

Massachusetts Cultural Resource Information System

Scanned Record Cover Page

Inventory No:	WEY.58
Historic Name:	Old South Union Church
Common Name:	
Address:	25 Columbian St
City/Town:	Weymouth
Village/Neighborhood:	Weymouth
Local No:	
Year Constructed:	c 1853
Architect(s):	
Architectural Style(s):	Greek Revival; Italianate
Use(s):	Church
Significance:	Architecture; Religion
Area(s):	WEY.A: Columbian Square
Designation(s):	Nat'l Register Individual Property (4/1/1982)
Building Materials(s):	Roof: Asphalt Shingle Wall: Wood Clapboard; Brick



DEMOLISHED

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Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Massachusetts Historical Commission
220 Morrissey Boulevard, Boston, Massachusetts 02125
www.sec.state.ma.us/mhc

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FORM B - BUILDING

MISSION
, Boston

In Area no.

Form no.

A

58

1. Town Weymouth

Address 25 Columbian St.

Name Old South Union Church

Present use Church

Present owner Union Congregational
Society of Weymouth

3. Description:

Date 1853-54

Source Church records

Style see attachment

Architect _____

Exterior wall fabric clapboard

Outbuildings (describe) none

Other features see attachment

Altered additions Date 1876
1963

Moved _____ Date _____

5. Lot size: 74,900 sq. ft.

One acre or less _____ Over one acre x

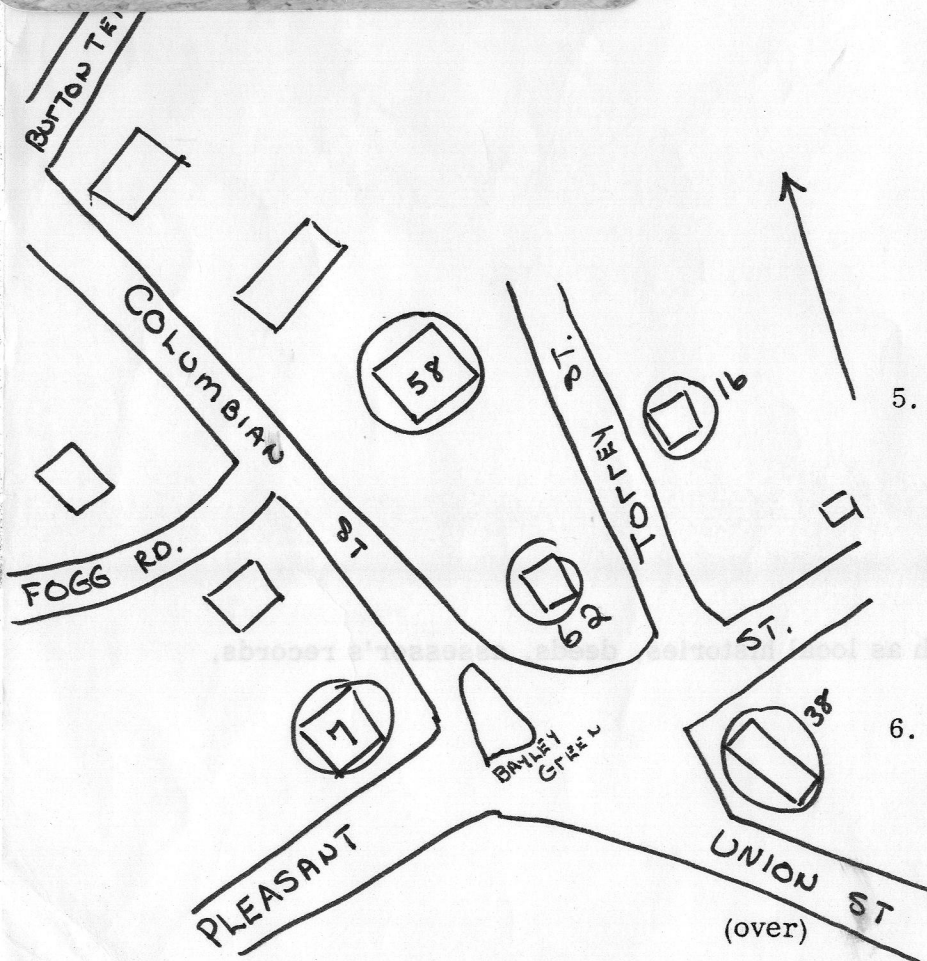
Approximate frontage 350+ ft.

Approximate distance of building from street
100ft.

