

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 National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any 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.

1. Name of Property

Historic name: St. Mark's Episcopal Church

Other names/site number: _____

Name of related multiple property listing:

N/A

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

2. Location

Street & number: 111 Oenoke Ridge

City or town: New Canaan State: Connecticut County: Fairfield

Not For Publication: Vicinity:

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 at the following level(s) of significance:

___ national ___ statewide ___ local

Applicable National Register Criteria:

___ A ___ B ___ C ___ D

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State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government				

<p>In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register criteria.</p>						
<table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 70%; border-bottom: 1px solid black;">Signature of commenting official:</td> <td style="width: 30%; border-bottom: 1px solid black;">Date</td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="2" style="border-top: 1px solid black;">Title :</td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="2" style="border-top: 1px solid black;">State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government</td> </tr> </table>	Signature of commenting official:	Date	Title :		State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government	
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4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register
 determined eligible for the National Register
 determined not eligible for the National Register
 removed from the National Register
 other (explain:) _____

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply.)

- Private:
- Public – Local
- Public – State
- Public – Federal

Category of Property

(Check only **one** box.)

- Building(s)
- District
- Site
- Structure
- Object

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Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>3</u>	<u> </u>	buildings
<u>1</u>	<u> </u>	sites
<u>2</u>	<u> </u>	structures
<u> </u>	<u> </u>	objects
<u>6</u>	<u>0</u>	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

RELIGION/religious facility

DOMESTIC/single dwelling

LANDSCAPE/garden

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

RELIGION/religious facility

LANDSCAPE/garden

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7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Modern Movement

Mission Revival-Tudor Revival

Materials: (enter categories from instructions.)

Principal exterior materials of the property: Concrete, brick, glass, stone, stucco

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance and condition of the property. Describe contributing and noncontributing resources if applicable. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, type, style, method of construction, setting, size, and significant features. Indicate whether the property has historic integrity.)

Summary Paragraph

St. Mark's Episcopal Church (St. Mark's Church), built in 1959–1961, is a Mid-Twentieth Century Modern-style (Modern-style) religious complex and landscaped grounds designed by Stamford-based architects Sherwood, Mills and Smith and landscape architect Vincent Cerasi for one of New Canaan's oldest congregations. Dedicated in 1961, the campus of buildings and designed landscape occupy a level rectangular area along the east side of Oenoke Ridge in New Canaan, Connecticut, on the site of two former residential estates. The centerpiece of the prominently sited complex is at the north end of the property, formed by the gray and brown brick and concrete vertical volumes of the tall St. Mark's Episcopal Church and Bell Tower near the street with the attached, lower, horizontal massing of Church School and Parish Hall to the east, surrounded by planar stepped terraces, courtyard, and gardens (all completed 1961). Shielded from street view by the church block are the eclectic Mission- and Tudor Revival-style McLane House, Gray Gables (built 1912), now used as church offices, and a small Garage (built ca. 1912, altered mid-20th c.). The open grass Great Lawn makes up the central and southern part of the property. It has scattered mature trees and is outlined on the south, east, and north by a U-shaped main entrance drive and parking areas. The nominated property is the west portion of the entire St. Mark's Church 14-acre parcel and encompasses the church complex and landscape as delineated in the 1959 SMS and Cerasi project site plan. The nominated St. Mark's Church property comprises 9 acres and contains six resources, (three buildings, two structures, and one site), all of which are contributing. The boundary

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follows the north, west, south, and southeast property lines of the full St. Mark's Church assessor parcel; on the northeast, the boundary crosses the parcel to exclude non-contributing land and resources to the east that area not associated with the design and development of the 1961 campus.

Narrative Description

Setting

St. Mark's Episcopal Church (St. Mark's Church) is located at 111 Oenoke Ridge approximately 0.25 mile north of New Canaan town center, on a main road connecting the village and rural wooded residential areas to the north. The surrounding neighborhood has a residential ambience with single-family houses built primarily in the nineteenth through mid-twentieth centuries and three nearby churches, many like St. Mark's Church likely constructed on former nineteenth-century estate lands. The nominated property conforms to its assessor's lot limits and the 1959 site plan (Figure 4) except at the northeast corner. It is generally bounded by properties along Hampton Lane on the north, Oenoke Ridge on the west, the southern edge of the Great Lawn and a shared asphalt-paved driveway on the south, private property on the southeast, and St. Mark's Church land on the northeast. On the northeast, the boundary follows the parcel line at the south end and along a line of convenience at the north end to omit non-contributing resources at the northeast corner of the overall asymmetrical, Z-shaped parcel.

The St. Mark's Church parcel is composed of two parcels purchased between 1949 and 1957 (Photograph 1, Figure 5). The north section where the buildings are located was part of the Dr. and Mrs. James W. McLane estate, including the main house, Gray Gables, now used as church offices and a Garage.¹ The south section with the Great Lawn and entrance drive was the home of the well-known sculptor John Rogers (1829–1904) and his wife Harriet Rogers. No resources from the Rogers property (house, studio, fountain, well, and barn foundation) remain extant on the property. They were removed, and the ground was regraded to make the parking and grassed common areas to prepare the site for the new church. The John Rogers Studio (NHL 1965, NR listed 1966) was moved a short distance south to the grounds of the New Canaan Historical Society in 1960, where it remains.

Connected Church Complex

The architects, Sherwood, Mills and Smith, sited the connected buildings comprising **St. Mark's Church (1959–1961, contributing building, Photographs 1–15; Figures 3–6)** to make the Church seem inviting and easily accessible to passersby on Oenoke Ridge and to screen the McLane House and parking areas from view (SMS 1962:13). The design of the new church was intended to be contemporary to the mid-twentieth century, while retaining the “feel” of a traditional church. To achieve this goal, the firm's founding partner, Willis N. Mills, a modernist architect and parishioner of St. Mark's, prepared by researching and studying contemporary church design in Europe and Great Britain (SMC 2011:5) (see **Section 8, Criterion C – Architecture**).

¹ Excluded from the nomination is the portion of the former McLane estate parcel that extends northeast and slopes abruptly downward where two residences, two outbuildings, and two landscaped areas are located. These resources are not visible from the St. Mark's Church complex and would not contribute to the nomination: a single-family house (ca. 1912) historically used as the chauffeur's residence; a nearby garage and shed (early to mid-20th c.); a single-family house (late 20th c.); and the Columbarium established in 1977 and the Gospel Garden created ca. 2010. The Columbarium and Gospel Garden occupy the former sites of a tennis court and swimming pool, serving Gray Gables.

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The St. Mark's Church complex has a U-shaped footprint opening to the south with the Church and Bell Tower on the west, the Church School at the center, and the Parish Hall on the east. The complex is set on a paved terrace platform raised slightly above the level of the street and of the Great Lawn. The site plan and arrangement of the three connected church buildings grouped around a central landscaped courtyard enclosed on the south by a covered arcade reflects the pattern of a medieval cloister, and the Church design displays the influence of underlying Gothic architecture principles and structure, especially on the interior framing (SMC 2011:6). The Church's north-south orientation and placement parallel to the street and facing south to an entrance plaza and the Great Lawn departs from the traditional Anglican church east-west alignment and from the New England custom of churches facing the street. Each building component of the complex is described below.²

Church

Exterior

The Church massing is an irregular pentagon in plan, composed of a long, narrow, rectangular main block (5 by 2 bays and measuring 145 feet by 52 feet)³ oriented approximately north-south with triangular projections formed by the south end roof overhang and the enclosed north end (Photographs 2, 3, and 4; Figures 3, 4, and 5). The main block, which faces south, contains the narthex (entrance and balcony), nave (main church hall), and choir and organ area. An integral one-story extension (4 by 1 bays and measuring 104 feet by 24 feet) along the east wall holds the chapel and a sacristy and altar guild space, and a freestanding square Bell Tower connected to the Church by an elevated walkway stands west of the south corner. The Church is connected to the adjacent Church School by an enclosed hallway at the northeast corner and to the Parish Hall by an open arcade at the southeast corner. Rectangles and broad triangles used as low-pitch gables constitute the primary geometric vocabulary of the design. The building has predominantly a reinforced concrete slab-on-grade and poured foundation, structural system, walls, and roof. The original architectural drawings refer to cast concrete columns, roof fascia, facing strips, facing panels on exposed sills and basement, and other surface elements as cast stone. The brick-clad walls rise from ground level to the roof line in various tones of gray and brown colored brick⁴ either laid in Flemish bond (alternating stretcher and header bricks in each row) or in a basket weave pattern of three stacked horizontal stretchers and one projecting vertical stretcher. These variants are referred to in the original architectural drawings as Brick "A" and "B," respectively. The complex multi-gabled church roof has a diamond-shaped, pyramidal skylight over the altar area. Both the main roof and the three-gabled chapel roof section are clad in a thermoplastic membrane. Although the building specifications called for a terne metal (tin-lead or zinc alloy coated steel) roof, it was eliminated prior to construction, probably for cost reasons.

The main entrance is inset within flanking angular brick end bays of the south-facing façade. These bays rise to the concrete roof slope, which continues upward to meet at a central gable peak (Photograph 5). The brick pattern on the inner face of the angled bays is Flemish bond brick, and on the outer faces is basket weave. The entrance is composed of massive, teak wood double doors whose panels are filled with carved lettering colored black and gold, copied from an eighth-century Christian alphabet presenting

² National Register Bulletin 16a "Rules for Counting Resources" states that "a building or structure with attached ancillary structures, covered walkways, and additions [should be counted] as a single unit unless the attachment was originally constructed as a separate building or structure and later connected." Therefore, St. Mark's Episcopal Church, Parish Hall, and Church School are counted as one resource (NPS 1997:17).

³ Dimensions are from the Sherwood, Mills and Smith building plans and are given in feet only.

⁴ The brick is currently manufactured by The Belden Brick Company, Canton, Ohio, and is "Burbank Blend."

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biblical text excerpts and large cast-bronze door pulls in the form of a lion, the symbol of St. Mark (SMC 2011:7). The doors are flanked by full-height stained glass windows and are surmounted by an eight-part transom with angled dark metal insets. Above the transom, a stained glass window (see interior description) reaches to the roof and is set in a rectilinear grille work pattern of concrete muntins organized with continuous vertical divisions and staggered horizontal divisions. A 10-foot-tall wood cross hangs over the entrance. A protective plexiglass and metal frame screen has been added over the stained glass window.

The west elevation along the street is composed of five equal bays delineated by narrow concrete columns and topped with a low gable that together create a rhythmic zigzag roof line with a shallow overhang. The three inner bays have Flemish bond brick with 10 rows of staggered, punched, narrow, vertical openings with slate sills containing stained glass (see interior description); the outer bays have basket weave pattern brick and no openings. The south bay contains a secondary entrance to the narthex, composed of double leaf teak doors of vertical planks with metal butterfly escutcheons, set in a plain opening and sheltered by the elevated walkway to the Bell Tower.

The east elevation has a similar arrangement of five bays, all in basket weave brick and blank with no openings, and roofline. The south bay contains a secondary entrance to the narthex, composed of double leaf teak doors of vertical planks with dark bowtie joints, set in a plain opening and sheltered by the open arcade roof. A similar entrance is in the south wall of the chapel extension under the arcade. The first level of the central three bays consists of the stained glass window-filled walls of the chapel extension. Its roof echoes the main roof profile above, and the window grid is like that on the facade. The north bay is occupied by a flat-roof section that contains a corridor and the sacristy and altar guild rooms and connects to the Church School on the northeast corner. A skylight is located over the sacristy.

The north elevation is composed of two angled bays that meet at a point at the centerline of the main block. The walls are clad in basket weave pattern brick with no openings. Each bay is framed at the northwest and northeast corner of the building, and at the centerline by a W-shape concrete column with slate trim. The one-story, flat-roof sacristy and altar guild wall extension on the east end has two small round-arch openings containing stained glass windows (see interior description) relocated from the old St. Mark's Church. A walled enclosure of basket weave pattern brick with a thin, cast concrete coping is attached to the west angled bay and shields the HVAC system from view. The HVAC system and enclosure were added in 1999.

Interior

The Church floor plan has a traditional layout arranged with an entrance narthex at the south end, the main nave space in the center, the choir and organ area at the north end and a chapel alcove east of the nave (Photographs 6, 7, and 8; Figure 9). The sacristy and altar guild rooms open off the north side of a corridor at the northeast corner of the chapel extension. The narthex is a low-ceilinged, wood-paneled space with terrazzo floors, naturally lit by predominantly blue stained glass panels flanking the main entrance. On either side of the entrance are an irregular shaped space (ante room on the west and duct shaft on the east) wrapped on three sides by stairs leading to the balcony above. Double-leaf wood doors at the west and east ends of the narthex lead outdoors. The dimly lit narthex opens via three sets of wood, double-leaf doors in the north wall to the soaring nave and the focal point of the altar and reredos at the opposite end.

The nave reflects Episcopal and Anglican church ideals in the mid-twentieth century to bring the minister and congregation closer together centered on a table altar around which congregants could gather, and to

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reduce the amount of artwork, providing a relatively plain and practical space (SMC 2011:6). The nave, with seating for 700, is 56 feet tall and its perimeter frame expresses and reveals the principal design feature of the building, reinforced concrete triangular fan vaulting soaring out of 13, 40-foot-tall tapered columns that support the gable roof. The columns are arranged with six on each side and one at the north end. Each column weighs 15 tons and is widest at the roof level vaulting. In plan, the columns are irregular pentagons, like the building footprint. They were precast, trucked to the site individually, and raised by crane in 1960 (SMC 2011:5–6, 8). The exposed, white concrete panels and fan ribs of the angled and vaulted roof were mixed to match the columns and poured in place. Above the altar, natural light streams down from a large skylight. The wall planes between the white structural columns with dark slate trim on all sides of the building are infilled with an 18-inch-thick curtain wall of gray and brown-colored, basket weave pattern brick (SMC 2011:8). The altar, reredos, and choir loft are at the north end of the church, and the balcony is at the south end above the narthex. The rear wall of the nave separating it from the narthex has walnut paneling and doors with a slate base. The balcony front wall is concrete with precast stone facing, and a door at the west side of the balcony level opens to the elevated bridge to the Bell Tower. The 24-foot-wide, low-ceilinged chapel is parallel to and opens from the east side of the nave, separated by the structural columns connected with low-pitch gable openings. The chapel ceiling is angled white concrete panels; the walls are white painted plaster on the south wall and the north wall behind the altar, and stained glass windows on the east.

The floors of the narthex and nave and chapel are terrazzo laid as large square tiles with bronze spacers. The terrazzo grid pattern in the narthex and nave is at a 45-degree angle to the building walls, and the five traditional symbols of Christianity—shell, lion, fish, bee, and sun—are distributed around the nave. In the chapel, the grid pattern is aligned perpendicular and parallel to the walls. Strips of black mottled with white marble are set to delineate edge transitions between the nave and chapel, and around the altar rail. The lighting consists of ceiling-hung fixtures, including narrow metal canisters in the nave and long metal upright fixtures in the chapel, and recessed units.

The liturgical artwork in the Church that is integrated into the architecture includes fine examples of stained glass and metal work by highly regarded American artists (Photographs 6, 7, and 8). The stained glass featured in three areas of the Church was designed by Odell “Billie” Prather and executed by Willet Stained Glass Company (now Willet Hauser Architectural Glass), Philadelphia, PA. Prather used one-inch-thick glass tiles bound together with a flexible black matrix of various widths, rather than restrictive lead comes, which creates an abstract linear pattern and helps bring out the jewel-like quality of the asymmetric colored pieces (SMC 2011:8–9). The west wall parallel to the street, referred to as the Great Wall, is of brick with 135 vertical pierced openings filled with stained glass that together illustrate the Benedicite, the canticle (hymn or chant) derived from the 148th Psalm that is an invocation of a blessing. The thick glass is arranged in abstract bands of rich color across the openings, reflecting water, earth, sky, and plant tones. The stained glass window that fills the facade (south) wall above the main entrance to the roof line depicts the Resurrection of victory over death, expressed in an abstract motif that shifts from dark colors of blue and green at the bottom to light yellow and gold at the top. The chapel east wall is entirely of stained glass in three large panels defined by concrete ribs and contains pictorial imagery that depicts the life of Christ. The stained glass windows of the south and east elevations are set in robust precast stone grilles with a grid of staggered vertical rectangles.

