

## FORM B - Building

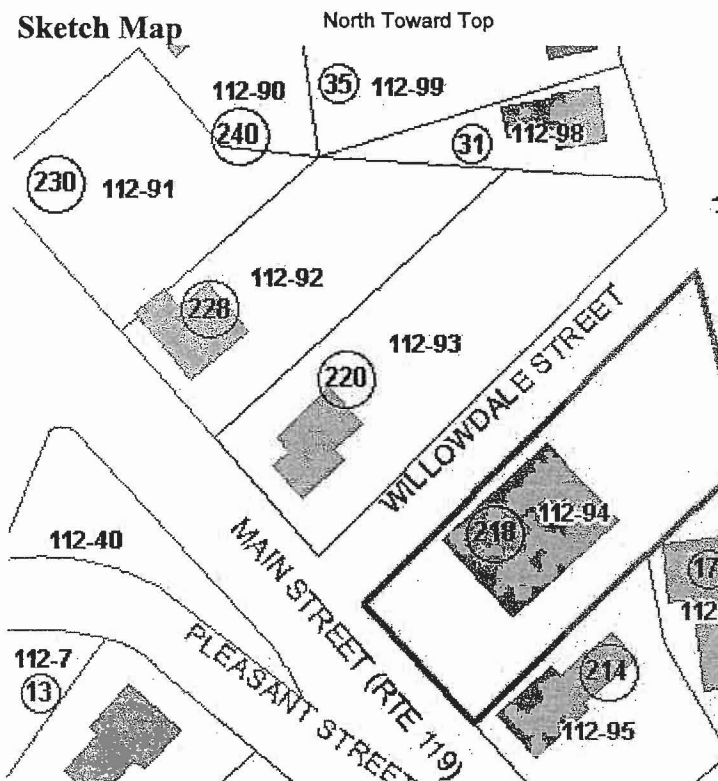
Massachusetts Historical Commission  
Massachusetts Archives Building  
220 Morrissey Boulevard  
Boston, Massachusetts 02125

### Photograph

(3"x3" or 3-1/2x5" black and white only) Label photo on back with town and property address. Record film roll and negative numbers here on form. Staple photo to left side of form over this space. Attach additional photos to continuation sheets.

Roll Negative(s)

### Sketch Map



Recorded by Sanford Johnson

Organization Groton Historical Commission

Date (month/year) 6/06

Map and Lot # 112 94 USGS Quad Area(s) Y Form Number 195

Town Groton

Place (neighborhood or village)

Groton Center

Address 218 Main Street

Historic Name Congregational Church

Uses: Present Church

Original Church

Date of Construction 1826

Source Butler, pp. 153

Style/Form Greek Revival

Architect/Builder

Exterior Material:

Foundation Granite

Wall/Trim Wood flushboard and clapboard

Roof Asphalt shingle

Outbuildings/secondary structure

Major Alterations (with dates)

Building raised, 1846

Condition Excellent

Moved no ☒ yes ☐ Date

Acreage .33

Setting Town center

Follow Massachusetts Historical Commission Survey Manual instructions for completing this form.

## BUILDING FORM

### ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION

☐ see continuation sheet

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

- \* The Union Congregational Church is a front-gabled, wood-framed, Federal style building of five by four bays
- \* The steeple above the façade rises from a square base clad in wood clapboards; the intermediate section is built on a smaller square plan with canted corners and corner pilasters as well as louvered vents for the carillon; the hexagonal spire is pyramidal and terminates in a round finial with a weathervane above
- \* A variety of window types exists including Queen Anne sash in the second level of the façade, double-hung units in the third level of the façade, 6/6 double-hung sash in the flushboard tympanum; side elevations are lit by a combination of fixed stained glass and 4/1 double-hung sash; Windows in the façade are trimmed by a molded surround with shouldered hoods; a central double-leaf door gives access to the interior and is flanked by paneled walls
- \* Paired pilasters and fluted columns demarcate the five bays of the flushboard façade; side and rear walls are clad in wood clapboard
- \* The principal elevation faces a small lawn bounded by a fence of granite posts and iron rails
- \* The Congregational Church is in excellent condition, appears relatively unaltered and is comparable in scale and detail to the First Parish Church (MHC #22).