6. Recorded by Sharon Cassani Clarke

Organization Weymouth Hist. Commission

Date April 1979



(over)

7. Original owner (if known) South Church, Union Congregational Society

Original use Meetinghouse, civic and religious

Subsequent uses (if any) and dates _____

8. Themes (check as many as applicable)

Aboriginal	_____	Conservation	_____	Recreation	_____
Agricultural	_____	Education	_____	Religion	<u>X</u>
Architectural	<u>X</u>	Exploration/ settlement	_____	Science/ invention	_____
The Arts	_____	Industry	_____	Social/ humanitarian	_____
Commerce	_____	Military	_____	Transportation	_____
Communication	_____	Political	_____		
Community development	<u>X</u>				

9. Historical significance (include explanation of themes checked above)

see attached Anniversary pamphlet

10. Bibliography and/or references (such as local histories, deeds, assessor's records, early maps, etc.)

Church records

Weymouth Historical Commission

3 April 1979

Architectural Evaluation of The Old South Union Church on
Columbian Street

Old South Union Church is a fine example of mid 19th century eclecticism, a period when many changes were taking places in American architectural design. The ornamental forms derives from the classic eras were still prevalent in the the 1850s, but now different expressions and styles were often mixed. On first glance, the church gives the simpression of a Greek Revival building with its projecting center pavilion or porch laden with Greek Revival details: flush boarding, pilasters framing the door, corner pilasters with recessed centers at the corners, wide cornice board and a closed pediment decorated with modillions. However, on closer inspection one notes the manisfestation of one of the new styles to emerge in the 1850s, the Italianate-Bracketed Style. The main body of the church structure, although still retaining its rectangular form and plan in which the entry and the pulpit face each other on the long axis, it is now embellished on the exterior, with characteristic Italianate-Bracketed details, such as the double brackets under the projecting roof, the quoins articulating the corners and the heavy hooded arched moulding, also bracketed, on top of the tall arched windows of the side.

Preserved in the church archives, is a hand written document, the Minutes of the Building Committee and their efforts in "undertaking to build a new house (September 8, 1853). Its contents gives

thousand dollars including painting, fixtures, and stone or mason work".

The interior follows the instructions of the Building Committee with its coved ceiling (September 4, 1854 "Voted that the ceiling be arched about feet each way from the corner") and the specified amount of pews. Most of the details are based on the classic idiom, such as the balustraded choir loft and the facing of the organ loft made up of Roman arched opening framed with pilasters. The benches are finished with sunken panelling, have solid sides, are now painted white and are decorated with a mahogany finials.

The overall composition of the structure is rather simple, but two details give it a rather unique character, and indicate the human involvement in the design; first are the most unusual capitals of the facade pilasters, and secondly is the presence, on the side of the porch, of Tudor arched doors, set within a mitered frame. It seems that one of the members of the building committee wished for some kind of Gothic form for the new church; he was listened to, but not in an obvious way, Greek and Italianate was the visible form.

Monique Lehner

1. Peter Benes, "The Templeton "Run" and the Pomfret "Cluster": Patterns of Diffusion in Rural New England Meetinghouse Architecture, 1647-1822" in Old-Time New England, The Bulletin of the Society for the Preservation of New England Antiquities, Winter-Spring 1978, Serial Nos. 2510252. p. 1

us first hand evidence of the type of thinking that went on in the process of deciding the style of a new meeting house or church. In the SPNEA Bulletin of Winter-Spring 1978, Numbers 251-252, Peter Benes in his article explores the pattern of regional differences within a pattern of architectural uniformity. "Pilastered facade¹ porches" were used from the early 19th century on, with variations in the main body and the steeple. He traces the diffusions of certain bell tower and porch designs throughout three areas in Massachusetts, Connecticut and New Hampshire. One can assume that the Building Committee of the Old South Union Church engaged in this type of "committee design". On November 7, 1853, they voted to have a "colonnade front....and the clock or _____ (not legible) steeple" and the "sill to be raised at least three feet above the ground". The steeple chosen is somewhat reminiscent of the one illustrated in Mr. Benes' article, on Page 8, Figure 2, of Hancock, New Hampshire 1819. In the photograph, one notes a steeple of a square on square, topped by two octagonal parts, whereas in Weymouth the design is simpler, a square decorated with pilasters, pierced by round faced clocks, topped by a chamfered smaller square (almost an octagon) with tall arched openings as in Hancock, New Hampshire, and with the interpolation of a band with small round openings, the whole is finished with a tall spire. On January 16, 1854, the Committee voted that "Mr. Earl Rider engaged to superintend the building of the new meeting house, to furnish plans at 3.50 per day and board....He said he could build the house after the plan agreed (author's underlining) to by their committee for nine