The altar, which is the focus of the church at the north end of the nave, was designed as a free-standing element with the altar rail on four sides reflecting a centuries-long tradition of the congregation gathering around for the Celebration of the Eucharist, and for the priest to preside facing the congregation (Photograph 6). The floor covering between the wood altar rail and altar is white and light grey marble in a geometric pattern. The altar frontals, the cloths edging the altar, change during different liturgical

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seasons. The kneeling cushions around altar representing the parables, Christ's teachings in stories, were designed by noted needlepoint, cross-stitch, and embroidery artist and teacher Erica Wilson. More than 67 volunteer women in the parish trained by Wilson executed the kneelers, which measure in total 86 feet long. The kneelers were completed using more than eight different stitches.

A major feature of the nave interior is the reredos, or choir screen, a wood and metal screen set behind the altar, 96 feet north from the narthex wall (Photograph 6). The reredos, measuring 36 feet wide and 42 feet high, was designed and fabricated by American sculptor Clark Battle Fitz-Gerald. Rev. Grant A. Morrill, St. Mark's Rector from 1955 to 1975, conceived the theme depicting the redemptive spiritual journey of the Creation, man's spiritual journey, and return to God. The design contains approximately 184 welded bronze figures that are connected by brass tubes and mounted on 37 vertical Philippine mahogany ribs and arranged in two inverted, intersecting curves that create a vertical, central almond shape (SMC 2011:13).

The 50-seat choir loft and organ are behind the reredos, lightly screened from the congregation. The organ, a three-manual, five division pipe organ housed in black walnut was built by Austin Organs, Inc. of Hartford, CT, in 1961. The stepped wood pews of the choir loft radiate from the organ console and are arranged for optimal direction by the organist-director.

Other notable furnishings of the church interior include the custom-made teak wood lecterns, pews for the main floor, choir loft, and balcony, and other furniture. The chapel altar rail was relocated from the 1833 St. Mark's Church. Needlepoint cushions in the chapel, the chapel altar rail, the bishop's chair, litany desk, and clergy stalls were designed by parishioner Ruth W. Noble for the old St. Mark's Church and adapted for use in the new space.

Double-leaf doors from the choir loft area east wall and a single door in the chapel north wall access an east-west corridor connecting the Church and the north-south corridor leading to the Church School. The sacristy and altar guild rooms off the north side of corridor contain custom natural finish wood cabinet work and two stained glass windows depicting a "Good Samaritan", formerly in the narthex and chancel of the old St. Mark's Church that were designed by Putnam Brinley, a parishioner. Closets for altar hangings line the south side of the corridor. A stair accessed from the corridor leads to the basement, and the sexton's utility closet is to the north.

The Church rests mostly on a slab foundation, with two basement sections of unfinished storage and utility space with concrete walls, floor, and ceiling at the south and north ends that are connected by a duct tunnel. The south basement area, accessed from a stair in the narthex, includes a coat room and two restrooms. There are two tunnels running between these north and south spaces under the nave. One is a 5-foot-wide by about 8-foot-high passageway that makes a right turn and continues eastward to the boiler room. The other, west of the passageway, is a duct tunnel nearly 8 feet wide but only 2-3 feet high.

Bell Tower

The free-standing, 117-foot-tall Bell Tower at the southwest corner of the Church is a classic campanile and is the highest point in New Canaan (Photographs 1, 2, 3, and 4; Figures 3, 4, and 5). The structure stands on four tapered, reinforced concrete columns that mark the corners, create an X-shape platform with low arches at the base, and then rise to form a double cross arch at the apex, topped by a bronze cross. The base of the tower at ground level is open, and access is through an open connected walkway from the balcony level of the church. The tower has five vertical divisions consisting of a relatively low open base and four equal levels, three of which are clad in gray and brown brick laid in Flemish bond and

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the top containing the carillon of bells in an openwork bridge enclosure, and open apex. A concrete slab bridge with a metal pipe railing connects the Bell Tower first level and the balcony level of the Church. On the interior, a metal spiral staircase ascends to the fourth level, and narrow slits between the columns and wall panels covered on the interior by translucent panels let in natural light. The tower contains 30 bronze bells known as the Dana-Barton Carillon, designed by Arthur Bigelow of Princeton University and fabricated by the Pacard Bell Foundry of France in 1961–1962 for St. Mark's Church (SMC 2011:17).

Arcade

The arcade, set at the main terrace level and enclosing the south side of the courtyard, runs west-east connecting the Church narthex east entrance and the Parish Hall southwest entrance (Photographs 3 and 10). The seven-bay, 96-foot-long structure is composed of a single row of tapered reinforced concrete columns along the center line supporting a flat, concrete, membrane-clad roof.

Church School and Parish Hall

The Church School and Parish Hall comprise a series of interconnected spaces attached at its southwest corner to the Church's northeast corner. Together, they form an L-plan, one-story building with the Church School predominating on the north wing and the major Parish Hall functions in the east wing (Photographs 9–15; Figures 3, 4, and 5). The building has an exposed concrete frame with walls of multi-toned gray and brown brick laid in Flemish bond and large areas of glazed and dark metal-framed doors and windows. The Church School wing has a flat roof with four skylights over the choir room and one over the kitchen. The Parish Hall has a flat roof on the west and south perimeters and a low hip roof topped with a square raised skylight over the hall. All roof sections are clad in rubber or thermoplastic membrane.

Church School

The Church School section of the building is oriented west-east and is joined to the Church at the southwest corner and to the Parish Hall at the southeast corner (Photographs 14 and 15; Figures 3, 4, and 5). The south elevation facing the courtyard is comprised primarily of two equal bays: the west is a blank brick wall, and the east is filled with two sets of sliding glass and metal-frame doors. At the west end in a narrow bay, a double-leaf, fully glazed, metal-frame door with a stained glass window from old St. Mark's Church on the west, leads to a corridor connecting the Church School and the Church. The ten-bay north elevation overlooking the children's play area is defined by a rhythm of shallow recesses framed by square concrete columns and headers with brick knee walls and slate sills that each contain a metal-frame window divided vertically in four (originally three) sections (Photograph 9). The east end bay is brick. The west and east elevations each have a glass and metal-frame double-leaf door in the south end that enters the main corridor inside. The east elevation entrance is reached by a set of concrete steps and landing, and a loading dock, accessing the kitchen area of the Parish Hall, is to the south.

The interior plan of the Church School is organized along both sides of a west-east, full length corridor (Figure 3). Perpendicular corridors at the west end connect to the courtyard and Church, and at the east end lead to the Parish Hall. South of the main corridor at the west end near the Church are the choir practice room and acolytes' room, which open into the east corridor, as well as the connected robing room, and music office. To the east are the connected library and parlor, which opens into the east corridor near the Parish Hall. A cluster of service spaces on the east side of the east corridor include a kitchen and a serving area opening into the Parish Hall, a loading dock, bathrooms, stairs to the basement, and storage spaces. Arranged along the north side of the main corridor are nine equal size classrooms, two

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of which (classrooms 8 and 9 toward the east end) can be combined to create a larger space. Finishes in the Church School are primarily carpet or vinyl tile floors, plaster and vinyl sheeting walls, and dropped acoustical tile ceilings. The choir room walls have wood battens on cork for sound dampening. Wood natural finish flush doors are set in simple framed openings.

The Church School rests mostly on a slab foundation with a west-east running duct tunnel and is accessed from interior stairs at the west end and exterior stairs at the east end. The space beneath the kitchen is an unfinished boiler room and utility space.

Parish Hall

The Parish Hall section of the building is oriented north-south extending from the Church School south towards the main drive. The wing is built into the slope of the land with an exposed basement lower level opening to a patio on the east side (Photographs 10–13, and 15; Figures 3, 4, and 5). The six-bay west elevation facing the courtyard contains the main entrance centered in the courtyard area and composed of three full height fixed glass bays with a set of double-leaf glass and metal frame doors at the center accessing the main lobby. The remaining bays are Flemish bond brick with a secondary double-leaf door entrance in the south bay under the arcade (Photographs 10 and 15). The south elevation is blank and clad in basket weave brick pattern. The east elevation is defined by the Parish Hall itself, originally called the Parish Hall and later named Morrill Hall in honor of Rector Grant Morrill (see **Section 8, Criterion C – Architecture**), which occupies the northeast portion of the wing and projects out to the east. The east elevation wall planes are clad in Flemish bond brick and have no openings. The full-height exposed basement level under the hall has concrete walls that are mostly blank except in the area that has large windows and two entrances, one to the food pantry (south) and one to the youth space (north) that was renovated and reconfigured in 2017 (Photograph 11).

The interior plan consists of the hall on the east and a full-length corridor along the west side that serves as the main lobby and terminates at the south in the secondary entry area with a coatroom and stairs to the basement level (Photograph 12). A chair storage room east of the stairs is accessed from the hall south wall. The north wall of the hall opens into the kitchen.

The corridor and lobby have a largely glazed west wall opening to the courtyard, and the east wall is brick with wood paneled wall sections and door openings. The central portion of the east wall, opposite the main entrance from the courtyard and between the two sets of doors to Morrill Hall, has a slate shelf with a shallow recess containing a display board above. Two sets of natural finish, flush, double-leaf doors with one vertical light flank the recess and connect the lobby and the hall space. The remaining finishes date from renovations in the 2000s including the porcelain tile floor and plaster ceiling with round, flush light fixtures.

The approximately 70-foot-square Parish Hall, now Morrill Hall, gathering space is the centerpiece of the wing (Photograph 13). The finishes in the space are original and were designed to optimize acoustics and be visually pleasing. The walls are covered with a full height grille of vertical, natural finish, wood battens on cork and plywood, to which display panels can be attached. The distinctive geometric ceiling is an early modern interpretation of a traditional coffer form, here executed in square precast concrete coffers arranged in four triangular sections that rise slightly to a square skylight at the center. A light cove at the soffit intersection of the walls and ceiling holds the recessed uplighting as originally designed to illuminate the windowless space. The room initially had a raised platform reached by three steps along the east wall, which has been removed, and the wall in this area is finished with sand-finish plaster. The floor is original deep yellow-colored asphalt asbestos tile.

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Two U-shaped stairs leading to the basement/lower level are located at the south and north ends of the Parish Hall and are made of reinforced concrete with steel balusters and wood banister rail. Two side walls of the stair space are brick. The basement level of the Parish Hall was originally comprised of one large "recreation room" directly below the main floor hall with a storage room to the south. The large space has been divided into various areas including the control room for a solar energy collection system installed in 2018 for the heating and cooling system, a food pantry area, and a large youth group room with kitchen and finished with carpeted floor, acoustical tile ceiling with exposed ductwork, and gypsum board walls. The connection between the main and lower levels is by two sets of U-shaped and landing stairs at the northwest and southwest corners.

Church Offices (Gray Gables, McLane House) and Garage

Gray Gables (1912, contributing building, Photographs 16–22; Figure 14) is a west-facing, eclectic Mission- and Tudor Revival-style, two-and-one-half-story, wood-frame, stucco-clad building with a bracketed hip roof and stone foundation. The building is oriented north to south, with service spaces at the north end, formal spaces at the south end, and less formal and primary circulation spaces in the middle. The building, surrounded by lawn and trees, is accessed via a U-shaped, paved driveway that encircles St. Mark's Episcopal Church and approximately follows the original route. The walls are clad with stucco, and the roof is covered with simulated slate shingles. Four triple-flue, corbelled brick chimneys with rectangular, stuccoed bases project from the four corners of the roof, near the center of each slope line. The bases are ornamented with staggered brick pyramids and copper flashing. Three full-height projecting bays topped with gable roofs are evenly spaced on the east elevation (Photograph 16), and a porte-cochère formerly projected from the center of the elevation at the main entrance (removed in the 1960s). The primary entrance (Photograph 17) is in the center of the west elevation beneath a flat-roof porch on square piers with a roof balustrade and set in a stuccoed recess. The entrance is composed of a 20-light wood door flanked by 10-light sidelights with incised wood panels below. A tall, three-part, multi-light window in a segmental-arch opening south of the entrance denotes the location of the interior, main stair, inter-floor landing. The east elevation (Photograph 18) has a two-story, gable-roof porch with arched openings on the first story and rectangular openings on the slightly recessed second story, which is enclosed with a low wood balustrade with stucco corners. A full-height projecting bay is immediately north of the two-story porch.

The south elevation, formerly a two-story, integral sun porch with an attached one-story porch on the east elevation, was enclosed and stuccoed, likely in the 1960s. The first story windows are large, segmental-arch openings filled with multi-light sash and arched transoms, and the second story has three pairs of 12-light windows. A 12-light door is centered in the first story of the main block on the south end, likely originally providing access to former terraces surrounding the south end of the house. An additional one-story enclosed porch projects from the east elevation at the north end, and a two-story wood entry porch, supported by square wood posts and carved brackets, spans the east elevation between the center bay and the south porch. The north porch is bowed with a hip roof, rectangular window and door openings, and Tuscan pilasters at each corner. The south porch has a flat roof surrounded by a wood balustrade with stuccoed corner posts, and is pierced by wide, arched window openings on the east and south elevations. One- and two-story additions project from the north elevation, each topped with a hip roof. A projecting bay is in the interstice between the main block of the house and the two-story addition on the east elevation. The roof of the two-story addition is pierced by two double-flue brick chimneys, similar to the chimneys in the main roof. Secondary entrances consist of one in the two-story service porch addition on the north elevation, protected by a second-story porch and arched openings, and under the center porch on the east elevation. Fenestration generally consists of six-over-six, double-hung wood sash in the

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rectangular openings and three-part, multi-light, double-hung wood sash with transoms in the segmental-arch openings, all with narrow molded surrounds and wide board sills.

The interior of the building retains much of its original floor plan and finishes. The main entrance in the approximate center of the west elevation leads to a wide, one-story vestibule (Photograph 19) spanning the width of the house. To the south are a wide, dog-leg staircase (Photograph 20) leading to the second story, the Rector's study and office (Photograph 21), the enclosed porch, and a sitting room (Photograph 22), all of which are interconnected in a U-shaped circulation path. The staircase has spiral-carved, painted wood balusters and a natural finish wood railing with pineapple finials atop square newel posts. The outer wall of the staircase has paneled wainscoting. The stair treads and risers are covered with carpet. The Rector's study has built-in, half-height wood bookcases around the north, east, and part of the south walls, and a brick fireplace in the south wall. The sitting room has a fireplace in the south wall, flanked by double-leaf, eight-light wood French doors. The fireplaces both have a herringbone brick apron, splayed brick lintels, and a wood mantel atop a wide wood entablature supported by pairs of Tuscan pilasters in the sitting room and by engaged grooved pilasters in the study. In the south half of the building, floors are generally fir strip flooring, some covered with carpet, and the ceilings are covered with plaster crown molding.

The north part of the building is the service wing, with a long, double-loaded corridor running the length of the west side of the building. Rooms in the service wing, now used as offices, generally have modern drop ceilings, a mix of carpet and original hardwood floors, and simpler finishes than in the south half of the house. Internal doors are generally five- or six-panel solid wood doors, and doors to exterior spaces, like the north enclosed porch or solarium, are multi-light wood doors. At the north end of the building on the west side is the narrow dog-leg servants' stair, leading to the second story, which is partially used as a residence.

The south end of the second floor is used for offices and meeting space; the remainder of the floor is a private residence. The south rooms have a combination of original hardwood and carpeted floors, and small brick fireplaces, with herringbone aprons and splayed brick lintels, and simple wood surrounds with wide entablatures and molded pilasters.

