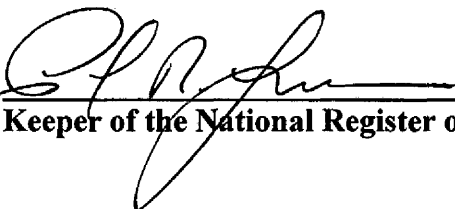




United States Department of the Interior

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
1849 C Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20240

The attached property, the Abington Congregational Church, in Windham County, Connecticut, reference number 77001413, was listed in the National Register of Historic Places by the Keeper of the National Register on 09/19/1977, as evidenced by FEDERAL REGISTER/WEEKLY LIST notice of Tuesday, February 6, 1979, Part II, Vol. 44, No. 26, page 7443. The attached nomination form is a copy of the original documentation provided to the Keeper at the time of listing.


Keeper of the National Register of Historic Places

2/12/2009
Date

FILE

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RECEIVED
DATE ENTERED

**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 Abington Congregational Church

AND/OR COMMON

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER Route 97

CITY, TOWN

Pomfret, Abington

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

STATE

Connecticut

VICINITY OF

Second

CODE

09

COUNTY

Windham

CODE

015

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE
<input type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	PUBLIC ACQUISITION	ACCESSIBLE	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY
			<input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
			<input type="checkbox"/> PARK
			<input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
			<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
			<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
			<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER:

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME Abington Congregational Society

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

Pomfret, Abington

VICINITY OF

Connecticut

STATE

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC. Pomfret Town Hall

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

Pomfret

STATE

Connecticut

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE Connecticut Statewide Survey

See Continuation Sheet 1

DATE

1967 and 1974

FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS

Connecticut Historical Commission

CITY, TOWN

Hartford

STATE Connecticut

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input 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 Abington Congregational Church, a sturdy Greek Revival style edifice, stands on the east side of Route 97 in the hamlet of Abington in the town of Pomfret. Across the road is a mid 20th century house, while north of the church building is its parish house, a frame structure with rectangular plan. While the clapboard covered walls, sash windows, and gable pediment of the parish house which was erected in 1950 attempt to relate it to the church edifice, the proportions of the 1 story building are awkward.

The church building is a pleasing Greek Revival design of vernacular quality. It is set back from the road about 25 feet and surrounded by grass. Although erected in 1751, the building was enlarged and remodelled between 1834-40. The only remaining exterior features of 1751 are the height of the walls of the auditorium, the pitch of the gable roof, and perhaps the 9/6 sash window in the gable of the rear (east) facade. Unfortunately the rear clapboards have been replaced and the visible indications of earlier windows discussed by J. Frederick Kelly[†] no longer exist. In addition the very low foundation of gray gneiss, originally dry wall, has been pointed with cement.

The building has a rectangular plan approximately 39' x 63'. The auditorium section is the 1751 mass. The vestibule (15' x 39') at the west was added in 1834-40 as was the three-stage tower. The building is covered with clapboards painted white. Its heavy Greek Revival cornice has an unadorned frieze.

The 3-bay main (west) facade has a triangular pediment supported by four plain pilasters with Greek Doric capitals. The gable has flush board siding and a circular window which is probably a post 1840 addition (1869?). The round-heads of the narrow windows of the north and south bays and of the three-part window above the center double-doors suggest that they are also post 1840 alterations since they are rather Italianate in character. The upper parts of the north and south windows have been boarded in recent years.

The tower located at the western end of the building has three graduated square stages. Its lowest stage has a plain frieze and simple cornice. It has no openings but there are indications on its south side that an opening has been closed. The second stage has louvered openings on each side, plain pilasters at corners, and an entablature. The third stage has no openings, but has plain pilasters and an entablature supporting a crown.

The north and south facades each have three windows with triple-hung sash (15/15/15). An interior chimney, probably added in 1900 when the first furnace was installed, projects from the north slope of the roof near the western end of the building.

The rear (east) facade has a doorway with hood at the north. It does not have a pediment since the cornice returns. In the gable is a 9/6 sash window with trim suggesting a splayed lintel.

The plan of the church is very simple. There is a rectangular auditorium and a narrow vestibule with stairs at both ends leading to a balcony. Until about 1920 when a wall was erected the balcony above the vestibule opened into the auditorium. The auditorium has two aisles. The pulpit is located at the east on a raised platform

See Continuation Sheet 2

8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW				
__PREHISTORIC	__ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	__COMMUNITY PLANNING	__LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> RELIGION	
__1400-1499	__ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	__CONSERVATION	__LAW	__SCIENCE	
__1500-1599	__AGRICULTURE	__ECONOMICS	__LITERATURE	__SCULPTURE	
__1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	__EDUCATION	__MILITARY	__SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN	
__1700-1799	__ART	__ENGINEERING	__MUSIC	__THEATER	
__1800-1899	__COMMERCE	__EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	__PHILOSOPHY	__TRANSPORTATION	
__1900-	__COMMUNICATIONS	__INDUSTRY	__POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	__OTHER (SPECIFY)	
		__INVENTION			

SPECIFIC DATES 1751, 1834-40

BUILDER/ARCHITECT 1834-40: Mr. Fitch

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Abington Congregational Church, raised in 1751, is the oldest church edifice in Connecticut in continuous use as a church. However, the building was enlarged and extensively remodeled between 1834 and 1840 by Mr. Fitch of Mansfield, Connecticut, resulting in its existing vernacular Greek Revival style. In its attic can be seen its 18th century roof framing system which unlike that of any other early Connecticut church, has chamfers on braces between wall posts and roof trusses, on main plates, and on splayed wall posts suggesting that they were originally exposed.

