

JAN 12 1990

IDENTIFICATION

community Freedom
 address Elm Street
 county Carroll
 property name First Christian Church

survey no. FRE-C-1 FRE001
 owner name/address First Christian Church of Freedom, Freedom, N.H. 03836
 tax map/parcel no. map 52, lot 23
 USGS quad Freedom
 UTM zone 19 E 336180 N 4852950

PROGRAM STATUS

NRHP status (code)/date _____
 NHL date _____ HABS no. _____ HAER no. _____
 tax case no. _____
 compliance case no. _____
 CLG no. _____
 archeological site no. _____
 A & D grant yes no date _____
 ownership (code) private
 lead agency (code) _____

SURVEY

photo codes _____ map code _____
 survey map Church Survey Maps
 survey name Southern Carroll County Churches
 survey evaluation (code) unknown
 surveyor name David Ruell
 name of potential district/grouping _____

prior survey representation yes X no
 level of prior survey/date _____
 local historic designation _____

photographer facing: NW date: 3/14/89
 description of view: South and east facades of main block, belfry and basement vestibule.

DESCRIPTION

date of construction (source) 1867 (Merrill)
 dates of alterations/additions (source) c.1945, 1978, 1987, 1988 (Buswell)
 designer type (code) unknown
 designer name (source) unknown
 style or form (code) vernacular, front gable
 building, structure, object, site type (code) church

structural system (code) wooden frame
 plan configuration (code) rectangular
 entry location (code) center, gable end
 dimensions \pm 47 1 41 w
 building materials (code)
 wall vinyl siding foundation granite
 wall clapboard roof corrugated metal
 wall _____ chimney brick
 other _____
 no. of stories 1½
 roof shape (code) gable



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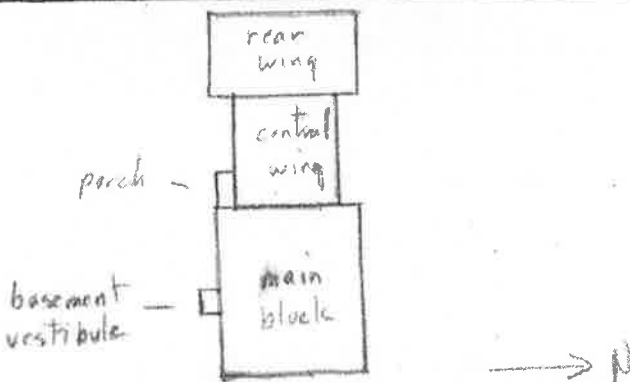
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chimney placement (code) end
window type(s) (code)/Pane configuration double hung, transom/ 4/4, single pane
appendages (code) tower
ornamentation (code) pilasters, corner-boards, box cornices, cornices, shutters, panels, pillars, louvers

notable interior _____

condition (code) good
building integrity Save for vinyl siding and plastic shutters, exterior of main block appears unchanged.
site integrity Probably little changed.

moved yes no unknown date _____
context (code) residential, commercial
related buildings/landscape features (code) _____



ELM STREET

sketch map (indicate north)

HISTORY

historic name(s) (source) Church of Christ, First Christian Church (The First Christian Church)
original functional type (code) _____
church
subsequent functional type (code) _____
church
associated individual(s) (dates) (source) _____

associated event(s) (dates) (source) _____

historical background (source) Built 1867, this church has always served the same congregation, although its name was changed from the Church of Christ to the First Christian Church in 1882. (The First Christian Church of Freedom)

BIBLIOGRAPHY see continuation sheet

The First Christian Church of Freedom, New Hampshire, 1958-1978 (1978)
interviews of David Buswell and Nelson Works by David Ruell
correspondence from David Buswell to David Ruell
Georgia D. Merrill, ed. History of Carroll County, N.H. (1889, reprinted 1971)
"The Freedom Bell, The Facts" (copy of newspaper clipping, Freedom Historical Society)
"The First Christian Church of Freedom, New Hampshire In Retrospect, 1858-1983" (manuscript, Freedom Historical Society)
Carroll County Independent (Ossipee) March 8, Sept. 9 and 16, 1987
Gail H. Bickford, Here is Freedom (North Conway: 1975)

study units (code) _____

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 PROPERTY DESCRIPTION

The First Christian Church is a 19th century vernacular wooden church that stands on the west side of Elm Street in Freedom village. The one and a half story, gable roofed main block, set with its east gable end facing the street, has a two stage belfry tower astride the east end of its roof ridge, and a small, one story basement vestibule on the south side. On the rear west gable end of the main block is the shorter and narrower, one story, gable roofed "central" wing. On the west end of the central wing is found the one story, gable roofed rear wing, which is set perpendicular to the central wing. A one story entry porch appears on the south side of the central wing, in the easterly corner it shares with the main block.

The main block, set on a cut granite block foundation, is now sheathed with vinyl "clapboarding", but does retain its original wooden trim. On the
 (cont.)

STATEMENT OF ARCHITECTURAL/ENGINEERING/LANDSCAPE SIGNIFICANCE

The First Christian Church may be eligible for the National Register for its architectural significance as a typical mid 19th century vernacular church, despite the vinyl clapboarding that now covers the exterior. However, a further study of the quality and integrity of the building's interior will be needed before a final determination of eligibility can be made.

