

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

1. *Name of Property*
St. James Episcopal Church
2. *Location*
125 Huntington Street, Corner of Federal Street
New London, CT
3. *Classification*
4. *State/Federal Agency Certification*
5. *National Park Service Certification*
6. *Function/Use*
7. *Description*
8. *Statement of Significance*
9. *Major Bibliographical References*
10. *Geographical Data*
11. *Form Prepared By*

Sketch Map
Photographs

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
REGISTRATION FORM**

=====

1. Name of Property

=====

historic name: ST. JAMES' EPISCOPAL CHURCH

other name/site number: N/A

=====

2. Location

=====

street & number: 125 Huntington Street, corner of Federal Street

city/town: New London

not for publication: N/A
vicinity: N/A

state: CT county: New London

code: 011 zip code: 06230

=====

3. Classification

=====

Ownership of Property: private

Category of Property: building(s)

Number of Resources within Property: 4

Contributing	Noncontributing
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<u>1</u>	<u> </u> buildings
<u> </u>	<u> </u> sites
<u> </u>	<u> </u> structures
<u>2</u>	<u> </u> objects
<u>3</u>	<u>0</u> Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register: 0


Name of related multiple property listing: N/A

=====

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

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As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this X nomination _____ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property X meets _____ does not meet the National Register Criteria. _____ See continuation sheet.



Signature of certifying official

6/18/90

Date

John W. Shannahan, State Historic Preservation Officer

State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property _____ meets _____ does not meet the National Register criteria. _____ See continuation sheet.

Signature of commenting or other official

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

=====

5. National Park Service Certification

=====

I, hereby certify that this property is:

_____ entered in the National Register
_____ See continuation sheet.

_____ determined eligible for the
National Register

_____ See continuation sheet.

_____ determined not eligible for the
National Register

_____ removed from the National Register

_____ other (explain): _____

Signature of Keeper

Date
of Action

=====

6. Function or Use

=====

Historic: RELIGION

Sub: religious structure

Current : RELIGION

Sub: religious structure

=====

7. Description

=====

Architectural Classification:

Gothic Revival

Other Description: _____

Materials: foundation sandstone roof slate
walls sandstone other other: stained glass
_____Describe present and historic physical appearance. X See continuation sheet.

=====

8. Statement of Significance

=====

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties: national.Applicable National Register Criteria: A,CCriteria Considerations (Exceptions) : AAreas of Significance: ARCHITECTURE
ART
RELIGION
_____Period(s) of Significance: 1847-c.1918 _____Significant Dates: 1847-1850 (built), c.1905-1920 (windows)Significant Person(s): N/A
_____Cultural Affiliation: N/A _____Architect/Builder: Upjohn, Richard

_____State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.
X See continuation sheet.

9. Major Bibliographical References

X See continuation sheet.

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- ☐ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.
- ☐ previously listed in the National Register
- ☒ previously determined eligible by the National Register
- ☐ designated a National Historic Landmark
- ☐ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
- ☐ recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

Primary Location of Additional Data:

- ☐ State historic preservation office
- ☐ Other state agency
- ☐ Federal agency
- ☐ Local government
- ☐ University
- ☐ Other -- Specify Repository: _____

10. Geographical Data

Acres of Property: .7 acres

UTM References: Zone Easting Northing Zone Easting Northing

A	<u>18</u>	<u>742620</u>	<u>4582220</u>	B	_____	_____
C	_____	_____	_____	D	_____	_____

____ See continuation sheet.

Verbal Boundary Description: ____ See continuation sheet.

The nominated property consists of Parcels 1 and 1A, Block 208, Tax Map 36, as shown in the records of the New London Assessor.

Boundary Justification: ____ See continuation sheet.

The boundary includes the church and attached parish center, but excludes the adjacent rectory, already listed on the National Register as part of an historic district. This is the historic extent of church property.