The **Garage (1938–1949, late 20th c., contributing building, Photograph 18; Figure 4)**, northeast of the house near the service wing, is a west-facing, astylistic, one-story, concrete block building. In the late twentieth century, the building was altered with the addition of three courses of concrete block to the top of each wall, and a new, wide, vertical-lift door was installed in the center of the west elevation replacing the original door. The end-gable roof, which was raised up and reset on the additional wall courses, is clad in asphalt shingles with vertical board siding in the gable peaks. There are five eight-light metal sash with header brick sills arranged on the east, north, and south elevations.

Designed Landscape

The **St. Mark's Church Designed Landscape (late 19th–early 20th c., 1961, contributing site, Photographs 1, 2, 4, 10, 14, 15, and 23–25; Figures 4, 5, 6, and 10)** is composed of two primary zones: the Courtyard, Terraces, and Gardens around the Church and Bell Tower, Church School, and Parish House complex; and the Great Lawn. Also within the Designed Landscape site are the Vehicular Circulation and Parking System and the Retaining Walls System.

The St. Mark's Church landscape as designed and executed in 1959–1961 (Figure 14) and as it remains today, is overlain on two late nineteenth- and early twentieth centuries estate landscapes (Figure 3). In

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adapting the combined residential estates for a new layout and ecclesiastical use, landscape architect Vincent Cerasi, working with the project architects Sherwood, Mills and Smith, retained a few basic and structural components while developing an up-to-date, modern design concept suited to the new church architecture. Many existing trees and shrubs on the site were moved to new sites as shown in the 1959 drawings and planting plan (Figure 10). The formal landscape zone of the Courtyard, Terraces, and Gardens around the Church and Bell Tower, Church School, and Parish House complex is enclosed by entrance drives that follow historic drive alignments on the north, east, and south, and by Oenoke Ridge on the west. This area was previously lawn dotted with trees that sloped generally down from northwest to southeast. The site was leveled, with a topographical drop retained within the footprint of the Church School and Parish House at the east elevations where the basement and foundation are exposed above grade.

The primary design features of the south-facing Terraces and the inner Courtyard are laid out in a L-plan. The main terrace runs west-east between the Bell Tower and the Parish House, with a short projecting section at the north end, west side, that abuts the Courtyard to the west. In the design, each component relies on a geometrical grid of square units at various scales and subtle grade changes to create a unified whole and immediate setting for the building complex.

The main Terrace is elevated above the drive level with a wide monumental stair of three steps along the east side (Photographs 2 and 3). The south end serves as a plaza approach to the Church entrance, with access south to the Bell Tower, and north to the arcade walkway and Courtyard. A square lawn panel in the north end of the terrace establishes the paved walkway routes to the various building entrances. Originally the terrace and walkways were paved with exposed aggregate concrete with brick borders. Sometime in the late twentieth century, the paving was redone with a patterned layout of bluestone (and granite in some areas) rectangular panels and light colored granite accents. Metal hand rails were added to the main stair, and a ramp flanked by a mortared stone wall of mostly square ashlar with bluestone caps was installed at the west end of the stair. The lawn panel contains a Japanese maple at the south end (likely original and transplanted to this location (Photograph 10; Figure 10). Lawn areas with trees and shrubs are set at the west and east ends of the Terrace. Scattered along the Terrace, and the edge of the Great Lawn, are tall, black metal lights with openwork shafts topped by low-domes lamps (Photographs 4 and 23).

The Courtyard is rimmed with paved walkways under the arcade and abutting the three adjacent buildings (Photographs 14 and 15). A square water fountain with an abstract bronze statue by the New Canaan sculptor Harry Caesar (1915–2004) (both installed in 2014) is located against the brick south wall of the Church School at the north end of the Courtyard. Mortared stone walls of mostly square ashlar with bluestone caps separate the walkways from the central, sunken section of the Courtyard, and broad bluestone steps descend from the walkway to the lower level at the southwest corner near the arcade and at the northeast corner opposite the main entrance to the Parish Hall. A walkway paved in exposed aggregate concrete (likely original paving) connects the steps along the east and south sides, and a lawn occupies the remainder of the space. A Japanese maple (likely original and transplanted to this location (Photograph 14; Figure 10) is set in the lawn, creating a shaded ambience. Other plantings include rows of round boxwood shrubs, hostas, and creeping groundcover. Originally there were two additional trees and a wider variety of shrubs filling the planting beds. Stone benches and small sculptures dot the periphery of the Courtyard.

On the west side of the Church, the terrace turns the southeast corner to the Bell Tower, where a walkway leads west to steps at the sidewalk. The remainder of the west side and the north side are lawn dotted with trees (Photograph 4). On the north side of the Church, a paved walkway extends between the north drive

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and the entrance at the west end of the Church School. A garden with shrubs and flowers was created along the north side of the sacristy and guild hall part of the church in the early twenty-first century. Along the north side of the Church School, the classroom windows overlook a playground surrounded by wood post-and-rail fence established in the late twentieth century (Photograph 9). On the east side of the Church, a lawn with trees extends beyond the southwest corner of the Parish Hall where a stone retaining wall is located (Photograph 11). English yews (as indicated in the 1959 plans) were located at the corners of the hall projection, and shrubs are planted in beds created by retaining walls constructed in 2017.

The Great Lawn is an expansive rectangular sheet of grass oriented north-south that was regraded in sections to create a uniform level ground surface (Photographs 1, 23, 24, and 25; Figure 10). Dotted within the lawn are various mature deciduous trees that are concentrated along the south, west, and north perimeters in a similar pattern to that shown in the 1959 planting plan, which indicates that all existing trees remained, and no new ones were added at that time. The varieties include maple, oak, and linden. Originally there were elms along the west, street edge. The Great Lawn is bounded by the main entrance drive on the south, east, and north. It serves as the primary visual setting for the St. Mark's Church building complex, which overlooks it from the Terrace, and as the site for the well-attended annual May Fair. Small benches and lights are located around the perimeter of the Great Lawn (Photograph 23).

Vehicle Circulation and Parking

The design of the **Vehicle Circulation and Parking System (1961, contributing structure, Photographs 23, 24, and 25; Figures 4, 5, and 6)** in the St. Mark's Church Designed Landscape employs linear alignments and gently curved corners of planting berms and at turns. The asphalt-paved drive has two, overlapped, roughly U-shaped sections with three entrances at Oenoke Ridge. The main drive follows a U-shaped alignment on three sides of the Great Lawn, running west-east from Oenoke Ridge at the south end of the property, south-north between the Great Lawn and parking areas to the east, and extending west-east from Oenoke Ridge in front of Church, Church School, and Parish Hall. The latter, north drive section also serves as the south part of the main U-shaped drive that surrounds the south, east, and north sides of the Church, Church School, and Parish Hall and follows the approximate route of the former McLane entrance drive as shown on the 1956 survey plan (Figure 4). The original section of the north-south drive travels between the Church School and Parish House and the Church Offices (Gray Gables); a spur east of the Church Offices and Garage rejoins the drive at the northeast corner of the property. A secondary drive continues northeast out of the nominated property. The main parking area is two parallel rows divided by planting berms with trees along the east edge of the church property and at a slightly lower elevation than the Great Lawn to the east. A small parking area is adjacent to the drive along the north side of the church complex.

Retaining Walls System

The **Retaining Walls System (late 19th-early 20th c., 1961, contributing structure, Photographs 4, 11, and 25; Figures 4, 5, and 6)** in the St. Mark's Church Designed Landscape incorporates one stone wall that is a remnant of former land use. The nineteenth- or early twentieth-century retaining wall along the entire Oenoke Ridge property line at the sidewalk is a mortared wall of mostly square ashlar stone with no cap (Photograph 4). In 1961, it was rebuilt at the three entrances, and a small section was removed at the Bell Tower for a walkway and steps. The new design for the landscape included a curved retaining wall in the western planting bed separating the north-south drive and parking on the east where the Rogers House was located (Photograph 25; Figures 4 and 6). The 1959 project plans specified that the stone walls would be of coursed rubble masonry with roughly dressed stones set in cement mortar joints. All masonry was to be durable dark stone in a wide range of colors, but no light or whitish stone.

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Collections Statement

The furnishings at St. Mark's Church are significant, contributing features that are historically associated with the property and contribute to its significance. Nearly all the objects in the church are original to the building; most were designed and fabricated specifically for the sanctuary space, and others were brought from the congregation's 1833 St. Mark's Church. Because of this intentional integrated design and direct historical connection with the making and ongoing use of the church, the furnishing objects complement and contribute to the aesthetic design and historical context of the building, the shared stories of the congregation, and the direct visual and felt experience of being in the architectural, stained-glass lit space. The primary components of the collection, which are further described in **7. Description** and **8. Significance**, are as follows:

- Sculpture, most notably the wood and metal reredos screen behind and above the altar designed for the space and the wooden statue of Jesus Christ at the rear of the chapel brought from the 1833 church;
- Furnishings, including the pulpit, lecterns, nave pews, choir pews, organ console and accoutrements and the Erica Wilson-designed kneeling cushions that were custom-designed for the space, and the altar rail, bishop's chair, litany desk, clergy stalls, baptismal font, and Ruth Noble-designed cushions in the chapel that were brought from the 1833 church; and
- Archives and manuscripts, including the original architectural drawings, correspondence, and other documents related to the church's design, construction, and furnishings.

Statement of Integrity

St. Mark's Episcopal Church retains overall integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association. The property's setting on Oenoke Ridge remains intact, and the property clearly conveys its significance as a distinctive and important Mid-Twentieth Century Modern church complex comprised of connected or related buildings within a complementary designed landscape. The coherent vision, design, and execution of the complex built in 1959–1961 as overseen by the St. Mark's Church Vestry, with buildings designed by architect Willis Smith of Sherwood, Mills and Smith, and site designed by landscape architect Vincent C. Cerasi, are readily apparent today. The Church's exterior of gray and brown brick rising to a multi-gable, concrete roof, along with the associated Chapel and Bell Tower are unaltered and sustain a commanding presence overlooking the Great Lawn to the south. The building's extensive architectural stained glass and interior artwork including the choir screen, and furnishings, all by noted artists and designers, are essentially unaltered. Likewise, the gray and brown brick lower masses of the Parish House, containing Merrill Hall, and the School wings stand essentially as originally completed. The earlier Gray Gables eclectic Mission- and Tudor Revival-style McLane House, Gray Gables (built 1912), now used as church offices and remnants of estate grounds that predated St. Mark's Church ownership and development of the property, as integrated in to the 1960s design, continue to provide a link to the site's history. Minor changes to the buildings and landscape that have occurred since the early 1960s do not materially detract from the overall integrity of the buildings and landscape.

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**St. Mark's Episcopal Church
 National Register Data Table**

*All resources listed are contributing to the National Register

Resource Name	Construction Date	Resource Type	Photo Nos.	Figure Nos.
St. Mark's Episcopal Church	1959-1961	Building	1-15	6-9
Gray Gables	1912	Building	16-22	4
Garage	1938-1949	Building	18	4
St. Mark's Church Designed Landscape	Late 19 th -early 20 th century; 1961	Site	1,2,4,10,14,15,23-25	4-6, 10
Vehicular Circulation and Parking System	1961	Structure	23-25	4-6
Retaining Walls System	Late 19 th -Early 20 th century; 1961	Structure	4, 11, 25	4-6

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8. Statement of 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.)

- 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 old or achieving significance within the past 50 years

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Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Architecture

Period of Significance

1958-1962

Significant Dates

Spring 1958 – Design competition
October 8, 1961 – St. Mark's Episcopal Church dedicated
January 1962 – Final building committee report filed

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Sherwood, Mills and Smith, Architects
Vincent C. Cerasi and Associates, Landscape Architects and Planners
Frank Mercede & Sons, General Contractors

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Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance, applicable criteria, justification for the period of significance, and any applicable criteria considerations.)

St. Mark's Episcopal Church (St. Mark's Church) is eligible for listing in the National Register at the state and local levels under Criterion C in the area of Architecture as an important example of a Modern-style (Mid-Twentieth-Century Modern-style) church constructed in New Canaan, Connecticut. The building, designed by prominent Stamford architects Sherwood, Mills and Smith, was the first Mid-Twentieth Century Modern church constructed in New Canaan, and one of the earliest constructed in the state of Connecticut. Incorporating Gothic design principles adapted to then-current functions and Modern materials, executed predominantly in pre-cast concrete, the church combines traditional and Modern elements in a striking composition. Likewise, the surrounding landscape, designed by Bedford Hills, New York, landscape architect Vincent C. Cerasi, combines traditional and Modern elements, including the cloister-like paved courtyard and garden between the attached Church, Church School, and Parish Hall, and the wide, grassy Great Lawn that demonstrates Modern sensibilities, making use of materials and landscape elements native to the site or area. It is one of two known ecclesiastical commissions and among a handful of projects completed by Cerasi in Connecticut. St. Mark's Church, which embodies a lively story of thoughtful and well-documented design decision-making at a watershed moment in American architecture, conveys a timelessness of building architecture and landscaped campus that was pioneering when constructed, remains a prominent visual landmark in the community today, and continues to support a vibrant congregational life.

Criterion Consideration A is met because the primary significance of the church stems from its architecture, rather than its ecclesiastic history.

The period of significance for St. Mark's Episcopal Church begins in 1958 with the preparation for construction of the church and ends in 1962 when the final building reports were completed. Resources constructed prior to 1958 were incorporated into the mid-twentieth-century reuse and redesign of the property; they are thus considered contributing, but do not affect the period of significance.

Narrative Statement of Significance (Provide at least **one** paragraph for each area of significance.)

CRITERION C – ARCHITECTURE

St. Mark's Episcopal Church (St. Mark's Church) is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places (National Register) at the state level as an outstanding expression and example of a Modern Movement (Mid-Twentieth-Century Modern) church built in New Canaan, Connecticut, based on the designs of the prominent Stamford architectural firm of Sherwood, Mills and Smith that intentionally adapts traditional Gothic ecclesiastical architectural patterns and principles to Mid-Twentieth-Century Modern forms, materials, and program requirements with an integral designed landscape by Vincent C. Cerasi. The church is important as the earliest Mid-Twentieth-Century Modern church built in New Canaan. It stands out as an important and early example within the small group churches of this type and period in Fairfield County and the Hartford area of Connecticut; and is also notable within the broader context of New England and New York church architecture of the mid-twentieth century.

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Mid-Twentieth-Century Modern Architecture in the United States

Modernism coalesced as an identifiable architectural style in the 1920s and signaled a seismic shift in design within architecture and related arts that continues to inform design ideals and our experience of the built environment. An unprecedented and extraordinary sequence of international, national, and local political, social, and design events catalyzed the Modern Movement during this time. Modernism established a radically new aesthetic that broke with the historical past and advocated design based on function, economy, efficiency, simplicity, planar forms, new technologies and materials, and an intimate relationship with site and nature (Adams et al. 2010).

The formative decades of what emerged as the Mid-Twentieth-Century Modern style were marked in the 1920s and 1930s by the first presence and designs of European Modern architects in the United States. Some Americans became familiar with the emerging European Modern architecture through travel and visits to the Bauhaus, the influential Modern design school that operated in Germany from 1919 to 1933. A few European architects came to the United States, drawn in part by celebrated architect Frank Lloyd Wright (1867–1959). When European architects and designers fled Nazi Germany in the late 1930s, key figures became department heads and teachers at major American architecture and design schools and began training students. From the 1940s through the early 1960s, Mid-Twentieth-Century Modern buildings designed by the European émigré architects, their students, and traditionally trained American Modern architects appeared in the American landscape, often in concentrations at specific locations. Designs reflected Frank Lloyd Wright's pioneering emphasis on open plan, horizontality, and dialogue with the landscape and explored the possibilities inherent in prefabricated manufactured building units. These developments occurred in the period of high national optimism and wealth after World War II and advanced vigorously in the late 1940s through mid-1960s. The resulting Mid-Twentieth-Century Modern architecture displayed multiple design currents that shared a spirit of freshness and innovation (Adams et al. 2010).

