



Evangelical Church Stained Glass Window Preservation

Submitted to the Acton Community Preservation Committee

by Acton Congregational Church

November 16, 2015

Revised: January 15, 2016

PROJECT APPLICATION FORM – 2016

Due Date: November 16, 2015

Applicant: Acton Congregational Church **Submission Date:** November 16, 2015

Applicant's Address:

12 Concord Road

Acton, MA 01720

Phone Number: 978-263-2728

E-mail: trudy@actonc.org

Purpose: (Please select all that apply)

- Open Space
- Community Housing
- Historic Preservation
- Recreation

Town Committee (if applicable): NA

Project Name: ACC Stained Glass Window Stabilization

Project Location/Address: 12 Concord Road, Acton

Amount Requested: \$51,237

Project Summary: In the space below, provide a brief summary of the project.

In 1898, the stained glass windows were installed as memorials to the loyal members of the church:

- The Honorable William A Wilde, donor of the Acton Memorial Library who gave the double front window to the church
- Mary Skinner, who gave the pulpit to the church when it was remodeled in 1846. (1796-1892)
- Luther and Sukey Conant: Luther being a founder of the Evangelical Church in 1832
- Mary Elizabeth Taylor, married by Rev. James Woodbury in 1846
- William Warren Davis, Deacon of the church for 18 years until his death in 1890
- Stevens Hayward, served as Deacon for 33 years until his death in 1868

Some of the details of the double window were painted on the inside. For instance the details of the face are not visible from outside.

These windows are a treasure, yet they are in need of care. The exterior plexiglass is no longer doing its job. Not only is it cloudy, so that the beauty of the glass cannot be appreciated outside of the church, but it is no longer weathertight. New material is recommended. Because it has failed, the wood around the windows is rotting, risking the integrity of the window.

The proposed work would remove the old plastic covers, repair the existing wood damage, replace missing or broken pieces of glass, seal the glass, and install new ventilated glazing (1/4" laminated glass) to stabilize and protect the eleven primary stained glass windows. Total cost of the project is \$56,930. ACC is requesting a grant of \$51,237 with the balance to be paid by ACC (10% of the total cost).

Estimated Date for Commencement of Project: September 2016

Estimated Date for Completion of Project: December 2016

Introduction

Acton Congregational Church (ACC) has a long history at the center of Acton, tracing its roots back to the early days of the formation of the Town, and its heritage to the great events in Acton's history. The current sanctuary dates back to 1846, and is listed on the National Historic Register. As part of a renovation in 1898, beautiful stained glass windows were installed in memorial to prominent members of the church. These windows have now seen nearly 120 years of weathering, as well as their share of neglect. In an effort to protect the building and the windows, the stained glass was at some point covered with plastic, such that the window structure is no longer properly ventilated and the stained glass is partially obscured from outside the building. The Master Plan to be generated by ACC for the preservation of the whole church will encompass the windows, but the need to provide ventilation and adequate sealing of the stained glass windows is urgent, and requires immediate action to prevent further degradation of these historical works of art. ACC is requesting CPC funds to stabilize the major stained glass windows of the historic church building.

Site location and history

ACC is located in the Historic District in Acton Center, at 12 Concord Road. The main Church building, at 12 Concord Road, dates back to 1846, and was built on the site of the first church building of the Evangelical Church. It followed the first meeting house of First Parish that was at the intersection of Nagog and Main Streets, and the second larger meeting house where the Town Hall now stands. While at the second meeting house, the Evangelicals split off from the more Unitarian-leaning side of First Parish, and built a chapel where now stands the Acton Women's Club building. The Church later moved to the present site at 12 Concord Road circa 1833. This first church for the Evangelicals was re-built on the same site in 1846, and became one of the few to survive the great fire of 1862, that destroyed much of the Town Centre. The church was renovated in 1898, when the steeple was moved from the traditional top center to a corner of the building, the interior was reconfigured, and the stained glass windows were added. The windows memorialize various Church families, including Conant, Hayward, Davis, and Wilde. Mr. Wilde, who also donated the money for construction of the Memorial Library in the late 1800's, gave ACC the most prominent stained glass window, which is visible from Concord Road. It is a double window which depicts Jesus and a kneeling woman. (A picture of this window is shown on the front page of this proposal.) The building has had other additions through the years, with the most recent one adding a modern kitchen, offices and classrooms in an extension behind the original building. These rooms are used throughout the week by a local daycare center and many other community groups, such as the Town of Acton Safety Net Committee, Al Anon, Overeaters Anonymous, After School Tutoring Program, Youth Theater Production groups, Boy Scouts, Yoga and Wellness Classes, Pastoral Mentoring and Communities of Practice meetings, Acton Garden Club Speaker Events, United Way Speaker Events, and Parent to Parent Support Groups and Forums. In addition, this extra space has afforded ACC the opportunity to open space in the original church building to house an all-volunteer-organized Cornerstone Thrift Shop that serves the community with affordable basic needs of clothing and household items. The thrift shop has also been identified by the Acton Police Department and the Town's Community

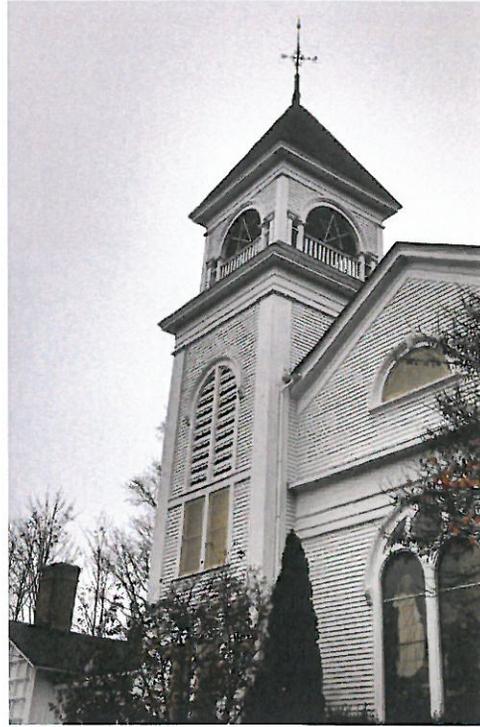
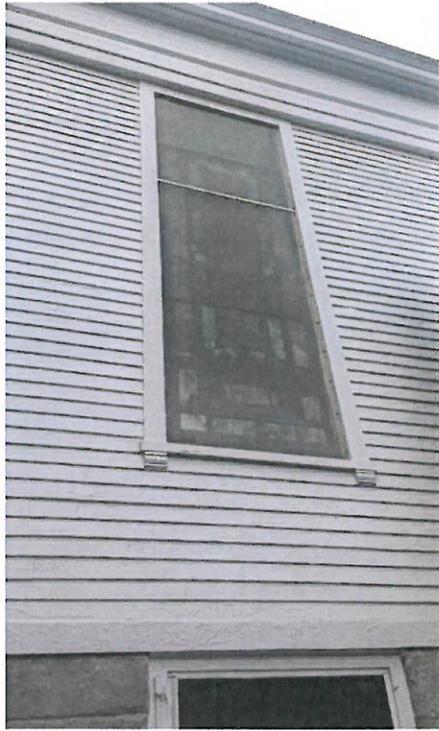
Resource Coordinator as a partner for critical need situations and families requiring assistance free of charge.

Condition of the Windows

The eleven primary stained glass windows in the historic church building are showing the obvious signs of 100+ years of weathering the elements. As the windows age, the glass and lead coming are beginning to deflect, stressing the window, and potentially leading to broken pieces of glass. While ACC's windows do show some deflection, and there are a few places of cracked glass, overall the deflection is considered "normal", and at this point acceptable. At some point in the future, however, the windows will need to be restored by removing the window and re-leading the glass pieces.

Of immediate concern, however, is the proper ventilation and sealing of the windows. As a result of the plastic covering that was installed over the windows in years past, the window casings and lead coming are in a constant moist condition. This is causing the wood casings to rot and the lead coming to corrode. Lead corrosion is characterized by the degradation of the lead into a white powdery substance (lead carbonate), ultimately leading to failure of the coming such that it no longer holds the glass in the window. The longer we wait on correcting this issue, the more rot and lead corrosion we are likely to see, potentially causing additional problems with more expensive repairs required in future years.

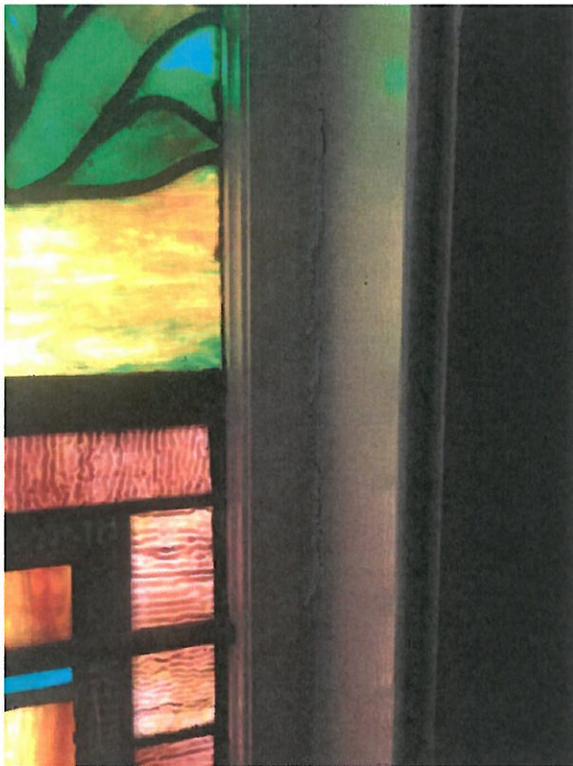
The pictures below display some of the problems that will be addressed by funding of this proposal. Complete pictures of all 11 windows to be stabilized under this proposal are in the Appendix at the end of the proposal.