11. Form Prepared By

Name/Title: Bruce Clouette and Matthew Roth, Reviewed by John Herzan, National
Register Coordinator

Organization: Historic Resource Consultants Date: January 15, 1990

Street & Number: 55 Van Dyke Avenue Telephone: 203-547-0268

City or Town: Hartford State: CT ZIP: 06106

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section 7

St. James' Episcopal Church Page 7-1
New London, CT

Description (continued):

St. James' Episcopal Church (Photographs 1 and 2) in New London is a large Gothic Revival-style stone church building completed in 1850. The church occupies a prominent corner lot at the intersection of Huntington and Federal Streets at the northern edge of New London's downtown commercial area. The church is cruciform in plan and measures about 110' long and 85' across the transepts. The gable roof, covered with gray slates, is steeply pitched over the narrow nave and has only a slightly gentler slope over the side aisles. At the northwest corner of the church a large square-plan tower rises to a height of 156'. Its tall belfry stage has a single large pointed-arch opening on each side, filled with complex wooden tracery. Crockets line the ridges of the tower's octagonal stone spire, which is surmounted by a cross. The corners of the building, including the shallow projection of the nave on the facade (west elevation), have stepped buttresses, some with gablets on the lower stages. The buttress on the southwest corner is large and continues above the eaves as a pinnacle.

The building's main entrance (Photograph 3) is centered on the west elevation. Double board-and-batten doors on intricately scrolled iron hinges are enframed by a simple beveled surround. Above the pointed-arch doorway is a steeply pitched gable molding flanked by small pinnacles and terminated by a fleur-de-lis finial. The area between the arched opening and the molding is filled with geometric stone tracery formed of circle, teardrop, and trefoil elements. There are similar secondary entrances at the base of the tower and on the north transept.

Above the main entrance in the west-facing gable is a large round window with a four-petaled flower outlined in the tracery. Most other windows in the church are lancet windows incorporating trefoil arches within their curving, geometric tracery. The windows have simple stone drip molds, and all are fitted with stained glass. The windows in the transepts and above the altar are larger than the side windows.

Other decorative features found on the church include fleur-de-lis finials on the southwest pinnacle and gable peaks, corbelling beneath the gable coping, and an elaborate molded water table at the base of the building. The walls of the church are built of a random ashlar of red New Jersey sandstone; both the vermiculated stone of the walls and the smooth stone used for buttress coping, quoins, drip molds and other trim show moderate erosion due to weathering and the effects of sand-blast cleaning fifteen years ago. (Photographs 3 and 4).

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CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section 7

St. James' Episcopal Church Page 7-2
New London, CT

Description (continued):

Attached to the rear of the church is the Seabury Center (Photograph 5), a two-story monitor-roofed addition with walls built of small sand-colored concrete masonry units and partly faced with slate. It was built in 1967.

Demarcating the church property on the north and west sides is a cast-iron fence (Photograph 6). Between the top and bottom rails is an arcade of trefoil arches. The fence rests on a rusticated sandstone base, and there are two thick octagonal gateposts at the main entrance. The fence is a contributing object, as is the marble grave-marker tablet surrounded by an iron pale fence in the north yard: the monument formerly stood over the grave of Samuel Seabury in a New London cemetery. It was moved to its present site at the time the church was built, when Seabury's body was interred in the church's crypt. The original stone is now protected by a replica laid on top.

The church's interior is highly original and is elaborately finished with dark-stained paneling and exposed structural woodwork (Photographs 8 and 9). The trefoil-arch motif found in the window tracery is continued in the paneled dado which extends along all interior walls, in the communion rail, and in the paneled railing for the shallow gallery at the rear of the nave. Between the center and side aisles are two sections of box pews, with side paneling in the form of cinquefoil arches (Photographs 9 and 14). The wall between the vestibule at the west end and the nave proper is similarly finished with intricate arched shapes. The paneling on the interior doors (Photograph 13) echoes the curving, geometric tracery of the large windows. Floors (Photograph 13) are tiled in quilt-like geometric patterns of triangles and squares.

The roof of the church is supported by two rows of piers between the nave and aisles, each a cluster of eight engaged columns surrounding a round center shaft (Photographs 8 and 9). The piers support large arches which in turn carry rafters for the main roof. Between the piers are large arched braces, above which is a series of small columns and trefoil arches. The arches form a beam beneath the rafter ends at the point where the main and aisle roofs join. The aisle roofs are carried on simple triangular trusses formed from the rafters and horizontal ties, beneath which are arches running from molded corbels on the side walls to the capitals of the main piers. The arches and spandrels of the roof bracing (Photograph 10) are ornamented with carvings in the shape of molded, scalloped arches terminating in cusps and fleur-de-lis decorations, with three levels of arches within arches

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**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section 7

St. James' Episcopal Church Page 7-3
New London, CT

Description (continued):

beneath the main rafter bracing.

