

PH0354384

DATA SHEET

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

FOR NPS USE ONLY
RECEIVED FEB 15 1977
DATE ENTERED OCT 20 1977

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
Chestnut Street Methodist Church

AND/OR COMMON

LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER 11-19 Chestnut Street

CITY, TOWN Portland VICINITY OF 1st Honorable David Emery

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

STATE Maine CODE 23 COUNTY Cumberland CODE 005

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 type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER:

OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME Board of Trustees, Chestnut Street Methodist Church

STREET & NUMBER 11-19 Chestnut Street

CITY, TOWN Portland, VICINITY OF STATE Maine

LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC. Cumberland County Registry of Deeds,

STREET & NUMBER 142 Federal St.

CITY, TOWN Portland STATE Maine

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

DATE

FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS

CITY, TOWN

STATE

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 Chestnut Street Methodist Church is located on a small side street behind City Hall, facing southwest. Designed by the Portland Architect Charles A. Alexander in the Gothic Revival Style, it was erected in 1856.

It's plan is rectangular, with vestibule, nave and two side aisles, and a semi-circular apse. The nave is covered by a steep, pitched roof with sloping eaves on either side housing the side aisles.

The building material is patent pressed brick, with lighter colored Connecticut brownstone used in trim, at the foundation level, around windows and doorways, and for ornamental detailing. Much of the brickwork has been repointed over the years. The foundation is also brick, covered from street level to an approximate two foot height with brownstone. Slate shingling covers the roof of the nave and side aisles.

Structural support is obtained through the use of cast iron posts at the basement level, and brick buttresses (ten on each side, with one at each corner of the facade) along the side aisle walls. Further support is visible from the interior. Here, wood posts and trusses with arched braces create a vaulted ceiling. Metal rods running post to post across the nave were added at a later date to reinforce the roof.

The exterior facade, 70.1 feet across, contains the greatest number of ornamental features. Twin towers flank the central gable. Both are octagonal, and once rose to a height of 110 feet, 45 feet of this bell tower and spires. The spires were removed for safety reasons, as were the smaller spires once above the buttresses which meet at right angles at both corners. Gone also is the uppermost portion of the chimney on the northwest side.

When the large spires were removed in 1950, several feet of brickwork were added with a brownstone cornice which has crosses set in relief on each octagonal surface. This gives the towers a less severed appearance.

Each corner formed by the octagonal shape of the tower originally contained slender brownstone columns. These rose from a stringcourse across the facade at approximately door level. Smaller columns with capitals continue below the stringcourse to the foundation level. Today, the niches which once contained these tower columns are partially filled with cement.

Three slightly recessed lancet-ogee shaped window openings are spaced one above the other on both towers. They are surrounded by brown stone mouldings.

The facade is divided into three sections by the towers. This tripartite separation is characteristic of the Gothic Style. Each section is emphasized by a pointed-arch doorway.

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 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

1856

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

Charles A. Alexander

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Chestnut Street Methodist Church is one of Portland's few surviving buildings erected in the early Gothic Revival style. It is the only fully intact structure remaining as designed by Charles A. Alexander, a popular local architect of the 1850's and 1860's. Also significant is its location near City Hall, lending to the architectural variety of the city center.

Charles Alexander arrived in Portland in 1851, after practicing in Boston with William Washburn, architect of the State Street Church. Prior to the Chestnut Street Church, Alexander designed St. Lukes Episcopal (St. Stephens) (1854-1965) on Congress Street, in the English Gothic Style. Alexander worked in the Italianate Style as well; J.B. Brown's estate, "Bramhall" (1855-1915), the Libby House (1853 - 1920) at High and Congress Streets, and the Falmouth Hotel (1868-1963) demonstrated his ability. None of these remain today. The Safford House on High Street (Portland School of Art), Grove Hall (Goddard Mansion) in Fort Williams, and the Samuel & Andrew Spring Mansions on Danforth are other notable buildings attributed to the architect. He was also responsible for the rebuilding of J. B. Brown's Sugar House, and the Union Street Church, both presently standing in altered condition. Alexander disappears from note in the late 1860's.

The facade of the Chestnut Street Methodist church maintains much of its original architectural unity despite the removal of its tall, twin towers. Buttressing, the tripartite, arched entrances and steeply sloping roof all indicate its adherence to the Gothic Style. Open timbering, handcrafted woodwork, and stained glass windows maintain the somber atmosphere of the original interior.

The Chestnut Street Church Society has been operating in the same location since 1808 when the first Methodist church was built. The present church was dedicated in 1857 and had the distinction of having the first organ in any Methodist church in America, some of the pipes of which are used today. The union of two nearby churches with the Chestnut Street church has increased its congregation and contributed to its constant use and upkeep. A community house and gymnasium imitating the Gothic Style, were added in 1924.