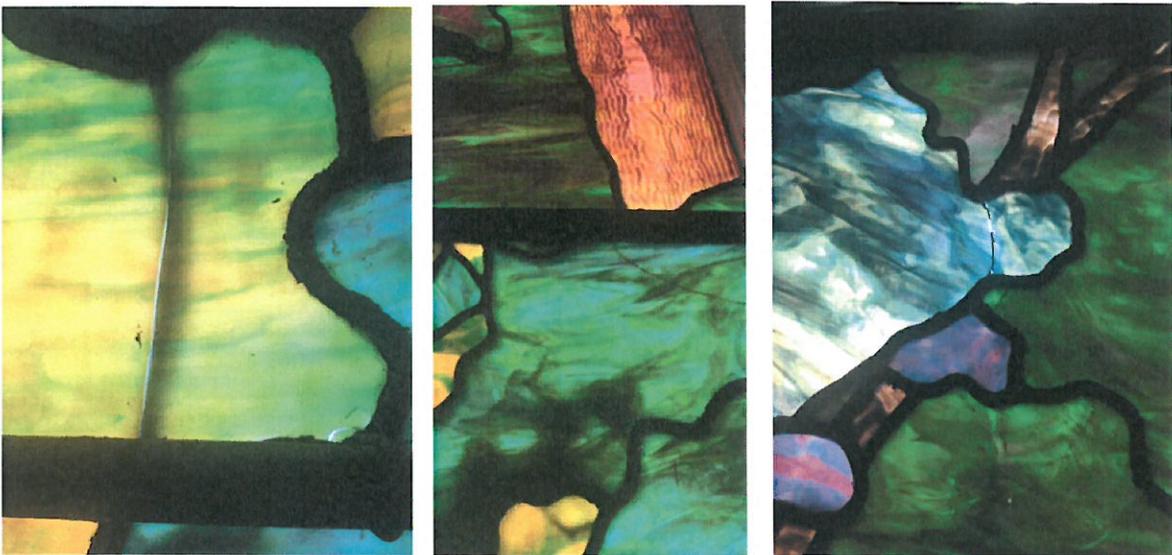
Plastic covering windows, trapping moisture in and obscuring view of windows



Plastic screwed to wood with no ventilation, promoting wood rot and lead corrosion



Window seals in need of repair



Broken glass in need of replacement

Proposed Work

The immediate protection and stabilization of the eleven historic church building stained glass windows requires the plastic covering to be removed and the window casings inspected for rot and repaired as necessary. In addition, each window will be sealed to prevent water and moisture infiltration to the building and any broken glass will be replaced. Once the window is repaired and sealed, a protective vented glazing system using ¼" laminated glass will be installed over each stained glass window to protect the window, while also providing proper ventilation and complete transparency to the beauty of the stained glass.

This work will result in the stabilization of these precious stained glass windows for many more years, with no more degradation of the wood and lead due to moisture issues. This effort gives us the benefit of time to assess all the renovation work of the church and neighboring historic buildings with the knowledge that we have stopped the progressive damage from moisture on the stained glass windows. Funding of this proposal will permit us to proceed with a stepped, logical approach to building preservation based on the findings of our Master Plan investigation.

Project Appropriateness

One of the major objectives of the CPC regarding historic preservation, as noted in the 2016 Community Preservation Plan is to “protect, preserve, and/or restore historic properties and sites throughout Acton, which are of historical, architectural, archeological, and cultural significance”. This proposal would protect the 118-year-old stained glass windows that are an integral part of the historic Evangelical Church in Acton, and bring them back to a more visible presence for everyone to enjoy.

Town Benefits

ACC traces its roots back to colonial Acton. The Evangelical Church, as it was called in the 1800's, and its predecessor, the First Parish, have always been at the center of the Town, from the establishment of the the first meeting house (required for incorporation of Acton in 1735) to the present day. The Evangelical Church building, now known as ACC, is a part of Acton heritage, and preserving and passing on that heritage to the next generation is invaluable window to the past for the townspeople of Acton.

Throughout its history, the church and its members have been very active in the social, political, economic and religious life of Acton. From the blessing of the Minutemen by Rev. Swift in 1775, as they marched to the North Bridge in Concord, to the petitioning of the state legislature for the Davis Monument in 1850, by Rev. Woodbury, to the present day leadership of Rev. Armstrong in the Acton Safety Net, ACC has been an integral part of the Town in many ways. CPC funding of the stabilization of the stained glass windows of ACC supports the preservation of these historic assets so that they can be enjoyed for many more years to come. This funding also helps ACC continue to be a prominent and positive part of Acton here in the center of Town, providing resources and activities for many people of different backgrounds, in different stages of life, with many different needs, from physical

activities (yoga and badminton) to social services (unemployment support, divorce counseling) to fellowship (movie nights, concerts) to educational programs (world religion series, Saturday Men’s Breakfast series) to community services (day care center, electronic recycling).

Cost and Schedule

ACC has solicited and received a firm bid from Serpentino Stained and Leaded Glass, Inc. of Needham, MA, for performing the proposed stained glass restoration work. Serpentino has over 50 years of knowledge and experience in restoration and preservation of stained glass from European and American stained glass masters. Serpentino operates within the spirit of historic preservation and conservation by doing what is the least required to preserve an historic asset without undue intervention or risk of damage. A few of the many notable projects Serpentino has performed include restorations for the Trinity Church in Boston, the Mother Church of First Church of Christ, Scientist, and the Massachusetts State House Hall of Flags. In addition, carpentry work on the molding for the new frames needs to be replaced. Niklaus Painting and Construction submitted a bid for the frame work. Niklaus has worked in historic districts on prior jobs. As well, they have been contracted in the past for ACC including painting the exterior of the church and most recently repaired all interior ice damage which was finished in late August. Their work is of superior quality and their quote highly competitive in the four bids received for the ice damage received in the spring of 2015. Based on these two bids, we are requesting funding per the following estimate of costs:

<u>Description</u>	<u>Cost</u>
Stained Glass Contractor Fee - Sanctuary Windows (8)	\$38,025
Stained Glass Contractor Fee - Bell Tower Windows (3)	\$ 3,700
Carpentry Contractor Fee	\$ 9,975
Contingency, 20%	<u>\$ 5,200</u>
PROJECT TOTAL	\$56,930

ACC Contribution (10%) (\$ 5,693)
REVISED FUNDING REQUEST \$51,237

If funded, ACC would hire the contractor in the Summer of 2016, and the work would be completed by the end of 2016.

Appendix

Site Location--Satellite Image
Site Location--Historic District Map
Pictures of the Stained Glass Windows
Window Location/Floorplan
Stained Glass - Contractor's Bids
Carpentry - Contractors Bid
Site Deed
Historical Map
National Register Listing
Historic Resources Inventory Form
History of Acton Congregational Church

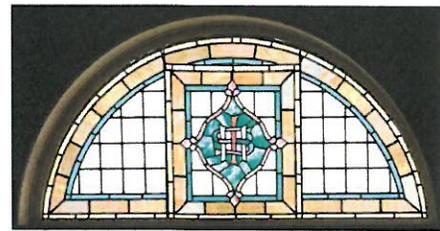
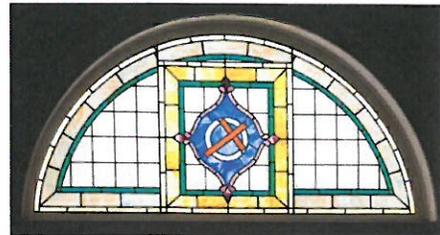
SITE LOCATION--SATELLITE IMAGE



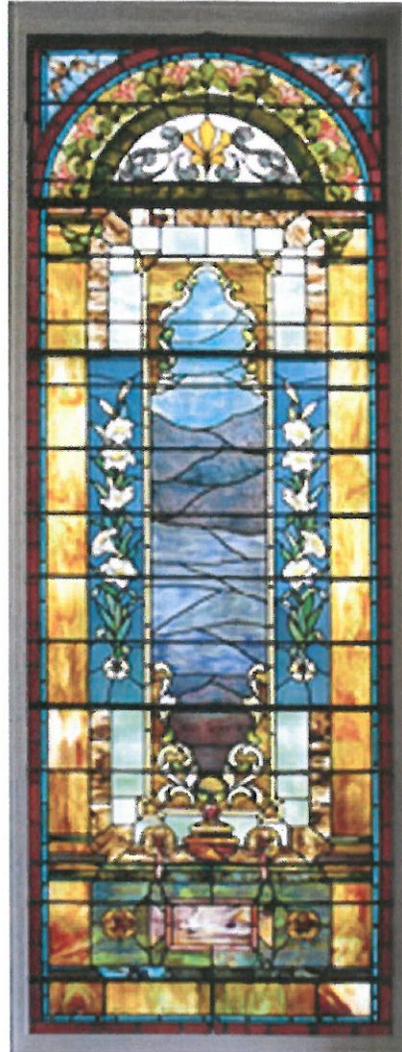
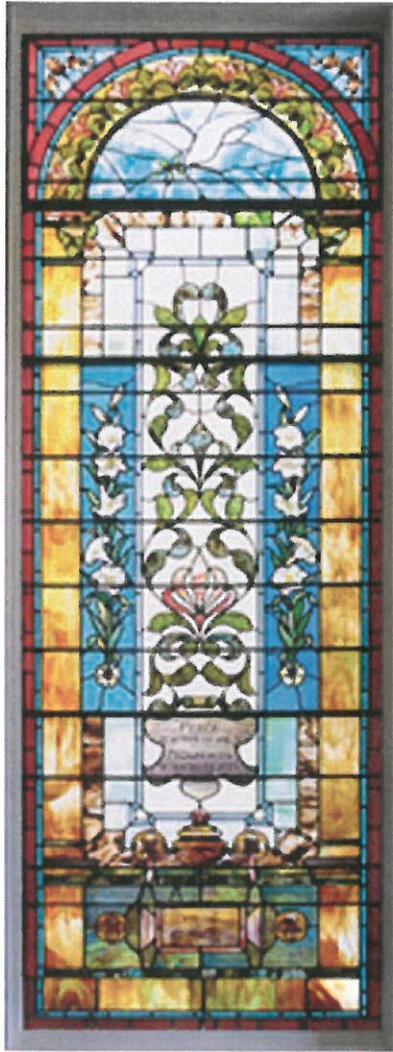
PICTURES OF THE STAINED GLASS WINDOWS



