

State of Connecticut
CONNECTICUT HISTORICAL COMMISSION
 59 South Prospect Street, Hartford 06106

HISTORIC RESOURCES INVENTORY:
 Buildings & Structures

SURVEY OF GUILFORD, NEW HAVEN COUNTY, 06437
 June-December 1981

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY									
Town No.:					Site No. 228				
UTM									
QUAD:									
DISTRICT					IF NR SPECIFY				
<input type="checkbox"/> S <input type="checkbox"/> NR					<input type="checkbox"/> Actual <input type="checkbox"/> Potential				



IDENTIFICATION

1. ADDRESS Ledge Hill Road or Meeting House Hill (map 109, lot 13)
2. NAME
 (historic) St. John's Episcopal Church
 NAME
 (common)
3. USE
 (historic) Church
 USE
 (present) Church
4. IF MOVED, WHEN AND FROM WHERE:

DESCRIPTION

5. ARCHITECT See below
6. DATE 1812 - 1817
- BUILDER STYLE See below
 Federal
7. ALTERATIONS Steeple taken down to the deck in 1842. A new belfry was added, replaced after 1890, and soon replaced again. Windows changed to present form in 1870 (Gothic frames are original), and interior extensively altered: chancel, sacristy, and vestry room added, side galleries, removed, and seating rearranged. Rear wing modern.
8. NOTABLE FEATURES A simple building of small size given stature by crisp detailing and a tall tower (the present belfry is not original: see below). Siting plays an important part in the total effect.

SIGNIFICANCE

9. ARCHITECTURAL-HISTORICAL
 This is a more significant building than its modest appearance suggests, for it is an early example of the beginnings of an Episcopalian style in Connecticut, marked by the verticality of the tower and the pointed windows (notice especially the Gothicizing of the Palladian window). In form it is one of a small group, all in the Housatonic Valley, of which the known members are Monroe (1902), Orange (1810), Quaker's Farm (1811), and Huntington (1812). Of these, Quaker's Farm is the only one to use the Gothic window style. The builder or designer of St. John's may have known one or more of these buildings, for they are in the New Haven orbit.
 There is no record of who he was, but (continued on next sheet)

SOURCES

10. SOURCES
 Dorothy Whitfield Society '76; Connecticut Historical Commission '72; Tercentenary Committee; Kelly, Meetinghouses; Steiner; Shore Line Times, 30 April 1970 and 25 October 1977; interview, Michael Pochan. Photographs: Guilford Library.

In all categories below, check more than one box if applicable.

If you have not actually made certain of the answer to a given question, either leave it blank or write "inferred" after the checked box; or, if drawn from a previous investigator, give source.

11. MATERIALS

- ☒ Clapboard
☐ Wood Shingle
☐ Board & Batten

- ☐ Brick
☐ Fieldstone
☐ Cut Stone

- ☐ Stucco
☐ Concrete
☐ Cobblestone

- ☐ Asbestos Shingle
☐ Asphalt Siding
☐ Aluminum/Vinyl

☐ Other:

12. STRUCTURE

- ☐ Wood Frame:
☐ Post & Beam
☐ Balloon

☐ Masonry

☐ Iron or Steel

☐ Concrete

☐ Other:

13. ROOF

- a. ☐ Pitched
☐ Saltbox
☐ Gambrel

- ☒ Gable-front
☐ Cross-gable
☐ Mansard

- ☐ Hip
☐ Flat Hip
☐ Flat

- ☐ Shed
☐ False Dormer
☐ Sawtooth

☐ Other:

- b. ☐ Tower(s)

☐ Monitor

☐ Cupola

☐ Dormered Gable

☐ Dome

- c. ☐ Wood Shingle

☒ Asphalt Shingle

☐ Slate

☐ Metal

☐ Other:

14. NUMBER OF STORIES: 1 PLUS TOWER

APPROXIMATE DIMENSIONS:

LOT SIZE: 281.05 X 123.2 X
293.25 X 152.82

15. CONDITION: Exterior

☐ Excellent

☐ Good

☐ Fair

☐ Poor

☐ Bad

16. CONDITION: Structure

☐ Excellent

☒ Good

☐ Fair

☐ Poor

☐ Bad

17. OUTBUILDINGS (visible from public road)

☐ Barn(s)

☐ Carriage House

☐ Garage

☐ Shed(s)

☐ Shop(s)

Other (well, stand, greenhouse, gazebo, privy, etc.):

18. LANDSCAPING (visible from public road)

☒ Planted Grounds

☐ Garden

☐ Terracing

☐ Plaza

☐ Court

☐ Stone Wall(s)

☒ Pickett Fence

☐ Iron Fence

☐ Post & Rail

☐ Other:

19. SURROUNDING ENVIRONMENT

- a. ☐ Town Street

☒ Rural

☐ Semi-rural

☐ Clustered Growth

☐ Development

- b. ☐ Commercial

☐ Industrial

☒ Agricultural

☐ Residential

☐ Vacation, now or originally

- c. ☒ Open

☐ Wooded

☐ Lakefront

☐ Coastal

☐ Salt marsh

- d. ☒ Of outstanding scenic/architectural value

☐ Of scenic/architectural value

☐ Of supportive value to contiguous scenic/architectural area

☐ Neutral

☐ Other:

20. ROLE OF BUILDING IN ENHANCING QUALITY OF ENVIRONMENT

☒ Vital

☐ Important

☐ Supportive

☐ Neutral

☐ Other:

21. OWNERSHIP

☐ Public

☒ Private

☒ Interior accessible

INDEX NO: 228

22. Name PD + D. Penar

Date 7/2/81

Photographer P. O. disos

Date 7/2/81

Negative R 3:18

Organization: Guilford Preservation Alliance
P.O. Box 199, Guilford, Conn. 06437

Glfd's Neg. R 3:16A

23. THREATS TO BUILDING

- ☐ None Known
☐ Renewal

- ☐ Highways
☐ Private Owner

- ☐ Vandalism
☐ Deterioration

- ☐ Developers
☐ Other:

☐ Zoning

24. SUBSEQUENT EVALUATIONS

DESCRIPTION

COMPILED BY

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY

9. Architectural-Historical con't.

the delicate ornament of the door with its paneled pilasters is similar to work in town that is associated with Abraham Coan, builder of the Congregational church next door and the Episcopal church in North Branford. As Coan came from a North Guilford family and was a prominent Episcopalian, it is quite possible that this work is his. Coan is discussed more fully in the Survey Introduction in the section on Architecture; also see Christ Church (17 Park Street) and his own house (29 Broad Street).

The present belfry, which is not original, does not have the height and lightness of the Federal style nor that the proportions of the tower seem to call for. Perhaps the original belfry was similar to the ones on Coan's two other churches. A railing around the deck would also be expected.

St. John's and the Congregational church beside it combine to form a rural civic center on the North Guilford Green. The fact that they were built simultaneously and probably by the same builder suggests that this was the result of design, not of accident. Standing high on the ridge, overlooking the steeply sloping fields around them, these two small buildings achieve a monumentality that is touching and impressive. Meeting House Hill is discussed in the Survey Introduction in the section on Town Planning and Design.

The Episcopal parish of St. John's was organized in 1747, and a church was built c1754. The hostility that existed between the early Episcopalians and the Congregationalists is indicated by the following vote of the Congregational Society in 1751 "to make application to the General Assembly for the help of these neighbors, from whom we have begun to distrain rates, which hath been attended with the effusion of so much blood, that we cannot find any Collector that will undertake to gather any more." However after the Revolution, when the loyalty of the Episcopalians was no longer in question, peace was restored and the Episcopalians submitted a polite request "to carry to the inhabitants of the old Society in North Guilford to see if they are willing that we should build a Church on their Meeting house hill." The request happily was granted.