

FORM B – BUILDING

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
MASSACHUSETTS ARCHIVES BUILDING
220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD
BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

Assessor's Number USGS Quad Area(s) Form Number

N/A	Nashua South		CLM.394
-----	--------------	--	---------

Town/City: Chelmsford

Place: (*neighborhood or village*): North Chelmsford

Photograph



Address: 11-15 Princeton Street

Historic Name: North Chelmsford Congregational Church

Uses: Present: church

Original: church

Date of Construction: 1894

Source: *Images of America: North and West Chelmsford*

Style/Form: Romanesque Revival

Architect/Builder: Merrill & Cutler – church, Arthur Peters – parish house

Exterior Material:

Foundation: stone

Wall/Trim: vinyl siding/wood

Roof: asphalt shingle

Outbuildings/Secondary Structures: none

Major Alterations (*with dates*):

1958 parish house addition

Ca. 1990 vinyl siding on the 1st story

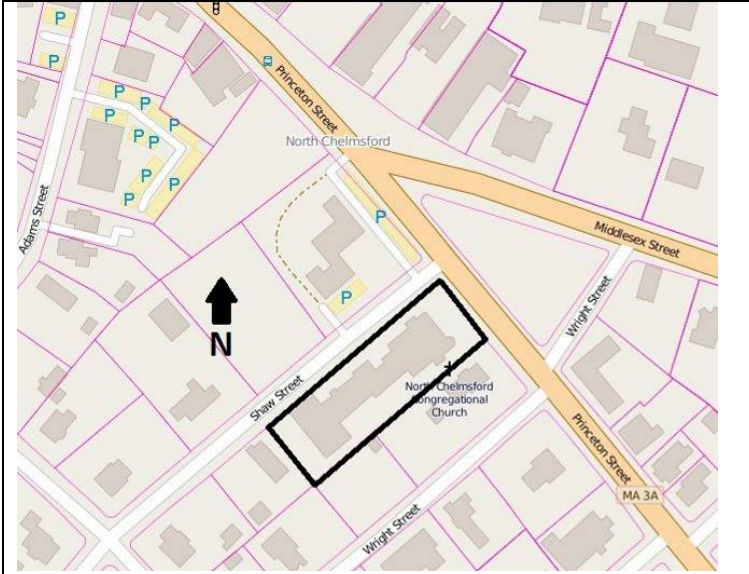
Condition: Fair

Moved: no yes **Date:**

Acreage: less than one acre

Setting: The church is located at the southwest corner of Princeton and Shaw sts, approximately 50' from Princeton St. The building encompasses most of the parcel with flat grassy areas around the perimeter. A path leads from the street to the main entry. The surrounding area includes 19th and 20th residential and commercial developments.

Locus Map



Recorded by: Jennifer Burden, Gray & Pape, Inc.

Organization: Chelmsford Historical Commission

Date (*month / year*): June 2016

INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

CHELMSFORD

11-15 PRINCETON STREET

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

Area(s) Form No.

CLM.394

Recommended for listing in the National Register of Historic Places.

If checked, you must attach a completed National Register Criteria Statement form.

Use as much space as necessary to complete the following entries, allowing text to flow onto additional continuation sheets.

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION:

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

The church mostly follows a Latin cross plan and has a stone foundation and an asphalt-shingled roof. The first story is clad in replacement vinyl siding, but the upper story is covered with painted wood shingles, which was the original material used to clad the building. Fenestration throughout the building is historic and includes a large cinquefoil stained glass window below the gable peak of the primary (northeast) façade, triple, double-hung, leaded glass windows topped with square transoms below the cinquefoil; one-over-one double-hung windows within the turret at the east corner of the façade; double-hung windows on the tower; and large, arched stained glass windows on the northwest wall. The main entry is located at the north corner of the façade and is sheltered by a one-bay portico. The tower is immediately behind the entry; it stands three stories in height and is topped with an open belfry and pyramidal roof. The aforementioned turret at the east corner is one-story tall and also features a pyramidal roof. A secondary entrance with a historic wood paneled door is located to the east of the turret and is sheltered by a shed roof hood and features decorative brackets that are covered with siding. An internal brick chimney is located behind the turret.

A large, one-story addition was constructed at the rear of the church in 1958, as noted by the date stamp on the stone retaining wall. The addition has a concrete foundation, walls clad in wide siding, and a multiple-plane asphalt-shingled roof. The addition features elements of the Neoclassical style, including fluted pilasters and front gable pediments. Fenestration appears to be historic six-over-six double-hung windows with decorative shutters. The main entry within the east bay of the northwest wall is accessible via stone steps with brick risers. The doorway includes a historic wood paneled door with sidelights and a sunburst transom.

The church is a good example of late nineteenth century ecclesiastical architecture that retains historic integrity of location, setting, materials, feeling, and association.

HISTORICAL NARRATIVE

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.