The chancel (Photograph 8) was redone around 1914, at which time the organ keyboard and choir seats were installed. The altarpiece is original, however, and features five steeply pitched gables. The center gable is above the tabernacle on the large altar table. The side gables are presently painted with the text of the Beatitudes, the Lord's Prayer, the Apostles' Creed, and selections from the letters of St. Paul. To the left of the altar, against the east wall, is a marble cenotaph in the shape of an arched niche. Honoring Samuel Seabury (Photograph 15), it is original to the church and was designed by the building's architect, Richard Upjohn.

The church's original windows were purchased from the Sharpe studio of New York City. Most are simple grisaille glass, painted with fleurs-de-lis (Photograph 10), but the round west window is filled with stained-glass depicting the symbols of the four Evangelists and the large window above the altar has myriad Christian symbols in stained-glass, all within a meandering grapevine motif (Photograph 8). Later memorial windows include one on the life of Seabury and seven windows from the Tiffany Studios: Jesus appearing to fishermen (Photograph 12), the Annunciation (Photograph 11), shepherds in the field, the Holy Family, allegorical figures of Truth and Justice, a grouping of Sts. Sebastian, Joseph, and Francis, and a memorial to two brothers killed in World War One. Six of the seven are signed "Tiffany Studios, New York" and are listed in the firm's catalogs.¹

East of the church, at 119 Huntington Street, is a Greek Revival-style house which for many years has served as the rectory for the church. As it is already listed on the National Register as part of the Whale Oil Row historic district, it was not included as part of the property herein nominated.

¹Tiffany Studios was adopted as the name of the firm in 1902. The catalogs cover the period up to 1910, so they could not include the war memorial window.

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**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
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Section 8

St. James' Episcopal Church Page 8-1
New London, CT

Significance (continued):

Summary

St. James' Episcopal Church in New London has great architectural significance as an example of Gothic Revival architecture. With its cruciform plan, steeply pitched gables, stone material, pointed-arch openings, and extensive medieval detailing, it embodies all the distinctive characteristics of the Gothic Revival style. Moreover, it is a large and important work by one of America's leading 19th-century architects, Richard Upjohn (1802-1878), and it possesses high artistic values. The aesthetic qualities of the church are further enhanced by its seven stained-glass windows from Tiffany Studios, windows which incorporate the innovative layering technique, distinctive palette, and figures that are characteristic of Tiffany (Criterion C).

As the church building of New London's oldest Episcopal parish, St. James' Church also is of local significance for its association with the history of organized religion in that community (Criterion A).

Although properties owned by religious institutions or used for religious purposes are ordinarily not considered eligible for the National Register, the architectural and artistic qualities of St. James' Episcopal Church give the building exceptional significance that justifies its inclusion on the Register (Criteria Consideration A).

Architectural Significance: Richard Upjohn and the Gothic Revival

The thousands of Gothic-inspired churches built in America from the mid-19th century through the 1930s make it hard to appreciate the revolution in church architecture brought by the early Gothic Revival. Although scattered examples were built from the 1790s onward, it was not until the 1840s and 1850s that Gothic form and detailing became the dominant style for American churches. At a time when most churches had plainly finished interiors and continued to follow the Classical models introduced in the Federal and Greek Revival periods, Gothic churches such as St. James' opened up new possibilities for color, texture, rich detailing, complex plans, and soaring interior spaces. Episcopal parishes had a special interest in the style because of its association with their English historical roots and because of its suitability for their liturgy. Yet so great was its

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CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section 8

St. James' Episcopal Church Page 8-2
New London, CT

Significance (continued):

appeal to Victorian taste that virtually all major Christian denominations built extensively in the Gothic style from the middle 19th century onward.

English-born Richard Upjohn was among the most influential of the early Gothic Revival's American proponents. His Trinity Church in New York City, completed the year before work began on St. James', attracted both national attention and notice among English architects. Upjohn's subsequent churches, including St. James', became widely known and were closely studied by architects who themselves designed churches in a Gothic mode. Upjohn is said to have had the largest ecclesiastical architectural practice in America. In addition to his role in developing church architecture, Upjohn has significance as a founder of the American Institute of Architects; he served as the group's first president from 1857 to 1876.

