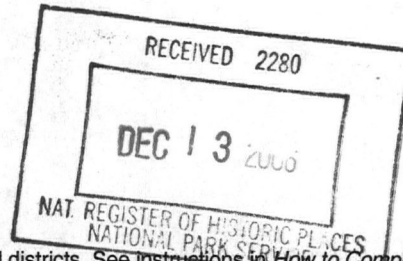


United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Registration Form



This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name First Unitarian Universalist Church of Niagara

other name/site number \_\_\_\_\_

2. Location

street & town 639 Main Street  not for publication

city or town Niagara Falls  vicinity

state New York code NY county Niagara code 063 zip code 14301

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this  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  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant  nationally  statewide  locally. ( See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Maria C. Carter, SAPO 11/12/06  
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

State of Federal agency and bureau \_\_\_\_\_

In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria. ( See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title Date

State or Federal agency and bureau \_\_\_\_\_

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the 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:)

Edson H. Beall 1.25.07  
Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

**5. Classification**

**Ownership of Property**

(check as many boxes as apply)

- public-local
- private
- public-State
- public-Federal

**Category of Property**

(check only one box)

- district
- building(s)
- site
- structure
- object

**Number of Resources within Property**

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1		buildings
		sites
		structures
		objects
1		Total

**Name of related multiple property listing**

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

N/A

**Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register**

N/A

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Function**

(Enter categories from instructions)

RELIGION/Religious Facility

**Current Function**

(Enter categories from instructions)

RELIGION/Religious Facility

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**

(Enter categories from instructions)

LATE 19<sup>TH</sup> AND EARLY 20<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY REVIVALS/Neo-Classical Revival

**Materials**

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation stone

walls stone

roof synthetic membrane

other \_\_\_\_\_

**Narrative Description**

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)



*First Unitarian Universalist Church of Niagara  
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**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section number 7 Page 1

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**Description**

**Exterior**

The First Unitarian Universalist Church of Niagara Building is located on the east side of the block at 639 Main Street in the City of Niagara Falls, New York. The block is on Main Street (rte. 104) between Walnut Avenue (rte. 62) and Pine Avenue (rte. 62A) and the building is north of the U.S. Post Office (on the National Register of Historic Places). The church was designed by the firm of Kirkpatrick and Cannon and built in 1921. The neo classical church building is of masonry construction clad in rough-cut bedrock stone, quarried at the site as the foundation was dug for construction of the building.

The building sits on a raised basement with a two-story high sanctuary space in the front (west) portion of the structure and a three-story (raised basement with two floors above) section in the rear (east) portion of the structure.

The entire structure is clad in the above-mentioned stone, laid in a highly randomized pattern with mortar deeply raked (as much as 5 inches in some spots). The pattern creates the appearance of a herringbone effect with quoin-like articulations at the corners formed by stone cut at right angles and slightly projecting from the wall plane. The individual pieces of stone are horizontal and vary in size from approximately 21/2 inches to 20 inches in length. The architect's specifications call for the perimeter walls of the church to be hollow clay tile, faced in stone and for hollow tile partition walls in the basement. The basement partition walls are evident, however it appears that the perimeter walls are constructed of mortared stone, similar in material to the facing stone, but smaller and flatter cut.

The principal façade faces west and contains a projecting portico formed by four stone Doric columns supporting a stone entablature and cornice topped by a rectilinear projection following the roofline. On the facing of this projecting overhang are the words "UNITARIAN CHURCH" in Roman lettering incised in a block of smooth faced stone. The portico meets the building façade with stone pilasters, one at each end of the portico. The entire building is surrounded by a metal-capped parapet surrounding a flat roof that slopes gently to the rear. Nine stone steps lead from the entry walkway to the deck of

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the portico. Beneath the portico the fenestration occurs in three bays. At the first floor level single six over six double hung windows flank the double entry doors that are paneled (3 panels in each) and set deeply with a paneled surround that is topped by rectangular row window made of six panes. The doors are surrounded by heavy framing formed from moldings and cornices. Above this level and still beneath the portico, three round top windows with intersecting quarter-elliptical muntins (the center window larger than the flanking windows) occur at the level of the choir loft in the sanctuary. The windows have stone sills with the lower level windows showing lintels made of the stone cladding laid vertically. A watercourse, made of stone laid in a similar manner, surrounds the building. This is repeated in a belt course that runs around the front and sides of the building at the level of the portico cornice. Behind the sanctuary portion of the building, a three-story block, projecting six feet to the north and south abuts the front portion of the building, giving the building a short-armed "T" shape. The north and south projections are blank except for an entry on the north projection formed by a single door treated in a manner similar to the front entry doors with a row of square panes above. The original paneled door has been replaced by a metal-faced door. The north elevation of the main block contains five two story high windows with cut stone sills (as with all windows) at the sanctuary level. These are double hung 15-over-15 windows topped by round arch sash windows with intersecting quarter-elliptical muntins. The first (western most) window contains a doorframe flanked by wood pilasters with a triangular pediment set in a paneled recess similar to the front doors. This single door also contains a row of square panes above and, like the entry in the projection, has been replaced with a metal clad door. The center three windows on this elevation sit above basement level 12-over-12 double hung windows that are recessed in grilled window wells. The north wall of the rear projecting block contains five 8-over-8 double hung windows, three corresponding to the inner stair landings and two lighting spaces on the upper floor. The south wall of the main block is a repeat of the north wall except for the westernmost window that is divided on the interior by the choir loft with a 2-over-2 stationary window below it at the basement level. The south wall of the rear projecting block has six 10-over-10 double hung windows, two on each of the three levels of this block.

The rear or east elevation has two openings at each of the three levels. At the ground level a step down leads to two doors below grade giving access to the basement and there is a separate 8-over-eight single sash window at this level. Above these are two 6-over-six double hung windows on the second level and above these a similar window and wooden



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door on the third level, the door opening onto a metal fire escape leading to the rear garden. On this façade, a chimney projects approximately 6 inches from the wall and rises above the roofline commencing in a concrete cap.

**Interior**

The main entry leads to a narthex that sits beneath the choir loft of the church. This space may also be reached by a half flight of steps from the driveway (north) entry or from the portico. The main floor rests on a concrete slab supported by steel I-beams running north-south. The narthex has a dado formed by deep moldings inset between a chair rail and the baseboards. The narthex has two sets of wide French doors leading into the sanctuary and an enclosed stairway leading to the choir loft. The sanctuary is a large two-story space lit on both sides by the north and south facing windows (four on each side) beneath which is a dado similar to that in the narthex. The sanctuary was designed to seat approximately 100 people. The west side of the sanctuary opens to the choir loft (with pipe organ) on the upper level and the east side consists of a large paneled frame, occupying almost the entire wall, formed by the proscenium arch of the stage that was originally on this wall. The stage opening has been enclosed and the stage removed with the frame remaining. The frame is flanked by slender columns and a square top arch is centered within the frame. Fronting this ensemble is a raised pulpit behind which a row of benches is placed against the east wall. A paneled skirt fronts the benches and pulpit. Portable seating for the congregation covers the linoleum tile floor. A thick, layered cornice surrounds the flat ceiling. All wall surfaces, trim and doors are painted.