JESUS AND KNEELING WOMAN
FACING CONCORD ROAD



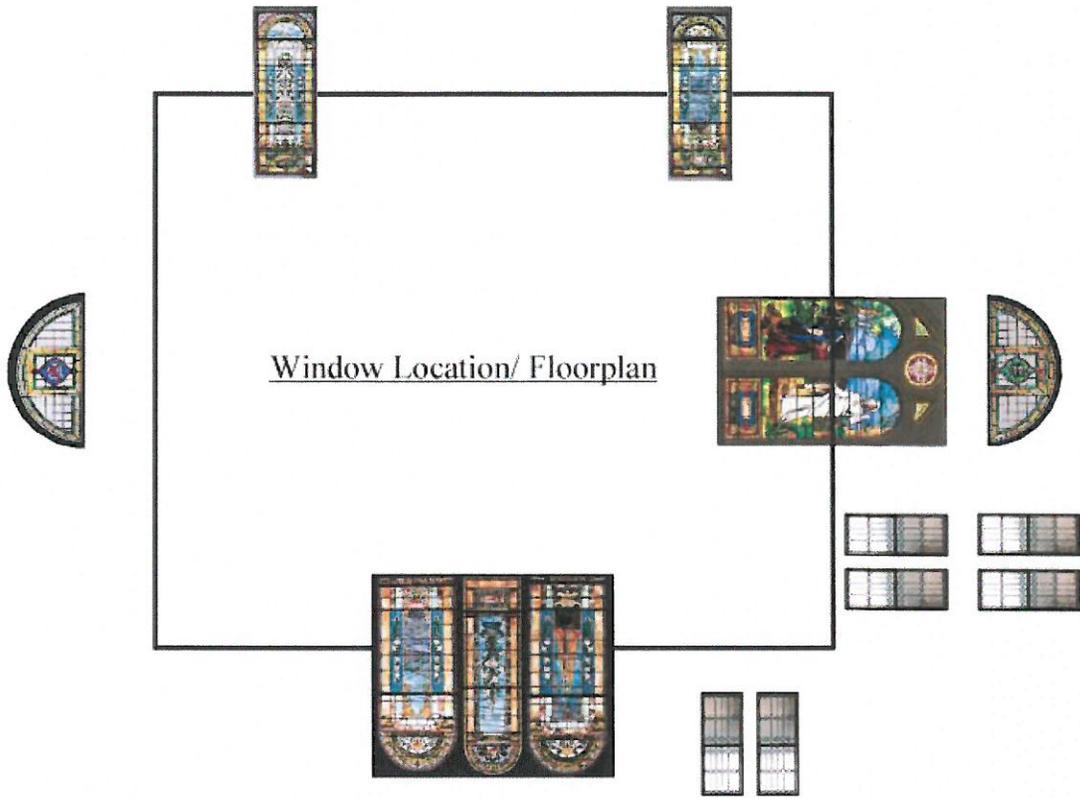
SEMI-CIRCULAR WINDOWS
SIDE WALLS



ALTAR WINDOWS



REAR OF SANCTUARY



Window Location/ Floorplan

Serpentino Stained & leaded Glass INC.

21 Highland Circle - Needham, Massachusetts 02494 - Tel. (781) 449-2074 - Fax. (781) 449-0821

Ms. Trudy Khosla
Acton Congregational Church
12 Concord Road
Acton, MA 01720

Dear Ms. Khosla,

It was a pleasure meeting you at the Acton Congregational Church to view the stained glass windows and inspect their condition. During my visit, I found most of the windows in the church to be in good, structural condition. The stained glass windows are very well designed and methodically fabricated with good traditional reinforcement. Although some of the windows are beginning to deflect, this is not an alarming condition, and the Church has plenty of time to plan for their repair and restoration. Deflection, on its own, is not enough to warrant removal and re-leading of a stained glass window. As building components go through the natural course of expansion and contraction, stained glass windows only expand, as lead is a material with "no memory". Over time as a stained glass window expands, it begins to deflect at its weakest point. If a window or panel has deflected, but is very solid to gentle hand pressure, the extent of the deflection is not great enough that it is causing glass to crack, and there is little evidence of lead corrosion and/or metal fatigue, there is time before the window has to be re-leaded. Some of the windows exhibit a few pieces of cracked glass, and these can be replaced and repaired in situ without removing the window.

The main issue that needs attention at the Acton Congregational Church is the exterior, obscured plastic covering all of the stained glass windows. The exterior plastic is installed directly into the wood framing, with very little to no means of ventilation and air circulation, thus allowing moisture to get trapped in between the stained glass and the exterior covering, resulting in a very hostile environment. The moisture and condensation that is trapped in between the stained glass and exterior covering is the primary cause of lead deterioration and wood decay. If this hostile environment is not corrected soon, a white powdery substance will be visible on the surface of the lead matrix. This substance is called "lead carbonate". It is important to recognize that the formed lead carbonate is not a substance clinging to the surface of the lead; It is the surface of the lead transformed to powder.

CONTRACTORS BID

My recommendation would be to remove all of the plastic covering, scrape and paint the wood frames and install a new, vented protective glazing system, using 1/4" laminated glass.

Recommended Work

(Please see attached window map)

Window # 1 "Christ Window":

This window measuring approximately 3'-6" x 10'-6" is in fair condition and does not need to be completely re-leaded at this time. The window has several cracked pieces of glass and some dirt and old waterproofing compound is trapped between some of the plated areas of the window. The cracked pieces can be replaced or repaired in situ, but nothing can be done to remove the dirt between the plates, until the window is removed for restoration. I would also recommend that waterproofing be added to the exterior of the window, in the areas where the old waterproofing compound has dried and fallen out from the leads. In order to apply the waterproofing compound, the existing plastic covering must be removed.

Cost to perform the work outlined above on Window #1: \$ 4,400.

As you requested, the cost to completely re-lead this window today is: \$ 20,400.

The rest of the windows in the Church have little to no deflection and are in good structural condition.

Window #4 has two pieces of broken glass in the border and these can be replaced in situ. Cost to replace these two pieces at the same time other work is performed: \$375.

I would also recommend that we remove the existing plastic from the exterior of the eight windows in the sanctuary, clean the windows from the exterior, waterproof them where necessary, scrape and paint their frames and install laminated glass.

Total cost for this work: \$33,250.*

* Does not include the disposal of old plastic covering.

I hope you find this helpful and if you have any questions please do not hesitate to contact me.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,



Domenico Iriti
Admin@SerpentinoStainedGlass.com

Serpentino Stained & leaded Glass INC.

21 Highland Circle - Needham, Massachusetts 02494 - Tel. (781) 449-2074 - Fax. (781) 449-0821

Ms. Trudy Khosla
Acton Congregational Church
12 Concord Road
Acton, MA 01720

Dear Ms. Khosla,

As you requested, I am providing you with a cost to remove the obscured plastic covering on the three bell tower stained glass windows, and install new vented $\frac{1}{4}$ clear laminated glass. The cost is \$3,700.

