

# Massachusetts Cultural Resource Information System

## Scanned Record Cover Page

<b>Inventory No:</b>	CON.328
<b>Historic Name:</b>	First Parish Unitarian Church
<b>Common Name:</b>	
<b>Address:</b>	6 Lexington Rd 20 Lexington Rd
<b>City/Town:</b>	Concord
<b>Village/Neighborhood:</b>	Concord Center
<b>Local No:</b>	54, H9-9
<b>Year Constructed:</b>	1901
<b>Architect(s):</b>	Cabot, Everett and Mead
<b>Architectural Style(s):</b>	Colonial Revival
<b>Use(s):</b>	Chapel; Church; Parochial School
<b>Significance:</b>	Architecture; Religion
<b>Area(s):</b>	CON.A: Concord Monument Sq-Lexington Road Historic Dist. CON.DS: American Mile Historic District
<b>Designation(s):</b>	Local Historic District (03/06/1961); Nat'l Register District (09/13/1977)
<b>Building Materials(s):</b>	Roof: Asphalt Shingle Wall: Wood; Wood Clapboard; Wood Flushboard Foundation: Concrete Unspecified; Granite; Stone, Cut



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Commonwealth of Massachusetts  
Massachusetts Historical Commission  
220 Morrissey Boulevard, Boston, Massachusetts 02125  
[www.sec.state.ma.us/mhc](http://www.sec.state.ma.us/mhc)

This file was accessed on: Friday, October 23, 2020 at 1:31: PM

CON-328

FORM B - BUILDING

Assessor's number

USGS Quad

Area(s)

Form Number

Massachusetts Historical Commission  
80 Boylston Street  
Boston, Massachusetts 02116

H9-9

Concord

A 05

328

RECEIVED

DEC 07 1994

NR: DIS; LHD

Town Concord

(neighborhood or village) \_\_\_\_\_

Concord center

6 Lexington Rd

Address or 20 Lexington Road

Historic Name First Parish Church

Present Unitarian/Universalist Church

Original Unitarian Church

Year of Construction 1901

Where church records

Form late Greek Revival

Architect/Builder Cabot, Everett & Mead,  
(based on plans by Richard Bond)

Exterior Material:

Foundation granite and concrete

Wall/Trim wood clapboard

Roof asphalt shingle

Outbuildings/Secondary Structures Five  
buildings on property: 6/8 Lexington (Wright  
Tavern); 1, 19, 23/25 Church Green; garage.

Major Alterations (with dates) 1955: chapel &  
Sunday School addn., 1984: 2-story rear addi-  
tion, SE corner entry vestibule.

Condition excellent

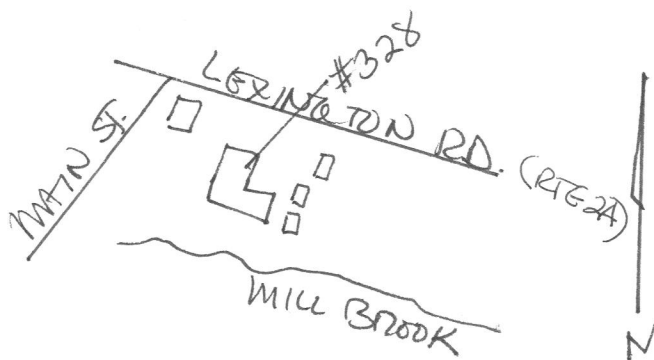
Moved [X] no [ ] yes Date N/A

Acreage three acres

Setting On open Church Green with scattered  
trees, curved drive in front. 3 early cottages  
to SE, Wright Tavern to NW.

Sketch Map

Draw a map of the area indicating properties within it. Number each property for which individual inventory forms have been completed. Label streets, including route numbers, if any. Attach a separate sheet if space is not sufficient here. Indicate north.



Recorded by Anne Forbes, consultant

Organization Concord Hist. Commission

Date 11/15/94

## BUILDING FORM

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION [ X ] *see continuation sheet*

*Describe architectural features. Evaluate the characteristics of this building in terms of other buildings within the community.*

One of the most beautiful of Concord's churches, the 1901 First Parish Church, a copy of its 1841 forerunner (see below), is a magnificent Greek Revival anachronism for its time. It is a gable-roofed building with a wide pedimented, tetrastyle Doric portico fronting on a shallow projecting vestibule. A three-stage clock- and bell-tower rises from the front end of the building. Its square base is flushboarded, with a large clock occupying a recessed panel on each of the east, north, and west faces. The round belfry above it stands on an octagonal base, and has rectangular columns and a turned balustrade. The roof of the belfry is a gilded dome on an octagonal base with louvered openings.