As a rare example of early Gothic design located near City Hall, Monument Square and the Waterfront Historic District, significance is its contribution to the architectural diversity of its surroundings.

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Cumberland County Registry of Deeds
Portland Advertiser, June 25, 1857

Portland Transcript, October 18, 1856; December 13, 1856; March 28, 1857;
 June 6, 1857; June 13, 1857; July 4, 1857

Portland Evening Express, July 23, 1966, "Portland Heritage" by Earle Shettleworth

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA 1

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY _____

UTM REFERENCES

A 19 398540 48134600
 ZONE EASTING NORTHING

B _____
 ZONE EASTING NORTHING

C _____
 ZONE EASTING NORTHING

D _____
 ZONE EASTING NORTHING

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

ORGANIZATION

DATE

STREET & NUMBER

TELEPHONE

CITY OR TOWN

STATE

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

Earle S. Shettleworth Jr.

TITLE

State Historic Preservation Officer

DATE

January 17, 1977

FOR NPS USE ONLY

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

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHITECTURE AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

ATTEST:

Robert B. Kettig

DATE

10/20/77

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

10/12/77

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CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 7

PAGE 2

The side aisle doorways are identical. Both have slightly recessed, double wood doors, and decorative iron hinges and door handles. Slender brownstone columns the height of the door flank both entrances. Four brownstone steps service each of the three entrances from the sidewalk.

Above the side aisle doorways, close to the roof line, are small trefoil stained glass windows, surrounded with unusual drip-like shaped mouldings in brownstone.

The main central doorway, although the same size as the side entrances, contains the area of greatest ornamental detail. The central doorway is also double, separated by a narrow column, the doors of wood painted red with iron hardware. It is also flanked by brownstone columns and is slightly recessed into the wall surface. The spandrel in the arch above the doors, is traceried with stained glass.

Above the doorway is a light stone colored wall surface containing a decorated stonework moulding, which articulates the central entrance and relates it to the large, arched, stained glass window above.

The window itself, over 100 years old and made in Florence, Italy, is composed of 5 lancet-shaped panes below a "Blue Rose" medallion. It is intact, with all the glass in excellent condition. However, leadwork and wood framing need to be restored.

The interior of the church is in good condition, and, until later years, has been changed little.

The interior of the church can be reached by three entrances on the street level or through the side doorway leading to the vestry in the basement.

The three entrances open to a large vestibule where two separate stairways lead up to the level of the sanctuary or one stairway leads down to the vestry. Once on the sanctuary level, entrance to the interior is through three arched and paneled doors. Inside, two rows of columns divide the nave from the side aisles. These columns support the roof, and side and front galleries. The side galleries are not built onto the walls, due to support from the columns. This allows the stained glass windows lining the side walls to rise uninterrupted by floor levels. The galleries terminate approximately 20 feet from the rear wall, creating a cruciform plan with transepts marked by a trio of stained glass windows on either wall. Originally, the nave contained a central aisle.

The roof is open timbered; the wood is pine, painted in imitation of oak. The alter rail and pulpit were originally walnut. In 1959, a new alter, pulpit

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CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 7

PAGE 3

and lecturn were installed.

All stained glass windows are lancet shaped, their condition good aside from their need of re-leading and re-framing.

The chancel is hexagonal, and contains what is left of the original organ pipes, which are almost ceiling height. These are obscured by a large, wooden paneled replica of the church facade painted white. It's front formation and carving was designed by the architect to be an exact replica of the church exterior. The organ stood originally on a dais that has been moved to the rear gallery three feet above the alter.

The color scheme is a soft olive paint on plaster, with gold colored stenciled borders between each area created by the timbered ceiling. The stained wood of the pine, the darker walnut and the dark red carpet create a properly somber Gothic Revival atmosphere.

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CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 7 PAGE 4

In 1924, the Chestnut Street Methodist Society built the Community House, which is attached to the church on its NW side. The house contains classrooms, a gymnasium, church offices, and an Italian Chapel in memoriam to the two Italian Churches which joined the Chestnut St. Church in 1960. (Italian Methodist Church, Federal Street (1865)-Italian Methodist Church on Warren Avenue).

It is also a brick structure, three stories high, with cement detailing. The window forms of the street facade are also borrowed from the Gothic; three square, vertical, openings separated by thick stone muntins with smaller rectangular windows above.

Entrance to the building is from the side walk, through a wooden studded door in an arched opening, or by walking down a sloped walkway between the church and Community House, to a glass door leading to the vestry of the church or the gymnasium.