St. James' Church epitomizes Upjohn's work. Like nearly all his churches, it relies on English precedent for its material, form, and detailing. Although the exterior has buttresses, corbels, and other identifiably medieval details, the overall appearance is one of simplicity, appropriate to the English parish church which was the model for the early Gothic Revival. Like all of Upjohn's churches and most others from the early period, St. James' lacks the polychromatic masonry and dense, heavy ornament characteristic of later Victorian Gothic churches. Other significant elements of St. James' include its exceptional woodwork, particularly the curvilinear tracery in the windows (Photograph 8) and door panels (Photograph 13); the intricate roof bracing, which was important to Upjohn as an expression of structure and is found in most of his early churches; and the use of repetitive elements, such as the trefoil and cinquefoil arches which appear in the pews, the dado, the outside fence, and elsewhere in the church, lending unity to the design. Upjohn worked as a cabinetmaker in his early years, which undoubtedly added to his exceptional abilities in designing woodwork for his churches.

For St. James parish, Upjohn originally drew a much simpler building in the Early English mode, but he was persuaded to produce a more ornate design, which was used to build the church. As soon as St. James' was finished, Upjohn was criticized by purists in the New York Ecclesiological Society, who found the roof bracing of St. James'

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

All photographs:

- Detail of interior framing, camera facing northeast
 Photograph 10 of 15

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**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Photograph captions

St. James' Episcopal Church Photos-2
New London, CT

Tiffany stained-glass windows along north wall, camera facing northwest
Photograph 11 of 15

Tiffany stained-glass window, south wall, camera facing south
Photograph 12 of 15

Typical interior door, south door between vestibule and nave, camera
facing south
Photograph 13 of 15

Detail of pews and floor, camera facing northwest
Photograph 14 of 15

Seabury cenotaph, camera facing east
Photograph 15 of 15

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CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section 8

St. James' Episcopal Church Page 8-3
New London, CT

Significance (continued):

church "Moorish" rather than properly English Gothic.¹ Although the rector of St. James, Robert Hallam, was unhappy with some of the "High Church" aspects of Upjohn's designs (Upjohn himself considered his churches as expressions of his religious faith), New Londoners in general approved of the building. Two years after its consecration a local historian wrote:

This church, in completeness of design and architectural elegance, holds the first rank among the ecclesiastical edifices of the state. . . . It is a noble and massive structure.²

Artistic Significance: Tiffany Studios

The seven Tiffany windows in St. James' Church (Photographs 11 and 12), installed c.1905-c.1920, are representative examples of the work of America's most innovative producer of architectural art glass and demonstrate many of the firm's identifying characteristics. Louis Comfort Tiffany (1848-1933) started making glass for himself in 1878, and over the next half century his studio introduced glass-making techniques which made the firm's windows unique. His innovations included special opalescent and iridescent glass, metalized surfaces, "fractured" glass that included small bits of colored glass within the larger sheet, "drapery" glass that was folded while still hot, mottled glass formed by injection of fluorine compounds, and "flashed" glass composed of two layers joined together while hot and acid-etched to selectively reveal the layers. Another of his techniques was plating,

¹New York Ecclesiologist, July 1851; quoted in Phoebe B. Stanton, The Gothic Revival and American Church Architecture: An Episode in Taste, 1840-1856 (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1968), 185. In contrast, English Ecclesiologists criticized St. James' for the plainness of its exterior; see Everard M. Upjohn, Richard Upjohn, Architect and Churchman (New York: Columbia University Press, 1939), 77.

²Frances Manwaring Caulkins, History of New London, Connecticut (New London: priv. pr., 1852), 594.

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CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section 8

St. James' Episcopal Church Page 8-4
New London, CT

Significance (continued):

whereby windows were built up with multiple layers of colored glass. Tiffany's objective was to accomplish as much as possible with the glass itself and not to rely on applied paint. Tiffany's delineation of his subjects was also distinctive: he made extensive use of shimmering landscapes, he favored lush, draping vegetation with myriads of small leaves, and he drew faces and figures with the delicate, almost ethereal expressions characteristic of Art Nouveau.³ Church windows such as those in St. James' made up the largest part of Tiffany's business.