Two rows of 12-over-12-sash windows line each side wall of the sanctuary; between each upper and lower window is a raised field panel. The windows of the granite basement story are 8-over-8-sash. The facade has three entries. The one in the center has a tall, double-leaf door, each section with a single panel with applied moldings. A rectangular glass light diagonally into eight triangular panes, situated above each panel, is reminiscent of Greek temple windows. The main entry is flanked by two smaller ones; each has a one-panel door and a paneled entablature, flat pilasters and corner blocks, both trimmed with a one-inch board molding. Filling the wall above all three doors is a wide field panel. (Cont.)

HISTORICAL NARRATIVE [X] *see continuation sheet*

*Explain history of the building. Explain its associations with local (or state) history. Include uses of the building, and the role(s) the owners/occupants played within the community.*

The First Parish Church is the oldest religious institution in Concord, and represents over 350 years of continuous operation since the town church was first organized in 1636, the thirteenth so established in the Massachusetts Bay Colony. Concord is somewhat unusual for an early Massachusetts settlement in that it began with two ministers, the Rev.s **Peter Bulkeley** and **John Jones**. In 1637 the Rev. Bulkeley was chosen the town's religious "teacher" and the Rev. Jones "pastor." The Rev. Jones left Concord with a group of settlers in 1644 to establish a settlement at Fairfield, Connecticut, however, and the Rev. Bulkeley continued as the little community's sole spiritual leader until his death in 1659. He was succeeded by his son, the Rev. **Edward Bulkeley**, who was assisted, beginning in 1667, by the Rev. **Joseph Estabrook**. The second Rev. Bulkeley presided over the church for 36 years, and died in 1696. The Rev. Estabrook continued in the church until his death in 1711.

The period during which the fourth minister, the Rev. **John Whiting**, served, was one of great discontent within the church, coinciding with the early years of the Great Awakening and the first attempts by citizens in outlying areas to form their own societies. He was ordained in 1712, and dismissed in 1737. The next year the Rev. **Daniel Bliss** was chosen. (Cont.)

BIBLIOGRAPHY and/or REFERENCES [X] *see continuation sheet*

Maps and Atlases: Maps and Atlases: 1906. ~~Sanborns~~.

The Concord Journal. 9/10/1953.

Gross, Robert. The Minutemen and Their World. 1976.

Jarvis. Houses & People in Concord. ca. 1884.

Keyes/Tolman. "Houses in Concord."

The Middlesex Patriot. 4/13/1900. (Cont.)

[ X ] Recommended for listing in the National Register of Historic Places\*. If checked, a completed National Register Criteria Statement form is attached. \*NR-listed 1977.



## INVENTORY FORM CONTINUATION SHEET

Community

Property

Concord

First Parish Church

Massachusetts Historical Commission  
80 Boylston Street  
Boston, Massachusetts 02116

Area(s)  
A

Form No.  
328

**ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION, cont.**

Other architectural detail of the church is typical of the high-style Greek Revival as it would have been interpreted in the early 1840's. The columns of the portico are fluted, while the tapered pilasters of the flushboarded vestibule facade are flat and unadorned. The main building has corner pilasters embellished with a Greek key design, a wide, plain frieze, a water table at the foundation, and a molded, boxed cornice at the roofline. A very wide chimney rises from the rear southeast roof of the sanctuary.

Behind the main part of the building is a cross-gabled, two-story section with 12-over-12-sash windows and a flushboarded, pedimented west gable-end. Also at the west end, adjacent to the back of the sanctuary, is a side entry, distyle in antis, with a multi-light, two-paneled door. Extending to the east of the rear section is a long, low gable-roofed addition of the 1950's, which terminates in a gable-front chapel with a three-bay, pedimented facade.

Standing on the lawn just northwest of the building is the 1826 church bell, which was damaged in the 1900 fire. A small piece of it was contributed to the casting of the 3500-pound 1901 bell, which still hangs in the belfry, its pitch matched to harmonize with the bell in the Congregational church, a block to the south.