The remainder of the interior is office and meeting space on the upper two floors with the lower level containing Unity Hall, a large social space beneath the sanctuary, a fully equipped banquet kitchen and lavatory and storage spaces. The basement rests on a concrete pad, with a wood floor in Unity Hall and linoleum tiles in the remaining rooms. The second and third floor rooms occur in the projecting block behind the sanctuary. The stage originally was present in this space. The second floor contains a lavatory and three office/meeting rooms including the minister's study. The minister's room is original to the building while the two meeting rooms and lavatory were added in 1955 in the space that was behind the stage. The third floor is a repeat of the rooms on the second floor (without the lavatory). The central two rooms being added when the stage was enclosed in the 1950's. A lift, installed in 2002 services entry, sanctuary and Unity Hall levels.



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**Grounds**

The church building sits on a lot that is 66 feet wide with a length of 106 feet on the north, 139 feet on the south and 73 feet fronting on Main Street (Rte 104) in Niagara Falls near the intersection of Walnut Avenue (Route 62). The shallow front lawn is banked to reach the raised entry and slopes from the building front to the north, west and south. A large tree is at the southwest corner of the lawn and small shrubs surround the building front. At the base of the north slope of the lawn, a concrete driveway extends from the street, ending at the extended block at the back of the building. Behind the church is an enclosed garden and lawn.

**8. Significance**

**Applicable National Register Criteria**

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

**Criteria Considerations**

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B** removed from its original location.
- C** a birthplace or grave.
- D** a cemetery.
- E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F** a commemorative property.
- G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

**Narrative Statement of Significance**

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

**Areas of Significance**

(enter categories from instructions)

ARCHITECTURE

**Period of Significance**

1921-1922

**Significant Dates**

1955

**Significant Persons**

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

**Cultural Affiliation**

N/A

**Architect/Builder**

Kirkpatrick and Cannon Architects of Niagara Falls, N.Y.

**9. Major Bibliographical References**

**Bibliography**

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

**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 Name of repository: \_\_\_\_\_



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**Statement of Significance**

The First Unitarian Universalist Church of Niagara is architecturally significant under Criterion C as a representative example of Neo-Classical style church architecture of the twentieth century in Niagara Falls, New York. The congregation was formally established in 1920. Designed by Kirkpatrick and Cannon in 1921-1922, the steel and concrete church is faced with rough, uncut limestone that came from the bedrock excavated during the construction of the building's foundation. The building retains a high degree of architectural integrity both on the exterior and interior.

Niagara Falls, New York is located on the Niagara River at the site of the famous falls. The French were the first Europeans to control the area from 1669 to 1759, when the English took over and dominated until 1796. The first settlers in Niagara Falls were August Porter and his brother Peter B. Porter, who took-up residence in 1805 after purchasing from the "Mile Reserve", large tracts of land near the falls and laid out a village. They were the first to see the energy potential of the falls and to make efforts to develop the potential by building a sawmill, a blacksmith shop, and in 1807 built a gristmill, the first to be built along the American side of the Falls. The early industries established by the Porters were the basis for the later industrial development of the Niagara Falls area.

After the War of 1812, the village of Manchester, was renamed Niagara Falls, started to rebuild following the burning by the British. The mills were rebuilt. Judge De Veaux built his store, and James Field reopened his tavern. The town also became an important manufacturing, tourist center and a port of entry for goods from Canada, once the bridge connection was made. By 1845, the Village of Niagara Falls was officially incorporated and the Suspension Bridge at Bellevue was dedicated and opened to traffic between the two countries. A small hamlet called Bellevue grew-up around the site of the new bridge to Canada and consequently, developed as a railroad center.

During this period, the Porter brothers tried to interest capitalists in the idea of building a hydraulic canal, which was eventually completed in 1861. The industrial development of Niagara Falls began in earnest when Jakob Schoellkopf



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bought the hydraulic canal and began to develop milling using the power generated by the canal. His success encouraged other businesses to use the canal's hydropower. The canal was used to generate the hydraulic power that was converted to electric light in 1881 and was the first public distribution of electricity at Niagara Falls. The population of Niagara Falls grew as a result, building activity increased and businesses prospered. The village limits expanded northward closer to Suspension Bridge, thus encouraging eventual consolidation, which took place on March 17, 1892, creating the City of Niagara Falls. The Village of La Salle was not annexed until 1927, adding 7,000 people.

The Age of Electricity (1892-1901), the use of Niagara Falls as a power source spurred the industrial development and economic prosperity, caused more families to move to the new city. By the beginning of the twentieth century three distinct areas of industrial development were well defined. The city became one of the greatest electro-chemical manufacturing centers and also witnessed the expansion of existing industries. The 1915 State Census reported that Niagara Falls was the fastest growing city in the New York Survey. Between 1900-1920, the population had increased from 19,452 to 50,760 inhabitants. Niagara Falls began to see for the first time in its history a heavy influx of foreign workers. Following the pattern established else where in the United States, churches in Niagara Falls became the focus of ethnic communities as well as other denominations active in the local justice movement.

**The First Unitarian Universalist Church of Niagara**

The First Unitarian Church of Niagara (now First Unitarian Universalist Church of Niagara) was built in the Neo-classical style in 1921. The church was designed by the Kirkpatrick and Cannon, the same firm that did the Neo-classical City Hall, just one block north of the church on Main Street. Norton Kirkpatrick was born in Toronto, Canada in 1889 and came to the United States to study architecture at Cornell University, graduating in 1911 with a B.A. in Architecture. He continued his studies for a term at Union College in Schenectady, New York and completed his classical training at the Ecole Des Beaux-Arts in Paris, France in 1914. Returning to the United States, he opened an independent office in Niagara Falls until 1919, when he went to Canada to serve as Instructor for the Canadian Royal Air Force. Kirkpatrick

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resumed his architectural practice in Niagara Falls and formed a partnership with Will A. Cannon in 1921. The firm's name is associated with a number of public and commercial buildings within the City of Niagara Falls besides City Hall. Other notable buildings designed by the firm are the Niagara Hotel 1927; Carborundum Corporation Office Building; the LaSalle Junior High School, 1931; and Research Building for Union Carbide-Chemical Corporation, 1934. They are also responsible for the design of many residences in the city and surrounding area.

