



United States Department of the Interior  
National Park 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 Stoughton Universalist Church

and/or common Stoughton Historical Musuem

## 2. Location

street & number 324 S. Page Street  not for publication

city, town Stoughton vicinity of ~~Congressional district~~

state Wisconsin code 55 county Dane code 025

## 3. Classification

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

## 4. Owner of Property

name Stoughton Historical Society

street & number 324 S. Page Street

city, town Stoughton vicinity of \_\_\_\_\_ state Wisconsin 53589

## 5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Dane County Courthouse

street & number 210 Monona Avenue

city, town Madison state Wisconsin 53709

## 6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Wisconsin Inventory of Historic Places has this property been determined eligible?  yes  no

date 1979  federal  state  county  local

depository for survey records State Historical Society of Wisconsin

city, town Madison state Wisconsin 53706

## 7. Description

<b>Condition</b>		<b>Check one</b>	<b>Check one</b>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input 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 simple, Greek revival style Stoughton Universalist Church, now known as the Stoughton Historical Museum, is a single, detached rectangular structure measuring fifty-one feet by thirty-one feet. A single, staged square steeple dominates the building and is centrally located, and flush with the main facade. The one story building has three bays across the main facade and a full basement.

The structure's exterior walls are built of cream colored brick, brought from Milwaukee by oxen<sup>1</sup>, that are laid in a stretcher bond pattern. The flat surface of the main facade is broken by engaged brick pilasters. An inscription stone bearing the name of the church and its date of construction is located in the center of the main facade pediment.

The roof shape is that of a low gable with a plain, boxed cornice for roof trim. The gabled end of the building has a pedimented boxed cornice with a full width horizontal eave that forms the distinct triangular shape. The pediment is simply decorated with a recessed triangular panel and brick corbeling.

The main window openings are set in a flat structural opening surmounted by sandstone lintels. The head and side-surrounds are of plain wooden moldings. There are also sandstone slipsills for each of the windows. These windows are two sashed, double hung in a sixteen over sixteen arrangement.

The principal entrances are located along the main facade, offset left and right. The single leaf doors are set in a flat opening with a sandstone lintel present. The side surrounds are plain and the doors are set flush with the construction opening. Above either door is a flush, blind transom. The original wooden steps were replaced with concrete ones in 1961.

The simple, single space for the nave inside was dominated by the altar at the west end. The interior was, and is now, devoid of ornamentation, reflecting the Universalist approach to a more simplistic nature of worshipping. The only alteration to the original spatial arrangement was the removal of the altar and pews, to accommodate museum displays.

To facilitate museum operations and storage, a carriage house was constructed near the church in 1970 and attached by means of an enclosed walkway. The size and massing of the addition doesn't detract from the architectural significance of the original building. The sensitivity of the construction of the addition is such that it could be removed without damaging the historic fabric of the original structure.

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<sup>1</sup>"A History of The Stoughton Universalist Church." Harry O. Hale. 1958. (Mimeographed).

## 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
<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 checked="" 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 checked="" 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** 1858<sup>2</sup> (date of construction) - 1938 (period of significance) **Builder/Architect** P. J. Hynes/S. V. Shipman<sup>3</sup>

### Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The significance of the Stoughton Universalist Church rests with its association with the development of Stoughton and its position as one of Stoughton's best examples of the Greek Revival. The church was, and continues to be, a social, architectural, and educational focal point for the community.

### Architecture

Distinguished by the simple forms and shapes of the exterior, the Universalist Church is further significant as an example of Greek Revival design. The plans for this structure were drawn by the noted regional architect, S. V. Shipman, towards the waning years of the popularity of this style. Therefore, Shipman was able to design the building in such a way that it retained the essence of the well proportioned details of the style without subjecting the clients to repetitive architectural cliches. The structure, the oldest public edifice in the city, is also the only remaining example of Greek Revival architecture, as applied to a public building, in Stoughton.<sup>4</sup>

Colonel Stephen Vaughan Shipman was chosen to draw the plans for the Universalist Church in 1857, shortly after he was appointed architect for the Central Wisconsin Hospital for the Insane in Madison. His involvement with the Civil War interrupted his architectural practice, but after the war he returned to Madison to resume his profession.

