

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

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National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form

NATIONAL
REGISTER

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in *Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms* (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

1. Name of Property

historic name Methodist Episcopal Church
other names/site number United Methodist Church of Greenwich

2. Location

street & number 61 East Putnam Avenue not for publication
city, town Greenwich vicinity
state Connecticut code CT county Fairfield code 001 zip code 06830

3. Classification

Ownership of Property	Category of Property	Number of Resources within Property	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	Contributing	Noncontributing
<input type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input type="checkbox"/> district	<u>2</u>	<u>0</u> buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> public-State	<input type="checkbox"/> site	_____	_____ sites
<input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> structure	_____	_____ structures
	<input type="checkbox"/> object	_____	_____ objects
		<u>2</u>	<u>0</u> Total

Name of related multiple property listing:
N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet.

Signature of certifying official [Signature] Date July 20, 1988
Director, Connecticut Historical Commission
State or Federal agency and bureau _____

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet.

Signature of commenting or other official _____ Date _____
State or Federal agency and bureau _____

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

entered in the National Register.
 See continuation sheet.

determined eligible for the National Register. See continuation sheet.

determined not eligible for the National Register.

removed from the National Register.

other, (explain:) _____

Signature of the Keeper [Signature] Date of Action 8/25/88

Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

RELIGION/church

RELIGION/parsonage

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

RELIGION/church

SOCIAL/community center

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(enter categories from instructions)

MID-19TH CENTURY/Gothic Revival

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation granite

walls wood

roof slate

other board-and-batten siding

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

The United Methodist Church and its former parsonage are located on the north corner of East Putnam Avenue and Church Street in Greenwich, Connecticut. The church is a wood-framed building built in the Carpenter Gothic style in 1868 (Photographs #1, 2, 3). The parsonage (now used as a community center) is an 1872 vernacular Italianate-style house set further back from the street to the north of the church (Photograph #4). A large two-story masonry addition to the rear of the parsonage was constructed in 1960-61 and now houses the church offices and a day-care center (Photograph #5).

The historic appearance of the site and the surrounding area has changed over time. Late nineteenth-century photographs show the church on a large open site with broad lawns and mature trees. It now stands in a modern residential, institutional, and commercial district. The property is flanked on the east by a house converted to a restaurant with a brick front. Retail establishments, an apartment building, and a large brick Y.M.C.A. building are located on the other corners of this busy intersection. Changes to the street configuration have reduced the size of the site. Church Street on the southwest side of the church was not laid out until after the church was built, probably about 1900. East Putnam Avenue, the Boston Post Road, has been widened. A sidewalk now runs directly along the southwest wall of the church and the setback of the buildings from East Putnam Avenue has been reduced by about one-half. The first church on this site, a temple-form Greek Revival-style building, was demolished about 1960. It was originally constructed where the parsonage now stands and was moved to the northwest (rear) of the present church.

The church is a long, rectangular board-and-batten building (52'x 76') set on a stone foundation. The nave has a steeply pitched main gable roof with long, pent roofs with a shallower pitch along each side. An attenuated, double-pitched polygonal spire rises from the belfry of the full-height square tower at the south corner. It has small pedimented dormers at the base of the four main faces. All the roofs are covered with slate, in contrasting bands on the main gables. A smaller turret originally located at the east corner was removed sometime after 1925. A molded raked parapet is located at each end of the main roof. Wooden buttresses with weatherings are found at the corners of the building and the tower.

The fenestration consists of a combination of lancet-arched window and door openings with squareheaded windows along the side elevations. The latter windows, grouped in pairs at the lower level and tripled above, contain diamond-paned divisions set in a lancet-arched pattern (Photograph #3). The central, vertical row of panes in each window contain colored glass. There are wheel windows in the top level of the

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tower; paired lancet windows below complete its fenestration. A large compound lancet-arched window is centered in the facade of the main block. Three sets of double-leaf doors in lancet-arched openings with molded surrounds are equally spaced across the facade. The central door has a steep, molded pediment with a pinnacle. The latter detail is repeated in the gable roof of the right hand entrance. The rear wall has pointed-arched single doors at either corner and an outside brick chimney extends up the center of this otherwise blank wall.

The interior of the church consists of a nave which rises two stories at the center with a balcony or choir loft at the south end over the entrance foyer (Photographs #6, 7, 8). A staircase to the loft rises from the small south room at the end of the foyer (Photograph #9). It provides access to the bell rope from the landing and access to the tower itself by a trapdoor. Vertical beaded boards and wainscot are found throughout the foyer and along the side walls of the nave.

King-post trusses with drops are set at intervals across the nave, carried on compound posts which extend to the floor. Braces radiating out from the built-up wooden collars of the posts provide decorative support for the walls above and the side roofs (Photograph #10).

The only interior change to the building is at the altar. The present altar is a second replacement for the original stepped altar and communion rail which had a large pipe organ in the center of the rear wall. In the first alteration, a smaller organ was installed to the left of the altar. A stylized cross is suspended over the current altar which has no railing or organ. Two flanking screen partitions set at angles on either side conceal the rear exit doors.

The parsonage (47'x 36') displays a ridge-to-street gable roof with a steep pedimented gable breaking the eave line at the center of the facade and rear elevation. Brick chimneys flank the center gable on the ridge of the main roof. The foundation is brick over granite, with the latter quite probably part of the foundation for the first church in this location. Round-arched windows are found in the gables and center pediment. An open porch extends across the facade with full height six-over-nine windows. The rest of the windows have six-over-six sash. The walls are clapboarded. The rear concrete block addition (40'x 60') is two stories in height with a flat roof. The interior of the building was modernized to meet building codes when it was converted to a community center (See Photograph #11 for a typical interior view). The original layout is only partially intact. The center staircase has been enclosed with fire doors at the top and bottom. The partition wall between the east and north parlors has been removed and a supporting pier installed. Fire-rated gypsum board has been installed throughout. The door and window surrounds generally remain in place.