The congregation in choosing the "style of Jefferson" for a Unitarian Church was entirely appropriate since Thomas Jefferson referred to himself as a Unitarian. Whether or not that is the reason for this particular building's appearance, the style is one that fits with the Unitarian religion at that time in history. The Unitarian Church in America has its origin in the Puritan society where conflicts within the established denominations lead to the growth of a separate, liberal religion. Early advocates believing in "free human will and the loving benevolence of God"<sup>1</sup> established the American Unitarian Association in 1825 in Boston, Mass. Although the origins were within the American Christian churches, throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> century the Unitarian Church practiced a religious pluralism with no established dogma and, in fact, nearly from its founding the Church was exploring a variety of World religions, many of which were not Christian. The transcendentalism of the late 19<sup>th</sup> Century and the humanist movement of the early 20<sup>th</sup> Century would also find places within the Unitarian Church. In the last half of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, the Unitarian Church merged with the Universalist Church forming the Unitarian Universalist Church. The movement advocating "universal salvation" had begun in the Mid-Atlantic and Southern states in the early 18<sup>th</sup> Century and spread throughout to the northeastern states with the Universalist Church being officially established in 1793. Both the Unitarian and Universalist churches preached an inclusive philosophy and both were active in the social justice movements of the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries.<sup>2</sup> Their merger in the United States occurred in 1961.

It was within the context of liberal religion that the First Unitarian Church of Niagara was formally established in 1920 as the only Unitarian Congregation in Niagara County. The congregation has its origin in a 1913 document that lists the names of nearly 100 Niagara Falls residents "...who had interests of a liberal nature..."<sup>3</sup> These local residents were

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<sup>1</sup> UUA Website: <http://www.uua.org/info/origins.html>

<sup>2</sup> UUA Website: <http://www.uua.org/info/origins.html>

<sup>3</sup> Archives, First Unitarian Universalist Church of Niagara.

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lead by Mr. J. Allen Johnson who spearheaded the more formalized functioning of the group. Johnson was a Unitarian and in 1915 he was joined by fellow Unitarian William Wallace Kincaid in the leadership of the group. On March 25, 1918, at a Unitarian Conference in Meadville, Pa., a resolution was approved stating that "after careful consideration both in the general session and by the executive committee be it resolved that we reaffirm our confidence in the possibilities of the Unitarian movement at Niagara Falls and the we urge the American Unitarian Association to cooperate strongly with the people there, toward the end of establishing a permanent church in that permanent and growing city:"<sup>4</sup> A meeting at the Niagara Club resulted in the establishment of a committee that began working with the national organization to formally organize a church in Niagara Falls. By 1920, Dr. Orville Bruce Swift was hired as minister and on October 17 of 1920 the First Unitarian Church of Niagara was officially organized. The congregation worshiped in various locations in the city including a space in the Temple Beth El Synagogue on Ashland Avenue. By 1921, the congregation began looking for a building or a site for a permanent worship space and land was purchased on Main Street in Niagara Falls for the purpose of constructing a church building.

The Unitarian Church construction began in July of 1921 and was completed by December of that year. In shape and style, the building has a similarity to the Temple Beth El structure, both being Neo-classical in style, flat-roofed and showing columns on the front. The temple is a more restrained structure, especially in its use of brick rather than the unusual stone facing of the Unitarian Church. The church board gave serious consideration to the style of the building. In a letter dated October 20, 1935 Minister Bruce Swift states that there were two reasons for the appearance: "One, that the building might be of a more readily saleable sort should the movement fail. Two, the hope that we might someday be able to sell the building at an appreciated price and build a churchly structure elsewhere."<sup>5</sup> Records within the church also explain the history of the stone facing. The original specifications from the architect call for the purchase of Indiana Limestone for the exterior. Subsequently, the church board accepted an offer from the Niagara Falls Power Company for stone produced by the enlargement of the hydraulic canal leading to the Schoellkopf Power plant just 4 blocks west of the church site. There were two excavations done on the canal at the time of the church building: one to enlarge the canal in 1918-1920 and a second to build the power tunnel beneath the canal in 1921-1922. Either of these excavations could have been the reason for the offer. However, the church board never took up the offer since in the excavation of the

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<sup>4</sup> Archives, First Unitarian Universalist Church of Niagara



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basement of the church an unusually large amount of bedrock was encountered and it is this stone that became the facing of the church: excavated and broken up on the site. The stone was cut on site and left in its rough, undressed state, and laid in random pattern giving a "herringbone" effect. The appearance of this stone did not happen by chance. In a letter to the architect, Will Alban Cannon, dated July 7, 1921, the contractor, Ernest Kremers verifies the change orders he had reviewed with Cannon that afternoon. Item X in the letter states:

"We understand that the stone work is to be of the same character as that in the Niagara Falls Power Company buildings at the Hydraulic Plant, and that useable stone will be furnished us and further that this stone need not be dressed in any way, except breaking up with sledges.<sup>6, 7</sup>

Examination of historic photos of the famous Schoellkopf Plant (two-thirds of which were lost in a spectacular rockslide in June of 1956) shows a very similar application of the stonework, including the belt courses and random pattern on the wall surfaces.<sup>8</sup> With the exception of wooden windows and doors and the stone columns, trim and windowsills, the entire envelope of the church building is done in this unique stone treatment. The deep raking of the mortar (as much as 5 inches) presents a particularly striking shadowing in the late afternoon sun.

The interior of the church is unusual even for Unitarian Churches of the time. As with the Neo-classical style, the main sanctuary or nave is the center of the structure. Two stories in height, it is reached by passing through a narthex that is, itself, entered from the raised portico. At the far end of the nave there was originally what was called on the architects' plans a "chancel" but what was, in reality, a stage complete with proscenium arch<sup>9</sup>. A passageway behind the stage led to a meeting room and the minister's study on either side of the stage floor. The stage/auditorium arrangement is consistent with Dr. Swift's reference to a building that was not to be "churchly" in appearance.

By the 1950's the church membership grew considerably (nearly 250 members in 1957) and there was no longer a need to have a "saleable" appearance to the interior. In 1955 a significant change occurred in the sanctuary when the

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<sup>5</sup> Archives, First Unitarian Universalist Church of Niagara

<sup>6</sup> A note in pencil on this sheet states "no sledge used".

<sup>7</sup> Archives, First Unitarian Universalist Church of Niagara

<sup>8</sup> The remaining parts of the buildings that survived the 1956 collapse were demolished in 1961 when the Robert Moses Power Plant in Lewiston went on line.

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stage was removed and the space within the proscenium arch walled. This allowed for the creation of six classroom/meeting rooms in what had been the stage and back-stage area on the main and upper floor. These additional rooms provided space for programs and activities accommodating the larger congregation and the increased number of children. In the sanctuary space, itself, a pulpit, backed by raised benches, was placed in the area originally occupied by the apron of the stage.

The liberal religious and social movements within the First Unitarian Universalist Church of Niagara continued throughout its history, including the peace demonstrations of the 1970's and as recently as the time leading to the war in Iraq. Although smaller in size (there are currently just over 50 members) the congregation is once again growing and continues working in social activism by housing the local chapter of Habitat for Humanity as well as allowing the building to be used for meetings by various social reforming organizations in the area. A recently formed Public Forum committee has hosted a series of public forums on controversial topics within the community.