Architectural background. The present 1901 structure is technically the fourth church of Concord's original religious society. The first meetinghouse, a small, humble building, stood across the street on the hill, probably in a position adjacent to the eastern border of the Hill Burying Ground.

In 1673, a second meetinghouse, 34 x 26 feet, and 14 feet high, with a belfry in the center of its hipped roof, replaced the first. That church stood on the south side of the street, slightly northwest of the current building, on a plot of "common land" that included two features vital to early colonial life--the town pound and the training field. It was replaced in 1712 by the third meetinghouse, a 60 x 50 x 28-foot building, which stood at the present location. Constructed largely by Charles Underhill, the third church as built has been described as a "barn-like" structure, without a belfry or tower. It had casement windows until 1749, when they were replaced with three tiers of double-hung windows with 7 x 9-inch panes. That building, or at least portions of it, was to last through several substantial renovations and enlargements for nearly two hundred years. In 1792 it was lengthened to 72 feet, and three enclosed "porches" and a 90-foot spire at the northwest end added. The principal builder at that time was Abner Wheeler.

In 1841, the third meetinghouse was radically changed to the Greek Revival style. Under a building committee led by Concord Bank cashier John Cheney, Boston architect Richard Bond, (who later designed the Town House--see Form #302), was hired to turn the old church into a high-style building with a three-stage tower and tetrastyle front portico. The shell of the old meetinghouse was raised, turned halfway around to face Lexington Road, the windows, doors, and trim were changed, and a 6-foot-high granite foundation inserted to provide for a vestry under the main sanctuary. Nathan S. Hosmer was the builder for that project, which cost \$8300. At that time, the grounds around the church were landscaped and fenced, creating a true "church green" of a type that was fashionable in New England towns of the period. Maple saplings brought from Stow were planted, and grew into what were acknowledged to be some of the most beautiful trees in town, greatly admired by Henry Thoreau and others. (Cont.)



## INVENTORY FORM CONTINUATION SHEET

Community

Property

Concord

First Parish Church

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Boston, Massachusetts 02116

Area(s)  
A

Form No.  
328

## ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION, cont.

Later nineteenth-century renovations included an extension at the west end built by local architect/builder Moses Hobson in 1882. In 1900, in preparation for exercises commemorating the 125th anniversary of the Concord Fight, extensive interior renovations were done. The night after they were completed, however, probably as a result of the spontaneous combustion of some painter's rags, the building caught fire, and burned to the ground.

Under a committee led by Prescott Keyes, rebuilding was initiated immediately. The architects hired were those who had just done the interior renovations, the firm of Cabot, Everett and Mead of Boston. Although the new building was lowered and reduced slightly in size, and the portico extended for a full vestibule, it was essentially a replication of the 1841 design. The plans utilized were those followed in 1841 by Nathan Hosmer, which had been meticulously preserved by his son, Alfred. This time, the principal builder was A. Fales & Sons of Framingham.

The new building was dedicated in 1901, and its main section stands today essentially unchanged. In 1955 a long southeast addition was built for Sunday School rooms and a chapel, under the supervision of local developer and builder H. Whittemore Brown. In 1984, handicapped accessibility was achieved, with the addition of an interior elevator and a ground-level entrance at the southeast corner of the sanctuary. At the same time, a two-story rear addition was built.

Other changes to the property in the 1890's and early twentieth century greatly altered the church's setting. In the 1890's, lower Lexington Road was widened, and the old tenements, the "white block", the "yellow block", which had stood on the northeast edge of the Church Green since the eighteenth century, were demolished. In 1909 the church constructed a little stone bridge over the Mill Brook, making the foot path to Walden Street more accessible, and in 1925 the old horse sheds that had stood for generations between the church and the brook were torn down.

## HISTORICAL NARRATIVE, cont.

An advocate of "new lightism", his "zealous, impassioned" style of preaching contrasted markedly with that of his predecessor, and during the early 1740's, when the Great Awakening and the New Light movement were at their peak, the church membership increased rapidly. Dissension was great at mid-century, however, and it was during this time that the church underwent its first separations and reorganization. In 1745 several people organized a short-lived second society, the "West Church", (commonly called the "Black Horse Church" because they met in the Black Horse Tavern--see Form #138), and in 1746 a second precinct was formed in the east part of town, now Lincoln, which became Concord's Second Parish. What is now Concord reorganized as the First Parish, and adopted a new covenant in 1749.