### HISTORICAL NARRATIVE

☐ see continuation sheets

*Discuss the 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 Congregational Church was formed out of the First Parish of Groton in 1825 as a result of a disagreement concerning interpretation of the scriptures. Religious schisms based on liberal versus conservative interpretation of the bible occurred in many Massachusetts towns in the mid to late 1820s with Groton being no exception. The breach in Groton began when the superannuated reverend Daniel Chaplin, serving as minister since 1778, fainted in the pulpit due to excessive heat in July, 1825, prompting the town to hire John Todd as the interim replacement while ideas about a permanent replacement were discussed at town meeting. Having received from Reverend Chaplin a request for a written statement of the preferred tenets of any potential successor, the committee declined to respond and hired Reverend Charles Robinson against the wishes of the ailing reverend. This led to secession by the adherents of Reverend Chaplin and the formation of the Congregationalist Society. According to Dr. Green, the Congregationalists held a conservative interpretation of the bible while the Unitarians were more liberal; however, while the Unitarians retained the old church records and so were considered the older body, the new group of Congregationalists outnumbered them. The result was the construction, beginning with the cornerstone laid by Josiah Blood on July 4th, 1826, of the Congregational Church at 218 Main Street. The Classically inspired design has a gabled roof and 80 foot tall steeple. This was later remodeled in 1846 with the addition of a second story. The Union Congregational Church bought the house at 219 Main Street for a parsonage in 1874 and later acquired the house at 220 Main Street from Dr. David R. Steere which still serves as the parsonage. The Sanborn fire insurance maps from 1906 show that the steeple is 80' high and that there was a horse shed across Willowdale Road.

### BIBLIOGRAPHY and/or REFERENCES

☐ continuation sheet

"Groton Plantation", p. 14; Tercentenary Booklet, p. 20; "Groton at 350", pp. 38-40; Sanborn fire insurance maps, 1896-1906; Butler, p. 153, 195-199; Green, Vol. 4, pp. 1-3

**\*\* All properties mentioned in bold type are individually inventoried resources**

- ☒ Recommended for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. If checked, you must attach a completed National Register Criteria Statement Form.
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## INVENTORY FORM CONTINUATION SHEET

Massachusetts Historical Commission  
220 Morrissey Boulevard  
Massachusetts Archives Building  
Boston, Massachusetts 02125

218 Main Street

**Town**  
Groton

**Property Address**

**Area(s)**

**Form No.**



Massachusetts Historical Commission

Massachusetts Archives Building  
220 Morrissey Boulevard  
Boston, Massachusetts 02125

Community Groton  
Property Address  
218 Main Street

Area(s)  
Y

Form No.

### National Register of Historic Places Criteria Statement Form

Check all that apply:

Individually eligible ☒ X

Eligible only in a historic district

Contributing to a potential historic district ☒ X

Potential historic district

Criteria: ☒ A ☐ B ☒ C ☐ D

Criteria considerations: ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ E ☐ F ☐ G

The Greek Revival Style Congregational Church at 218 Main Street is potentially eligible for the National Register of Historic Places as an individual resource at the local level. The Congregational Church was formed out of the First Parish of Groton in 1825 as a result of a disagreement concerning interpretation of the scriptures. This led to secession by the adherents of Reverend Chaplin and the formation of the Congregationalist Society. According to Dr. Green, the Congregationalists held a conservative interpretation of the bible while the Unitarians were more liberal; however, while the Unitarians retained the old church records and so were considered the older body, the new group of Congregationalists outnumbered them. The result was the construction, beginning with the cornerstone laid by Josiah Blood on July 4th, 1826, of the Congregational Church at 218 Main Street. This was later remodeled in 1846 with the addition of a second story. The building's association with historic religious activity establishes its significance under Criterion A. The refined design of the church with its 80' tall spire and the surviving historic exterior materials make the property eligible under Criterion C. The church retains integrity of design, materials and workmanship.