The First Unitarian Universalist Church of Niagara is a remarkably intact example of its period, type and method of construction in an urban setting and remains a prominent religious building along Main Street in Niagara Falls.

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<sup>9</sup> For many years the stage and auditorium space was rented to the Niagara Falls Little Theatre

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- Harris, Mark W. Unitarian Universalist Origins: Our Historic Faith. <http://www.uua.org/info/origins.html>
- Kostov, Spiro. A History of Architecture: Setting and Rituals. New York: oxford University Press, 1995.
- McAlester, Virginia and Lee. A Field Guide to American Houses. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1984.
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- Rifkind, Carole. A Field Guide to American Architecture. New York: The New American Library, 1980.



First Unitarian Universalist Church of Niagara  
Name of Property

Niagara County, New York  
County and State

## 10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property less than one acre

### UTM References

(Place additional boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

1 17 658160 4773030  
Zone Easting Northing

2  
Zone Easting Northing

3  
Zone Easting Northing

4  
Zone Easting Northing

See continuation sheet

### Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

### Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

## 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Claire L. Ross, Program Analyst (Consultant: Thomas Yots drafted nomination)  
organization NYS Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation date September 26, 2006  
street & number Peebles Island, P. O. Box 189 telephone 518-237-8643  
city or town Waterford state NY zip code 12188

### Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

### Continuation Sheets

### Maps

A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

### Photographs

Representative black and **white photographs** of the property.

### Additional items

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

### Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

name/title Ms. Elizabeth M. Diachun, Board President, Unitarian Universalist Church of Niagara  
street & number 639 Main Street telephone 716-285-8381  
city or town Niagara Falls state N. Y. zip code 14301

**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 *et seq.*).

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

*First Unitarian Universalist Church of Niagara  
Niagara County, New York*

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section number 10 Page 1

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**Geographical Data:**

Verbal Boundary Description:

The boundary for the First Unitarian Universalist Church of Niagara, 639 Main Street, Niagara Falls, New York is shown as a heavy black line on the accompanying Niagara Falls Sanborn Map of 1955 updated. The church building sits on a lot of 66 feet wide with a length of 106 feet on the north, 139 feet on the south and 73 feet fronting Main Street.

Boundary Justification:

The boundary for the nomination has been drawn to coincide with the current legal lot line for the property as drawn on the Niagara Falls Sanborn Map.



*First Unitarian Universalist Church of Niagara  
Niagara County, New York*

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section number 11 Form Prepared By: Page 1

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**National Register Nomination Prepared By:**

Mr. Thomas Yots  
Preservation Consultant  
740 Park Place  
Niagara Falls, New York 14301



*First Unitarian Universalist Church of Niagara  
Niagara Falls, New York*

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section number PHOTOGRAPHS Page 1

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Name of Property: First Unitarian Universalist Church of Niagara

Location, County, State: 639 Main Street, Niagara Falls, New York Niagara County

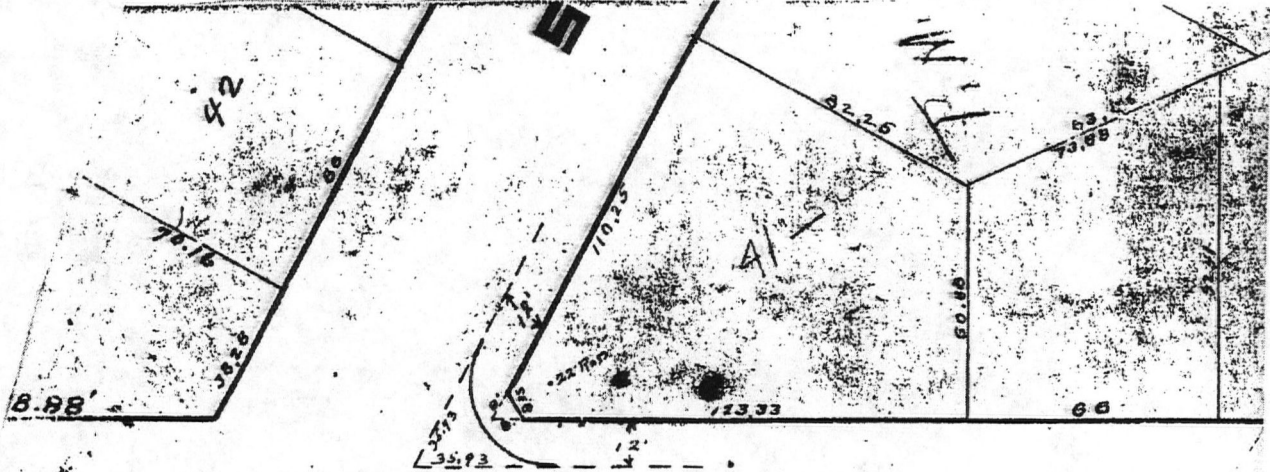
Photographs by: name, year, address: Thomas Yots, November 6, 2006