Many of the connections among architects and between designers and clients grew from and created social and professional networks that had profound impacts on particular communities. These locations included New Canaan, the towns and coast around New Haven and Yale University, and the Litchfield Hills in Connecticut; the Boston area and Outer Cape Cod in Massachusetts; Los Angeles and San Francisco in California; the greater Chicago area; parts of Michigan; Columbus, Indiana; and areas of Florida. In the mid-1960s, Mid-Twentieth-Century Modern architecture's appeal began to fade due to negative public response and a shift in design interests. The widespread use of minimalist, open plan designs and inexpensive construction technology and materials produced a proliferation of unornamented, rectilinear modern buildings and drastic urban renewal plans of varying quality that did not necessarily embody fundamental Mid-Twentieth-Century Modern philosophies. By the late 1970s and early 1980s, expressionist and historically referenced designs became increasingly prevalent as Postmodernism rose in prominence (Adams et al. 2010).

Due to its proximity to New York, New Canaan became fertile ground for architectural experimentation. Many architects had offices in New York City, but settled in the nearby Connecticut suburbs, like New Canaan, where they shared office space in the town center, built Mid-Twentieth-Century Modern houses for their families, and frequently designed school, church, and other buildings for their local communities (Gregson 2009). Starting in the 1940s, the New Canaan Historical Society began offering architectural house tours, capitalizing on the interest in Philip Johnson's Glass House and the growing number of Mid-Twentieth-Century Modern houses built in New Canaan. The tours, which were fundraisers for New Canaan institutions including the library, also served as marketing tools for the architects with offices in

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town. Some of the Mid-Twentieth-Century Modern buildings designed by prominent architects were the first of their kind in the United States, like the Connecticut General Insurance Company (1954–1957), designed by Gordon Bunshaft (1909–1990) of Skidmore, Owings and Merrill, which was the first corporate campus in the U.S. (Gregson 2009). In nearby Stamford, Wallace K. Harrison (1895–1981) of Harrison and Abramovitz designed the First Presbyterian Church (1958, pending NHL), often referred to as the “fish church” due to its resemblance to an abstract fish, with stained glass panels embedded in its concrete walls (Gregson 2019). In the post-World War II years, Mid-Twentieth-Century Modern designs were primarily executed for residences, schools and churches, but beginning in the 1960s, often as part of urban renewal activities, Mid-Twentieth-Century Modern office buildings were designed and built (Kino 2017).

By the early 1950s, approximately 30 Mid-Twentieth-Century Modern houses had been built in New Canaan, and the building boom extended into the early 1960s (Adams et al. 2010). Nationally and internationally prominent architects including Marcel Breuer (1902–1981), Philip Johnson (1906–2005), Eliot Noyes (1910–1977), John M. Johansen (1916–2012), and Landis Gores (1919–1991) (collectively known as the “Harvard Five” due to their connection with the Harvard Graduate School of Design) lived and worked in New Canaan beginning in the late 1940s (Adams et al. 2010; Earls 2006). In total more than 100 Mid-Twentieth-Century Modern houses were constructed in New Canaan by about 30 architects (at least 19 have subsequently been demolished – about 90 remain extant). Several of the houses were award-winning, including the Hodgson House, designed by Philip Johnson and built in 1950, which won first prize at the 1954 International Exhibition of Architecture in Brazil and the 1956 First Honor Award from the American Institute of Architects. Many of the architects had offices in downtown New Canaan, including Philip Johnson, Eliot Noyes and Associates, and John Black Lee Associates. The concentration of Mid-Twentieth-Century Modern architects in town made New Canaan the epicenter of the style in the United States at that time (Adams et al. 2010; NCHS 1986:18–19).

Architectural Characteristics

Mid-Twentieth-Century Modern architecture is generally defined by its distinct break with earlier classical and vernacular styles through an emphasis on simplified building form and functional efficiency in lieu of ornamentation, use of new and often experimental materials and technologies, comprehensive integration of the building with the existing environment, and incorporation of other visual arts. The holistic concept of design, site, and furnishings celebrated and supported modern living and working activities and priorities (Adams et al. 2010).

Structural and visual organization of form based on intersecting planes and volumes or alternating solids and voids replaced the traditionally massed motif. Large expanses of full height windows and glazed doors embraced natural light and along with courtyards, breezeways, terraces, and decks connected inside and outside spaces. The resulting open floor plans and a preference for asymmetry allowed and encouraged a new informality and freedom of lifestyle and workflow. Construction methods and framing and finish materials emphasized “honesty,” affordability, and ease of maintenance. Contemporary Mid-Twentieth-Century Modern painting, sculpture, textiles, freestanding and built-in furniture, and lighting were integral to the architectural expression. Buildings exhibited a fresh relationship and sensitivity to their site through energy considerations in the directional orientation to solar cycles and the use of architectural elements such as sunshades, as well as in the design of the approach and provision for the automobile. The aesthetic dynamic between buildings, their settings, and the human occupants’ experience dictated placement in the natural landscape, the importance of scenic and spatial views, and the introduction of no or minimal complimentary landscaping (Adams et al. 2010).

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Designing St. Mark's Episcopal Church

The Connecticut General Assembly established Canaan Parish (now New Canaan) in northwestern Norwalk and northeastern Stamford in 1731. The Episcopal Church began in New Canaan in 1762 when in Canaan Parish congregants wanted to worship closer to home rather than having to travel to Norwalk or Stamford. The first church was constructed in 1764 on West Road (west of Oenoke Ridge). Church records indicate that it was not consistently used, initially due to the lack of a minister, and later due to the American Revolution as many congregants were Loyalists. In 1791, the first Episcopal Society of Canaan Parish was formed. In 1832, the congregation purchased a parcel on what would become known as God's Acre (named for to the concentration of churches in that spot) near the town center, and a new wood-frame, Greek Revival-style church was constructed in 1833. Bishop Thomas Church Brownell (1779–1865) consecrated the new building on May 6, 1834, and the letter of consecration provides the first instance of the congregation being known as St. Mark's Church (Pennypacker 1964:8–13, 19, 25–27).

The St. Mark's Episcopal Church congregation remained in its 1833 church until the mid-twentieth century, when the congregation had increased in size and outgrown its building complex, resulting in a decision to build a new church on a different, larger site.⁵ Due to overcrowding, parents kept children home from Sunday School. Furthermore, any enlargement of the 1893 parish hall would constrict already cramped parking areas, and remove any possibility of expanding the 1833 church, which only seated 250 (Finnie 2001:4; SMC 2011:4).

St. Mark's Episcopal Church, Church School, and Parish Hall (1959–1961, contributing building), designed by prominent Stamford architects Sherwood, Mills and Smith, is the result of a more than 10-year process that began in 1948 when the estate of Dr. and Mrs. James W. McLane on Oenoke Ridge was put up for sale. Father Michael Barton, Rector of St. Mark's since 1933, suggested that the Tudor Revival-style McLane House, called **Gray Gables (1912, contributing building)** could be used for Sunday School classrooms, and the second floor could be turned into an apartment for the Rector and his family; the adjacent **Garage (1912, contributing building)** could be used for storage. The Rectory could then be sold to help fund the construction of a new church (SMC 2011:21–22). Beyond the space in Gray Gables, the surrounding 7-acre parcel provided ample space to build a new building (SMC 2011:22). In 1949, the parish purchased the McLane estate for \$53,000 (approximately \$570,000 in 2019). The parish quickly put the new site into use, with Sunday School classes and various parish committees moving into Gray Gables, and the parish's annual May Fair set up on the large lawn (now called the Great Lawn), where it continues to be held every year (Finnie 2001:5).

In 1951, a Building Fund was set up to begin collecting money for the construction of a new church. By early 1955, a planning committee was organized, led by Vestry member Germain "Gerry" Hubby, and was tasked with four assignments: to study the long-term needs of the parish; to evaluate possible building sites for a new church; to report on architectural design, building plans, and costs; and to assess the ability of the church membership to pay for the expansion (Finnie 2001:6). A subcommittee for site evaluation was led by Henry S. "Harry" Noble, who quickly enlisted the help of respected New Canaan building contractor Theodore de F. Hobbs, and Stamford architect and St. Mark's parishioner Willis N. Mills (see biography below). After considering the church property on God's Acre along with the present

⁵ Not wanting to see the old church demolished or left to sit vacant, the old St. Mark's Episcopal Church on God's Acre was sold to St. Michael's Lutheran Church in April 1962 (Finnie 2001:77). The God's Acre church continues to be used by St. Michael's. God's Acre is a Local Historic District established on June 27, 1963, and is listed on the Connecticut State Register but is not National Register listed (CTHP 2019).

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and future needs of the parish, the site evaluation subcommittee began looking at alternatives to simply expanding the present church. That same year, Katherine Rogers, daughter of famed sculptor John Rogers (1829–1904) and owner of the property immediately to the south of the McLane estate, alerted the church that she wanted to sell her property, and that she would be “particularly happy” if St. Mark’s purchased it (quoted in Finnie 2001:7). The church immediately purchased the property for \$50,000 (approximately \$478,000 in 2019), bringing the total land owned to 11 acres.

Despite the purchase of land on Oenoke Ridge and the determination by the site evaluation subcommittee that the 1833 church and surrounding lot were inadequate for the congregation’s needs, some parishioners remained unconvinced that a new church was even necessary. Others were upset at the prospect of leaving God’s Acre, and there were concerns about what the new building would look like. In response to this last issue, an architecture committee was formed, which would be subordinate to the planning committee. Willis Mills recused himself from this new committee as his firm, Sherwood, Mills and Smith, saw itself as a potential candidate to design the new building, but not before developing a questionnaire for interviewing prospective architects for the project (Finnie 2001:8, 10).

Toward the end of 1955, the architecture committee sent letters to approximately 50 architects and firms, based on recommendations from the Bureau of Church Building and Architecture of the National Council of Churches, editors of professional journals and magazines, and members of the congregation. 37 of the 50 responded to request more information, including prominent architects such as Eero Saarinen; Victor Christ-Janer; McKim, Mead & White; and all five of the “Harvard Five:” Landis Gores, Philip Johnson, Eliot Noyes, John M. Johansen, and Marcel Breuer⁶ (Earls 2006). Each of the architects received in return the questionnaire developed by Mills and a two-page document, A Statement of the Committee on Architecture, written by committee member and church Warden John Pennypacker, which outlined the feeling and aesthetic requirements of the new church (Finnie 2001:1–11, 82–83). The committee statement noted in particular, that the church should be beautiful, appropriate to New Canaan, and “be the creation of the architect of the middle twentieth century,” but not “blur the line between distinctively ecclesiastical architecture and secular architecture. We want the new St. Mark’s to be uncompromisingly a church and so proclaim itself to all who see it” (Pennypacker 1956, quoted in Finnie 2001:82–83). Further, the interior of the church should be focused on the altar, surrounded by “a feeling of serenity and a sense of mystery. There must be warmth. There cannot be distraction” (Pennypacker 1956, quoted in Finnie 2001:82–83).

In the spring of 1956, the architecture committee met to make their final decision from a group of three finalists: the New York-based firms of O’Connor and Kilham and Moore and Hutchins, and Willis Mills’ Stamford-based firm, Sherwood, Mills and Smith (Finnie 2001:13). These firms were chosen on the basis of their proposed approach to the new church, including a willingness to engage in a design process with the architecture committee, and the firm’s proximity to the new church location to facilitate supervising construction. The parish also wanted a medium-sized firm that would give individual attention to the project but also be able to keep the project moving forward in the absence of any single person. Firms with a large body of work in a variety of forms and styles were preferred, rather than specializing in one type of building (SMEC n.d.). The committee concluded that Robert O’Connor’s and Walter Kilham’s firm best reflected the parish’s interests and ultimately elected them to design the new St. Mark’s Episcopal Church. The letter announcement to the parish described their accomplishments, including the acclaimed Firestone Library at Princeton College (1948), and noted that both men were Episcopalian (Finnie 2001:13). In early meetings between the architects and the building committee, it was agreed that

⁶ The “Harvard Five” were five architects and industrial designers who trained at the Harvard Graduate School of Design under Walter Gropius and then settled in New Canaan.

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the new church would be near the north end of the property and be oriented north-south, parallel to Oenoke Ridge. Reverend Grant Morrill outlined the liturgical requirements of the building, along with rooms needed for clergy, the Altar Guild, Sunday School, music rooms, and other spaces (Finnie 2001:13).

When O'Connor and Kilham began designing a new church for the St. Mark's congregation, there were no Mid-Twentieth-Century Modern churches in New Canaan. Philip Johnson's Glass House (NHL), built on Ponus Ridge in 1951, was widely ridiculed in the press, and local opinions were divided on the design aesthetic of this and other Mid-Twentieth-Century Modern houses being built in the town. As a result, many in the congregation were concerned that a Mid-Twentieth-Century Modern church for St. Mark's would be "inappropriate to New Canaan" (Finnie 2001:18). The overall design included a campanile (a bell tower separate from the church itself); and pierced side walls, rather than traditional windows (Finnie 2001:16, 23). At public meetings held for the congregation in October 1956 where they could see the architects' plans and a model for the new building, there was a general sense of displeasure with the proposed building. Parishioners questioned whether the "experimental" architecture would age well in public opinion and wondered what was wrong with a Colonial-style church, that is, something that more resembled the Georgian and Greek Revival-style churches with which they were more familiar, like the wood-frame church on God's Acre which had been the congregation's home since the early nineteenth century (Finnie 2001:23-24).

The parish leadership welcomed the opinions of parishioners in letters, meetings, and open discussions. The New Canaan Historical Society and St. Mark's Episcopal Church archives record the opinions of parishioners stated in letters sent to various members of the church leadership. Elliot Macrae, president of New York publishing house E.P. Dutton & Co. wrote that "St. Mark's Parish should not be used as an experiment in terms of building a church that is modern in design and concept...John Pennypacker told our group that he doubted that the present architects could change the exterior of the proposed church without losing their integrity...If that is the case there seems to be but one thing to do, however disagreeable it may be, and that is to pay the necessary fee to the architects and start completely afresh..." (Macrae 1956, quoted in Finnie 2001:32). Willis Mills wrote a letter to Heywood Fox of the Vestry and building committee, cautioning him that "I think it would be impossible for the architects to do a good job if they have to satisfy practically everyone in the parish" (Mills 1956, quoted in Finnie 2001:32).

In the face of an overwhelmingly negative response to the proposed building, O'Connor and Kilham attempted to resign from the project, which was initially rejected by the Vestry (Finnie 2001:29). The Vestry and building committee, despite conflicting ideas and desires, convinced the architects to make one more attempt at a church design that would be accepted by the parishioners (Finnie 2001:27-29). By spring 1957, however, with parishioners rejecting the second set of plans by O'Connor and Kilham on the grounds that they were effectively the same as the earlier plans, there was a general demand from the congregation that the Rector issue a poll to gauge the parish's opinion of the plans (Finnie 2001:35, 39). By the fall, O'Connor and Kilham came to an agreement with the building committee: the plans, which were in their third revision, remained unsatisfactory to the parish, and the architects and parish should part ways (Finnie 2001:49-50).