I am also including examples of exterior venting of protective glazing. If you have any questions, don't hesitate to call.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

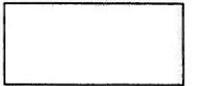


Domenico Iriti

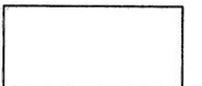
CONTRACTORS BID



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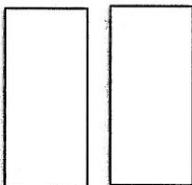
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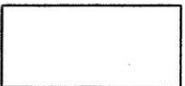
ALTAR

Acton Congregational Church
Stained Glass Window Map

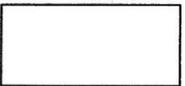


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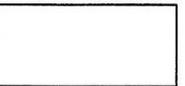
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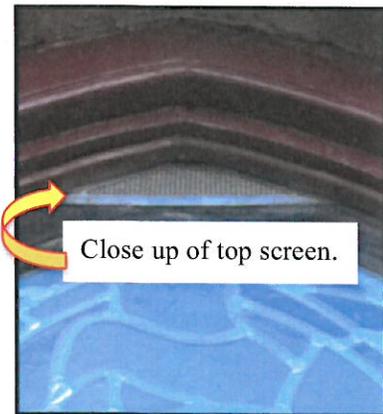
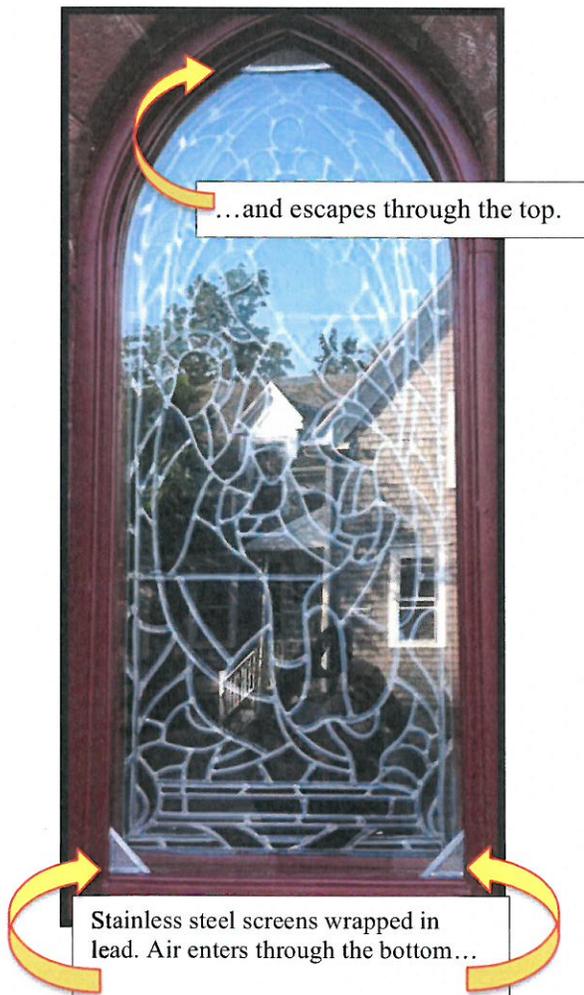
MAIN ENTRANCE

Serpentino Stained & leaded Glass INC.

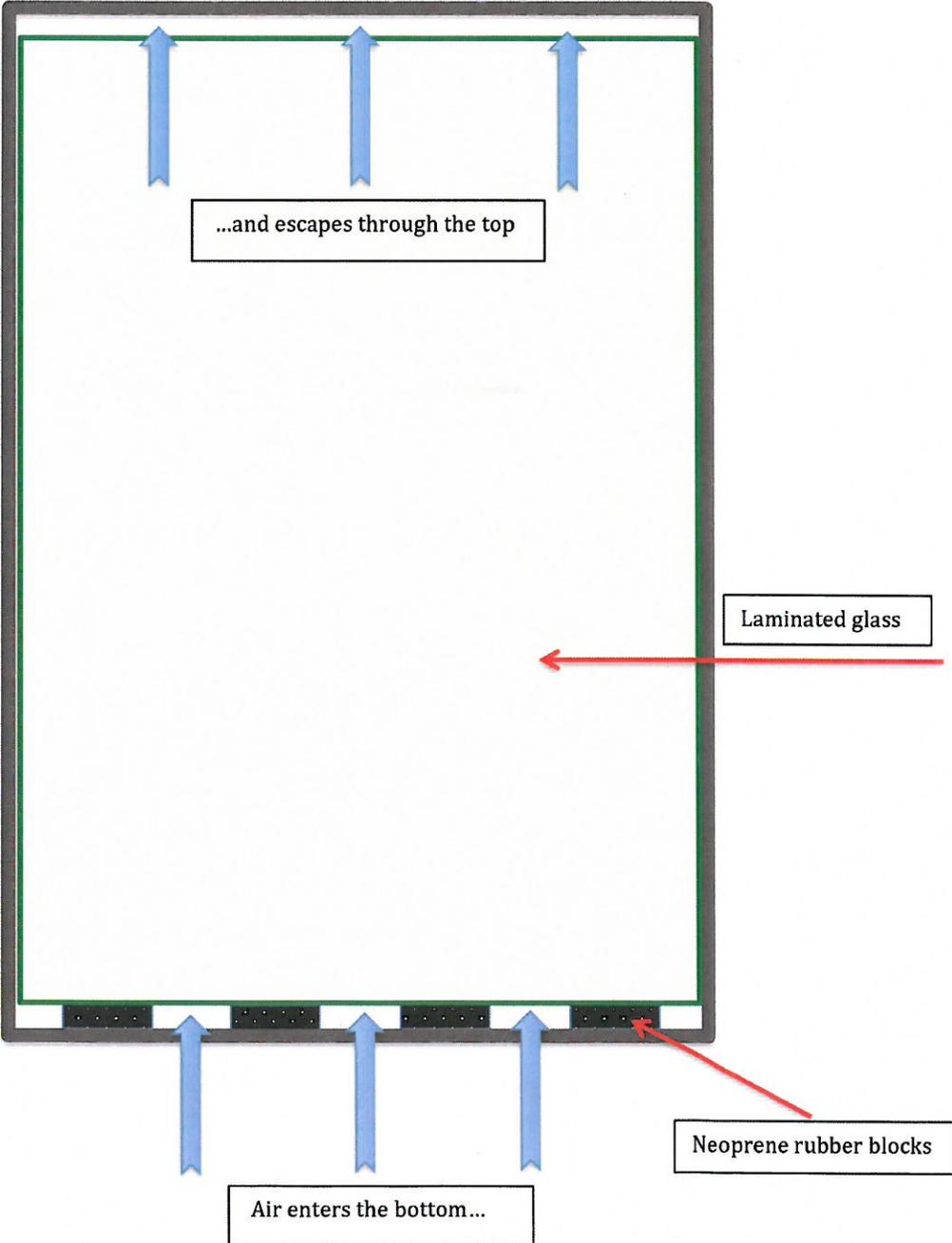
21 Highland Circle – Needham, Massachusetts 02494 (781) 449-2074 – www.serpentinostainedglass.com

VENTING OF EXTERIOR PROTECTIVE COVERING

One method of venting from the exterior is to cut off the corners at the bottom and top of the laminated glass units. Stainless steel screens wrapped in lead are fabricated and attached to the glass where the corners have been cut off. Below is an example of protective covering we installed at St. Paul Episcopal Church in Nantucket, using laminated glass vented from the exterior with the corners cut at the bottom and at the top. This allows for a “chimney effect”, where air enters the bottom and escapes through the top.



Another simple, yet effective method of venting, and perhaps a bit more conspicuous is to cut the new laminated glass slightly smaller in height. During installation, the bottom of the glass will rest on neoprene rubber blocks, leaving approximately a 1/2" space at the bottom and the same at the top. The perimeters are then sealed with silicone sealant, except for several areas at the bottom and top, allowing air to flow, again entering the bottom and escaping through the top (see sketch below). We have done this on many occasions and clients seem to like this option better, as it is less obtrusive



CONTRACTORS BID

Carpentry Work for Window Frames

Contractor

Stephen Themelis
Niklaus Painting and Construction, Inc.
PO Box 223
4 Franklin Street
Pepperell, MA 01463
978.433.2717

From: jthemelis@charter.net [mailto:jthemelis@charter.net]

Sent: Monday, January 04, 2016 10:52 PM

To: Trudy Khosla

Subject: RE: Request for Quote & Happy Holidays

Hi Trudy,

Here is your estimate for the stained glass window work at the Acton Congregational Church.

Remove all wood frames supporting plexiglas and install new 3/4" PVC frames to support new 1/4" safety glass for all stained glass windows.

Total labor and all materials: \$9,975.00

Thank you and please let me know if you have any questions.

Stephen Themelis
Niklaus Painting and Construction Co. Inc.
(978-852-8520 cell)

any special meeting called for that purpose. A certificate of such amendment, signed by the President and Secretary of the Association, shall be recorded wherever this declaration is recorded, and such certificate when so made and recorded shall be conclusive evidence that such amendment was duly adopted. In witness whereof, we hereunto set our hands and common seal, this twenty third day of September A. D. 1914. Edwin A. Thresher (seal) Martin F. Selberg (seal) Fred W. Jordan (seal) Commonwealth of Massachusetts, County of Middlesex, Cambridge Sept. 23rd 1914. Then personally appeared the above named Edwin A. Thresher, Martin F. Selberg, and Fred W. Jordan and acknowledged the foregoing instrument to be their free act and deed, Before me, Edward E. Bartlett Notary Public (Notarial Seal) Middlesex ss. Oct. 9, 1914 10h. 53m. A.M. Recd & Recorded.

For word substituted in one word, see reverse.