The parish of Abington was separated from Pomfret in 1749 due to overcrowding in the Pomfret meetinghouse and due to the distance to Pomfret for the fifty families of the new society. Religious services were held in private homes until the summer of 1751 when the church building was raised on the half acre of land purchased from Zachariah Goodell. The builder of the church is not known, but John and James Ingalls, Daniel Trowbridge, Edward Paine, and William Osgood served on its building committee. The 48' x 39' structure, modeled on the Pomfret building, was occupied in 1751 although it was incomplete. In 1752 a pulpit with sounding board was installed and the following year pews were built. About fifteen years after the church edifice was erected its exterior was painted (or whitewashed) white. In 1802 a belfry was added.

During the 18th and early 19th centuries the church has two ministers of long tenure and local importance. The first permanent minister, David Ripley, served the parish from 1753 to 1778. The next minister, Walter Lyon, was pastor from 1783 to 1826. In 1831 during the ministry of Charles Fitch the parish experienced a period of revivalism.

During the ministry of Nathan S. Hunt (1834-45) a controversy occurred concerning the future of the church building. Despite some interest in erecting a new building, it was decided to repair the 1751 building. This work done by Mr. Fitch of Mansfield resulted in a complete remodeling of the structure in the Greek Revival style. The 1802 belfry was removed and the existing vestibule and three-stage tower added. Galleries were removed and the ceiling lowered. Windows were replaced and a new exterior cornice added.

Although some sources indicate that the exterior has not had any major alteration since 1840, the round-headed windows of the main facade are not characteristic of the Greek Revival style. Apparently the interior plan was altered in 1869. It is possible that the west windows were also changed at this time. Other alterations made since 1840 include the excavation of a small cellar in 1900 when a furnace was installed, repairs to the tower following damage by a hurricane in 1938, and replacement of clapboard siding and of roofing material. In 1950 a free-standing parish house was constructed north of the church building. Durwood Kenyon was contractor in charge of building the parish house.

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

- Richard Bayles, History of Windham County, Ct., 1889, pp. 557- 560.
 Susan J. Griggs, Folklore and Firesides in Pomfret, Hampton, and Vicinity, 1950, pp. 132- 139.
 J. Frederick Kelly, Early Connecticut Meetinghouses, New York: Columbia, 1948, vol. 1, pp. 4- 7.

See Continuation Sheet 3

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY about 1 acre

UTM REFERENCES

A	1,8	7,4,8,3,5,0	4,6,3,8,0,7,0	B			
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
C				D			

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

T. Robins Brown Consultant in Architectural History

ORGANIZATION

Connecticut Historical Commission

DATE

September 1976

STREET & NUMBER

59 South Prospect Street

TELEPHONE

203-566-3005

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 National Park Service.

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE



TITLE

S.H.P.O.

DATE

JAN 3, 1977

OR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

DATE

TEST:

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

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CONTINUATION SHEET 1

ITEM NUMBER 6

PAGE 1

Abington Congregational Church, Pomfret, Abington, CT.

6. Presentation in Existing Surveys

Works Projects Administration, Connecticut Survey
1934 State
Connecticut State Library
Hartford, CT.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

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CONTINUATION SHEET 2

ITEM NUMBER 7 PAGE 2

Abington Congregational Church, Pomfret, Abington, CT.

7. Description

under an archway created in the 1920's. The organ is located on a raised platform by the vestibule wall at the west. This raised platform dates to 1869. The coved plaster ceiling is an 1834-40 feature as probably are the pews and most trim.

The present ceiling is 2'3" below the level of the 18th century ceiling. Originally the braces between the roof trusses and the wall posts were exposed since they, the main plates, and the splayed wall posts are chamfered and have traces of whitewash. This is the only known instance of originally exposed chamfered framing in an early Connecticut church building.

The heavy oak, 18th century roof trusses are king-post type and have double top chords.

Originally the 1751 church building was a simple rectangular mass with gable roof. Its pulpit with sounding board was located against the north wall and galleries were on the east, west, and south sides. There were two ranges of windows and probably centrally located doorways on the west, south, and east sides. Stairs were located in the south-east and southwest corners. In 1802 a belfry was added. This was removed in 1834-40 remodeling. Alterations made in 1834-40 include: construction of vestibule and tower, removal of early galleries, changing floor plan so that pulpit was at east end, lowering ceiling, replacing earlier woodwork with Greek Revival style fabric, and rearranging openings.

¹J. Frederick Kelly, Early Connecticut Meetinghouses. New York: Columbia, 1948, vol. 1, p. 5. Much of this description is based on Kelly's description.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

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DATE ENTERED

CONTINUATION SHEET

3

ITEM NUMBER

9

PAGE

3

Abington Congregational Church, Pomfret, Abington, CT.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Mrs. Eunice A. Platt, The First One Hundred Years of the Abington Congregational Church. Printed program for May 31, 1953.

Eva Jane Prior, "Report on Abington Congregational Church," July, 1976. Typewritten. In files of T. Robins Brown, and of author, Woodstock, Ct. 06281.

Interview with Eva Jane Prior, August 18, 1976. Notes in files of T. Robins Brown.

Edmund W. Sinnott, Meeting House & Church in Early New England. New York; McGraw-Hill, pp. 169-170, 1963.