After the failure to secure a design for the new St. Mark's Episcopal Church, the Vestry and Church Wardens assessed the lessons learned, some of which had been uncomfortable. Heywood Fox (1911-1986), appointed chairman of the building committee, was charged with coming up with a new plan to undertake the building of the church. Under Fox's plan, a five-person committee was tasked with choosing three architects to be interviewed by the Vestry. Non-Vestry members of the building committee would be invited to the interviews, but the final decision regarding the selection of the architect and the

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approval of the final building plans rested with the Vestry only (Finnie 2001:51). The selected architect would be engaged to make a survey of building needs and possible layouts, after which the Vestry would decide whether or not to hire them to design the new building (Finnie 2001:51–52). The three architects interviewed in the spring of 1958 were: president of the Church Architects Guild of America, Harold Wagoner of Philadelphia; the New York firm of Adams & Woodbridge; and Sherwood, Mills and Smith (Finnie 2001:52–54). In March 1958, Sherwood, Mills and Smith were asked to make a survey and prepare preliminary sketches but were not required to commit to any particular design. Willis Mills was in charge of the project for his firm, and he and the Vestry agreed to “a Mid-Twentieth-Century approach rather than the reproduction of a traditional church design...” (quoted in Finnie 2001:55). Mills, as a member of the site evaluation subcommittee had assessed the property on God’s Acre and the McLane/Rogers property, and despite the continued hopes of some parishioners who wanted the congregation to remain on God’s Acre, held to his earlier conclusion that to accommodate all of the parish’s needs, the only solution was to build on Oenoke Ridge (Finnie 2001:55). After completing the initial site study, Mills and his wife Esther took a vacation to Europe where he visited numerous Mid-Twentieth-Century Modern churches, including the 1951 Chapelle de Rosaire de Vence, designed by Henri Matisse (1869–1954), and Le Corbusier’s (1887–1965) 1955 Chapel of Notre Dame du Haut at Ronchamp, both in France. It seems possible, though unconfirmed, that the couple may have also visited St. Michael’s Cathedral (1956–1962), designed by Sir Basil Spence (1907–1976) which was under construction in Coventry, England. At the very least Mills was aware of the widely-published plans for the cathedral’s modernist design, which may have influenced aspects of the St. Mark’s design (St. Mark’s 2011:5; Finnie 2001:57).

In September 1958, Willis Mills presented his firm’s preliminary plans and site studies for the new church to the Vestry, which by early October voted to hire Sherwood, Mills and Smith to design the new St. Mark’s (Finnie 2001:60). On November 5, 1958, Mills presented the plans and preliminary sketches of the new church to the parish members who assembled in the brand-new auditorium of the Mid-Twentieth-Century Modern-style, New Canaan High School which was completed in 1971 (Lyons-Mather-Lechner, Architects). Prior to the meeting, Heywood Fox emphasized the importance of showing the congregation that the Vestry was confident in the ability of Sherwood, Mills and Smith to design a new, beautiful building for the parish. Fox anticipated that the parishioners attending the meeting would ask about the architectural philosophy behind the design (i.e. Modern vs. Traditional); whether the parish could raise enough money for the construction; and why the parish was not given an overall opportunity to vote. The Vestry was encouraged to answer briefly, and in such a way that the parish understood that the Vestry was fully behind Sherwood, Mills and Smith. The meeting was widely publicized, and the following morning the plans and their initial approval by the congregation were published in highly positive articles in the *New Canaan Advertiser* and the *Stamford Advocate*, along with a shorter summary in the *New York Herald Tribune* (Finnie 2001:60, 62–63).

Despite the positive reception and press coverage, some parishioners again wrote letters to committee chairman Harry Noble expressing concern over the new church design. Parishioner Elliot Macrae’s letter that questioned why the opinions of the congregation were not being taken into account, and stated that “If it is pre-ordained that we must have a contemporary church, I hope that the Vestry will bear in mind the many sincere members of the Parish who prefer a more familiar type of church, and that the final plans will be so arranged that the church will have warmth, character and familiarity. A contemporary church can be beautiful or it can be terrible. I am sorry to say that in my opinion and that of many others the present plans leave a lot to be desired” (Macrae 1958). Other letters outright stated a dislike of the architects’ plans, and, as in the case of a letter from parishioner MacLean Hoggson, that they would not help in soliciting support for the plan from friends and family. Noble’s response to Hoggson’s letter acknowledges the competing opinions and interests of the parish, and the perceived dichotomy between

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contemporary and traditional architecture which was a recurring theme of the early to mid-twentieth century Colonial Revival period throughout the United States. This design conflict was based in enduring aesthetics reflective of the country's history and newer social issues related to different views of immigration. In his response letter, Noble noted, "No church can be designed that is not a traditional building, since the purpose of a church is to house the perpetuation of our Christian heritage. At the same time, every church must be contemporary, in that it is built with the best materials and the best engineering available at the time" (Noble 1958).

Regardless of parishioner concerns, by the end of 1958, the Vestry chose to hire Sherwood, Mills and Smith to design the new St. Mark's Episcopal Church. Willis Mills predicted that he would have construction drawings ready by July 1959 to solicit bids, a contractor selected by August, and ground broken on September 1. He projected a completion date of December 1, 1960 (Finnie 2001:63).

In January 1959, Mills submitted altered plans with significant changes, most notably on the south primary elevation, where the entrance was placed into a deep recess reaching the full height of the building and incorporating a floor to ceiling stained glass window. A connecting arcade between the Church and Parish House was refined to more closely mimic the shapes and roof forms of the church itself, and the interior vaulting was reworked to create a more flowing form from the support columns (Finnie 2001:66). The final plans for the church and connected bell tower and school and parish hall wings had been influenced by a letter received with the executed contract, asking Sherwood, Mills and Smith to submit alternate sketches for both the interior and exterior that might address concerns voiced by parishioners after the presentation of preliminary plans in November 1958 (Finnie 001:63-65). The altered plans drew significantly less criticism than earlier iterations, leading the Vestry to move forward with the construction of the new building (Finnie 2001:66).

The design of St. Mark's Church reflects a strong current in post-World War II American society and religion at mid-century towards ecumenism, optimism, and social and liturgical innovations that underscored a recognition of modern culture and issues and welcomed the expression of new architectural vocabularies. Designers like Willis Mills worked with the tension and relationship between tradition and heritage balanced with technology and experimentation to achieve a building of its time, and for its community (Buggeln 2015:xviii-xix; Price 2013:138). The interior of St. Mark's features simple lines and reduced decoration, but still has a traditional vaulted ceiling and stained glass windows. In a statement he wrote for the church Willis Mills remarked that the design "expresses in today's idiom and materials those Gothic principles which are still relevant in terms of simplicity and strength" (SMC 1986:7).

Willis Mills' visits to European churches in 1958 occurred three years before the Church Architectural Guild of America's 1961 tour of European churches, when participants visited churches of all periods, but focused on post-World War II modern churches including the St. Michael's Cathedral at Coventry⁷ (Price 2013:147-148). Numerous similarities exist between the sandstone St. Michael's Cathedral in Coventry, England, and St. Mark's Episcopal Church. Structurally, the tapered columns supporting the roof, along with the pattern of the ceiling are similar, as is the shape and proportion of the enclosed nave. Artistically, the stained glass in the two buildings is comparable, and the reredos behind the St. Mark's altar, created by Clark Fitz-Gerald (1917-2004), seems almost to echo the almond-shaped tapestry made by English artist Graham Sutherland (1903-1980) behind the altar at St. Michael's (Finnie 2001:56; St. Mark's 2011).

⁷ The Architectural Guild of America formed in New York in 1940 and in 1950 started hosting an annual conference on church design that became an important venue for considering Protestant church architecture (Price 2103:83-84).

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Additionally, both St Michael's Cathedral and St. Mark's are oriented north-south (Finnie 2001:56–57). Anglican tradition previously required that the entrance be on the west and the altar on the east, but by the mid-1950s, a strict adherence to east-west compass orientation had faded and there was a general acceptance that the location of the chancel was "liturgical east," regardless of the building's actual orientation (Price 2013:59). Reflecting traditional and modern design influences, the St. Mark's church complex is sited facing south onto a large, open common green space, and is freely accessible from the street. The arrangement is patterned on a medieval cloister, with church buildings grouped around a landscaped central courtyard. It also reflects suburban siting considerations, including the need to accommodate cars and parking. The complex includes a free-standing Bell Tower with 30 bronze bells, the Church with integrated chapel, the Church School wing, and the Parish Hall with a pyramidal roof and coffered white concrete ceiling. The Church School hallway connects the Parish Hall to the church internally, and a covered arcade and bluestone and granite walkway connects the two buildings outdoors (see **Landscape Architecture** below).

The design for St. Mark's Episcopal Church also coalesced around the directive from the Vestry that "the new church should be close to people," according to an architect's statement published in a 1986 brochure about the architecture of the church (SMC 1986). The Vestry's intention aligned with an emerging national shift in attitude about church design as a shelter for people rather than a shelter for an altar. Inside the sanctuary, the free-standing altar is spiritually and liturgically close to the rows of pews for the congregation. This configuration reflects back to the early centuries of the Anglican and Episcopalian church when communion took place with the congregation gathered around the altar and permitted the celebration of the Liturgy while facing the congregation. St. Mark's is a relatively early and progressive mid-twentieth-century example of this altar orientation and worship arrangement in Connecticut and possibly nationally. This trend became increasingly prevalent in Protestant and Catholic churches in the 1960s, especially after the close of the Catholic Church's Second Vatican Council (Vatican II) in 1965. Vatican II sought to encourage new spiritual approaches, including modernization of church design, and to encourage dialogue between the Catholic Church and non-Catholics. The choir and organ are placed behind the reredos, subduing their visual importance, but not their auditory impact.

In keeping with Sherwood, Mills and Smith's frequent commissioning of artwork for inclusion in their projects by noted artists, Castine, Maine, sculptor Clark Fitz-Gerald (see biography below) was hired to create the reredos behind the altar after a presentation to the Vestry in August 1959 (Finnie 2001:68, 71). The 42-foot tall by 36-foot wide Philippine mahogany and bronze reredos depicts the Creation and Man's separation and return to God as told in the Bible. The Willet Stained Glass Studio of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, was hired to create abstract stained glass designs for the nave and chapel; Odell Prather (see biography below) created the designs. The west wall of the nave incorporates 132 8-inch-wide by 32-inch-tall windows illustrating the *Benedicite*, an Anglican canticle derived from Psalm 148; the south elevation illustrated the Resurrection; and along the chapel east wall, five episodes in the life of Jesus Christ were depicted in floor-to-ceiling windows (Finnie 2001:70). The organ was ordered from the Austin Company of Hartford, Connecticut, and the canticle bells were cast in Annecy, France (Finnie 2001:71).⁸

Willis Mills' design for the geometric, concrete coffered ceiling with recessed cove lighting in the Parish Hall, now Morrill Hall, is important as a relatively early example of this type of ceiling at the time in Connecticut. The design was likely inspired by Louis Kahn's Yale University Art Gallery in New Haven, CT, completed about five years earlier in 1951–1953, with which Mills would have certainly been familiar. Kahn was interested in exploring geometry as the underlying principle of architecture, and his

⁸ The Austin Organ Company Factory complex is extant on Woodland Street in Hartford.

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first building to investigate this paradigm was the Yale University Art Gallery. Kahn's solution introduced a clearly visible concrete space-frame structural system based on the triangle form with integrated mechanical, electrical, acoustical, and indirect lighting systems. The ceiling, with zones of indirect lighting, dominated the visual experience and created an energetic flow within the space. The ceiling was recognized as a major distinguishing feature of the building and was widely acclaimed when the building was completed (Futagawa and Meyers 1976; Kries et al. 2012). The Mills-designed layout of the concrete space-frame ceiling in Morrill Hall created dynamic tension by the placement of square units within four triangular quadrants rising to meet at the center skylight.

Ground was broken on October 4, 1959, in a ceremony widely covered in local newspapers. The church footprint was outlined with cords while scriptural readings were given. Everyone was welcome to turn a shovelful of dirt as part of the ceremony, beginning with the Rector, then the church Wardens and Vestry, after which any of the 1,000 congregants in attendance could take a turn (Finnie 2001:69). The cornerstone of the new church was sealed on Sunday, June 18, 1961, in a simple ceremony. The cornerstone contained a bible, prayer book, and the list of parishioners, all sealed within a copper box (Finnie 2001:73). Construction of the church continued through the summer and the church was dedicated on October 8, 1961, with Right Reverend Walter H. Gray, Bishop of Connecticut presiding (Finnie 2001:74). The following January of 1962, Heywood Fox made his final report as building committee chairman, lauding the efforts of Sherwood, Mills and Smith for their successful design and overseeing construction, and the leadership of Rector Grant Morrill, "who above all was responsible through his tireless and dedicated effort to guide us to a rewarding conclusion" (Fox 1962, quoted in Finnie 2001:75).

St. Mark's Church was featured in numerous ecclesiastical and architectural publications, some even before the building was officially completed including *Protestant Church Buildings and Equipment* in February 1961, the Parish Administration issue of *The Living Church* in September 1962, and *Architectural Record* in November 1962. The national professional journal *Architectural Record* article titled "Good Church Design on a Big Budget," which consisted of numerous photographs and a site drawing of the finished building, and a brief discussion of each of the main architectural elements of the church complex: the church, church school wing, and parish hall (*Architectural Record* 1962:151–156). In 1965, the regional newspaper *Stamford Advocate* hailed the church as "a breath-taking example of the triumph of Modern architecture," describing the various elements within the church, including the reredos, stained glass windows, and contrasts between the brick, concrete, and wood elements (*Stamford Advocate* 1965). By combining Gothic architectural elements with modern building materials, and early liturgical history with Mid-Twentieth-Century Modern design ideas, Willis Mills and the Sherwood, Mills and Smith firm designed a church that was both modern and traditional, described by one author as "reserved, austere, and yet quietly striking" with an interior "marked by an ecstatic outburst of unbounded creative enthusiasm" (Mutrux 1982:206–209). The building's design team included the Stamford-based firms of Werner-Jensen & Korst, structural engineers, and Bernard F. Greene, mechanical engineers (Sherwood, Mills, and Smith 1959; Finnie 2001:81).

As part of the construction contract with Frank Mercede and Sons, general contractors for the project, the firm was given permission to do what they liked with the Rogers house on the south end of the Oenoke Ridge property. Mercede tore down the house and had planned to demolish the Rogers Studio (NHL 1965) before the New Canaan Historical Society (NCHS) asked that the building be moved to the NCHS campus to the south of the church on Oenoke Ridge (NYTimes 1960). The studio was where John Rogers had created his famous "Rogers Groups" plaster sculptures (1859–1893), which were of everyday scenes, and were created to be inexpensive and widely available in the post-Civil War and Victorian eras, thus

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making Rogers' name known across the United States.⁹ The studio remains as a museum of Rogers' work and has been recognized as nationally significant through designation as a National Historic Landmark (Finnie 2001:71). The Rogers parcel, along with the south end of the McLane parcel and the space surrounding the church complex were designed by independent landscape architect Vincent Cerasi (see **Criterion C – Landscape Architecture** and his biography below), who integrated the landscape with the Church complex to create a welcoming, park-like space south of the Church, and a cloister-like environment for quiet contemplation in the central courtyard between the Church and the Parish House.

Landscape Architecture

The profession of landscape architecture began to shift from restoration and recreation of colonial-era gardens and landscapes toward modernism in the 1930s due largely to the influence of members of the Harvard Graduate School of Design (GSD) and the Cornell University Department of Architecture. In 1922, the Cornell landscape architecture program was transferred from the College of Agriculture to the College of Architecture, and the two fields quickly became integrated with students taking joint classes and working together on projects (Nielsen-Palacios 2018:43–46). In 1933, Cornell, like Harvard's GSD a few years later, began to shift away from the Ecole des Beaux Arts style of education, moving towards what would become modernist landscape architecture (Nielsen-Palacios 2018). At Harvard, Dean Joseph Hudnut (1886–1968) took over leadership of the GSD in 1936, two years prior to the arrival of Bauhaus architect Walter Gropius as professor at the institution. As Dean, he encouraged cooperation among architecture, planning, and landscape architecture, and in late 1936 he hired Walter Gropius to join the faculty of the revamped GSD. The two men worked together to entirely revise the GSD curriculum, uniting Hudnut's vision of modernist architecture with Gropius' Bauhaus theories and practices. Their initiatives in architecture and landscape architecture education profoundly influenced a generation of architects including the so-called Harvard Five (Marcel Breuer, Philip Johnson, Eliot Noyes, John M. Johansen, and Landis Gores) and other modernist architects who had homes and/or businesses based in New Canaan starting in the 1940s. These houses, whose siting and residential, woodland setting reflect basic modernist principles, include the Landis Gores House (1948), Breuer House I (1948), Philip Johnson's Glass House (1949, National Historic Landmark), and Noyes House II (1954), all listed in the National Register (Earls 2006; Pearlman 1997:460, 466–467).