Know all Men by these Presents that Whereas on the 13th day of May 1910 the Evangelical Congregational Church of Acton in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts was duly incorporated under the laws of said Commonwealth, and Whereas at a Special Meeting of the Evangelical Society in said Acton duly called and warned for the purpose and held on the 16th day of May 1910 the following vote was unanimously passed; Voted that Lyman G. Taylor, G. Faulkner Bonant and Horace F. Tuttle be and they are hereby authorized in the name and in behalf of the Evangelical Society in Acton Mass. to convey all the real and personal estate belonging to said Society to the Evangelical Congregational Church in Acton Mass. Now therefore we Lyman G. Taylor, G. Faulkner Bonant and Horace F. Tuttle, all of said Acton in consideration of the said church having assumed and agreed to pay the debts of said Society and in consideration of one dollar to us paid by the said church the receipt whereof is hereby acknowledged, do, by virtue of the aforesaid vote, hereby remise, release, and forever quitclaim unto the said Evangelical Congregational Church its successors and assigns forever. A certain parcel of land situated in the center of said Acton being the lot upon which the Meeting House now stands bounded as follows; Beginning at the Northwesterly corner on the road and running southerly on said road seven rods, six and one half feet thence Northeasterly on land formerly of Stephen Weston ten rods and twelve feet, thence Northerly eight

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rods and six feet on land of said Weston, thence Westerly on land formerly of Paul G. Hittidge and Capt. John Fletcher nine (9) rods and 12 feet to the first mentioned bound, being the same premises described in deed of Stephen Weston to J. J. Woodbury et al. dated July 2, 1833, and recorded with Middlesex Co. District Deeds Book 326 Page 183. Also another parcel of land situated opposite the first described parcel. Being the lot on which the Parsonage now stands containing $30 \frac{1}{100}$ square rods, bounded as follows. Beginning at the most Northerly corner of the granted premises one hundred and sixteen feet from the West corner of the Meeting House and $115 \frac{1}{4}$ feet from the Easterly corner of the Shot Shop formerly owned by John Fletcher & Sons, thence Southerly bounding on a town road one hundred forty and one half feet to land formerly of Abby O. Wood thence South $53^{\circ} 05'$ West 39 feet to land formerly of Ephraim Oliver thence North $24^{\circ} 45'$ West $147 \frac{1}{4}$, by land of said Oliver to a stake & stones thence North $70^{\circ} 05'$ East by land of said Oliver $81 \frac{1}{4}$ feet to the place of beginning. Said parcel is conveyed subject to a mortgage given by the Evangelical Society to Luther Bonant, \$900 of the principal of which remains unpaid. Being the same parcel described in deed of F. P. & Abby O. Wood to the Evangelical Society dated Oct. 27, 1887 and recorded with Middlesex Co. Dist. Deeds Book 1857 Page 23. And for the consideration aforesaid we do also sell and convey any and all the personal property of all sorts and kinds which said Evangelical Society now owns or to which it may be entitled to the said Church, the corporation above named and its successors and assigns forever. To have and to hold the granted premises with all the privileges and appurtenances thereto belonging to the said Evangelical Congregational Church and its successors and assigns forever. In witness whereof the said Evangelical Society has caused these presents to be signed in its behalf, by Lyman G. Taylor & Faulkner Bonant and Horace F. Tuttle and its corporate seal to be hereto affixed on this the twenty first day of May 1910 Evangelical Society Acton Mass. by Lyman G. Taylor, E. Faulkner Bonant, Horace F. Tuttle. (Corporate Seal), Commonwealth of Massachusetts, Middlesex ss. June 13, 1910. Personally appeared the above named Lyman G. Taylor, E. Faulkner Bonant, and Horace F. Tuttle and severally acknowledged the

forgoing instrument by them signed to be the free act and deed of said Evangelical Society, before me H. E. Blough, Notary Public. (Notarial Seal)

Middlesex. es. Oct 9, 1914 10 h 55 m. A. M., Read & Recorded.

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74 Know all Men by these Presents that I, Nellie M. Valentine, widow, formerly of Belmont, now of Medford, in the County of Middlesex and Commonwealth of Massachusetts, in consideration of one dollar and other good and valuable considerations to me paid by Meredith W. Palmer of Somerville, in said County, the receipt whereof is hereby acknowledged, do hereby remise, release and forever Quitclaim unto the said Meredith W. Palmer, two certain parcels of land in said Belmont, ^{shown} as lots numbered fifty four (54) and fifty five (55) on a plan of land recorded with Middlesex South District Deeds, Book of Plans number 201, plan 45, entitled "Plan of Wellington Park building lots in Belmont, Mass, Property of L. S. Hamilton April 1911, Walter C. Stevens, surveyor" and bounded and described as follows: Northerly by lot numbered fifty six on said plan ninety and 59/100 (90.59) feet; Southeasterly by Colby Street on said plan one hundred and 83/100 (100.83) feet; Southwesterly by lot numbered fifty three on said plan ninety (90) feet; Northwesterly on said plan by lots numbered thirty two and thirty three on said plan ninety (90) feet; containing by estimation eight thousand nine hundred and seventy four (8974) square feet of land more or less, meaning and intending to convey only lots numbered fifty four (54) and fifty five (55) on said plan, being the same premises conveyed to me by William F. Morang, Trustee of the Wellington Park Land Company, by deed dated August 20, 1912, and recorded as aforesaid, Book 3121, page 538 and this conveyance is made with the benefit of and subject to the restrictions therein mentioned, and subject to taxes assessed as of April 1st, 1914. To have and to hold the granted premises, with all the privileges and appurtenances thereto belonging, to the said Meredith W. Palmer and his heirs and assigns, to their own use and behoof forever. And I do hereby, for myself and my heirs, executors and administrators, covenant with the said grantee and his heirs and assigns that the granted premises are free from all incumbrances made by me, except as aforesaid, and that I

Valentine
to
Palmer

Massachusetts Cultural Resource Information System

Scanned Record Cover Page

Inventory No: ACT.130
Historic Name: Evangelical Church
Common Name: Acton Evangelical Congregational Church
Address: 12 Concord Rd
City/Town: Acton
Village/Neighborhood: Acton
Local No: F-3A-48
Year Constructed:
Architect(s):
Architectural Style(s): Greek Revival; Queen Anne
Use(s): Church
Significance: Architecture; Community Planning; Religion
Area(s): ACT.B: Acton Centre Historic District
ACT.K: Acton Centre Historic District
Designation(s): Local Historic District (3/14/1991); Nat'l Register District (3/10/1983)
Building Material(s): Roof: Asphalt Shingle
Wall: Wood Clapboard; Glass; Wood Flushboard; Wood
Foundation: Granite; Concrete Unspecified; Stone, Cut; Cast Concrete



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Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Massachusetts Historical Commission
220 Morrissey Boulevard, Boston, Massachusetts 02125
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This file was accessed on:

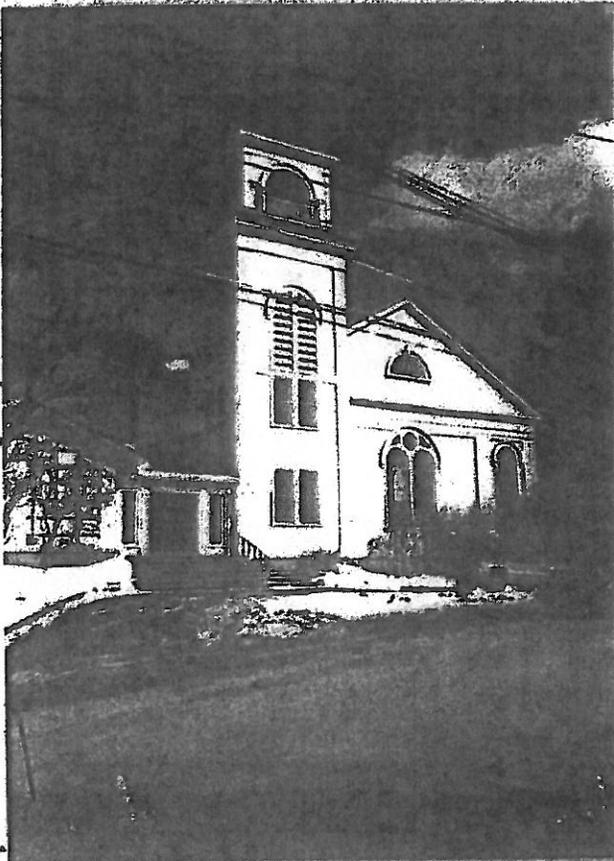
FORM B - BUILDING

Act. 130

D. Act 3/14/91 LHD
USGS
MAYNARD AREA

AREA	FORM NO.
BK	130

NETS. 3110123



Town ACTON IC

Address 12 Concord Road

Historic Name Evangelical Church

The Acton Congregational Church

Use: Present religious

Original religious

DESCRIPTION

Date 1846 / 1898 / 1966

Source Fletcher / Phalen

Style Queen Anne

Architect unknown

Exterior Wall Fabric clapboard

Outbuildings none

Major Alterations (with dates) 1966 - large near wing and small modern ell next to tower

Condition good

Moved no Date n/a

Acreage less than one acre

Setting At village center, near Common and among early to mid 19th century dwellings large building taking up most of lot and extending to the rear of the lot - well established setting

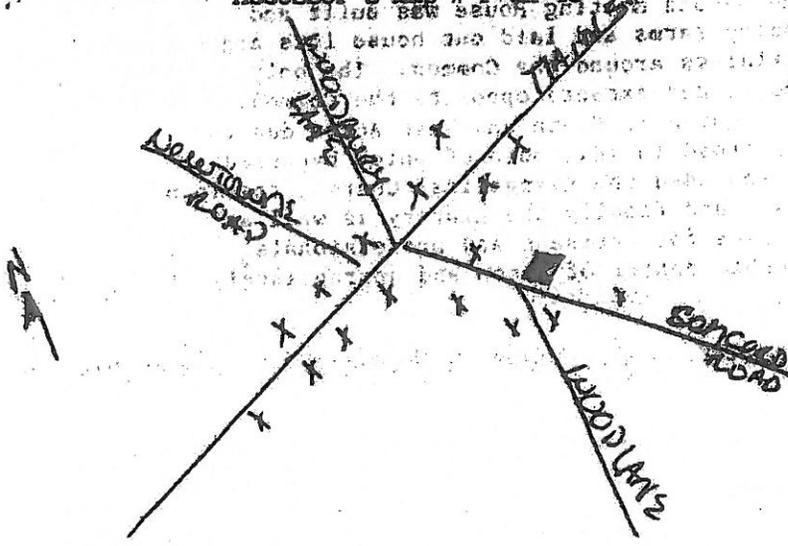
Recorded by Gretchen G. Schuler

Organization Acton Historical Commission

Date March 1990

Indicate north

Assessor's Map # T-3A-48



UTM REFERENCE _____

USGS QUADRANGLE _____

SCALE _____

NATIONAL REGISTER CRITERIA STATEMENT (if applicable)

LISTED ON THE NATIONAL REGISTER IN 1983
ACTON CENTRE HISTORIC DISTRICT

ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE Describe important architectural features and evaluate in terms of other buildings within the community.

HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE Explain the role owners played in local or state history and how the building relates to the development of the community.

Acton Centre, once known as Acton Village, developed as the civic and institutional center of the large sprawling town which has several 19th century village centers. Acton Centre took on its suburban institutional form around an elongated Common from 1806 when the Second Meeting House was built and several local citizens bought surrounding farms and laid out house lots and built an hotel and some commercial buildings around the Common. The only industrial site was a shoe factory (no longer extant) opposite the Common. Most Acton industrial properties were located in South and West Acton due to the water power and location of the railroad in 1844 both of which bypassed Acton Centre. Subsequent development included the Evangelical Church, the Town Hall replacing the Second Meeting House, and finally the Library as well as many mid-19th century Greek Revival houses for artisans and professionals. Acton Centre is the approximate geographic center of Acton and appropriately remains the civic center.

SEE CONTINUATION SHEET

BIBLIOGRAPHY and/or REFERENCES

- Atlas/Map: 1856, 1870, 1875, 1889.
- Fletcher, Acton in History, 1890.
- Phalen, History of the Town of Acton, 1954.
- National Register Nomination, NHC, 1983.
- Notebooks, Acton Library.

INVENTORY FORM CONTINUATION SHEET

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
Office of the Secretary, Boston

ACT-130

Community: ACTON	Form No: B-130
Property Name: 12 Concord Road	

Indicate each item on inventory form which is being continued below.

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION - 12 CONCORD ROAD

Today's Congregational Church is a result of three construction periods all of which can still be seen in the complex Queen Anne design. The templar gable front meeting house built in 1846 on a raised granite block foundation sits at an angle to Concord Road. The clapboard siding, flush board pilasters, and the molded entablature including a molded boxed cornice with full returns has been retained from the building's Greek Revival construction. The flush board pilasters frame the multi-light roundheaded window bays on each end of the large central bay in the gable front facade. These windows and the roundheaded fanlight in the templar gable end all have molded projecting lintels with tab ends. This gable front facade was altered in 1898 with the addition of the large central stained glass window with projecting molded lintel, the removal of the main entrance and the removal of a spire surmounting the gable peak.

The 1898 changes and additions are marked by the corner tower with its clapboard siding, flat corner pilasters with narrow molding suggesting capitals and its roundheaded scalloped louvered openings. The wide entablature and flared cornice support the upper stage of an arcaded bell tower with pyramidal top and cross spire. Each roundheaded arch of the bell tower has a molded projecting lintel springing from bracket or tab ends, and a balustrade across the opening flanked by small window lights.

The 1966 additions include the low 1-story side ell which now houses the entrance to the tower and sanctuary as well as the large gable roof addition at the rear. The enclosed entrance lobby has double panelled doors flanked by 10-light side-lights and separated by pilasters and narrow molding. To the left of this entrance bay is a 1-story gable front section with a raking cornice, no returns, and a vine lattice to break up the solid gable front wall surface. One of the pedimented gable additions is viewed behind the entrance bay and has wide corner pilasters, a deep cornice and returns and three roundheaded windows.

The east side which is partially viewed from Concord Road and from Wood Lane is dominated by a large projecting square bay with pediment top on molded concrete blocks to resemble dressed granite blocks. There are no windows on the front of this projecting bay and three roundheaded windows with projecting lintels and tab ends in the gable pediment. The raised granite foundation of this long east side is punctuated by three large 10/10 windows and one entrance door which is sheltered by the tall projecting bay on stilts. At the rear of the main body is a 1-story connecting ell leading to the wide gable roof 1966 addition which has modern casement windows and ribbon windows marking the top of the raised concrete aggregate foundation.

The west side which is only partially viewed from the public way is complex with a series of projecting gable end additions. The original meeting house design is recalled in the fenestration with multi-light tall windows and roundheaded windows similar to those on the templar gable front facade. From left to right there is the gable end of the large wide 1966 rear addition with wide raking cornice and eave overhang, no returns, and three roundheaded windows of the same size centered on the clapboard wall surface, a long shed roof 1-story ell

Start to Inventory form at bottom

INVENTORY FORM CONTINUATION SHEET

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
Office of the Secretary, Boston

Community: ACTON	Form No: B-130
Property Name: 12 Concord Road	

Indicate each item on inventory form which is being continued below.

ACT. 130

projecting from the main block, a tall templar gable end projecting entrance bay cut into the shed roof extension, and a wide pedimented projection half way between the tall entrance bay and the corner tower. The tall templar entrance bay has long multi-light windows on the side, double door entrance surmounted by a roundheaded multi-light window. The wide gable end projecting bay has three roundheaded windows with the center one taller than the end ones all with stained glass, molded corner pilasters, and a molded cornice with narrow returns. This gabled section sits on the long shed roof addition in which there is a string of vertical rectangular multi-light windows. In front of the tower is the long side of the 1966 addition to the front entrance all west of the tower.

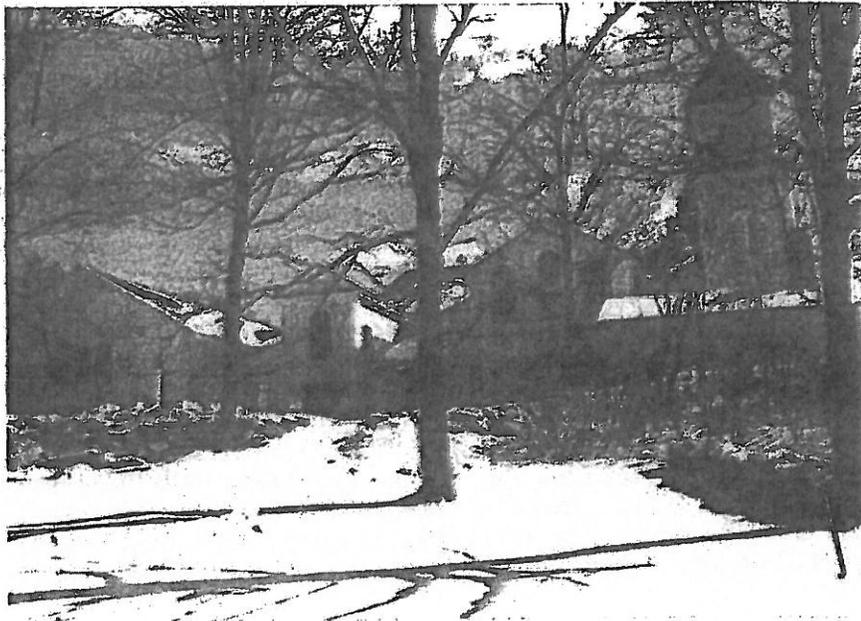
HISTORICAL STATEMENT

The formation of this church's congregation is particularly important in the development of Acton as it was a definitive action in exercising religious freedom when parishioners of the old Congregational Church broke away to form the Evangelical Society in March 1832. Two factions had been growing within the First Parish congregation with the introduction of Unitarian ideas. It was the conservative group or "Vestry" which left the First Parish to form the Evangelical Church. In preparation the Chapel (504 Main Street) had been built in 1829 and the first minister of the newly formed Society, the Rev. James Trask Woodbury (after whom Woodbury Lane is named) was called to service in August 1832. There were 44 founding members and others were admitted every second month for at least the next year with the largest group in November 1833. This rapid growth of the congregation led to the immediate construction of a meeting house on this site in 1833. That building burned in 1846 and the Greek Revival templar front meeting house was built immediately. The cost was \$6,000 for the 50' by 75' building which housed 82 pews. The pipe organ was installed in 1867.

The remodeling of the church building occurred in 1898 and the stained glass windows were gifts from parishioners and friends. The central front window was given by the Hon. William A. Wilde, library benefactor.

In 1910 the Evangelical Church was renamed the Acton Evangelical Congregational Church.