8. Statement of Significance

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

nationally statewide locally

Applicable National Register Criteria A B C D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions) A B C D E F G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)	Period of Significance	Significant Dates
<u>Architecture</u>	<u>1868 - 1938</u>	<u>N/A</u>
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

Cultural Affiliation
N/A

Significant Person
N/A

Architect/Builder
Architect not known
Ferris & McClure of Greenwich

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

The United Methodist Church, historically known as the Methodist Episcopal Church, and its parsonage are associated buildings with differing degrees of significance. The church is architecturally significant for its exceptional integrity and for the quality of its finely crafted Carpenter Gothic-style design (Criterion C). The Italianate-style parsonage contributes to this religious complex through its association with the development of the church and its well preserved, but less architecturally distinguished, exterior.

Historical Background

The first Methodist minister to preach in the Greenwich area was the Reverend Samuel Q. Talbot in 1787, three years after the Methodist Episcopal Church was founded in the United States. Talbot, along with several others, was a popular circuit rider in Fairfield County by 1790, meeting in homes and schools. In 1805 the parish was divided; Greenwich, then called Horse Neck, was set off with New Rochelle and Redding and continued to be served by circuit riders until 1843.

In that year, the Methodist Episcopal Society was formally recognized by the State of Connecticut. The first meeting of the Society was held in November. With the support of the members, construction of the first church on the site was started in 1844. Benjamin Peck donated the land. Various members gave timber and \$500 was raised towards the construction. It remained on its site until 1872, when it was replaced by the present parsonage. Between 1867 and 1869 the present church was built. Church records do not give the architect's name but Ferris & McClure of Greenwich were the builders. John Voorhis excavated the foundation and the stone was supplied by William Ritch, a quarryman from East Port Chester, New York.

In the early 1920s, plans were made to update the exterior of the church. Methodists had become acutely aware of the unfashionable appearance of their "country" church in a period when masonry churches were proliferating in Greenwich, many nearby on East Putnam Avenue. The old-fashioned carriage sheds were torn down in 1923. A major

9. Major Bibliographical References

"Condensed History of the Methodist Episcopal Church." MS. Included in the manuscript Historical Record. On file at the First United Methodist Church, Greenwich, Connecticut.
"82nd Anniversary of the Methodist Episcopal Church of Greenwich." Greenwich Graphic. November 6, 1925.
Directory of the First United Methodist Church: 1984. Greenwich, Connecticut, 1984.
Kaufman, Reverend Arthur. Interview, January 7, 1988.

See continuation sheet

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

Primary location of additional data:

- State historic preservation office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Specify repository:

United Methodist Church Archives
Greenwich, Connecticut

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of property .774

UTM References

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6	1	5	4	8	0
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4	5	4	3	0	9	0
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Zone Easting Northing

C

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B

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Zone Easting Northing

D

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See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

The nominated property is described as Map 167, Lot 3 of the Tax Assessor's Records of the Town of Greenwich, Connecticut. There is no recent first deed reference which describes the present lot.

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

The nominated property encompasses the two remaining buildings associated with the United Methodist Church of Greenwich and the remaining land surrounding these buildings.

See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By

Edited by John Herzan, National Register Coordinator

name/title Jan Cunningham, National Register Consultant

organization Cunningham Associates LTD date 1/20/88

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fund-raising campaign was initiated and an architect was hired to draw up plans to side the building with a brick veneer. Fortunately, the campaign failed to reach its goal. The money (over \$10,000) was used to reslate the roof and install copper gutters. As a face-saving measure, the church elders announced that brick veneer was found to be structurally unsound. In 1960-61 Wesley Hall was added to the rear of the parsonage. The parsonage was renovated in 1979 for leasing to Community Center, Inc., and renamed "Our House."

Attempts have been made in recent years to consolidate the United Methodist Church of Greenwich with the United Methodist Church of Diamond Hill, located several blocks to the northeast on Putnam Avenue. By vote of the congregation of the nominated church, the proposal was rejected. Currently the church has approximately 40 active members.

Architectural Significance

The United Methodist Church was designed as a wooden replica of a typical small English Country Gothic Church, an appropriate style for its original pastoral setting. Today this historical setting has been somewhat overwhelmed by modern development but the church itself is still a commanding presence at this commercial intersection. It has been exceptionally preserved and maintained. The removal of the secondary turret on the southeast corner, a feature which provided a counterpoint to the major tower on the opposite side, has reduced the complexity of the original asymmetrical organization of the facade, but the rest of the exterior is intact. The interior is particularly fine, with the decorative articulation of its supporting members giving definition to the spatial proportions of the nave. Although the interior is less developed than would be found in many Gothic churches, the architectural restraint of this design is appropriate to the size and simplified geometry of the nave and faithful to the tenets of the Carpenter Gothic.

The parsonage makes less of an architectural statement. Its style complements rather than detracts from the church. The simplified, well-preserved Italianate-style exterior allows it to play a subordinate role, an effect heightened by its placement on the lot.

The mass and scale of the addition to the parsonage would tend to overwhelm the building were it not for its placement on the lot. Set well back it is hidden from public view from the East Putnam Avenue side. Because the addition is held back from the parsonage by a one-story connector, most of the rear elevation of the parsonage is still intact.