
First Congregational Church
630 Ohio Street
D. 1902-03

Owner: First Congregational Church
630 Ohio Street
Terre Haute, Indiana

Description:

Photo #7, Bldg. #68

The First Congregational Church is a large neo-Gothic church building located at the northwest corner of Ohio Street and Spectator Court, near downtown Terre Haute. Built in 1902-1903, it is constructed of buff-colored brick with limestone trim and opalescent glass windows. Some alterations and additions were made to the church in 1962, but these were sympathetically executed and do not detract from the building's overall plan.

In plan, the church originally resembled a cross, with the nave running north/south and the transept running east/west. The slate-covered roof was of a high-pitched gable design, except at the crossing where it became pyramidal. The gable ends of both the nave and the transept features monumental pointed arch window openings with stone hood molds, and the windows, themselves, featured wooden tracery with pointed arch and quatrefoil motifs. Limestone trim was also used in the building's window hood molds and sills, water table, weatherings, and gable coping. These elements survive intact.

On the southeast corner of the nave is the church's square bell tower, which also contains the main entrance. This tower features a single buttress at its southeast corner, and on its upper levels features an arcade of three, tall, slender, pointed arch windows on each facade. These windows are bisected by a stone belt course which runs around the perimeter of the tower; limestone is also used to form a more delicate string course above these windows and to form a base for the tower's crenellated parapet. The original spire which rose from this tower has been removed.

In a 1962 remodeling, an addition was made to the southwest side of the nave. Constructed of similar buff brick, this addition features pointed arched windows, a stone water table, and a polygonal south facade. Another small addition was attached to the east side. Designed by local architect and church member, Juliet Peddle, the scale and design of these additions is such that they remain sympathetic to the original structure.

Significance:

The First Congregational Church is significant as a good local example of neo-Gothic religious architecture. Built in 1903, at the peak of the downtown's preeminence as the center of Terre Haute's cultural, commercial, and institutional life, the building is a representative example of a small-scale downtown church. It continues to serve as the home of one of Terre Haute's pioneer church organizations, founded in December, 1834.

The present church building is the third structure built by the Third Congregational Church. Their first building, erected in 1837, was destroyed by a tornado in 1853. A replacement structure built on the same site a year later continued in use until the turn of the century, when it was judged to be too small for the expanding congregation. The present church, constructed a short distance from the site of the first two structures, was begun in August, 1902, and completed in June, 1903. Designed by the Elgin, Illinois, architectural firm of Trumbull and Jones, who specialized in the construction of churches, public libraries, and

First Congregational Church
630 Ohio Street

Building #68 Continued

meeting halls, the building is particularly notable for its square tower, limestone capped buttresses, its lancet windows, and its stone water table and coping.

Geographical Data:

Acreage: Less than one acre

UTM Reference: 16/464810/4368330

Boundary: Map #1806-21, Block #477, Parcel #030