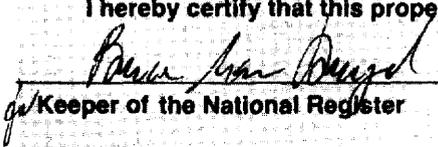
The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national state local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature 

title Director, Connecticut Historical Commission date January 12, 1984

For HCERS use only
I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register
 date 8/1/84
Keeper of the National Register
Attest: _____ date _____
Chief of Registration

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Verbal boundary description and justification

The boundary of the nominated property is shown by Thomaston assessor's map 40, block 19, lot 6. This is the land that has traditionally gone with the church. Initial purchase is recorded in Plymouth Land Records, volume 24, page 598, March 21, 1867.

Imperial Church
Worcester, MA



Sketch Map
Scale: 1" = 20'

Photo Key