Local Historical Significance

St. James' parish started as a small group of followers of the Church of England which first met in New London in 1725. Over the years the parish grew, and by 1850, when this building, the third to serve the parish, was consecrated, St. James' included some of New London's wealthiest and most influential families, people who had prospered from the city's whaling and commercial enterprises. The parish has the distinction of having been under the care of Samuel Seabury (1729-1796), the first Episcopal bishop in the United States. Seabury, rector of St. James' from 1783 to 1796, was consecrated a bishop in Aberdeen, Scotland, in 1784. Upon his return to the United States, he balanced his duties at St. James' with travels to ordain priests, confirm children, and oversee the affairs of the American church. Seabury was born nearby in what is now Ledyard, Connecticut, and was buried in New London. At the time of the building of the present church, his remains were transferred to St. James' crypt. Seabury is considered the leading figure from the Episcopal church's early days, both for his early efforts as a missionary priest and as the country's first bishop. At St. James' his memory is honored by the cenotaph within the church, designed by Upjohn, and by the relocated monument which formerly marked his grave.

³Tiffany Studios employed many designers who, while working under Tiffany's direction and inspiration, were individually responsible for the windows.

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CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section number 9

St. James' Episcopal Church Page 9-1
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Bibliography (continued):

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Upjohn, Everard M. Richard Upjohn, Architect and Churchman. New York:
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STATE OF CONNECTICUT
CONNECTICUT HISTORICAL COMMISSION

August 31, 1990

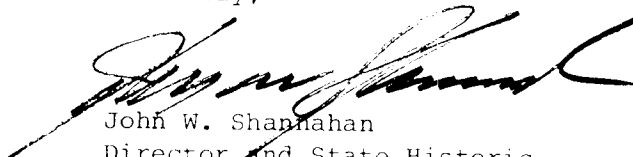
The Reverend Ralph Merrill
Saint James' Episcopal Church
125 Huntington Street
New London, CT 06320

Dear Reverend Merrill:

It is a great pleasure to inform you that St. James' Episcopal Church, New London, Connecticut, has been determined eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places effective August 2, 1990.

This property was nominated for listing in the National Register by the State Historic Preservation Officer but cannot be listed at this time. The National Preservation Act and Federal regulations 36 CFR 60 provide that owners of private properties nominated to the National Register must be given an opportunity to concur in or object to listing. If the owner of an individually nominated property or the majority of owners of an individually nominated property or the majority of owners in the case of a nomination which includes multiple ownership, object to the listing, the nomination cannot be entered in the National Register. Such objection has occurred in this case. Federal agencies are required to comment before the agency may fund, license, or assist a project which will affect properties determined eligible for the National Register.