address: 740 Park Place, Niagara Falls, New York 14301

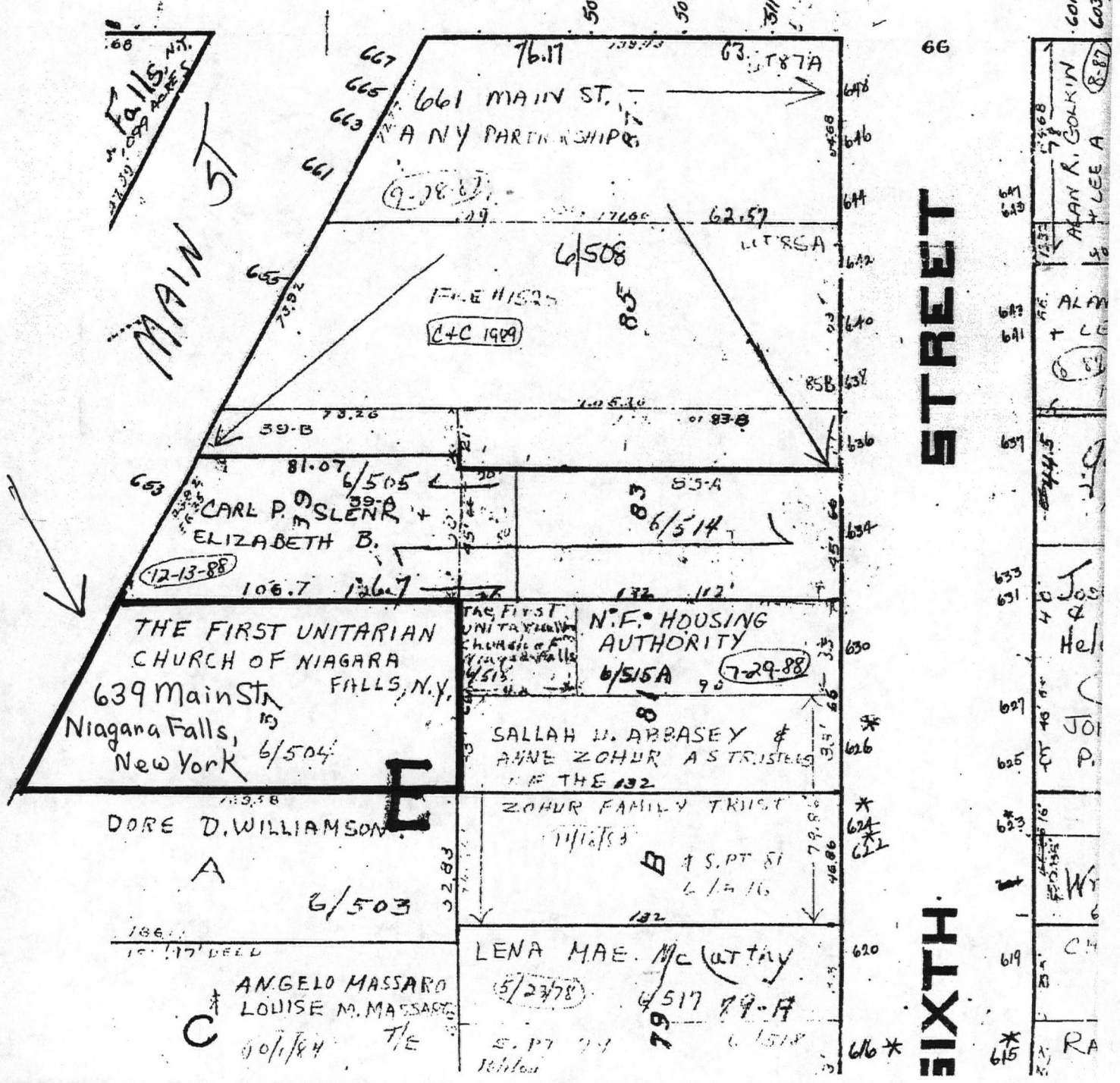
Key to Photographs:
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1. Facing southeast, view of the north elevation and the west façade.
2. Facing east, view of the entry doors beneath the portico on the façade.
3. Interior, facing east, view of the sanctuary and pulpit.
4. Interior, facing west, view of the sanctuary and choir loft/balcony.

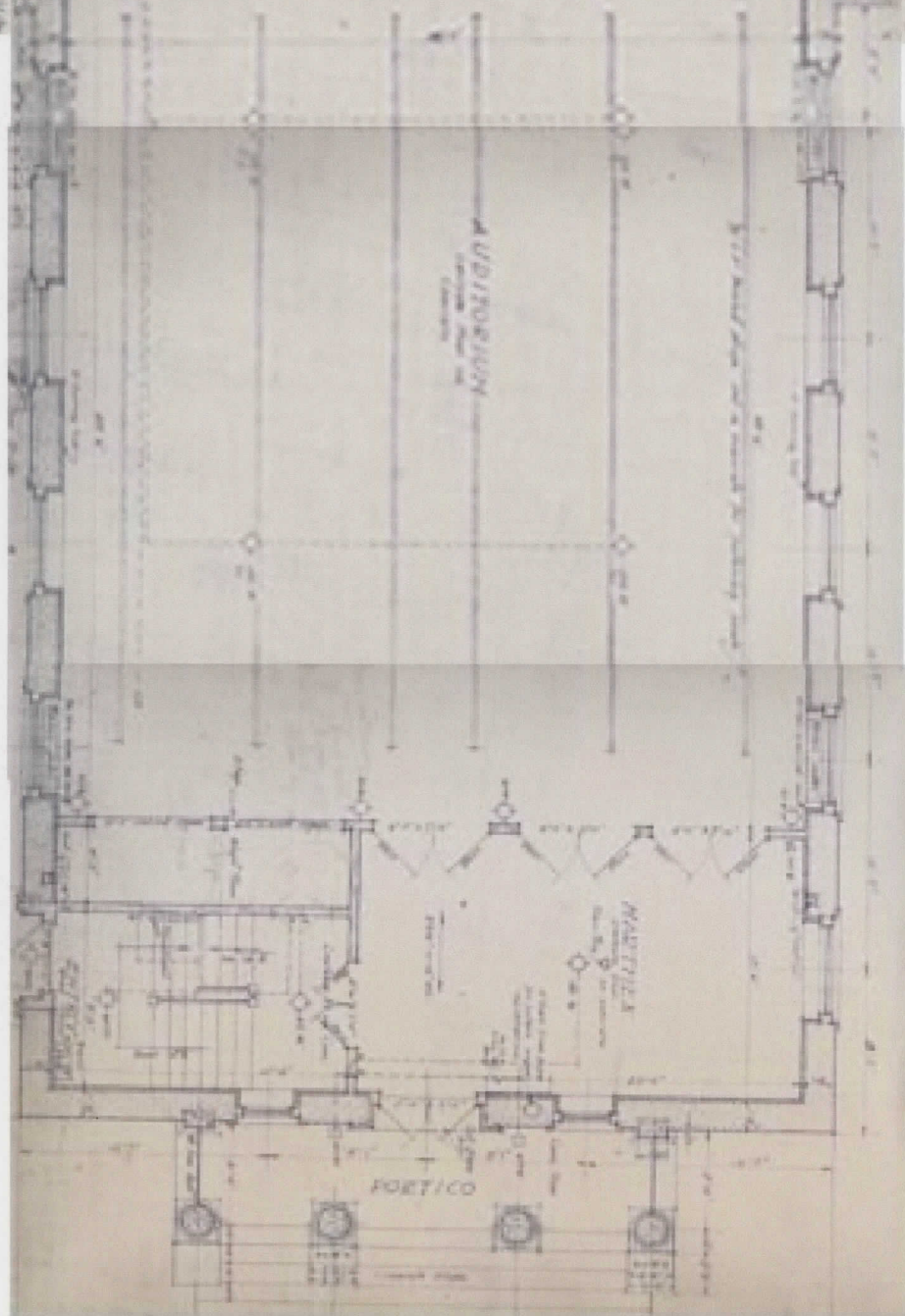
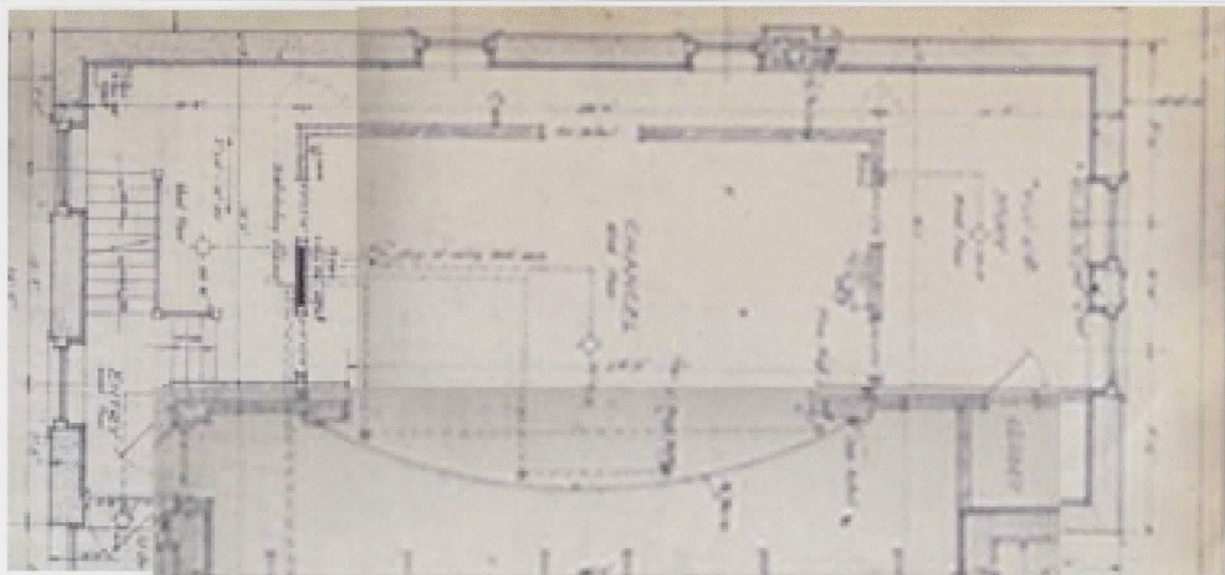
Disc enclosed



