

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

DATA SHEET

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED APR 8 1975

DATE ENTERED MAY 2 1975

**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 First Congregational Church

AND/OR COMMON
SAME

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER 1126 S.W. Park

CITY, TOWN Portland VICINITY OF 2nd, Robert Duncan
CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

STATE Oregon CODE 41 COUNTY Multnomah 97201 CODE 051

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
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER:

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME First Congregational Church

STREET & NUMBER 1126 S.W. Park

CITY, TOWN Portland VICINITY OF Oregon 97201

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC. Multnomah County Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER 1021 S.W. First Avenue

CITY, TOWN Portland STATE Oregon 97201

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE Statewide Inventory of Historic Sites and Buildings

DATE 1974 FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS Parks and Recreation Branch, State Highway Building

CITY, TOWN Salem STATE Oregon 97310

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

The First Congregational Church of Portland was constructed over a period of six years, 1889-95. Henry J. Hefty of Switzerland, architect for the building, designed the building in the period style of the "Venetian" manner, using the tradition of John Ruskin, the persuasive 19th century critic and aesthete. Ruskin admired Italian Gothic styles with their rich mixtures of Arabic, Byzantine, and Venetian elements. Some of these features, notably the smaller towers at the northwest and southeast corners of the building, have been removed. The towers were removed in 1940. Although minor changes have been made, the structure is still in excellent condition and it maintains the "Venetian" style,

The church measures 94 x 98 feet. Its exterior is constructed of basaltic rock, with some broken ashlar, and a Tenino sandstone trim. The auditorium is 92 x 92 feet in the shape of a Greek Cross faced with polished redwood and stucco. The ceiling is 35 feet high. The floor slopes down toward the pulpit with the pews in a half-circle facing the pulpit. With the gallery above, the auditorium accommodates 1100 members. The interior is relatively plain, and the design is basically that of other 19th century Oregon preaching churches. The minister and pulpit are emphasized rather than the medieval cruciform plan with a focus on the altar.

The remaining central tower suffered substantial damage during the October 12, 1962 Columbus Day storm. The damage to the tower and several interior changes, including the installment of an elevator in the tower, amounted to \$86,000. Even with the changes, the general treatment, the carved and textual effects, the memorial windows, the arches, lintels, and roof coverings still reveal a strong Victorian desire for richly manifested forms. This structure would comfortably fit in either the east or west coast.

Current plans call for the restoration of the deteriorating sandstone and other items in need of repair. The reconstruction of the two towers removed in 1940 is also contemplated but costs for the work may be prohibitive.

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 checked="" 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
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<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

1889-1895

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

Henry Hefty

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Portland First Congregational Church is significant both for its historical and its architectural attributes; its importance is further enhanced by its location in the South Park Blocks of Portland. The First Congregational Church was founded in 1851 - making it the oldest Congregational Church in the Pacific Northwest. The 185-foot high Italian Gothic Tower is the primary feature of the structure. The tower is one of the more impressive architectural attractions in Portland.

The church enhances and is enhanced by its location in the South Park Blocks, which extend along the west edge of the downtown core area. Its style of architecture is the only such example on the twelve South Park Blocks. It adds to other important structures on the "blocks" - notably the Portland Art Museum Center (on the National Register) and the Paramount Theater and St. James Lutheran Church (both nominated to the National Register).

The present building is the third house of worship for the First Congregational Church. Organized in 1851, the church's second minister, Dr. George Atkinson (1854-55, 1863-73), was the founder of Congregationalism in the Pacific Northwest and founder of the public school system in Oregon. It took six years to construct the church. A delay of two years (1893-95) was necessary because of the Panic of 1893. The building was dedicated in July, 1895, with a total cost of \$110,000.

The tower is ornately designed and constructed of stonework and sheet metal. It suggests Gothic prototypes. The exterior of the church is accented by three magnificent stained glass windows.

Although portions of the building have been altered (notably the removal of the NW and SE towers), it maintains its original dignity. The center tower acts as a focal point for Portlanders and the many visitors. The First Congregational Church is structurally sound and is an important contribution to Portland and Oregon architecture.