The Rev. Bliss died in 1764. In the volatile years before and during the Revolution, two of his sons became ardent patriots, and two others notorious Tories. His daughter, Phoebe, married the next two ministers of the town. The first, ordained in 1766, was the Rev. William Emerson, beloved pastor of the early years of the war, who died while serving as army chaplain on the the campaign to Ticonderoga. It was during his pastorate that the church served as the locus for some of America's most important political meetings, those of the first Provincial Congress, which first met here in October of 1774, and again in March and April of 1775 to authorize preparations for war. Phoebe Bliss's second husband, who served the church from the Revolution through the Federal period and into the mid-nineteenth century, was the Rev. Ezra Ripley. (Cont.)

## INVENTORY FORM CONTINUATION SHEET

Community

Property

Massachusetts Historical Commission  
80 Boylston Street  
Boston, Massachusetts 02116

Concord

First Parish Church

Area(s)  
A

Form No.  
328

## HISTORICAL NARRATIVE, cont.

During the Rev. Ripley's 63-year pastorate, singing was revived in the church, the Church School established, Unitarianism was developed and adopted by the congregation, the separation of town and church began, and the Congregational church of Concord was formed, finally splitting the original society into two congregations of differing theology.

In 1829, after the Rev. Ripley had served for over 50 years, an assistant minister, the Rev. Hersey B. Goodwin was hired. He was succeeded in 1837 by the Rev. Barzillai Frost, who became principal minister in 1841, upon the death of Dr. Ripley. He left active service in 1856, and was succeeded by the Rev. Grindall Reynolds, who served from 1858 to 1881. The ministers who presided over the church into the middle of the twentieth century included the Rev.s Benjamin Bulkeley, a descendant of Concord's first pastor (serving from 1882 to 1893), Loren Macdonald, (1895-1924), Johannes A.C.F. Auer, (1926-1930), and Edward Perry Daniels (1931-1956).

## BIBLIOGRAPHY, cont.

Richardson, Concord Chronicle.

Scudder.

Shattuck.

Teele, John, ed. The Meeting House on the Green. 1985.

Walcott, Charles. Concord in the Colonial Period.

Wheeler, Ruth. Concord, Climate for Freedom.

\_\_\_\_\_. House Files

\_\_\_\_\_. Our American Mile.



FORM B - STRUCTURE SURVEY  
MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION  
Office of the Secretary, State House, Boston

1. Is this structure historically significant to:  
Town \_\_\_\_\_ Commonwealth \_\_\_\_\_ Nation \_\_\_\_\_

Structure has historical connection with the following themes: (See also reverse side)

Agriculture	Commerce/Industry
Architecture	Science/Invention
Art/Sculpture	Travel/Communication
Education	Military Affairs
Government	Religion/Philosophy
Literature	Indians
Music	Development of Town/City

2. Town Concord <sup>AREA 14D NR. 541</sup>  
Street 70 Lexington Rd <sup>328</sup>  
Name First Parish Church  
Original Use Church  
Present Use Church  
Present Owner Unitarian  
Date 1900 Style 1841 style  
Source of Date "Colonial Concord"  
Architect \_\_\_\_\_

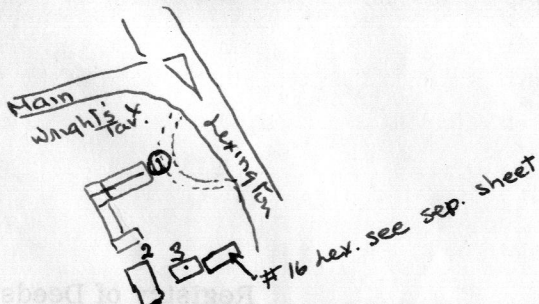
3. CONDITION: Excellent Good Fair Deteriorated Moved Altered \_\_\_\_\_  
IMPORTANCE of site to area: Great Little None SITE endangered by \_\_\_\_\_