N PINE AVENUE

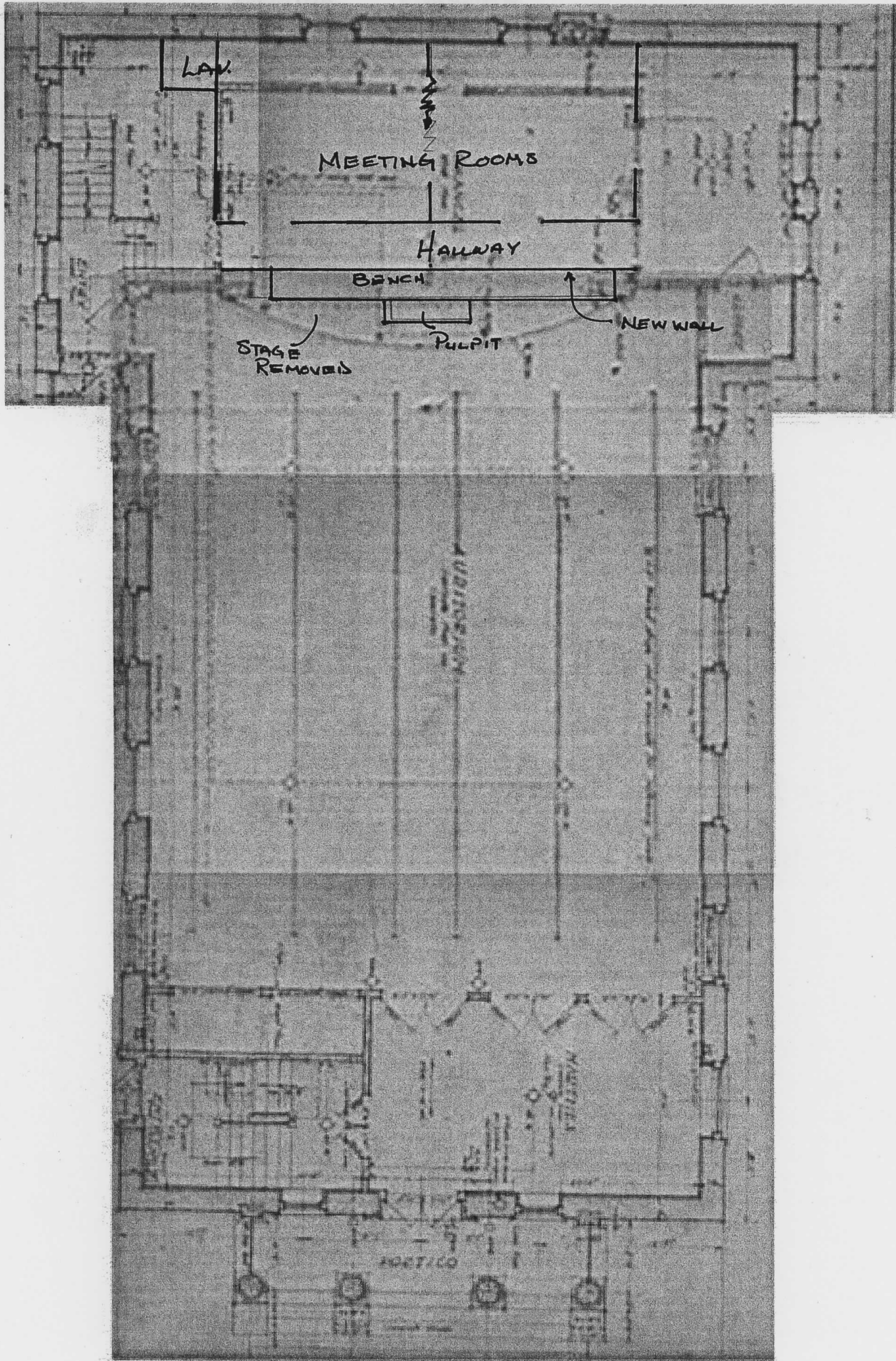






**ORIGINAL PLANS FIRST FLOOR**





Original Plans, First Floor, with 1955 Alterations Overlay

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION

PROPERTY First Unitarian Universalist Church of Niagara  
NAME:

MULTIPLE  
NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: NEW YORK, Niagara

DATE RECEIVED: 12/13/06 DATE OF PENDING LIST: 1/05/07  
DATE OF 16TH DAY: 1/20/07 DATE OF 45TH DAY: 1/26/07  
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 06001301

REASONS FOR REVIEW:

APPEAL: N DATA PROBLEM: N LANDSCAPE: N LESS THAN 50 YEARS: N  
OTHER: N PDIL: N PERIOD: N PROGRAM UNAPPROVED: N  
REQUEST: N SAMPLE: N SLR DRAFT: N NATIONAL: N

COMMENT WAIVER: N

ACCEPT  RETURN  REJECT 1.25.07 DATE

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

Entered in the  
National Register

RECOM./CRITERIA \_\_\_\_\_

REVIEWER \_\_\_\_\_ DISCIPLINE \_\_\_\_\_

TELEPHONE \_\_\_\_\_ DATE \_\_\_\_\_

DOCUMENTATION see attached comments Y/N see attached SLR Y/N

If a nomination is returned to the nominating authority, the nomination is no longer under consideration by the NPS.





First Unitarian Universalist Church of Niagara

639 Main Street

Niagara Falls, New York

Niagara County

Photo by: Tom Vots, 11-6-06

Negs at: 740 Park Place, Niagara Falls, N.Y. 14301

View: Facing southeast, view of the north elevation and the west facade.