In 1936, influential Canadian landscape architect Christopher Tunnard (1910–1979) designed the landscape for Bentley Wood, in Sussex, England, home of internationally-prominent Modernist Serge Chermayeff (1900–1996). During the next two years of 1937 and 1938, he published a series of influential articles, including "The Garden in the Modern Landscape," in the *Architectural Record*, which were a counter to the Arts and Crafts movement's treatment of landscape with pergolas, sundials, sunken pools, and eclectic paving, instead favoring functional, minimalist designs (Richardson 2005a,b).¹⁰ The following year in 1939, Dean Joseph Hudnut and Walter Gropius recruited Tunnard to teach at the Harvard GSD, where he remained until 1943, when he was drafted into the Royal Canadian Air Force (Jacques and Woudstra 2009:29, 34, 43). In 1939 and 1940, three of Tunnard's students at the GSD (and later, prominent landscape architects in their own right) Garret Eckbo (1910–2000), Dan Kiley (1912–2004), and James Rose (1913–1991) published three articles in the *Architectural Review*, "Landscape Design in the Urban Environment," "Landscape Design in the Rural Environment," and "Landscape Design in the Primeval Environment." In "Landscape Design in the Urban Environment," Kiley, Eckbo, and Rose argue that inside and outside spaces must be integrated and flow into each other, stating that the

⁹ Many of Rogers' sculptures are on display in his studio at the New Canaan Historical Society.

¹⁰ Tunnard's *Architectural Record* articles were compiled into a book, *Gardens in the Modern Landscape*, published in 1938 and republished in 1948.

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landscape “cannot exist as an isolated phenomenon” (Eckbo et al. 1939:73–74). They also argued that outdoor spaces should provide for flexibility in building design and be multi-use spaces. The article concludes that landscape architects must organize plantings in organic ways relating to the use, circulation, topography, and existing elements in the landscape. These revolutionary articles by Tunnard, Eckbo, Kiley, and Rose shifted the national landscape discourse to one firmly focused in the present (Birnbaum and Hughes 2005:4–9; Pearlman 1997:459).

As a result of the influence of Harvard’s GSD and other institutions of higher learning, like Cornell University (Vincent Cerasi’s alma mater) landscapes around Mid-Twentieth-century Modern buildings typically deferred to the characteristics of the existing and natural environs. Landscapes frequently had simple, elegant lines with a minimum of hardscape materials and no ornate detailing. Materials used were familiar, including brick, stone, and concrete, although they were sometimes used in unusual ways, and plantings were selected to be low-maintenance, requiring a minimum of attention (TCLF 2019).

Buildings were set back from the street edge, and plazas, terraces, and lawns, along with general landscaping became part of the overall plan for religious buildings. Parking areas were often behind the church, rather than in front as with many stores and shopping areas of the time, which shifted how congregants accessed the church building. Instead of entering the building from the street, as one might if walking to services, parishioners now encountered the building near the middle of the site after parking their car (Price 2013:59). Congregants and local residents wanted attractive church complexes, which extended to the landscape, where landscapes were expected to encompass more than just a small number of shrubs planted near entrances or the church cemetery (Price 2013:59–60). Some church architecture advisors, like architect Hardie C. Bass Jr., suggested that the church itself occupy no more than one-third of the total site, with another third devoted to parking, and the last third given over to a wide, lawn-like landscape dotted with trees (Price 2013:59).¹¹

In his design for the **St. Mark’s Episcopal Church Designed Landscape (1958–1961, contributing site)**, Vincent Cerasi (1912–1987, see biography below) created an overall plan, in which the former McLane and Rogers estates were regraded to create a pastoral, park-like setting for the church that was similar to New England churches facing a town common and English churches overlooking a greensward, while providing easy access to the entire complex. Working with the existing conditions and plantings, all healthy, existing trees in the Great Lawn area were retained, and many trees on the new building site were retained along the grassed west perimeter or relocated within the new terrace and courtyard (Figure 4).

In keeping with Modern design principles and aesthetics, the St. Mark’s landscape design placed the church itself and associated buildings at the north end of the site, with nearly two-thirds of the site given over to the Great Lawn, a wide, grassy expanse surrounded on all sides by asphalt drives, and dotted with evergreen and deciduous trees, mostly around its periphery. Three asphalt-paved drives leading east from Oenoke Ridge and a connecting perpendicular drive on the east establish a clear and simple division of use ones and circulation pattern. Parking was sited at the east and north edges of the site in rectangular lots at a lower grade with a stone retaining wall and planting beds with trees, thus screening it from view. The Church and Bell Tower, Church School, and Parish House complex is likewise surrounded by asphalt and concrete walkways, and deciduous trees and shrubs in a grass lawn provide shade along the west elevation. Like the Church’s architecture, the south elevations of the Church and Parish Hall incorporate aspects of Gothic ecclesiastical design principles and are fronted by a paved apron terrace (originally

¹¹ Hardie C. Bass Jr. received a bachelor’s degree in architecture in 1932 from Georgia Tech and in 1946 became the head of the Architectural Staff, Department of Church Architecture, Southern Baptist Convention, Nashville, TN (GTAA 1946:102).

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raised aggregate and brushed concrete, now bluestone) that flows into the cloistered courtyard garden between the two arms of the U-shaped complex. The pavers provide a walkway around a sunken garden space rimmed with a stone wall and planted with deciduous trees and low shrubs and ground cover.

The partial list of Cerasi's clients in an undated firm brochure includes seven religious projects and five educational projects for schools with religious affiliations, primarily in New York with a few in Connecticut; no dates are provided (VCCA n.d.). Cerasi selected two church projects to illustrate: St. Mark's Church and the First Baptist Church of White Plains, NY. The landscape design for the red brick, Colonial Revival-style First Baptist Church (1960–1961) shares many similarities with St. Mark's including an extensive paved entrance terrace inset with square planting beds and looking south across a curved entrance drive to an open grassy area. The extent of Cerasi's intervention at another listed commission, the wood-frame Federal-style, Congregational Church of Westport, Connecticut (1832), are not recorded, but the site has the general site layout pattern of the church facing across a drive to a broad green dotted with trees.

Similar and Comparable Churches

In New Canaan, St. Mark's Episcopal Church was the earliest of the Mid-Twentieth-Century Modern churches constructed and initiated the use of modern design aesthetics for several subsequent churches including St. Aloysius Catholic Church at 21 Cherry Street built five years later in 1967, followed by the Presbyterian Church at 178 Oenoke Ridge in 1968. In 1978, the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints constructed a Mid-Twentieth-Century Modern building at 682 South Avenue. None of these buildings received the level of journalistic interest and coverage that St. Mark's Episcopal Church did, whether due to a lack of internal controversy and external newspaper coverage, or because by the late 1960s, Mid-Twentieth-Century Modern architecture was prevalent and widely accepted in New Canaan and no longer a revolutionary concept.

In Connecticut, particularly in Fairfield County and the Hartford area, numerous Mid-Twentieth-Century Modern churches were constructed starting in the late 1950s and especially in the early 1960s (Mutrux 1982:198–237). Several of these churches were contemporary with the planning and construction of St. Mark's Episcopal Church, which was among the earliest wave of Mid-Twentieth-Century Modern churches in Connecticut. One of the first was the round plan and concrete finned First Unitarian Congregational Society Church in Hartford of 1951 by Florida and New York City-based architect Victor Lundy (b. 1923). This group includes St. Barnabas Episcopal Church in Greenwich, designed by Greenwich resident and architect, Philip Ives and built in 1958, which uses wood, stone, and colored glass in its angular, low-slung frame; the 1956–1958 Gothic Modern-style First Presbyterian Church (discussed above) in Stamford, with an angular concrete frame grid filled with panes of stained glass, designed by Wallace K. Harrison with Sherwood, Mills and Smith creating the design of the classroom and office wing and Fellowship Hall; and the Cathedral of St. Joseph in Hartford, designed by the New York City firm of Eggers and Higgins, and built in 1962 to replace an 1877 church designed by prolific Brooklyn architect Patrick Keely.¹² The design lineage of the new cathedral, like St. Mark's Church and the First Presbyterian Church, exemplifies the through-thread of traditional Gothic-style references in concert with

¹² Like Willis Mills, Wallace Harrison was influenced by a trip to Europe during which he visited churches and cathedrals. Harrison's trip was in 1953, and he was inspired by the soaring spaces and stained glass windows of the European cathedrals – Harrison may have also influenced Mills' design for St. Mark's Episcopal Church through their joint work on the Stamford church (Fish Church Conservancy 2019).

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Mid-Twentieth-Century Modern expression of forms and materials, in this case with reinforced concrete walls clad with limestone and elaborate stained glass windows. Two free-form, expressive, wood-frame churches with swooping roofs were built in this period. Yale-educated, Westport-based architect Joseph Salerno's United Church in Rowayton of 1962 and Victor Lundy's First Unitarian Church of 1964, with a parabolic roof inspired by praying hands, in Westport. Lundy won the 1960 *Progressive Architecture* design award for the building design, and Salerno's project received the First Honor Award from the American Institute of Architects in 1962 (Fisher 2009; Mutrux 1982:213). In New Haven, another enclave of Mid-Twentieth-Century Modern Architecture, John Johansen designed the Dixwell Avenue Congregational United Church of Christ at 217 Dixwell Avenue in 1967. One of that last examples of this group was Sherwood Mills and Smith's St. Matthews Episcopal Church–Wilton Presbyterian Church in Wilton completed in 1971. The low concrete volumes of the ensemble are arranged around a paved court between the two congregation's worship spaces connected by shared community building. Aside from the Cathedral of St. Joseph, which was listed in the National Register in 1979 as a contributing element of the Asylum Avenue Historic District (NRIS 79002672), none of the other Mid-Twentieth-Century Modern churches in Connecticut are listed in the National Register.¹³

Outside Connecticut, Mid-Twentieth-Century Modern design became a logical choice for congregations and internationally and nationally prominent architects throughout the country (Buggeln 2015; Price 2013).¹⁴ One example is the First Unitarian Church of Rochester, New York, built in 1962 and listed in 2014 (NRIS 14000537). Designed by internationally prominent architect Louis I. Kahn of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, the First Unitarian Church developed in much the same way as St. Mark's, with the architect conferring with the congregation's building committee to create the final design for the building. However, the First Unitarian Church is significant as the project which crystallized Kahn's design aesthetic and propelled him onto the international scene as a major influence on late twentieth-century architecture (Walkowski 2014). In Boston, internationally-prominent architect Paul Rudolph (1918–1997) was hired by the congregation of the First Church Boston in 1969, four years after leaving his post as Chair of the Yale Department of Architecture (1958–1965), to rebuild the church following a devastating fire (First Church in Boston 2019). Rudolph's Brutalist design retained the bell tower and facade facing Berkley Street, which both survived the 1968 fire, and incorporated modern building materials and forms, including concrete and glass (First Church in Boston History 2019).

Willis N. Mills (1907–1995) and Sherwood, Mills and Smith (1946–1969)

Regional and local architect Willis Nathaniel Mills (1907–1995) resided in New Canaan from 1938 until his retirement in 1970. He lived in two houses he designed for himself, Mills House I (1939) and Mills House II (1956, NR listed 2010) (Adams and Scofield 2010). Mills had joined the New Canaan community and designed his first house in town before World War II and was well ensconced when the influential Harvard Five group of architects established themselves in town after the war (Earls 2006).

Mills was born in Menominee, MI, and graduated from the Kent School in Kent, Connecticut, in 1925. He received a bachelor's degree in architecture from the University of Pennsylvania in 1929 and immediately began working as a draftsman and project manager for the New York architecture firm of Shreve, Lamb, & Harmon (Bowker 1956). While in this position Mills may have worked on many of the

¹³ As of 2019, there has been no comprehensive survey of Mid-Twentieth-Century Modern churches in Connecticut. Comparative information is based on research in readily available sources conducted for the preparation of this nomination. There are few Mid-Twentieth-Century Modern churches listed in the National Register in the Northeast.

¹⁴ Recent studies of Mid-Twentieth-Century Modern church architecture by Jay M. Price (2013) and Gretchen Buggeln (2015) focus primarily on the American Midwest.

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firm's large New York projects including their signature commission, the Empire State Building completed in 1931. Mills attended Columbia University from 1933–1934, possibly to train in a specific area as he did not receive a degree. He returned to Shreve, Lamb, & Harmon for two years from 1935–1936 before opening his own firm, aided by an early commission for the Edward Pickard House in Kent, Connecticut, completed in 1936 (Adams and Scofield 2010). Mills was made a Fellow of the American Institute of Architects in 1963 (Mutrux 1982:208).

From 1937 to 1941 Mills had his own firm in New York, although he was employed as a project manager for New York architect William Lescaze (1896–1969) in 1938. During this period, he settled in New Canaan and designed his first house for himself, Mills House I, in 1939. The partnership of Howe & Lescaze had designed the Philadelphia Saving Fund Society building (1929–1932, NR listed 1976), the first International Style high-rise building in the United States, and Sun Terrace, the first International Style country house in New Hartford, Connecticut, in 1932 (NR listed 1978). Lescaze then formed an independent firm in 1935. Mills may have been involved in the design process or project management of the Professor F. S. Dunn House and Cottage in Woodbridge, Connecticut, which was in design and construction from 1936 to 1939 (Adams and Scofield 2010).

Mills' career was interrupted by World War II, and after serving in the Marine Corps Reserve from 1942 to 1946, he formed a partnership with Thorne Sherwood (1910–1994) and Lester W. Smith (1909–1993) in 1946. All three architects had received a traditional Beaux-Arts education in the 1930s. Smith completed an undergraduate degree in architecture and a Master of Fine Arts from Princeton University in 1933. Sherwood attended Williams College and received his architecture degree from Columbia University in 1936. According to a 1957 article in *Progressive Architecture*, the decision to establish the Sherwood, Mills and Smith office in Stamford, a residential-industrial city a 50-minute train ride north of New York City, allowed them to lead pleasanter lives, connect with the community, and build a region-wide diversified practice. Unlike most of the Mid-Twentieth-Century Modern architects with studios in the area, Sherwood, Mills and Smith had a staff of over 50 that included interior and furniture designers. Along with St. Mark's Episcopal Church and the St. Matthews Episcopal Church–Wilton Presbyterian Church in Wilton (1971), the firm was responsible for many large commercial and institutional buildings in the region, including the Library addition (1952) and the South Elementary School on Farm Road in New Canaan (1950); the Science Building at the Kent School, Kent; IBM buildings in Poughkeepsie and Endicott, NY; a Dormitory at the Berkeley Divinity School, New Haven; and the Mutual Insurance Company of Hartford (1959) (Adams and Scofield 2010; Mutrux 1982:208). In 1997, Sherwood, Mills and Smith moved offices as part of a merger with Perkins–Eastman of New York City, and all of the firm's files were discarded including those related to the St. Mark's Church project. However, St. Mark's retains all the original plans and copies of church correspondence with Sherwood, Mills and Smith in its archives (Doran 2009; Finnie 2001:85).

