

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.: 230
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 159 Ledge Hill Road or Meeting House Hill (map 109, lot 12)
2. NAME
 (historic) North Guilford Congregational
 NAME Church
 (common)
3. USE
 (historic) Church
 USE Church
 (present)
4. IF MOVED, WHEN AND FROM WHERE:

DESCRIPTION

5. ARCHITECT Abraham Coan
6. DATE 1812-14

BUILDER Abraham Coan
STYLE Federal

7. ALTERATIONS

Starting in 1850 a five-year wrangle took place in the congregation about altering the interior, one faction wishing to build a floor across the whole room to make two (continued on next sheet)

8. NOTABLE FEATURES

One of Guilford's major productions of the Federal period, distinguished for delicacy of ornament and for a nicely proportioned facade with a trio of doors, all with flat entablatures whose slim horizontal cornices are repeated in that of the Palladian window above.

9. ARCHITECTURAL-HISTORICAL

There is a marked similarity between the facade at North Guilford and the more famous church at Killingworth, but it should be noted that North Guilford came first. Possibly Coan worked on both. It is surprising to find such an advanced design in such a small and remote place, and we can only conclude that Abraham Coan, its designer, must have had a wider horizon and a larger career than we have any knowledge today (for Coan see the Survey Introduction, also his own house at 29 Broad Street). In the church records Coan is recorded as having made the plan and was also retained to "complete the meeting house at the sum of \$675 dollars he to board himself." The fact that he is employed only to "complete" the work, as also the relatively small size of (continued on next sheet)

SIGNIFICANCE

10. SOURCES

Dorothy Whitfield Society '76; Connecticut Historical Commission '72; Kelly, Meetinghouses; Lane. Photographs: Guilford Keeping Society; Stoddard Smith.

SOURCES

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

- | | | | | |
|---|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|---|---------------------------------|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Clapboard | <input type="checkbox"/> Brick | <input type="checkbox"/> Stucco | <input type="checkbox"/> Asbestos Shingle | <input type="checkbox"/> Other: |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Wood Shingle | <input type="checkbox"/> Fieldstone | <input type="checkbox"/> Concrete | <input type="checkbox"/> Asphalt Siding | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Board & Batten | <input type="checkbox"/> Cut Stone | <input type="checkbox"/> Cobblestone | <input type="checkbox"/> Aluminum/Vinyl | |

12. STRUCTURE

- | | | | | |
|--------------------------------------|----------------------------------|--|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Wood Frame: | <input type="checkbox"/> Masonry | <input type="checkbox"/> Iron or Steel | <input type="checkbox"/> Concrete | <input type="checkbox"/> Other: |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Post & Beam | | | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Balloon | | | | |

13. ROOF

- | | | | | |
|---|---|--|---|---------------------------------|
| a. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Pitched | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Gable-front | <input type="checkbox"/> Hip | <input type="checkbox"/> Shed | <input type="checkbox"/> Other: |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Saltbox | <input type="checkbox"/> Cross-gable | <input type="checkbox"/> Flat Hip | <input type="checkbox"/> False Dormer | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Gambrel | <input type="checkbox"/> Mansard | <input type="checkbox"/> Flat | <input type="checkbox"/> Sawtooth | |
| b. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Tower(s) | <input type="checkbox"/> Monitor | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Cupola | <input type="checkbox"/> Dormered Gable | <input type="checkbox"/> Dome |
| c. <input type="checkbox"/> Wood Shingle | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Asphalt Shingle | <input type="checkbox"/> Slate | <input type="checkbox"/> Metal | <input type="checkbox"/> Other: |

14. NUMBER OF STORIES: 1 APPROXIMATE DIMENSIONS:

plus balcony

LOT SIZE: C, 2 1/2 acres

15. CONDITION: Exterior

- | | | | | |
|------------------------------------|--|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Excellent | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Good | <input type="checkbox"/> Fair | <input type="checkbox"/> Poor | <input type="checkbox"/> Bad |
|------------------------------------|--|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|------------------------------|

16. CONDITION: Structure

- | | | | | |
|------------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Excellent | <input type="checkbox"/> Good | <input type="checkbox"/> Fair | <input type="checkbox"/> Poor | <input type="checkbox"/> Bad |
|------------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|------------------------------|

17. OUTBUILDINGS (visible from public road)

- | | | | | |
|---|---|---------------------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Barn(s) | <input type="checkbox"/> Carriage House | <input type="checkbox"/> Garage | <input type="checkbox"/> Shed(s) | <input type="checkbox"/> Shop(s) |
| Other (well, stand, greenhouse, gazebo, privy, etc.): | | | | |