A second Congregational Church was authorized for the Middlesex Village section of Chelmsford in 1821 and a church building was dedicated in 1822. By 1830 the Unitarian Church assumed operation of the building, but abandoned it in 1836. (Around 1860 members of the Roman Catholic Church saved that building from demolition by moving it to the corner of Middlesex and Church streets.) The Middlesex Village congregations temporarily moved to a North Chelmsford schoolhouse in 1836, and in 1828 constructed a new church building with a store in the ground floor on Middlesex Street property later occupied by the Silesia Mill (see photograph below). The church building burned on January 20, 1893 when a dog accidentally knocked over a kerosene lamp placed on the floor to warm an employee of the E. Shaw and Son store.

Elisha H. Shaw (1847-1898), whose store was located in the previous church building, donated the land next to his house for the construction of a new church building. The new church was designed by the architecture firm of Merrill & Cutler. Otis Addison Merrill (1844-1935) and Arthur Sidney Cutler (1854-1903) worked out of Lowell, where they designed several buildings, including Lowell City Hall (LOW.1131). The 1900 Lowell City Directory notes that at this date Merrill was then partnered with Perley F. Gilbert, and their firm of Merrill & Gilbert succeeded that of Merrill & Cutler. The new church was dedicated on April 26, 1894. The church continues to function as the Congregational Church of North Chelmsford.

The parish house was added to the rear of the church building in 1958 and designed by Arthur Peters (1903-1981). Peters is listed as a designer in Lowell and also designed the Wamesit Lodge in Tewksbury, MA.

INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

CHELMSFORD

11-15 PRINCETON STREET

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

Area(s) Form No.

CLM.394

BIBLIOGRAPHY and/or REFERENCES

Merriam, Fred. *Images of America: North and West Chelmsford*. Arcadia Publishing, Charleston, South Carolina. 2016.

Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps of Lowell, MA. 1907 and 1950.

Waters, Dr. Wilson. *The History of Chelmsford, Massachusetts*. Lowell, Mass., 1917.



1836 Church building showing the E. Shaw & Son store on the ground floor. (Chelmsford Historical Society.)

INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

CHELMSFORD

11-15 PRINCETON STREET

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

Area(s) Form No.

	CLM.394
--	---------



11 Princeton Street, facing west.
May 2016.



Parish house in the foreground, taken from Shaw Street, facing northeast.
May 2016.

Congregational Church in North Chelmsford

Historical Outline

1. 1654, November 22 – At the Town of Chelmsford first meeting an agreement with Rev. Fiske to become the town's first settled pastor is approved
2. 1659-1660 the first meeting house is built in the center part of town.
3. 1659-1660 This meeting house was the home of the First Congregational Church and Society of Chelmsford serving the town's first parish.
4. 1803 the Middlesex Canal opens on the Merrimack River running a course to Charlestown. Middlesex Village grows at the entrance to the canal.
5. 1821 the Town Meeting approves the Rev. Wilkes Allen to preach to the people of Middlesex Village "one Sunday in three" provided a meeting house by built or place of worship be secured.
- * 6. 1821, July 9 – The meeting house at Middlesex Village is built at the intersection of Baldwin and Middlesex Streets.
7. 1822, January 31 – The meeting house is dedicated
8. 1822, February 10 – Rev. Allen presided over the Church's first service in its formed history.
9. 1824, February 16 – 41 individuals sign a paper to form a religious society, the Second Congregational Society in Chelmsford.
10. 1824, March 21 - Fourteen members of the First Congregational Church and Society of Chelmsford were dismissed under good terms to form a new church and society.
11. 1824, April 27 – A council made up of pastors and delegates from nearby towns and churches organized the Second Congregational Church and Society and it was separated from the parent church in the first parish.
12. 1827, November 21 - Rev. John A. Albro, was ordained and installed as our Church's first pastor.
13. 1830 the majority of pew holders held Unitarian beliefs and voted the Congregationalists and Rev. Albro out of the Church.
14. 1830 – 1836 – The congregation meets at Wood's Hall.
15. 1836 – The congregation moves to the *Old Red School House* on Princeton Street between Gay and Washington Streets.

16. 1839, August 1 – Rev. B.F. Clark is ordained and installed as the Church's 2nd pastor.
Rev. Clark serves for twenty-nine and a half years.
17. 1839, September – A church building was constructed in the mill yard between Middlesex Street and Princeton Street, known as the North Chelmsford Meeting House.
18. 1893, January 20– The North Chelmsford Meeting House burns, Mrs. Arthur Sheldon saves the pulpit and pulpit chairs still in use today.
19. 1893, October 7 – The cornerstone of the building on Princeton Street at Shaw Street is laid.
20. 1894, April 26 – The building on Princeton Street is dedicated.
21. 1912 – The Church is incorporated as The Congregational Church in North Chelmsford.
22. 1900's – The basement under the building is dug out and rooms added.
23. 1939 – The steeple was straightened and braced from damage caused by a hurricane in 1938.
24. 1956 – A fund Drive is launched to raise money to expand the building.
25. 1958, July – Construction of the Parish House begins.
26. 1959, April 19 – The Parish House was dedicated.
- This outline references the basic chronological history of the Congregational Church in North Chelmsford.