

740358941

DATA SHEET

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

FOR NPS USE ONLY	
RECEIVED	MAY 4 1976
DATE ENTERED	JUN 30 1976

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

~~AND/OR COMMON~~

Christ Episcopal Church

AND/OR COMMON

Christ Church

**2 LOCATION**

STREET & NUMBER

909 Eddy Street

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

Providence

VICINITY OF

2 Rep. Edward Beard

STATE

Rhode Island

CODE

44

COUNTY

Providence

CODE

007

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

**4 OWNER OF PROPERTY**

NAME

Christ Episcopal Church

STREET & NUMBER

909 Eddy Street

CITY, TOWN

Providence

VICINITY OF

STATE

Rhode Island 02905

**5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE,  
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Providence City Hall

STREET & NUMBER

Dorrance & Washington Streets

CITY, TOWN

Providence

STATE

Rhode Island 02903

**6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE

Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission - So. Prov. Survey

DATE

July, 1975

FEDERAL  STATE  COUNTY  LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR  
SURVEY RECORDS

R.I. Historical Preservation Comm. 150 Benefit St.

CITY, TOWN

Providence

STATE

Rhode Island 02903

# 7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

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DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Christ Episcopal Church was erected at the southwest corner of Eddy and Oxford Streets in 1888. It was designed by the Providence architectural firm of William R. Walker and Son, in the High Victorian Gothic style. The church occupies the entire lot and is constructed immediately adjacent to the sidewalk. It is closely abutted on the west by contemporary Late Victorian frame multi-family housing, while on the south it originally adjoined a block of two-and-one-half-story Mansard-roofed flats, now replaced by a one-story, modern shopping complex.

The building is basically rectangular, with a tall steeply-pitched gable roof and a full-height apse protruding from the east gable end. A 120-foot-tall tower flanking the apse at the northeast corner of the building is balanced by a small one story hip-roofed wing at the southeast corner. The two visible facades, the east elevation on Eddy Street and the north elevation on Oxford Street, are constructed of fine red Danvers pressed brick with extensive brownstone trim and high relief carved brick floral ornaments. The south and west elevations, which were not readily visible originally because of the close proximity of the neighboring buildings, are constructed of rough common brick and shingled wood frame construction without ornamental detailing.

The Eddy Street or east elevation is the principal facade, and is a composition of contrasting geometric forms. Projecting from the center of the east wall, the buttressed apse rises to the height of the gable. Flanking it to the south is the small, one-story, hip-roofed wing containing the pastor's study. This wing terminates in a deep, recessed, round-arched, gabled portico facing on Eddy Street. Balancing this wing is the tower at the northeast corner of the building. The main entrance to the church was originally from Eddy Street through an elaborate portal in the base of the tower. The double doorway is framed by a finely-molded brownstone lancet arch with a boldly sculptural, high relief, carved brick floral tympanum. In the upper section of the tower, the belfry is enclosed by the original scalloped wood louvers set in brick arched openings. Over the belfry arches are carved brick panels in a floral motif similar to the design of the tympanum. The tower is capped by a 70-foot attenuated pyramidal spire terminating in a copper cross.

The north or Oxford Street elevation is five bays long and is accentuated by a gabled, slightly projecting center bay containing a large traceried lancet window. The bell tower at the northeast corner of the building is balanced by the gabled, arched, recessed portico of the side entrance portal at the northwest corner.

(See continuation Sheet 1)

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NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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The interior of the Church remains in largely original condition. The Eddy Street entrance is no longer used. The entrance from Oxford Street leads into a long narrow narthex with three pairs of doors opening into the center and side aisles of the church.

The plan of the sanctuary is rectangular and terminates in a deep semi-circular apse at the east end. The sanctuary is open to the full height of the roof, which is supported by a simple, exposed timber-work truss system. Projecting from the apse into the first bay of the nave is a raised wooden dais containing the altar, pulpit, and lectern. To the right of the apse, the choir area contains the original pipe organ encased in a carved wood cabinet stained dark to match the timber roof structure. The pulpit, altar, and pews of black birch stained cherry are handsomely carved with Victorian Gothic ecclesiastical motifs.

The church contains numerous stained glass windows, most depicting floral and iconographic motifs. The magnificent original north aisle window, designed and executed by Cox, Sons, Buckley & Co. of New York, contains a richly colored sequence of scenes from the life of Jesus. The plaster walls do not retain their original stenciled border design of intertwining vines and are currently painted a pastel yellow above a cream colored vertical board dado. The cove ceiling of the apse, however, still features its original treatment of a dark blue ground speckled with gold stars.