Sincerely,



John W. Shanahan
Director and State Historic
Preservation Officer

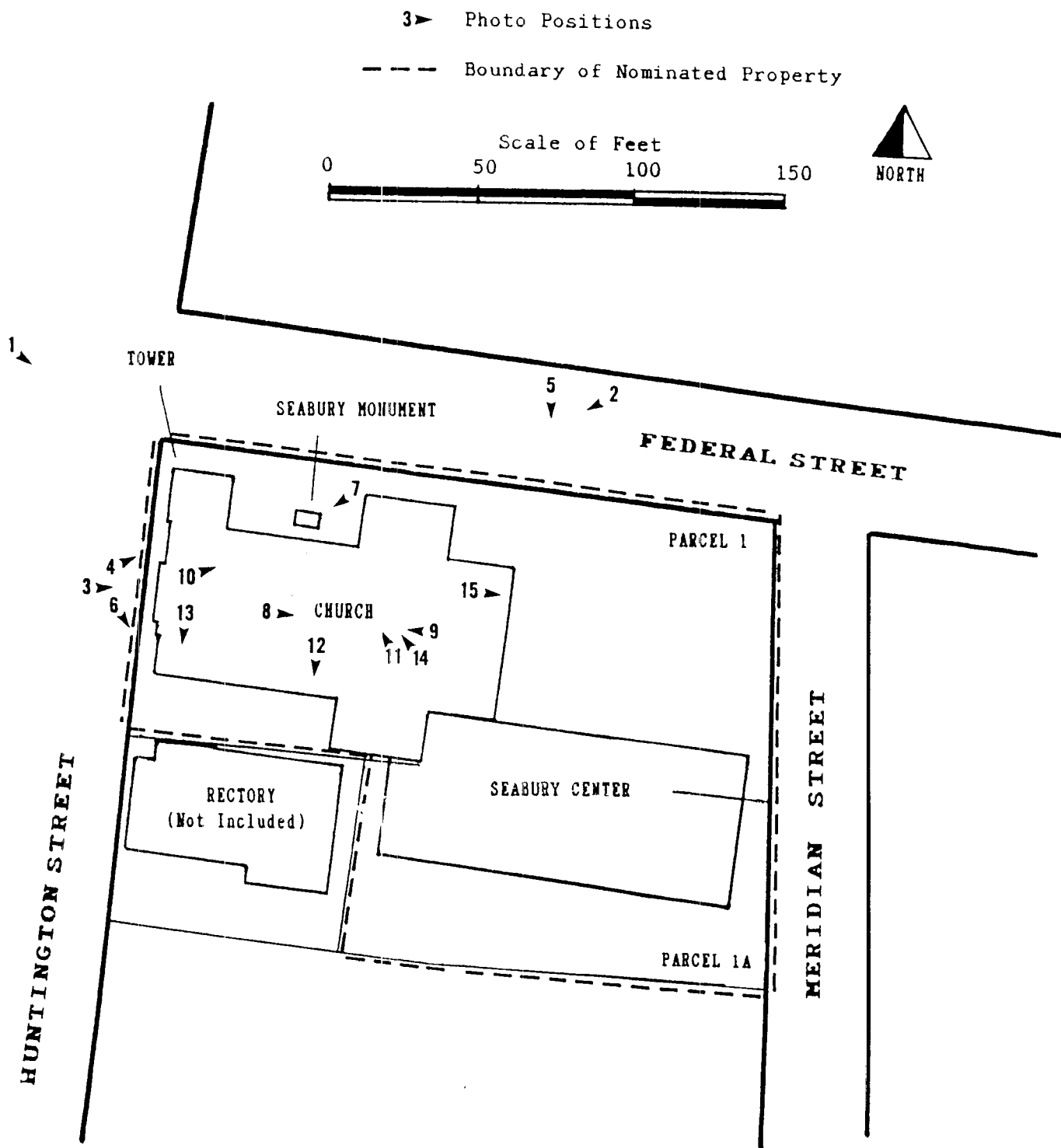
JH:mf

cc: The Honorable Stephen Massad
C. Francis Driscoll, City Manager
Harold Arkaba, Chairman, Planning & Zoning Commission
Richard B. Erickson, Executive Director, Southeastern Connecticut
Regional Planning Agency
Frank L. McGuire, Chairman, Historic District Commission
Mrs. Lisa Perrin, President, New London County Historical Society
Peter Haller, Executive Director, New London Landmarks
Bruce Clouette/Matthew Roth, National Register Consultants
Sarah M. Ryan, Municipal Historian

ST. JAMES' CHURCH

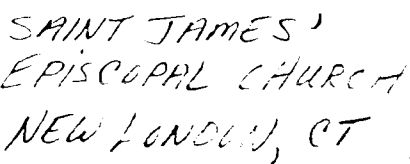
New London, Connecticut

SKETCH MAP



6566 1 NW
(MONTVILLE)

(11)



UTM:

18/742626/4582220

West elevation, camera facing southeast
Photograph 1 of 15



North elevation, camera facing southwest
Photograph 2 of 15



Main entrance, camera facing east
Photograph 3 of 15



St. James Church
EPISCOPAL
Rev. RALPH H. MORRILL
RECTOR
SUNDAY SERVICES
8:00 a.m. & 10:00 a.m.
Office in Sanctuary Center
(ON FEDERAL STREET)

St. James Church
EPISCOPAL
ORGANIZED
MAY 27, 1725
Pastor: RALPH H. MORRILL
155 N. BROAD ST.
BOSTON, MASS. 02108
The Trustees of St. James Church
Incorporated in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts
INCORPORATED: JUNE 11, 1890