FIRST UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CHURCH OF NIAGARA  
NIAGARA COUNTY, N.Y.

#1



First Unitarian Universalist Church of Niagara

639 Main Street

Niagara Falls, N.Y.

Niagara County

Photo by: Tom Vots, 11-6-04

Neg. at: 740 Park Place, Niagara Falls, N.Y. 14301

View: Facing east, view of the entry door &  
beneath the portico on the facade

FIRST UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CHURCH OF NIAGARA

NIAGARA COUNTY, N.Y.

#2





First Unitarian Universalist Church of Niagara  
639 Main Street

Niagan Falls, New York  
Niagara County

Photo by: Tom Vots, 11-6-66

Address: 700 Park Place, Niagara Falls, N.Y. 14301

View: Facing east, Interior view of the  
sanctuary and pulpit.

FIRST UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CHURCH OF NIAGARA  
NIAGARA COUNTY, N.Y.

# 3





First Unitarian Universalist Church of Niagara  
439 Main Street  
Niagara Falls, New York  
Niagara County

Photo by: Tom Yots, 11-6-04

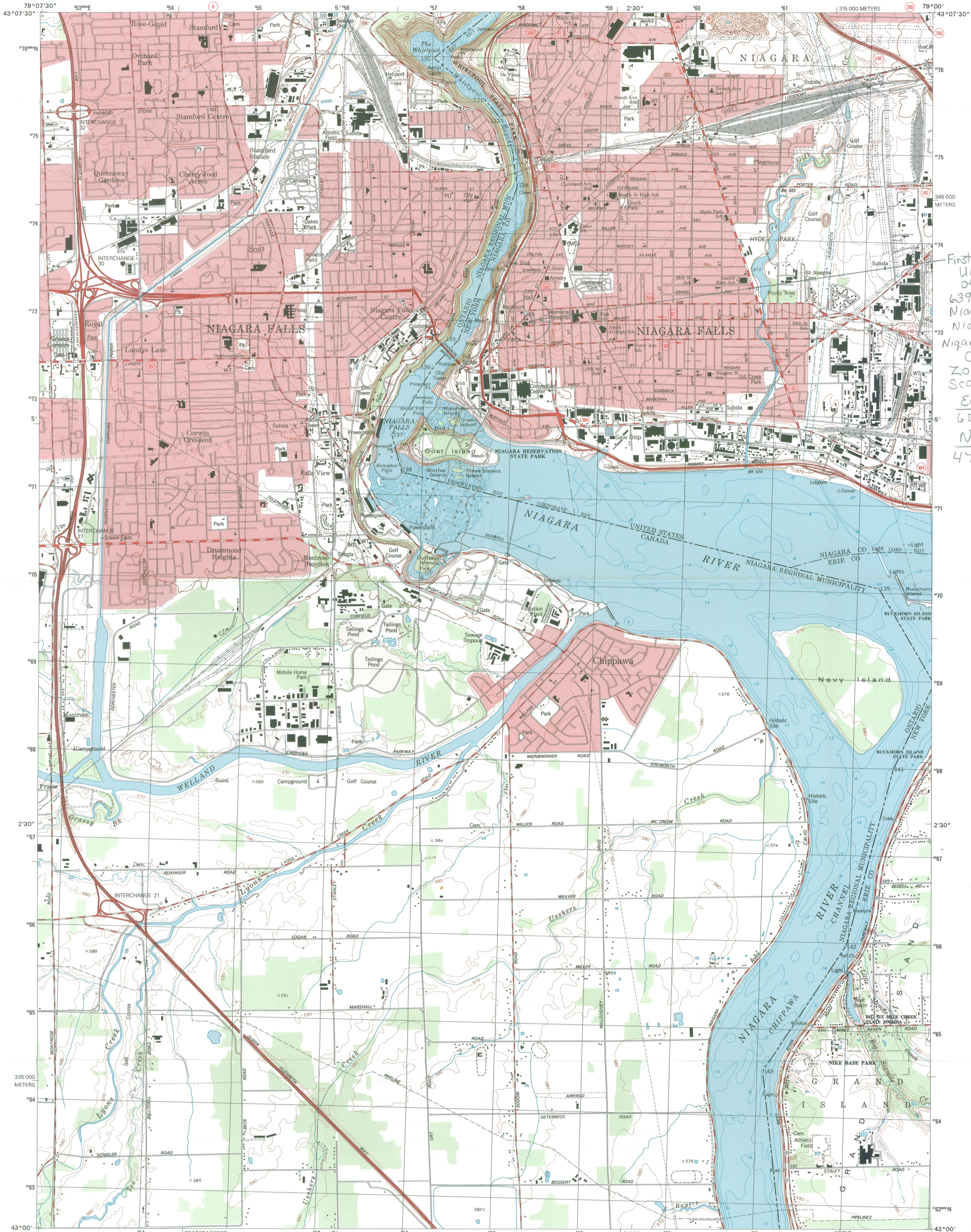
View at: 740 Park Place, Niagara Falls, N.Y. 14304

View. Interior, facing West, view of the  
sanctuary and choir loft/balcony.

FIRST UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CHURCH OF NIAGARA  
NIAGARA COUNTY, N. Y.

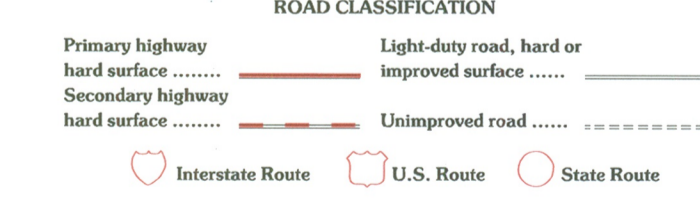
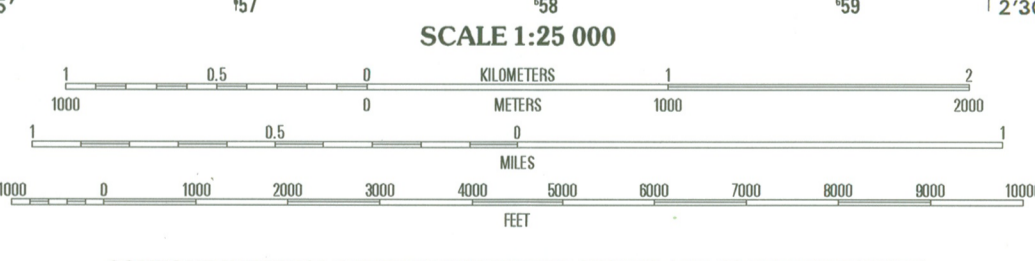
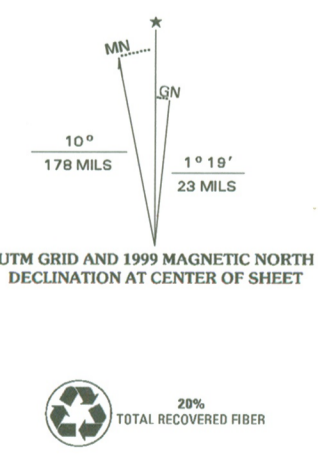
# 4