18. LANDSCAPING (visible from public road)

- | | | | | |
|---|--|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Planted Grounds | <input type="checkbox"/> Garden | <input type="checkbox"/> Terracing | <input type="checkbox"/> Plaza | <input type="checkbox"/> Court |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Stone Wall(s) | <input type="checkbox"/> Pickett Fence | <input type="checkbox"/> Iron Fence | <input type="checkbox"/> Post & Rail | <input type="checkbox"/> Other: |

19. SURROUNDING ENVIRONMENT

- | | | |
|--|--|---|
| a. <input type="checkbox"/> Town Street | b. <input type="checkbox"/> Commercial | c. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Open |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Rural | <input type="checkbox"/> Industrial | <input type="checkbox"/> Wooded |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Semi-rural | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Agricultural | <input type="checkbox"/> Lakefront |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Clustered Growth | <input type="checkbox"/> Residential | <input type="checkbox"/> Coastal |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Development | <input type="checkbox"/> Vacation, now or originally | <input type="checkbox"/> Salt marsh |
| d. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Of outstanding scenic/architectural value | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Of scenic/architectural value | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Of supportive value to contiguous scenic/architectural area | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Neutral | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other: | | |

20. ROLE OF BUILDING IN ENHANCING QUALITY OF ENVIRONMENT

- | | | | | |
|---|------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|----------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Vital | <input type="checkbox"/> Important | <input type="checkbox"/> Supportive | <input type="checkbox"/> Neutral | <input type="checkbox"/> Other: |
|---|------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|----------------------------------|---------------------------------|

21. OWNERSHIP

- | | | |
|---------------------------------|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Public | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Private | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Interior accessible |
|---------------------------------|---|---|

INDEX NO. 230

22. Name P.O. A. Penar

Date 7/2/81

Photographer P. Odiseos

Date 7/2/81 Negative

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

Roll 3: 16

Guilfd's Neg. R3 14A

23. THREATS TO BUILDING

- | | | | | |
|-------------------------------------|--|--|-------------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> None Known | <input type="checkbox"/> Highways | <input type="checkbox"/> Vandalism | <input type="checkbox"/> Developers | <input type="checkbox"/> Zoning |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Renewal | <input type="checkbox"/> Private Owner | <input type="checkbox"/> Deterioration | <input type="checkbox"/> Other: | |

24. SUBSEQUENT EVALUATIONS

DESCRIPTION

COMPILED BY

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7. Alterations, con't.

stories and the other favoring a plan by Henry Austin "to take out the whole interior of the house and make it anew." Votes and vetos flew back and forth until 1855 when the Austin faction apparently won and a contract was signed with Spencer and Norton of Guilford. Changes were extensive enough to occasion a re-dedication of the building. The old high pulpit and sounding board were removed, and it is probably that the galleries were lowered, pews converted to slips, and the pulpit arch built at this time; also the upper tier of gallery columns was removed (then or later) and the original elliptical vault replaced by a flat ceiling. An old photograph shows the walls painted in dark colors. In 1932 the walls were again repainted in what Kelly refers to as a "tasteful manner"--light buff with ivory trim. Pressed metal ceiling installed probably in 1910. Rear addition for classrooms, offices, and kitchen, 1957, Henry Straub Kelly, architect.

9. Architectural Historical, con't.

the payment, implies that he was responsible mainly for the joinery and suggests that the ornamental work of the building--its chief distinction--is his; this view of Coan's role is borne out by the fact that we know he had a joiner's shop adjoining his house. The general form of the building is of the standard type that became popular in the Federal period, but this is one of the earliest examples: of churches remaining today only Rocky Hill and Norwichtown precede it (possibly Harwinton should also be included). Once again we are brought up short by the mystery of Coan's career and his unknown contacts with the world beyond Guilford. See the Congregational parsonage next door (145 Ledge Hill Road) for another possible work by Coan.

The steeple is puzzling. In style it seems markedly different from the rest--heavier, plainer, and rather clumsy ("Greek Revival" says Kelly, which to him is a term of disapproval), and yet a steeple is mentioned as early as 1816 and in 1827 a bell is hung in what can only be a belfry.

For the layout of Meeting House Hill and the role the church plays in this interesting scheme, see the Survey Introduction, section on Town Planning and Design; also see St. John's Church next door (Ledge Hill Road).

9. Architectural Historical, con't from Sheet 1

The North Guilford Church was organized in 1720--it was then the Third Society and is now the Second, as explained elsewhere (see 110 Broad Street). A meeting house was built in 1723. The present church is the Society's second building.