USE
TOWER
DOOR

Detail of stone work, west elevation, camera facing northeast
Photograph 4 of 15



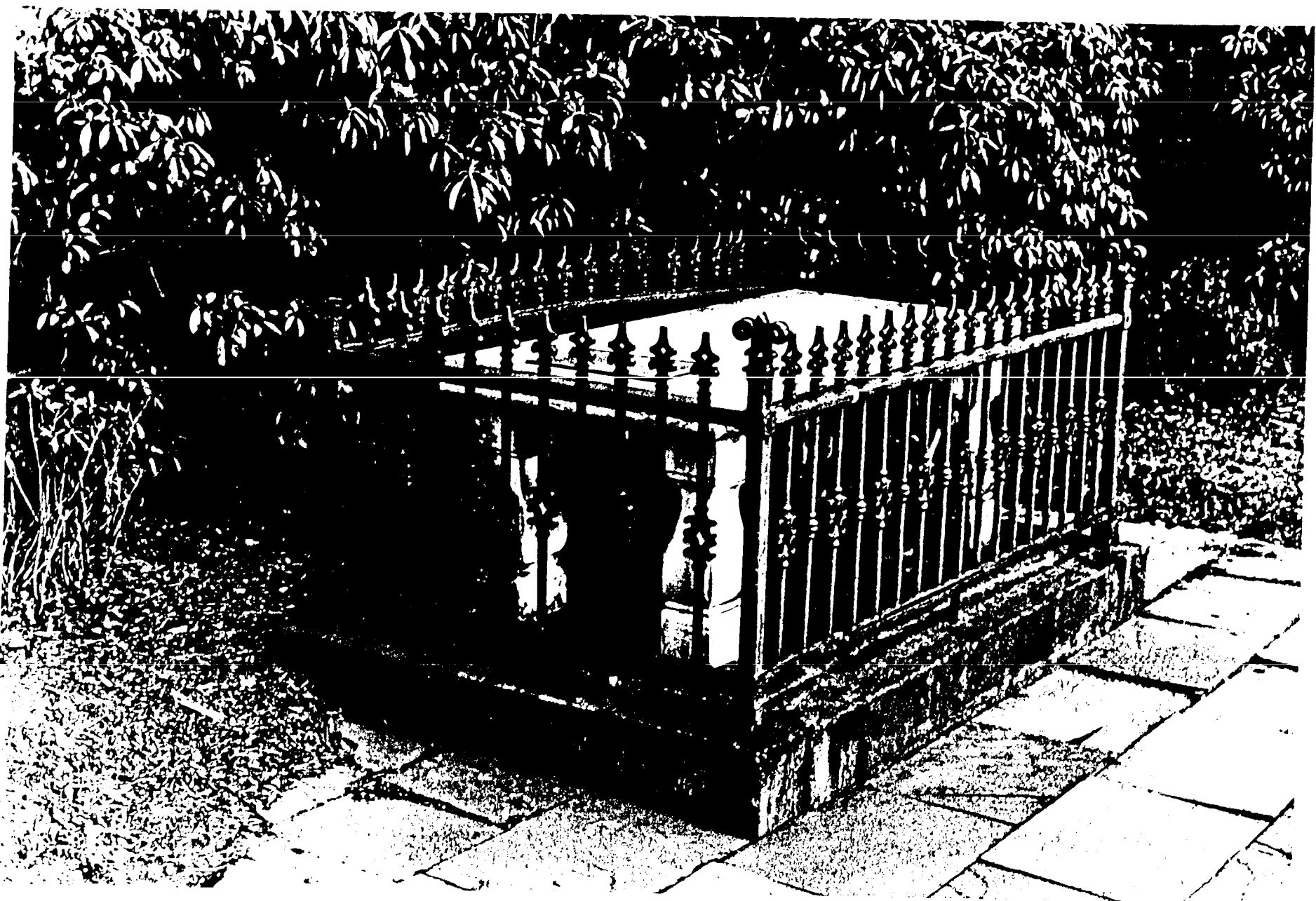
Seabury Center (noncontributing), attached to rear of church, camera facing south
Photograph 5 of 15



Detail of fence, camera facing southeast
Photograph 6 of 15



Seabury monument, north yard between tower and transept, camera facing southwest
Photograph 7 of 15