Adjoining the sanctuary to the south, the original robing room and pastor's study are contained in a one-story hipped roof wing. Behind this wing and abutting the south wall of the nave is a large fellowship hall and kitchen. Although this construction dates from 1888, its relatively light construction and awkward placement abutting the south aisle window suggests that it may have been intended as a temporary structure. The original plan may have been to expand the church property to the south and build a more permanent structure at the end of the south wing. However, no documentary evidence could be found to support this hypothesis.

# 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		

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SPECIFIC DATES      1888                                      BUILDER/ARCHITECT      William R. Walker & Son,  
Architects

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STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Christ Episcopal Church is of significance to South Providence both historically, as an early and continuing religious and social institution, and architecturally, as a visual landmark in an area much changed by 20th century development.

The church body was founded in 1864 as a mission in a public school building on Oxford Street and is the oldest extant Protestant congregation in South Providence. After a few years, the site of the present church was acquired and in 1867 a wooden chapel designed by architect Clifton A. Hall of Providence was erected. The location of Christ Episcopal Church at the southern edge of Providence on the Pawtuxet Turnpike (now Eddy Street) was indicative of the first suburban settlement by the Yankee upper middle class, that was occurring in the area after mid-century. To the east, the now-vanished suburban community of Burgess Cove on Narragansett Bay was populated by independent tradesmen and prosperous Providence merchants, while Eddy Street, a major highway between Providence and Pawtuxet, was at that time being built up with spacious suburban estates. ✓

By 1887 the South Providence section was a heavily populated working and middle class residential area, and the congregation of the church had expanded beyond the capacity of the original chapel. The 1867 building was removed to another site and later razed. The present church building was completed in 1888. The congregation of the church did not grow significantly during the late 19th century or early 20th century and the church building was never expanded or significantly altered.

Increasingly after 1890 the center of fashionable middle and upper class residence shifted to other areas and the neighborhood became more ethnic and working class in composition. After 1950 the always moderately sized congregation began to decline in numbers and prosperity. Today the small congregation of Christ Church continues to serve the community by sponsoring a variety of needed social service programs including a day care center, counseling services, and a job referral agency. The dwindling congregation and flagging parish revenues, however, have necessitated the almost

(See continuation Sheet 2)

# 9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Cady, John Hutchins. The Civic and Architectural Development of Providence, 1636-1950. (Providence, Rhode Island 1957).  
 Christ Episcopal Church Records Vol. 1, II, III.  
 Providence Journal May 6, 19, 24, 1917.  
 Walker, William R. & Son. Construction Specifications, (Providence, Rhode Island 1888).

# 10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY Less than one acre

UTM REFERENCES

A	1,9	300 <sup>200</sup> 2,45	4,6	3,0	3,7,0 <sup>450</sup>	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
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

# 11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Leslie J. Vollmert

ORGANIZATION

Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission

DATE

April 21, 1976

STREET & NUMBER

150 Benefit Street

TELEPHONE

(401) 277-2678

CITY OR TOWN

Providence

STATE

Rhode Island 02903

# 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

*Frederick C. Williams*

TITLE

State Historic Preservation Officer

DATE

April 30, 1976

FOR NPS USE ONLY

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

*Acting*

*Wm. Sturtis*

DATE

6/30/76

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

ATTEST

*Acting*

*Charles Adams*

DATE

6-25-76

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

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total abandonment of regular maintenance on the building, as scarce funds are allotted to community service programs. Although today the neighborhood landmark carries on its historic role of serving the community, little financial support is available for the deteriorating building's preservation.

Christ Church has long been a visual landmark in its neighborhood and is one of the finest examples of Victorian Gothic ecclesiastical design in Providence. The architects, William R. Walker and Son, were a regionally prominent firm with a wide practice throughout Rhode Island and Massachusetts from 1865 to 1915. Among the more significant examples of their work are the Cranston Street Armory, in Providence, already on the National Register of Historic Places, and the Woonsocket Court House.

Christ Church was executed during a design transition period in the firm's prolific career. The church's massing, informal juxtaposition of elements, use of massive masonry motifs, and low groundhugging character are indicative of the influence of the contemporary Romanesque Revival movement and mark the firm's transition from the high Victorian Gothic style to the full Romanesque Revival. Christ Church is the only known surviving example of the firm's transitional period. In addition, it is one of William R. Walker & Sons's most successful church designs.

Christ Church is an important visual symbol of a proud past in a deteriorated neighborhood of rundown houses and vacant lots. The current efforts at stabilization and rehabilitation in the area are partially based on renewed pride in the neighborhood and an appreciation of the historical importance of South Providence as one of the city's first streetcar suburbs. Today, Christ Church is an essential component of the neighborhood's historical and architectural heritage and a focal point of renewed community pride.