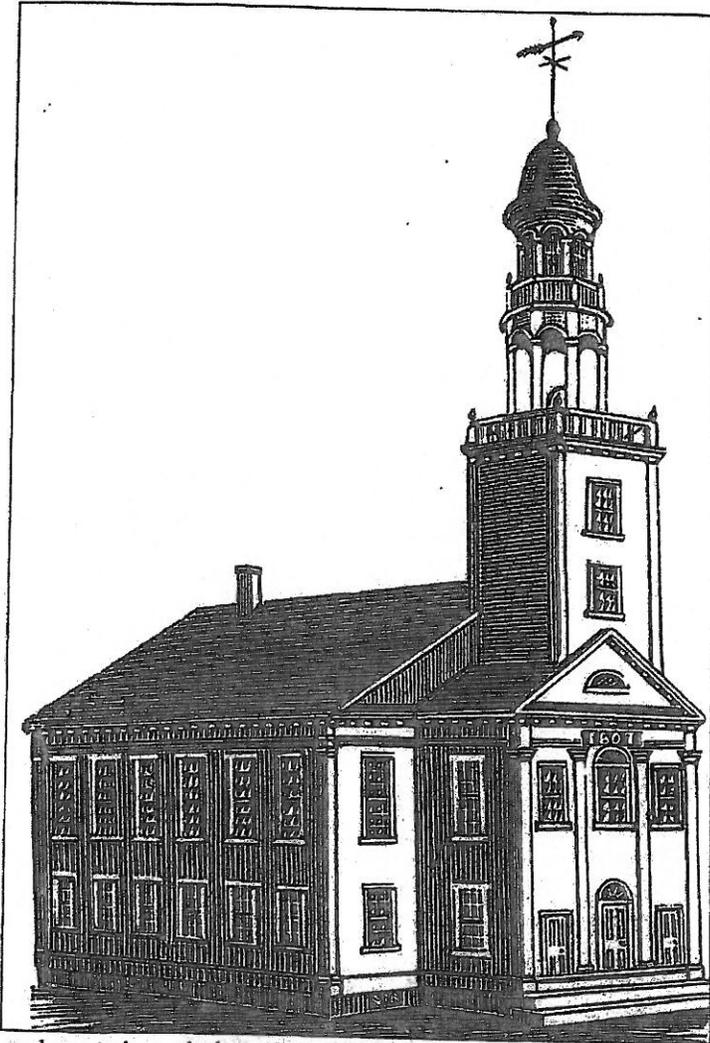
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SIDE VIEW

Church History for CPC

The roots of Acton Congregational Church started in 1735, when the first meeting house was built and Acton became a town. The first meeting house was built on the corner of Nagog and Main Streets currently known as Meeting House Hill. It was completed in 1738, and the first minister was Reverend John Swift. During the 97 years of the First Parish of Acton there were only three



The second meetinghouse, built in 1807, replaced the earlier meetinghouse at the corner of Main Street and Nagog Hill Road, now known as Meeting House Hill. The first meetinghouse had served from the time the town was incorporated. The second one also served for both worship and for town meetings. The building consisted of a main floor with a balcony around three sides and is similar to the First Parish Church in Carlisle in both the date of construction and appearance. As with the Carlisle church, a second floor was constructed by joining the balconies. The building was deeded to the Town of Acton in 1858 and became the town house. In 1862, a fire originated in the tailor's shop building and spread to a barn. Also consumed were the hotel, the Fletcher shoe factory, and, finally, the second meetinghouse.

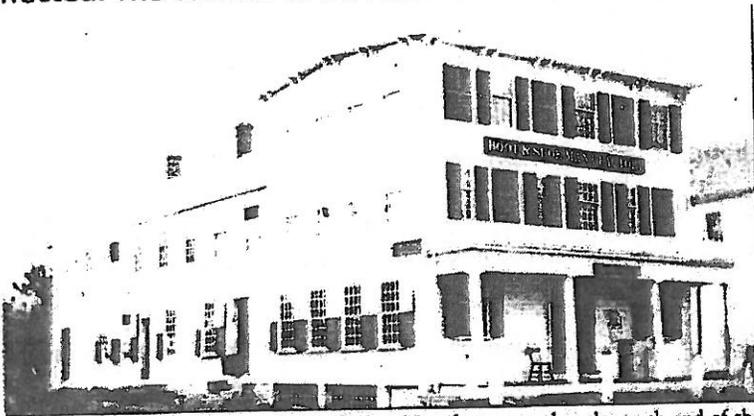
ministers: Reverend Swift, Reverend Moses Adams, and Reverend Marshall Shedd. Reverend Swift was the Minister to Captain Isaac Davis and went to his house to bless the Minutemen on April 19th, 1775, before the march to Concord.

During Reverend Adams' ministry a new meeting house was built on the site of the present town hall and was dedicated in 1807. Reverend Moses Adams addressed the Davis Blues before they started to Boston for the war of 1812.

In 1832, the Acton Evangelical Society split from the Universalist Society. The Universalists remained at the Second Meeting House. When repairs became too expensive, the lower part of the Second Meeting House was leased to the town, leaving the upper part for religious services until 1859, when the whole building was deeded to the town.

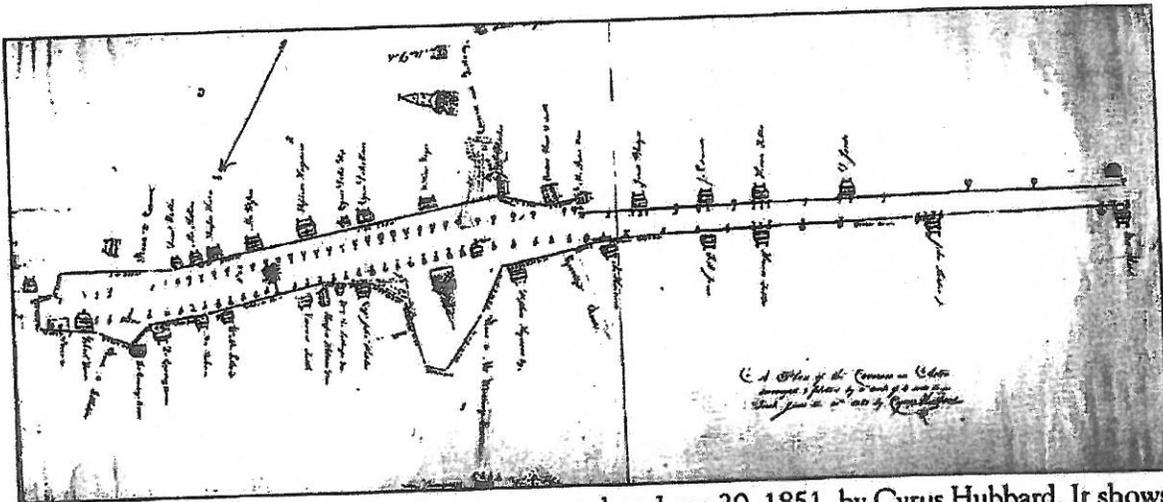
Unfortunately, the building burned to the ground in 1862, in a fire that threatened to consume the entire Acton Centre Village. The fire started in a tailor shop near where the current fire station stands, burned the Fletcher Shoe Factory and then the meeting house side of the road. The Fletcher Homestead stood where the library now stands, and was likely burned as well. The buildings across Concord Road were not

affected. The current Town Hall was erected in 1863.



The first John Fletcher & Sons Boot and Shoe Manufactory stood at the south end of the common near the present Spanish-American War Memorial. It appears on the map to be in the middle of what is now Concord Road. The building to the right is the store and tailor shop, where the fire originated in 1862 that burned the factory, barn, hotel, and town house. The shoe factory was replaced along with the hotel and the town hall the following year.

When the Evangelical Society split from the church, it was done via a motion at a meeting in the Second Meeting House. It was signed by 16 men with last names of Hayward, Wheeler, Tuttle, Conant and Hapgood. These are all important families in the town. Fifty-nine members asked to be dismissed to form the Evangelical Society of Acton. The new church was later known as the Evangelical Congregational Church until 1963, when it changed its name to Acton Congregational.



This is a plan of the common in Acton, surveyed on June 20, 1851, by Cyrus Hubbard. It shows later changes, such as the monument and road changes, in pencil. Notable is the fact that there is a shoe manufactory facing the common in the area of the present Spanish-American War Memorial and the hotel and barn that occupied the space between the present fire station and Main Street. (Town of Acton.)

10

In 1832, the church called Reverend James Trask Woodbury. He would also serve as a representative to the state legislature for one term while he was minister. He was credited with

getting the state funds to build the Davis Monument in the Acton Center common.



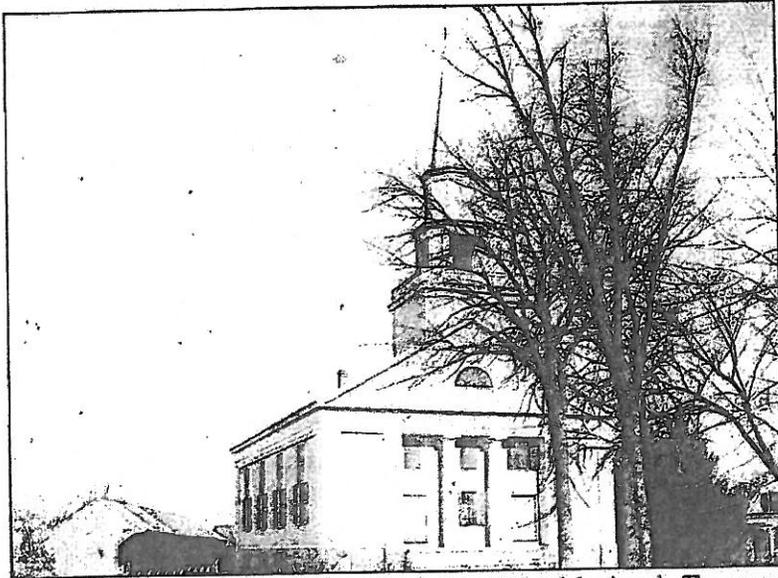
Rev. James Trask Woodbury graduated from Harvard University in 1823 with a law degree and was admitted to the New Hampshire bar in 1826. Several years later, he became interested in the ministry and, after more education, served the Evangelical church from 1832 until 1852. During his tenure in Acton, he petitioned the Massachusetts legislature for a sum of money to erect the monument on the town common. His efforts raised \$2,500, and the town of Acton raised \$500; the monument was dedicated on April 19, 1851. (Author's collection.)