Interior, looking toward altar, camera facing east
Photograph 8 of 15



Interior, looking toward rear of nave, camera facing west
Photograph 9 of 15



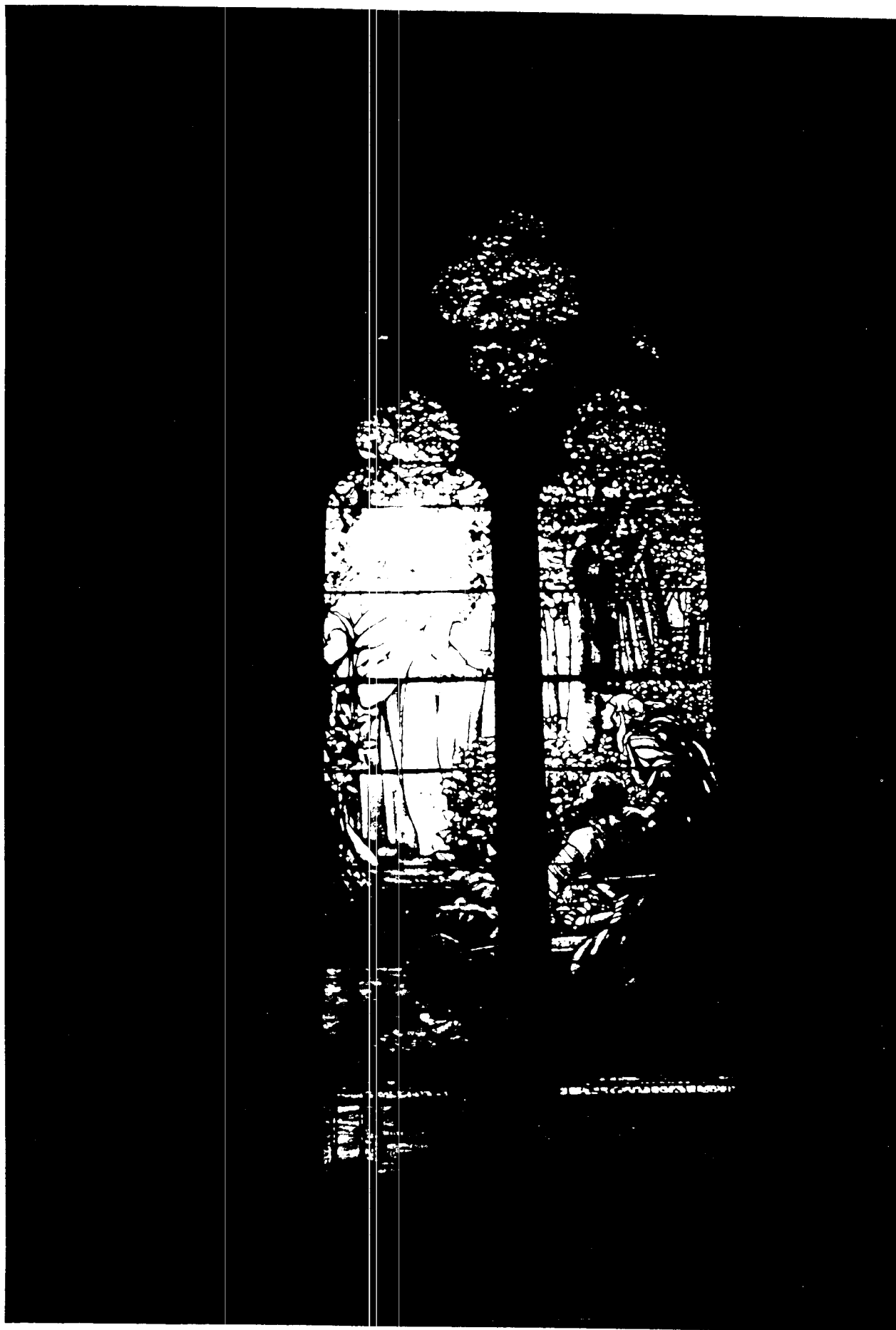
Detail of interior framing, camera facing northeast
Photograph 10 of 15



Tiffany stained-glass windows along north wall, camera facing northwest
Photograph 11 of 15



Tiffany stained-glass window, south wall, camera facing south
Photograph 12 of 15



Typical interior door, south door between vestibule and nave, camera
facing south
Photograph 13 of 15



Detail of pews and floor, camera facing northwest
Photograph 14 of 15



Seabury cenotaph, camera facing east
Photograph 15 of 15