The church now known as the First Christian Church was organized on June 12, 1858. (At first called the Church of Christ, the church changed its name to the present title in 1882.) After the church's first resident minister was appointed in 1866, the congregation grew, and the need for a church building became apparent. A building committee was formed and a site acquired. The church was built in 1867 by the building committee at a cost of \$3000, with the committee members being reimbursed for their personal investments by the sale of pews. The completed building was dedicated in October of 1867. (The bell in the belfry of the new church was donated by Elias Towle, who removed it from the Baptist church in Freedom, to which he had previously given it. The removal of the bell began a long controversy with the Baptists that ended with a N.H. Supreme Court decision upholding Towle's ownership of the bell.) Changes to the building seem to have been
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STATEMENT OF HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE

The First Christian Church has served as a religious building down to the present day, and is therefore eligible for the National for historical significance, only if it has non-religious significance or more than local importance in religious history. The First Christian Church would not appear to qualify in either category of historical significance.

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CONTINUATION SHEET (note heading of each section to be continued)

Description three public facades, the walls are trimmed by corner pilasters and a box cornice with mouldings, frieze, and returns. The rear west gable end has just cornerboards and close verges. A brick chimney breaks the south slope of the corrugated metal gable roof, just south of the belfry tower. In the center of the three bay east gable end, the main facade, is the church's main entry, tall, double four panel doors with tall panels. Above the doors are four transom panels, each with its own separate single pane window. The entry is framed by pilasters with moulded capitals and by a pronounced cornice with mouldings and deep frieze. Small ornate lamps are mounted on both pilasters. The south pilaster also has a small date sign. The entry is served by granite steps and landing with wrought metal railings. To the north of the entry is mounted a painted wooden sign with triangular top that identifies the church, pastor, and service hours. The two side bays each contain a tall 4/4 sash window, ornamented by plastic louvred shutters and another pronounced cornice with mouldings and frieze. In the gable is found a tall window (also said to be a 4/4 sash window), covered by plastic louvred shutters and crowned by the same cornice with mouldings and frieze seen in the main level windows. The three bay main levels of the north and south lateral facades each contain three tall windows like the windows of the east gable end, with 4/4 sash, plastic shutters, and the same cornice with mouldings and frieze. The south facade also has a single pane basement window and the small gable roofed basement vestibule. (The short vestibule has a cut granite block foundation, vinyl clapboarded walls, narrow vinyl trim on the corners and eaves, a corrugated metal gable roof, a board door with narrow vinyl frame in the south gable end, and a two pane window with narrow vinyl frame in the west side.) The rear west gable end of the main block is windowless.

The square tower has a short clapboarded base trimmed by corner pilasters with moulded capitals and a box cornice with mouldings and frieze. The open belfry stage has a low paneled wall on which stands square pillars. The pillars, located at the corners and in the center of each side, create two openings in each side, which are filled by louvers. A semicircular arched timber at the top of each louvred opening give it an arched appearance. A box cornice with mouldings, deep freize, and architrave trims the low pitched belfry roof, from which rises the tall octagonal spire. The spire is sheathed with flush boarding and ornamented by cornerboards and a moulded cap, on which stands a metal globe and a lyre shaped weathervane.

The central wing and the rear wing both have concrete foundations, vinyl "clapboarded" walls, vinyl corner trim, simple lateral wooden box cornices, close wooden verges, and corrugated metal gable roofs. A short brick chimney with corbeled cap breaks the roof ridge of the central wing. Only the lateral facades of the central wing are exposed. Each such facade has two 1/1 sash windows with simply moulded trim. The east bay of the three bay south facade contains a modern, plain framed, twenty panel door, which opens onto a wide porch. The porch has a base of vertically grooved plywood, a board floor, and simple wooden railings. The porch is reached by southern board steps with plain wooden railings. Two plain corner posts support the porch roof, a shed roofed extension of the central wing roof, with a cross gable above the porch steps. The porch roof has a plywood ceiling, close eaves and verges, and corrugated metal sheathing. Save for a two pane basement window in the south

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CONTINUATION SHEET (note heading of each section to be continued)

Description gable end, the rear wing's windows all have 1/1 sash and narrow vinyl frames, including a double window in the west facade and two single windows in each (north and south) gable end. The three bay north gable end also has a plain door with plain trim in its western bay. The door opens onto a board floored landing with a board floored ramp, which descends east-erly along the wall. The landing and ramp are set on wooden posts and pro- tected by plain wooden railings.

Architectural Significance rather limited. The dates of the metal roof and the basement vestibule are not available. The wrought metal railings at the main entry were installed about 1945. Vinyl clapboarding was mounted on the church exterior in 1978. The same year saw the erection of the central wing and its porch, at a cost of approximately \$31,000. The rear wing, designed by Spike Trail and built by Michael Quinn of Freedom, at a cost of approx- imately \$42,000, was erected in 1987. In 1988, plastic shutters were mounted beside the church windows.

The only major architectural change to the church exterior that compro- mised its architectural integrity was the vinyl clapboarding on the main block. But, the wooden trim, the corner pilasters, window and door frames, and the main cornice, was preserved. The church is today a pleasant mid 19th century vernacular church, with a form and composition typical of its day and type, a three bay gable end front with central entry, three tall windows on each side facade, and a two stage tower with belfry and spire, above the main facade. The church might easily be considered a good example of its building type and therefore worthy of placement on the National Register for its architecture. However, more has to be known about the build- ing, specifically about the quality and integrity of the interior, before a final determination can be made. As this survey was limited to the exteriors of the churches surveyed, further study of the building is therefore needed.

Bibliography Dorothy P. Chapman, One Hundred Twenty-Five Years of Freedom 1832-1957 (Freedom:1957)

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CONTINUATION SHEET (note heading of each section to be continued)



Photographer facing: Northwest Date: March 14, 1989
Description: South and east facades of rear wing, central wing, main block, basement vestibule and belfry.



Photographer facing: West
Date: March 14, 1989
Description: East facades of main block and belfry.

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