His later works include an appointment as the architect of the State Capitol where he designed the rotunda and dome; the superintending architect of the United States Court House and Post Office, in Madison. There were also numerous residences in Madison and hospitals for the insane in Iowa, Illinois, and Missouri. In 1870 Shipman established an office in Chicago where he continued to design churches, stores, and manufacturing structures. He remained active in the architectural profession until shortly before his death in 1905.<sup>5</sup>

Mr. Shipman's original plans for the building and his specifications still exist and are on display in the Universalist Church.

<sup>2</sup>Fred Homme, Oak Opening: The Story of Stoughton. (Stoughton, Wisconsin: The Stoughton Centennial History Committee, 1947), p. 77.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

<sup>4</sup>"Wisconsin Inventory of Historic Places", Historic Preservation Division: State Historical Society of Wisconsin. Madison, Wisconsin. 1979.

<sup>5</sup>Milwaukee Sentinel, 14 November, 1905; The Madison Democrat, 17 November, 1905.

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

Emerson; Minä, "History of the First Universalist Church", Universalist Church, 1908.  
 Hale, Henry O., "A History of the Stoughton Universalist Church", Universalist Church, 1958.  
 Homme, Fred., Oak Opening: The Story of Stoughton, Stoughton: The Stoughton Centennial  
 History Committee, 1947.  
 The Madison Democrat, 17 November, 1905. Milwaukee Sentinel, 14, November, 1905.

## 10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property less than 1.0

Quadrangle name Stoughton, Wis.

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

### UMT References

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 Zone Easting Northing

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### Verbal boundary description and justification

The nominated property is described as follows: The south 66 feet of lot 7, and the south 66 feet of lot 8, Block 8, Original Plat, Stoughton, Dane Co., WI.

### List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state	code	county	code

state	code	county	code

## 11. Form Prepared By

name/title James S. Kane

organization   date May 31, 1982

street & number 1107 Vilas Avenue telephone (608) 251-1248

city or town Madison state Wisconsin 53715

## 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 *Richard Murray*

title Director, State Historical Society of Wisconsin date 8/25/82

For NPS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

Entered in the  
National Register

date 9/30/82

*James S. Kane*  
Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

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



Stoughton Universalist Church, Stoughton, Dane County  
Continuation sheet

Item number 8

Page 1

In addition to the extensive documentation of the building's plans, complete records of the church's construction were kept. P. J. Hynes, a local builder offered the lowest bid of \$2,075.00 and was awarded the contract to construct the church. Mr. Hynes supervised a construction team of E. E. Warren and John H. Warren. The crew was small because each of the male members of the congregation was expected to donate one work day per week while construction was being undertaken. J. H. Harvey was hired to do the finish masonry work.<sup>6</sup>

Social/Humanitarian

The Universalist Church in Stoughton was, and continues to be, inseparable from the community. The Universalist was the first church group to be formally organized in Stoughton<sup>7</sup>, with thirty-five men and women signing the confession of faith of the Universalist Church of America on May 16, 1858. Four members of the Stoughton Family were among the original signers; Luke Stoughton, the city's founder donated the land for the building site.

Throughout the nineteenth century, the church not only met the functions of its members but also the community-at-large. The church was used by other denominations for their services; public gatherings were held in the basement; earliest Stoughton schools, both private and public utilized the church.

The Universalist Church also had the distinction of having three women pastors during its time as a church. The first women leader came in 1869 and stayed until 1873. The other two women were preachers from 1883-1884 and 1890-1892.<sup>8</sup>

While the Universalists stopped using the church in 1938, various public organizations used it for their activities. In 1947, a centennial museum was established in the building. The long pews were removed and stored in another building. The Stoughton Historical Society took formal possession when they were granted ownership in October 14, 1960.

Under the careful stewardship of this organization, the Universalist Church was assured of its continuous presence as a center of community life in Stoughton.

<sup>6</sup>"A History of the Stoughton Universalist Church", Harry O. Hale, 1958.  
(Mimeographed), p. 4.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid., p. 1.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid. p. 4.