

FORM B - Building

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

Map and Lot # 112 63 USGS Quad Y Area(s) 196 Form Number
 Town Groton
 Place (neighborhood or village) Groton Center

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)

Address 297 Main Street
 Historic Name Sacred Heart Parish
 Uses: Present Vacant
 Original Church
 Date of Construction 1887
 Source "Groton at 350"

Style/Form English Revival
 Architect/Builder Henry Vaughan, Architect
 Exterior Material:
 Foundation Unknown
 Wall/Trim Stucco, wood clapboard
 Roof Asphalt shingle
 Outbuildings/secondary structure

Major Alterations (with dates)
 Enlarged, 1891

Condition Good
 Moved no yes Date 1904

Acreage 1.45
 Setting Town center

Sketch Map



Recorded by Sanford Johnson

Organization Groton Historical Commission

Date (month/year) 6/06

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 Sacred Heart Parish Catholic Church is an English Revival style, front-gabled, 1x6-bay form with wood clapboard siding in the façade and stucco as well as clapboard in the side elevations. The rear of the roof peak is occupied by an 8-sided octahedral bell tower that rises from a square base with louvered side panels. Enclosed gabled porches occupy the center of the façade and the southeast corner of the side elevation. A variety of window types exists, including the fixed stained glass example in the steeply pitch gable peak of the façade, tripartite 6-pane fixed sash in the front entry porch, casements with quarrel panes in the side entry porch and double-hung units in the side elevations. Wall fields finished with stucco on the side elevations and in the peak of the side porch are divided by half-timbering. The church is in excellent condition and appears to be relatively unaltered despite its having been moved from the campus of the Groton School on Farmers Row 1 ½ miles to the south.

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 first Catholic church in Groton was located in the former industrial village of South Groton and now the town of Ayer, in 1858. Sufficient numbers of Catholics, mostly Irish immigrants, had moved to the northern part of town around Groton Center by 1890 that the priest from the Ayer parish said a mass in a vacant schoolhouse starting around that time. By 1895, the Episcopal Groton School on Farmers Row had outgrown its 150 seat chapel built in 1887 and constructed the exiting stone Gothic building in 1899. Both the 1887 and 1899 chapels were designed by the renowned Gothicist architect Henry Vaughan, designer of the National Cathedral in Washington DC among numerous other landmarks. Unable to make use of two churches, the original chapel's donor, Groton School teacher and nephew of Isabel Stewart Gardner, William Amory Gardner, again donated the 1884 building, this time to the Catholics of Groton. It was moved on rollers in September, 1904 from the northeast corner of Peabody Street and Farmers Row to the current site on Main Street and consecrated by Archbishop John Williams in October, 1905. Daniel C. Lovell was listed in the 1888 resident directory as a building mover and may have been involved in this project. The first permanent priest, Charles Finnegan, arrived in 1907. By 1955, the church had 500 parishioners, a number that increased through much of the 20th century. Later developments, including a reduction in church attendance overall, the crisis in the Catholic Church in general and the Boston Archdiocese in particular, caused the Sacred Heart Parish to be closed in 2006. The building remains unused.

BIBLIOGRAPHY and/or REFERENCES

continuation sheet

"Groton at 350", pp. 129-135; Robert A.M. Stern, "The Architecture of St. Paul's School and the Design of the Ohrstrom Library"

**** 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.

INVENTORY FORM CONTINUATION SHEET

Town
Groton

Property Address

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

Area(s)

Form No.

297 Main Street



Massachusetts Historical Commission

Community Groton

Massachusetts Archives Building
220 Morrissey Boulevard
Boston, Massachusetts 02125

Property Address
297 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 English Revival Style former Sacred Heart Catholic Church at 297 Main Street is potentially eligible for the National Register of Historic Places as an individual resource at the local level. The first Catholic Church in Groton was located in the former industrial village and now the town of Ayer, in 1858. Sufficient numbers of Catholics, mostly Irish immigrants, had moved to the northern part of town around Groton Center by 1890 that the priest from the Ayer parish said a mass in a vacant schoolhouse starting around that time. By 1895, the Episcopal Groton School on Farmers Row had outgrown its 150 seat chapel built in 1887 and constructed the exiting stone Gothic building in 1899. Both the 1887 and 1899 chapels were designed by the renowned Gothicist architect Henry Vaughan, designer of the National Cathedral in Washington DC among numerous other landmarks. It was moved on rollers in September, 1904 from the northeast corner of Peabody Street and Farmers Row to the current site on Main Street and consecrated by Archbishop John Williams in October, 1905. The first permanent priest, Charles Finnegan, arrived in 1907. The building's associations with religious activity establish its significance under Criterion A. The refined Late Gothic - English Revival design and the surviving historic exterior materials including the locally rare stucco cladding make the property eligible under Criterion C. The church retains integrity of design, materials and workmanship.