First Unitarian  
Universalist Church  
of Niagara  
639 Main Street  
Niagara Falls, New York  
Niagara County  
Niagara Falls, NY-ONT  
Quad. 1995  
Zone 17  
Scale: 1:25,000  
Easting  
658168  
Northing  
4773030

Produced by the United States Geological Survey  
Topography compiled 1972. Planimetry derived from imagery taken 1995 and other sources. Survey control current as of 1973.  
Map edited 1999. Canadian portion copied from Natural Resources Canada, 1:50 000-scale topographic map dated 1990.  
Canadian portions of this map © by Her Majesty the Queen in Right of Canada, and may not be reproduced or redistributed without express consent of Natural Resources Canada, 4th Floor, 615 Booth Street, Ottawa, Ontario, K1A 0E9.  
Selected hydrographic data compiled from NOS Chart 14832 (1977). This information is not intended for navigational purposes.  
North American Datum of 1983 (NAD 83). Projection and 1 900-meter grid: Universal Transverse Mercator, zone 17.  
2 500-meter ticks: New York Coordinate System of 1983 (west zone).  
North American Datum of 1927 (NAD 27) is shown by dashed corner ticks. The values of the shift between NAD 83 and NAD 27 for 7.5-minute intersections are obtainable from National Geographic Survey NADCON software.  
There may be private inholdings within the boundaries of the National or State reservations shown on this map.  
Landmark buildings verified 1973.



CONTOUR INTERVAL 5 FEET IN THE UNITED STATES AND 10 FEET IN CANADA  
NATIONAL GEODETIC VERTICAL DATUM OF 1929  
TO CONVERT FROM FEET TO METERS, MULTIPLY BY 0.3048  
DEPTH CURVES AND SOUNDINGS IN FEET  
REFERENCE LEVEL 568.6 FEET; INTERNATIONAL GREAT LAKES DATUM  
THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE TWO DATUMS IS VARIABLE

THIS MAP COMPLIES WITH NATIONAL MAP ACCURACY STANDARDS  
FOR SALE BY U.S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, P.O. BOX 25286, DENVER, COLORADO 80225  
A FOLDER DESCRIBING TOPOGRAPHIC MAPS AND SYMBOLS IS AVAILABLE ON REQUEST

1	2	3	1 Location
4	5	5 Tonawanda West	2 Ransomville
6	7	8 Buffalo NW	3 Tonawanda West
			4 Buffalo NW

ADJOINING 7.5 QUADRANGLE NAMES

NIAGARA FALLS, NY-ONT  
1995  
NMA 5170 II SE-SERIES V821





*Unitarian Universalist Church of Niagara*

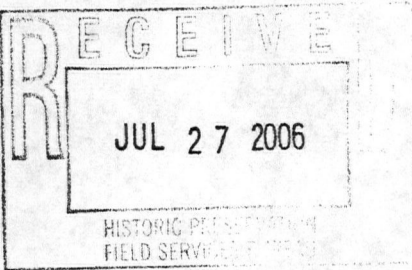
*639 Main Street*

*Niagara Falls, New York 14301*

P.O. Box 2566, Niagara Falls, NY 14302-2566

(716) 285-8381

uuniagara@yahoo.com



July 24, 2006

Claire Ross  
New York State Office of Parks, Recreation  
And Historic Preservation  
Historic Preservation Field Services Bureau  
Peebles Island, PO Box 189  
Waterford, New York 12188-0189

Dear Ms. Ross:

In May of this year our congregation voted to seek local, State and National Register designations for our church building at 639 Main Street in Niagara Falls, New York. Please send me a National Register Application and packet of information regarding placing a building on the National Register of Historic Places.

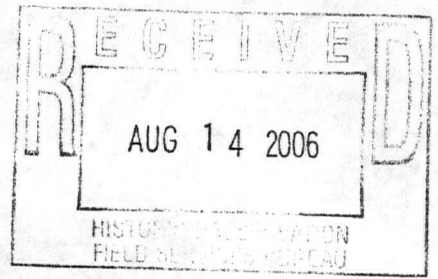
Our congregation will be working with consultant Tom Yots.  
Thank you for your assistance.

Sincerely,

Elizabeth M. Diachun  
Board President

Cc: Tom Yots





STATEMENT OF OWNER SUPPORT

Before an individual nomination proposal will be reviewed or nominated, the owner(s) of record must sign and date the following statement:

I, Elizabeth M. Diachun, am the owner of the property at  
(print or type owner name) President of Board of Trustees

639 Main Street, Niagara Falls, NY 14301  
(street number and name, city, village or town, state of nominated property)

I support its consideration and inclusion in the State and National Registers of Historic Places.

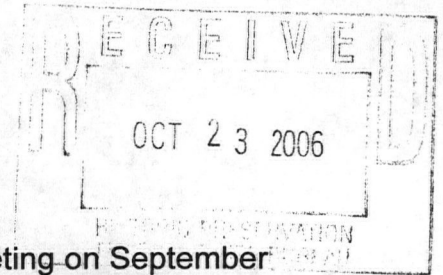
Elizabeth M Diachun, August 12, 2006  
President of Board of Trustees (signature and date)

P.O. Box 2566  
Niagara Falls NY 14302-2566  
First Unitarian Universalist Church of Niagara  
(mailing address)

RESOLUTION  
NIAGARA FALLS HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION

Re: Unitarian Church, 639 Main Street.

Date: September 6/2006



The Niagara Falls Historic Preservation Commission at its meeting on September 6, 2006 met to consider the nomination to the National and State Register of the above referenced property. After due consideration, the Commission finds that the property meets the following criteria for listing on the State and National Register listings of Historic Places:

Embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, a period, or a method of construction, or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic value, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.

The Unitarian Church on Main Street in Niagara Falls is significant both architecturally and historically as an intact example of an early 20<sup>th</sup> Century Neo-Classical religious building designed by a well-known local architect. The unusual use of random native stone, quarried at the site, adds to the building's significance.

For the above noted reasons we support the nomination of the Unitarian Church to the State and National Registers of Historic Places.

Handwritten signature of Pamela Smith.

Pamela Smith  
Vice Chairman  
The Niagara Falls Historic Preservation Commission

## STATEMENT OF MAYOR'S SUPPORT

I, Vincenzo V. Anello, Mayor, of the City of Niagara Falls, New York, do hereby support the Unitarian Church, 639 Main Street, for consideration and inclusion on the State and National Registers of Historic Places as the building meets the criteria for embodying the distinctive characteristics representative of the early 20<sup>th</sup> Century Neo-Classical religious building designed by a well-known local architect.

Vincenzo V. Anello      Oct 16 - 06  
(signature and date)