4. DESCRIPTION

FOUNDATION/BASEMENT: High Regular Low Material: stone <sup>land falls off to allow full basement</sup>  
WALL COVER: Wood clapboard Brick Stone Other \_\_\_\_\_  
STORIES: 1 2 3 4 CHIMNEYS: 1 2 3 4 Center End Cluster Elaborate Irregular  
ATTACHMENTS: Wings Ell Shed Dependency S. side Simple/Complex  
PORCHES: 1 2 3 4 Portico Balcony 2 story doric entrance Recessed also enhance porch.  
ROOF: Ridge Gambrel Flat Hip Mansard  
Tower Cupola Dormer windows Balustrade Grillwork 3 stage  
FACADE: Gable End: Front/Side Symmetrical/Asymmetrical Simple/Complex Ornament  
Entrance: Front/Side Centered Double Features: Triple entrance center door = 2 story  
pediment, entablature broken by dentel course  
Windows: Spacing: Regular/Irregular Identical/Varied \_\_\_\_\_  
Corners: Plain Pilasters Quoins Obscured wide pilasters - doric

OUTBUILDINGS attached church building LANDSCAPING simple

5. Indicate location of structure on map below 6. Footage of structure from street 50' +  
Property has 50' feet frontage on street



Recorder Anne Wardwell  
For MHC  
68-439, 68-439a  
Photo II-14 (5)  
out buildings 2.09 065, 1.054  
HD

NOTE: Recorder should obtain written permission from Commission or sponsoring organization before using this form. (See Reverse Side)



FOR USE WITH IMPORTANT STRUCTURES (Indicate any interior features of note)

Fireplace \_\_\_\_\_

Stairway \_\_\_\_\_

Other \_\_\_\_\_

GIVE A BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF HISTORIC IMPORTANCE OF SITE (Refer and elaborate on theme circled on front of form)

1) <sup>on site of that which</sup> *Housed First Provincial Congress Oct. 14, 1775. Hancock and Adams spoke there. Rev. Wm. Emerson preached there for many years.*

*Church was burned 1900, reconstructed to 1841 state*

- 2) *Was wheelwrights + wood-working shop - occupied by Nathan Horner, Timothy Prescott Isaac Thayer through 19th C. Now owned by 1st Parish: Grk Rev. ridge roof, side front door 2 1/2 stories, gable front*
- 3) *Cottage - 1 story center chimney ridge roof 2 ident. windows, center door 18th occupied by Wm. Munroe - pencil making business; 1841 sold to Joseph White, known as "White Cottage"*

2-3 - *Last half 18th C + 19th C - store area from edge of Church Green at Millbrook up to Lexington Rd + along Lexington Rd. to opposite Dane House.*

REFERENCE (Where was this information obtained? What book, records, etc.)

1) *American Mile p. 35.*

*2-3 = American Mile p. 31-32.*

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

Original Owner: \_\_\_\_\_

Deed Information: Book Number \_\_\_\_\_ Page \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_ Registry of Deeds

## INVENTORY FORM CONTINUATION SHEET

Town

Property Address

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION  
 MASSACHUSETTS ARCHIVES BUILDING  
 220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD  
 BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

Concord 20 Lexington Rd

Area(s)

Form No.

CON 328

BUILDING INSPECTION DEPARTMENT—DISTRICT POLICE  
 PLAN RECORD

CASE B RACK 1 APART. 30 NO. 2911

BUILDING First Parish Church STORIES 1B

CITY OR TOWN Concord. STREET Lexington Rd.