Vincent C. Cerasi (1912–1987)

Landscape architect Vincent C. Cerasi was born Vincenzo C. Cerasi on February 15, 1912 in Teramo, Italy. In 1913, Cerasi's father Guerino immigrated to the United States, followed by Vincent, his mother, and his brother Tony in 1920 (U.S. Census 1930). In 1936, Cerasi graduated from Cornell University with a bachelor's degree in Landscape Architecture (*New York Times* 1936). In February 1941, he enlisted in the Coast Artillery Corps of the United States National Guard, and in 1946, after the close of World War II, he was awarded a Conspicuous Service Medal by the State of New York. In 1947, Cerasi was a finalist and first alternate for the Rome Prize, awarded yearly to 30 artists and scholars by the American Academy in Rome, Italy; in 1950 he was awarded the Prize, which provided the opportunity to study for a year at the Academy (*New York Times* 1947; American Academy in Rome 2019). In private practice,

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Cerasi had offices in Manhattan, and later in Bedford Hills, New York. Cerasi and his firm, Vincent C. Cerasi and Associates, Landscape Architects and Land Planners, established in 1956, specialized in “complete land planning and land development” (VCCA n.d.). The firm’s portfolio contained numerous designs for industrial, institutional, historical, residential, civic and recreational, educational, and religious clients, including AT&T, IBM, Laurence D. Rockefeller, the New York City Housing Authority, Bowdoin College, Worcester Polytechnic Institute, the First Baptist Church of White Plains, New York, and the Congregational Church of Westport, Connecticut (VCCA n.d). Cerasi’s work was featured in a 1966 Traveling Exhibit of Contemporary Landscape Architecture held at the Architectural League of New York; two of his projects, St. Mark’s Episcopal Church and the Dorado Beach Development in Puerto Rico, were accepted into the Smithsonian Institution Permanent Exhibit of Contemporary Landscape Architecture; and he received several awards from organizations including the Catholic Properties Administration, the Ninth District of Federated Garden Clubs of New York, and the Long Island Chapter of the American Institute of Architects (VCCA n.d.).

Clark B. Fitz-Gerald (1917–2004)

Sculptor Clark B. Fitz-Gerald was born in St. Louis, MO, and graduated from the Philadelphia College of Art in 1940. During World War II he served as part of the Ninth Armored Division of the U.S. Army. After the war, he taught at Phillips Academy in Andover, Massachusetts; Washington University in St. Louis, Missouri; and finally, Beloit College in Beloit, Wisconsin, before leaving teaching in 1956 and moving to Castine, Maine, to become a sculptor. Fitz-Gerald worked in a variety of media, including wood, stone, and bronze, and took inspiration from the natural world around him. He completed numerous large commissions for educational, religious, and civic institutions such as Independence Hall in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; Coventry Cathedral in Coventry, England; the Maine Maritime Academy in Castine, Maine; and the George Stevens Academy in Blue Hill, Maine (*New York Times* 2004). The reredos at St. Mark’s Episcopal Church was completed in conjunction with his associate O.V. Shaffer (b. 1928), who is a sculptor, art instructor, and former director of the Wright Museum of Art at Beloit College in Beloit, Wisconsin (St. Mark’s 2011:14).

Odell “Billie” Prather (1912–2001)

Odell “Billie” Prather was born and raised in Wichita, Kansas. While recuperating from tuberculosis as a teenager, which derailed a promising music career, she studied drawing and painting with German artist Max Marcini (1895–1978). After World War II, she moved to Philadelphia and studied art under artist and illustrator Henry Pitz (1895–1976) at the Philadelphia College of Art; she later commuted regularly to New York to study with Russian-American painter Morris Kantor (1896–1974) and Modernist painter Byron Browne (1907–1961) at the Art Students League of New York. She also studied sculpture under Modernist painter and sculptor Raphael Sabatini (1898–1985) at the Tyler School of Art at Temple University in Philadelphia. Her early career was as an illustrator for children’s magazines *Children’s Activities* and *Jack and Jill*, both of which were published in Philadelphia. She was a designer for the Willet Glass Studio from 1951 until the 1960s, when she left Willet to begin her own freelance design studio. Among other projects, she designed windows for St. Mark’s Episcopal Church; Michigan State University Alumni Chapel; and the Place of Meditation, President Dwight Eisenhower’s final resting place, in Abilene, KS. She received numerous awards during her career, including the Silver Medal for Creative Sculpture from the National Arts Club in New York, and the Woodmere Endowment Fund

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Memorial Prize from the Chestnut Hill art museum in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania (Michigan Stained Glass Census 2019; Drill 2001; Willet Hauser Architectural Glass 2013).

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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 # _____
- recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # _____

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository: New Canaan Historical Society, and St. Mark's Episcopal Church, New Canaan, CT.

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 9.0

Use either the UTM system or latitude/longitude coordinates

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates (decimal degrees)

Datum if other than WGS84: _____

(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

	Latitude	Longitude
A	-73.499050	41.153061
B	-73.497356	41.153466
C	-73.496432	41.151196
D	-73.498103	41.150943

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Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

The boundary of the St. Mark's Episcopal Church National Register nomination follows the north, west, and south property lines of the St. Mark's Episcopal Church assessor's parcel. On the east, the boundary conforms to the eastern boundary of the 1959 site plan (Figure 4); a line of convenience is drawn on the east boundary north of the church to omit non-contributing resources at the northeast corner of the property.

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The boundary of St. Mark's Episcopal Church National Register nomination was selected to encompass all resources associated with the 1958–1962 construction of the Mid-Twentieth-Century Modern-style St. Mark's Episcopal Church complex including the Church and Bell Tower, Church School, Parish Hall, McLane House, Gray Gables, used as church offices, and Garage, within the surrounding landscape designed by Vincent C. Cerasi with the project architects Sherwood, Mills and Smith. Buildings to the northeast of the church offices have been omitted as they are not associated with the primary significance of the property.

11. Form Prepared By

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Architectural Historian
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date: August 2020

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Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A **USGS map** or equivalent (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO, TPO, or FPO for any additional items.)

Photographs

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels (minimum), 3000x2000 preferred, at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map. Each photograph must be numbered and that number must correspond to the photograph number on the photo log. For simplicity, the name of the photographer, photo date, etc. may be listed once on the photograph log and doesn't need to be labeled on every photograph.

Photo Log

Name of Property: St. Mark's Episcopal Church

City or Vicinity: New Canaan

County: Fairfield State: Connecticut

Photographer: Gretchen M. Pineo

Date Photographed: October 25, 2018

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera:

- | | |
|----------|---|
| 1 of 25. | St. Mark's Episcopal Church complex and Great Lawn, looking north. |
| 2 of 25. | St. Mark's Episcopal Church and Bell Tower, looking north. |
| 3 of 25. | St. Mark's Episcopal Church and bluestone/granite plaza, looking northwest. |
| 4 of 25. | St. Mark's Episcopal Church west elevation, campanile tower, and stone boundary wall, looking east. |
| 5 of 25. | Entrance doors, looking north. |
| 6 of 25. | Sanctuary with altar and reredos (left) and chapel (right), looking northeast. |

St. Mark's Episcopal Church

Fairfield Co., Connecticut
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- 7 of 25. South wall stained glass window, looking south.
- 8 of 25. Detail of stained glass windows in chapel, looking east.
- 9 of 25. Church School wing, looking southeast.
- 10 of 25. Arcade and Parish Hall, looking northeast.
- 11 of 25. Morrill Hall and entrance to lower teen room, looking northwest.
- 12 of 25. Hallway connecting Parish Hall and Church School, looking north.
- 13 of 25. Parish Hall, looking northeast.
- 14 of 25. Courtyard garden, looking northwest.
- 15 of 25. Courtyard garden, looking northeast.
- 16 of 25. Gray Gables, looking northeast.
- 17 of 25. Gray Gables entrance, looking east.
- 18 of 25. Gray Gables (left) and Garage (right), looking northwest.
- 19 of 25. Gray Gables entry vestibule, looking west.
- 20 of 25. Gray Gables interior, south stair, looking southwest.
- 21 of 25. Gray Gables Rector's study, looking southwest.
- 22 of 25. Gray Gables sitting room, looking south.
- 23 of 25. Great Lawn, looking south.
- 24 of 25. Vehicular Circulation System, looking north toward Church.
- 25 of 25. Vehicular Circulation System lower parking area with Stone Retaining Wall, looking south.

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.460 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 100 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 Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.

St. Mark's Episcopal Church
Name of Property

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Figure 1. St. Mark's Episcopal Church Coordinate Map

St. Mark's Episcopal Church
Name of Property

Fairfield Co., Connecticut
County and State

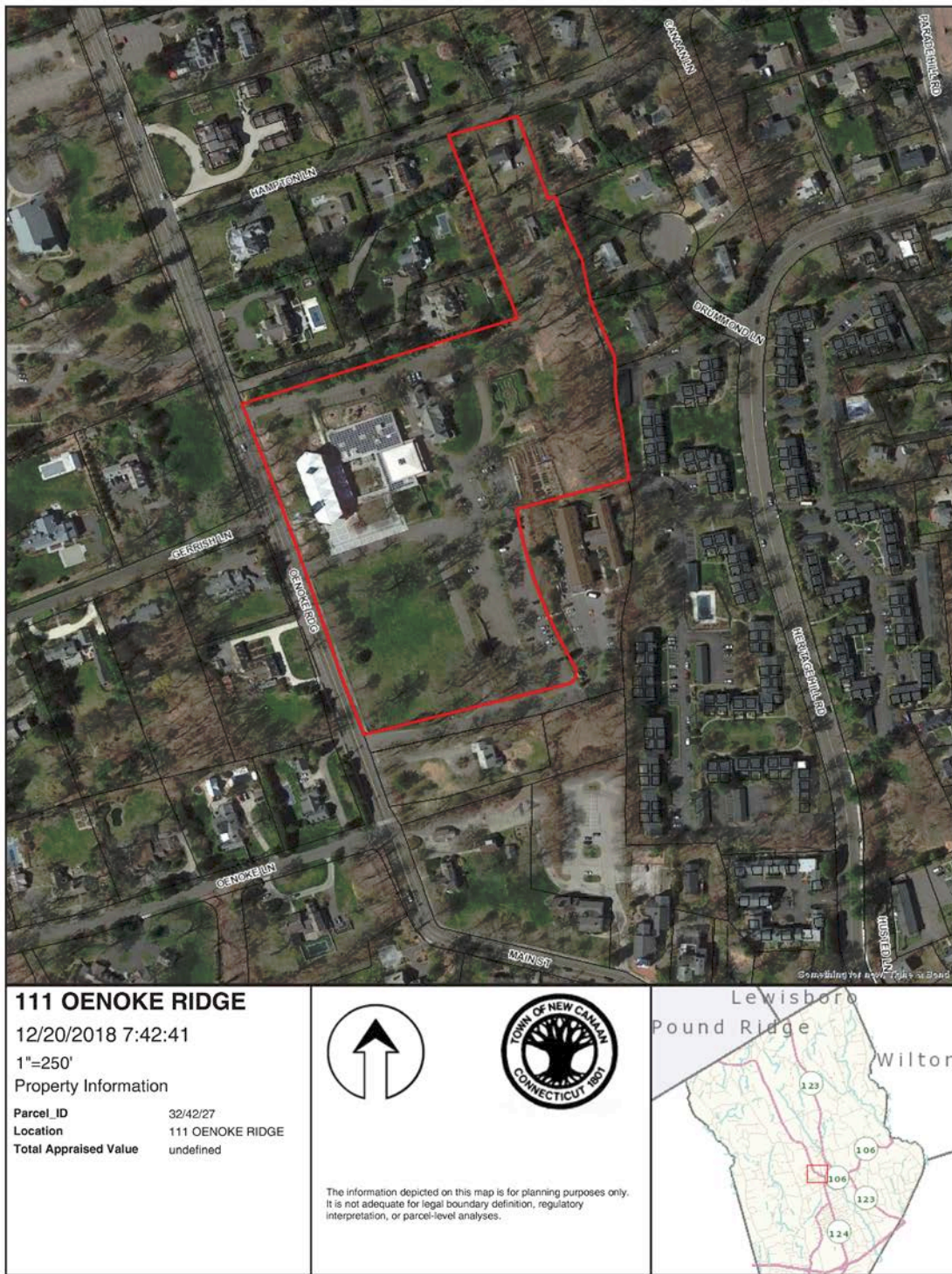
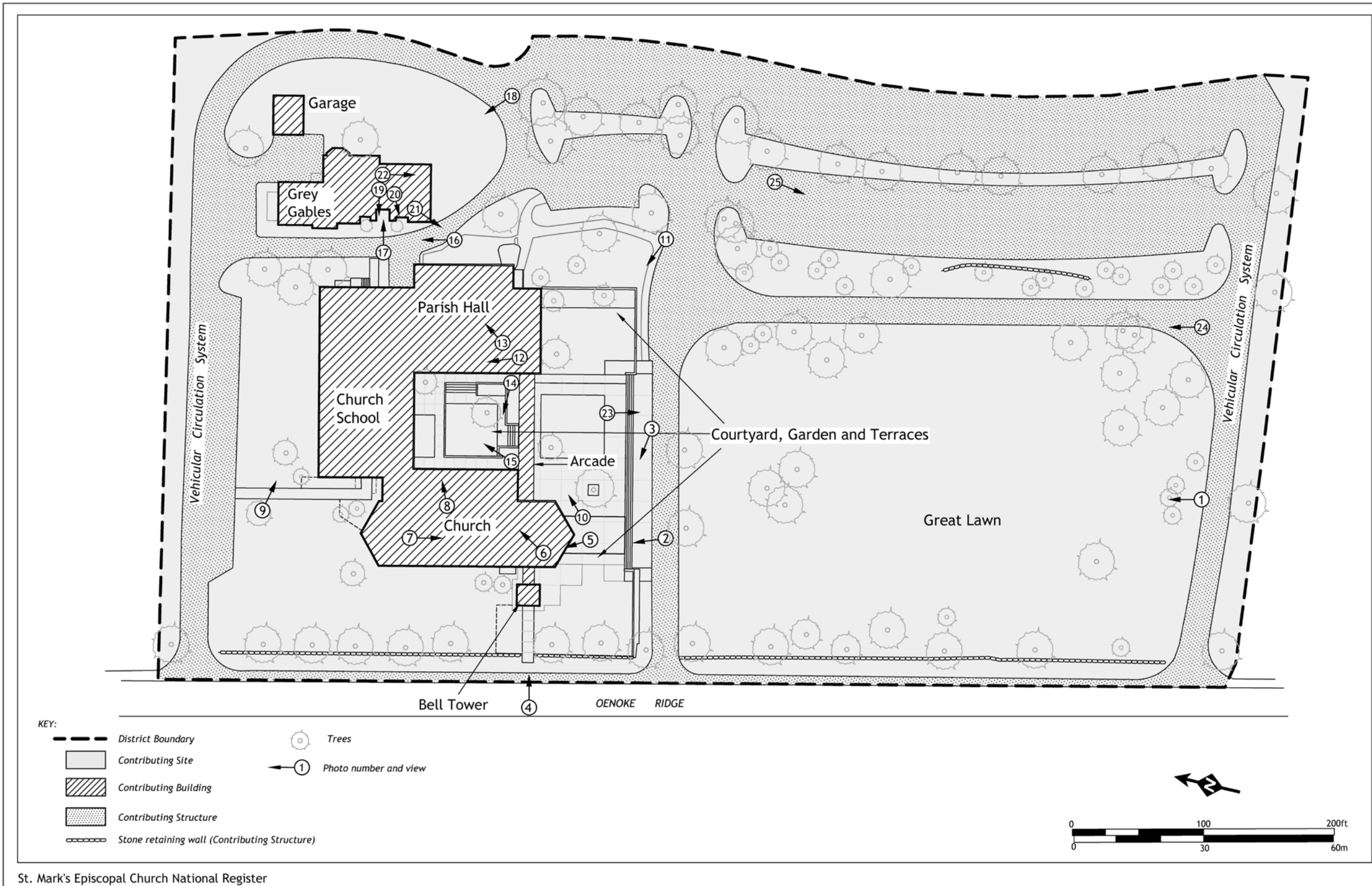


Figure 2. St. Mark's Episcopal Church Assessor map.

St. Mark's Episcopal Church
 Name of Property

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St. Mark's Episcopal Church National Register

Figure 3. St. Mark's Episcopal Church resource map and photo key.