Hannah Davis, the widow of Capt. Isaac Davis, died in 1741 and was buried in Woodlawn Cemetery next to her husband, who was killed at the North Bridge on April 19, 1775. Ten years later, the captain's remains were moved to the monument along with those of Abner Hosmer and James Hayward, who were also killed the same day. (Author's collection.)



He also secured a pension from the state for Captain Isaac Davis' widow, Hannah Davis (more below, see Wood). He was known for his anti-slavery sermons, and there have been rumors that he and the church were part of the Underground Railroad.

A chapel, which is the current Acton Woman's Club building, was built in 1829. This land was owned by the Reverend Moses Adams' estate and sold to Reverend Shedd in 1820, and Reverend Shedd deeded the property to Messrs. Davis, Wheeler and Parlin, who were trustees of the church when the chapel was built. Meetings of the Evangelical Church were held in the chapel. The chapel became too small for the growing congregation, and in 1833, the congregation built a



The Acton Center Congregational Church was built c. 1833 and faced south. The present building is dated 1846 but may be the 1833 building turned 90 degrees to face west. The steeple was originally central and was moved to the left corner in the late 1890s to give the building a Queen Anne appearance. Noteworthy in this image are the horse sheds, and the semicircular window is the most obvious architectural feature that has not changed during the church's history.

larger structure on the site of the present church. It was modeled after the Westford Union Congregational Church. The building was torn down in 1846, for construction of a larger church at the same site, using part of the same foundation at a cost of approximately \$6,000. It was a Greek Revival style with a center steeple and twin pillars at the entrance. While the 1833 building looked straight down Wood Lane, the second building was square to Concord Road after the road was built in 1836. The church had a Victorian renovation and 1898, which moved the steeple

from the center to the left side, where it is today. That is also the time when the stained glass windows were installed and dedicated to loyal members of the church, including Conant, Davis, and Hayward. The honorable William A. Wilde, the donor of the Acton Memorial Library, gave the double front window to the church in 1898, when all the stained glass was installed. This window is unique because many details, especially the details of Christ's face, are painted on the interior side of the stained glass and cannot be seen from the outside.

This occurred during the ministry of Reverend Franklin Wood, who was the first occupant of the church's parsonage, built in 1875. It is the Victorian building standing at One Wood Lane next to the fire house.

Reverend Wood is best known for a speech that he gave in 1875, at the centennial of the Concord fight, which apparently was the greatest celebration Middlesex County ever experienced. In the audience were numerous dignitaries, including President Grant and ex-President Franklin Pierce. In Reverend Wood's speech, he related the details regarding the part played by Captain Isaac Davis and the other men of Acton in the Concord fight, and concluded by reading the deposition of Hannah Davis concerning her knowledge of the events of the day.

The parsonage at Wood Lane was renovated in 1951, before Reverend Grimshaw's ministry started. With a growing congregation and the desire to have all church properties on one contiguous lot, the church bought the building at 481 Main Street adjacent to the church and directly across the street from the Town Hall in 1958. The property was known as the Lothrop property. It consisted of approximately one acre of land on the Village Green. The house was known as the Brooks-Noyes house, and had a large barn that was converted into a much needed Sunday School space. It is believed to have been built in 1790 and was documented to have existed when the First Meeting House was erected. The church sold this house in 2002. This was done primarily because parsonages were no longer of interest for Senior Ministers and the addition on the church made the Sunday School space in the barn redundant.

In 1961, the church called Reverend Justin Hartman. During his time, the church expanded quickly. It added the Senior Minister's office, a church administration office, a library off of the front near Concord Road, and a large structure in the back that included classrooms, a large worship area and a kitchen. Today this is known as Hartman Hall.

In 1966, the Bean House (John Fletcher House) came on the market. The church's funds were committed to the parish hall and library expansion. Miss Gladys Bean, in her will, had left her house to the church, but when she entered Rivercrest Deaconess Home in Concord, a condition of her admittance was that her property would go to the Home. In 1966, the Home was willing to sell the Bean House to the church. Church members, however, felt it was not the best time for the church, having just taken out a large mortgage for the parish hall construction. Everyone agreed, however, that the location of the property made it crucial for the church to own the house. Her adamant desire that the church must buy it, along with her at least half serious threat that she would "never speak to any church members again if they didn't buy it" probably settled the issue. The Board of Trustees did manage the \$12,766.44 purchase price, but making the house livable was mostly the work of the Youth Director, Richard Sparrow, and his wife Jane, who took up residence there. On October 29th, 1967, they had sufficiently repaired and redecorated to hold an open house for the church. This house is believed to be built in 1851.

The land on which the house was built at 8 Concord Road was conveyed by Mrs. Hannah Layton to David Bernard in 1816, along with one third of the blacksmith shop that stood on the premises. In 1820, James and John Fletcher had established a store and shoemakers shop on the land. The present house, originally a Greek Revival style and later Victorianized, was built after 1851. It is not shown on the 1851 survey of the Common. The complete renovation of the Bean house in 1975 added greatly to the value of the property. A plan was presented for gutting the interior of the house and then rebuilding it entirely within the empty shell. The work began in early April

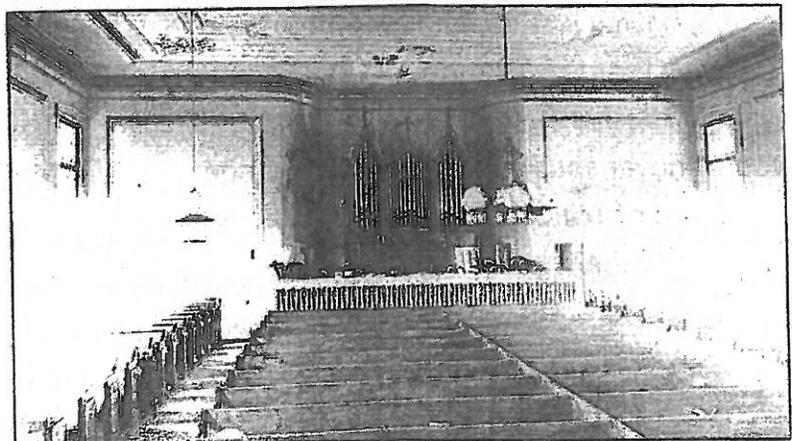
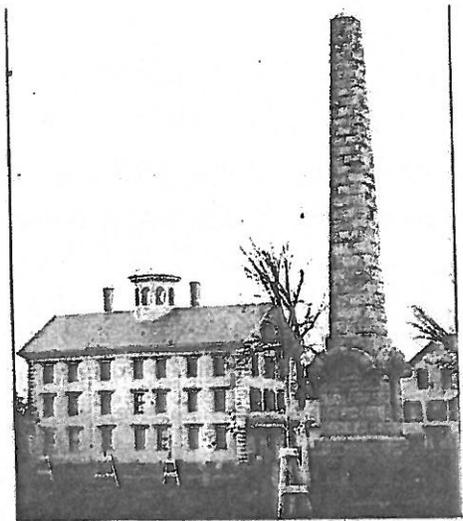
1975, and was finished on January 4th, 1976. It is estimated that the renovation utilized \$20,000 worth of volunteer labor. The work was practically the equivalent of building a completely new house.

The current organ in the church is the third in its history. It was built by JH & CS Odell in 1888, for the Chapel of the Holy Cross Academy, 343 West 42nd Street Manhattan New York. It became available in 1973, when the Academy building was scheduled for raising. The organ was obtained by the Andover Organ Company, Methuen, MA and dismantled just ahead of the wrecking ball, to be completely rebuilt and revoiced by that company. The organ was located for our church by the Organ Clearing House, Harrisville, New Hampshire. Like the Simmons organ before it, the instrument has tracker action, making it reliable, long-lasting and pleasing to play. It was installed in the church in the fall of 1976. In February of 1982, the Andover Organ Company installed a new 8-foot oboe organ stop in the pipe organ.



This is an interior view of the Acton Center Congregational Church of 1898. Changes included the repositioning of the pulpit, organ, a corner of the church and installing stained-glass memorial windows on the left side of the room could be opened to increase the s

In 1863, the John Fletcher & Sons Boot and Shoe Manufactory was rebuilt on the same location and was similar to the architectural features on the present Acton Town Hall, also rebuilt at the same time. The new factory was three stories in height, had a central cupola with a flagpole on top, and a front porch similar to the town hall. In the background is the Monument House, which replaced a former hotel. Both of these buildings have since burned—the factory in 1893 and the hotel in 1913.



This is an undated image of the interior of the Acton Center Congregational Church after the organ was installed in 1867.

Even the church bell has a long history. It may have been what Henry David Thoreau records that he heard from the Acton church on Sunday. In *Walden; or Life in the Woods*, in which he tells of a two-year experiment in living in the edge of Walden Pond beginning in 1845, Thoreau writes, "Sometimes, on Sunday, I heard the bells, the Lincoln, Acton, Bedford or Concord bells,

when the wind was favorable, a faint, sweet, and, as it were, natural melody, worth importing into the wilderness."

The present bell was dated 1860, and has commemorated many significant events in our national history. It was rung by one man from the 1920s until 1977; that man was Mr. R. J. Bond. We know it was rung to mark the end of World War II in August of 1945; to celebrate the end of the Korean War in the 1950s; in January 1973, to show the end of the long drawn out war in Vietnam; and on July 4th, 1976, to mark the entry of the United States into the 3rd century. In addition, the bell is rung every Sunday morning before the church service begins and on request, when newly married brides and grooms leave the church. The 1860 bell, present today, is inscribed, "*Oh bless our God ye people and make the voice of His praise be heard. Enter into His gates with Thanksgiving and into His court with praise - 1860.*"