TO BE USED FOR Religious Purposes. CLASS Church

OWNER First Parish Church Society. Wood

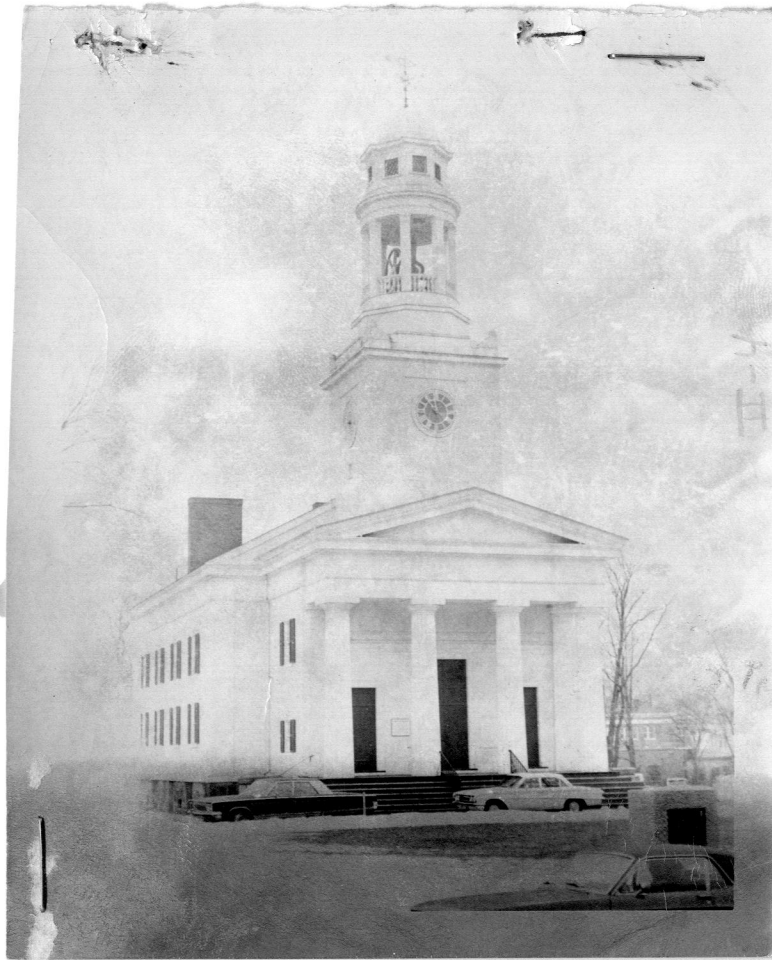
ARCHITECT Cabot Everett.

CERTIFICATE APPROVAL—SPECIFICATION REQUIREMENTS—REFERRED

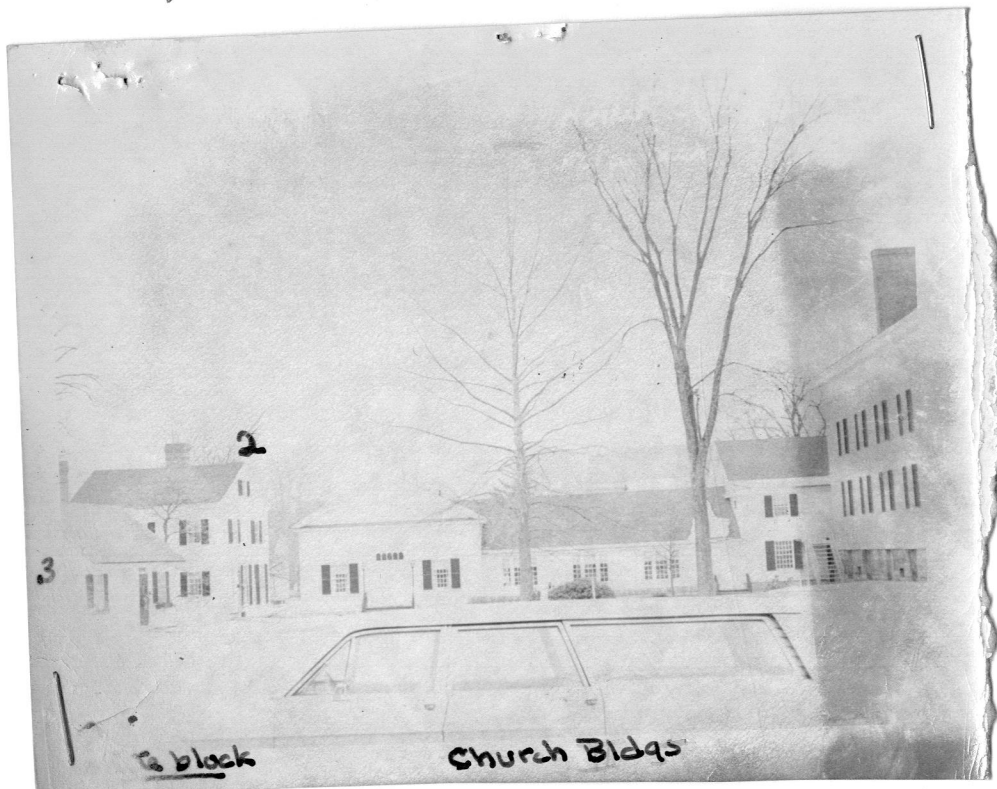
DATE Sept. 24, 1900

INSPECTOR WHITE.

FORM 41. 10,000. \* 2-2-18.



January 1967



to block

Church Bldgs

January 1967. Outbuildings