St. Mark's Episcopal Church
 Name of Property

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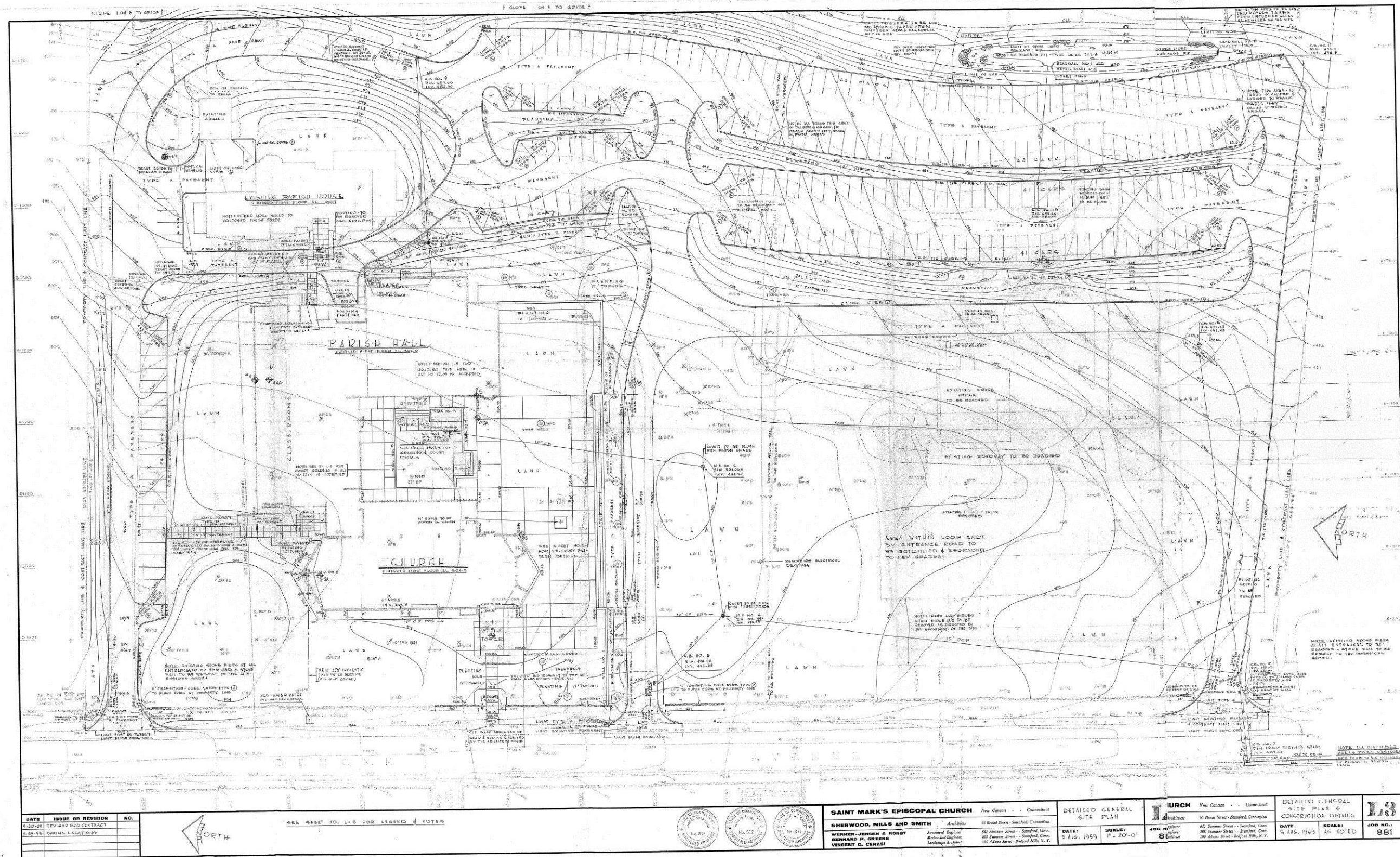


Figure 4. 1959 site plan, St. Mark's Episcopal Church, New Canaan, CT. (Sherwood, Mills and Smith with Vincent Cerasi, landscape architect, drawing, courtesy of St. Mark's Episcopal Church, New Canaan, CT).

St. Mark's Episcopal Church
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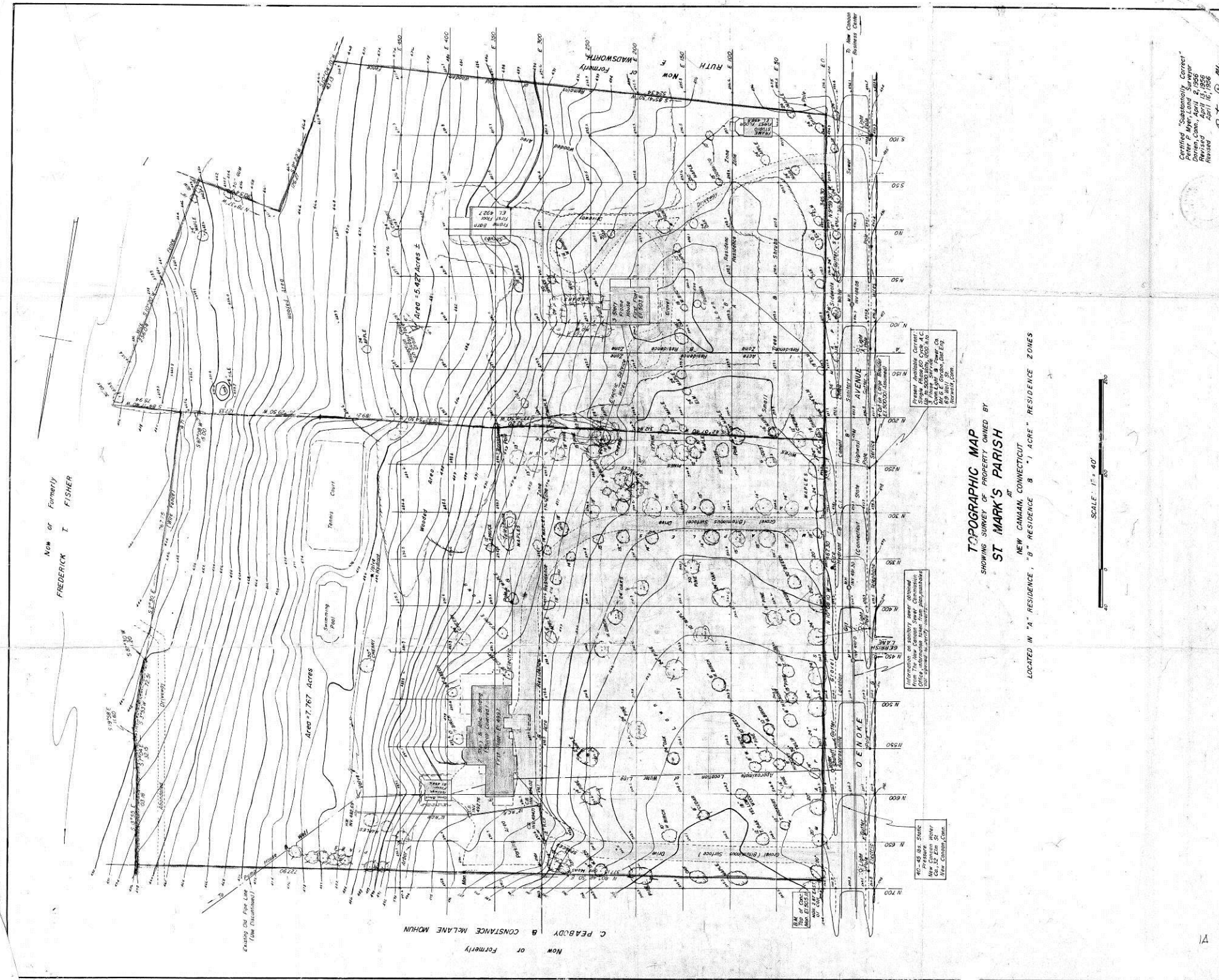


Figure 5. 1956 survey plan and topographic map, McLane estate (top/left) and Rogers estate (bottom/right) (Sherwood, Mills and Smith plan, courtesy St. Mark's Episcopal Church, New Canaan, CT).

St. Mark's Episcopal Church
 Name of Property

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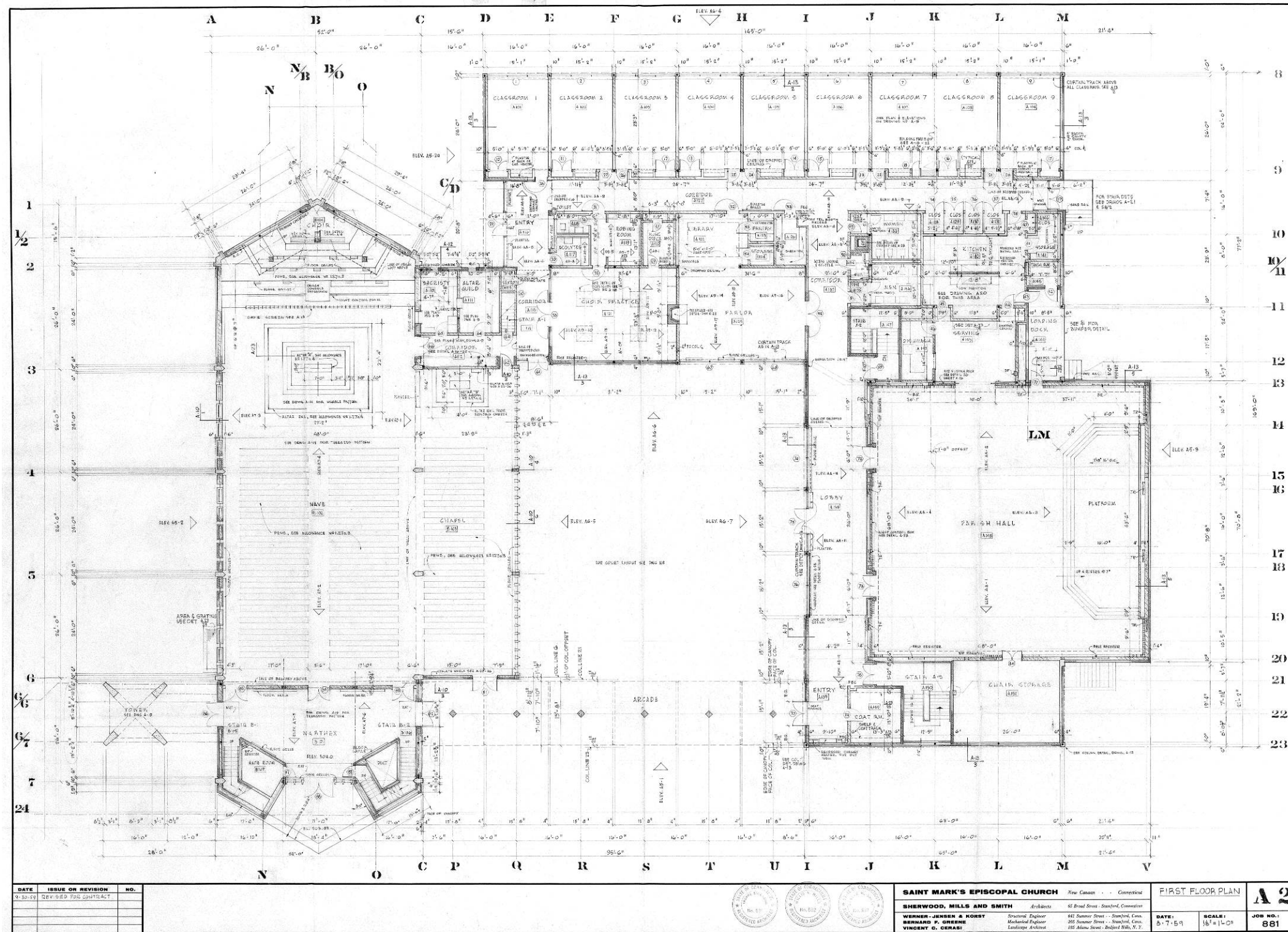


Figure 6. First Floor Plan, St. Mark's Episcopal Church complex (1959 Sherwood, Mills and Smith drawing, courtesy of St. Mark's Episcopal Church, New Canaan, CT).

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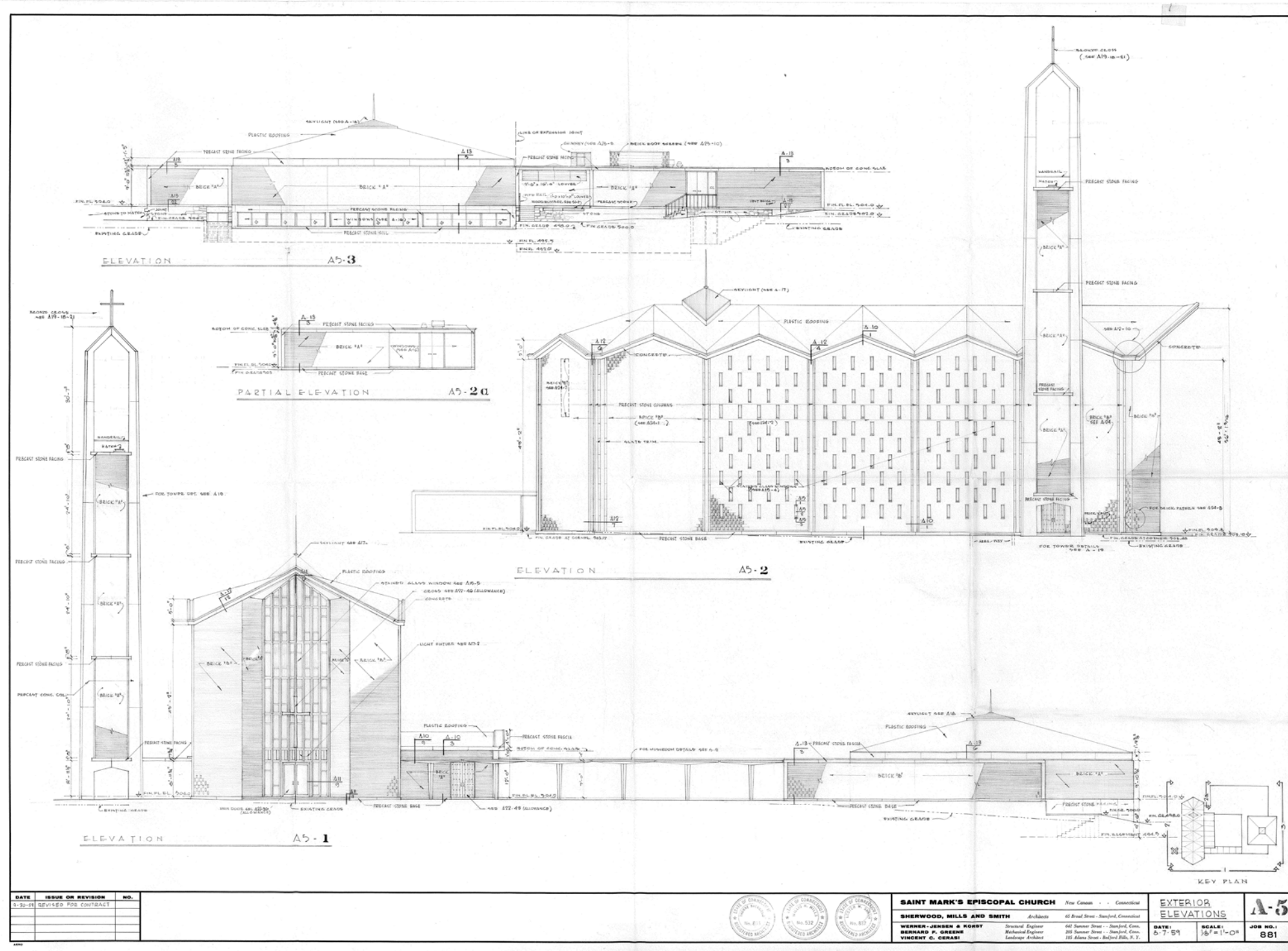


Figure 7. South and west elevations, St. Mark's Episcopal Church (1959 Sherwood, Mills and Smith drawing, courtesy of St. Mark's Episcopal Church, New Canaan, CT).

St. Mark's Episcopal Church
 Name of Property

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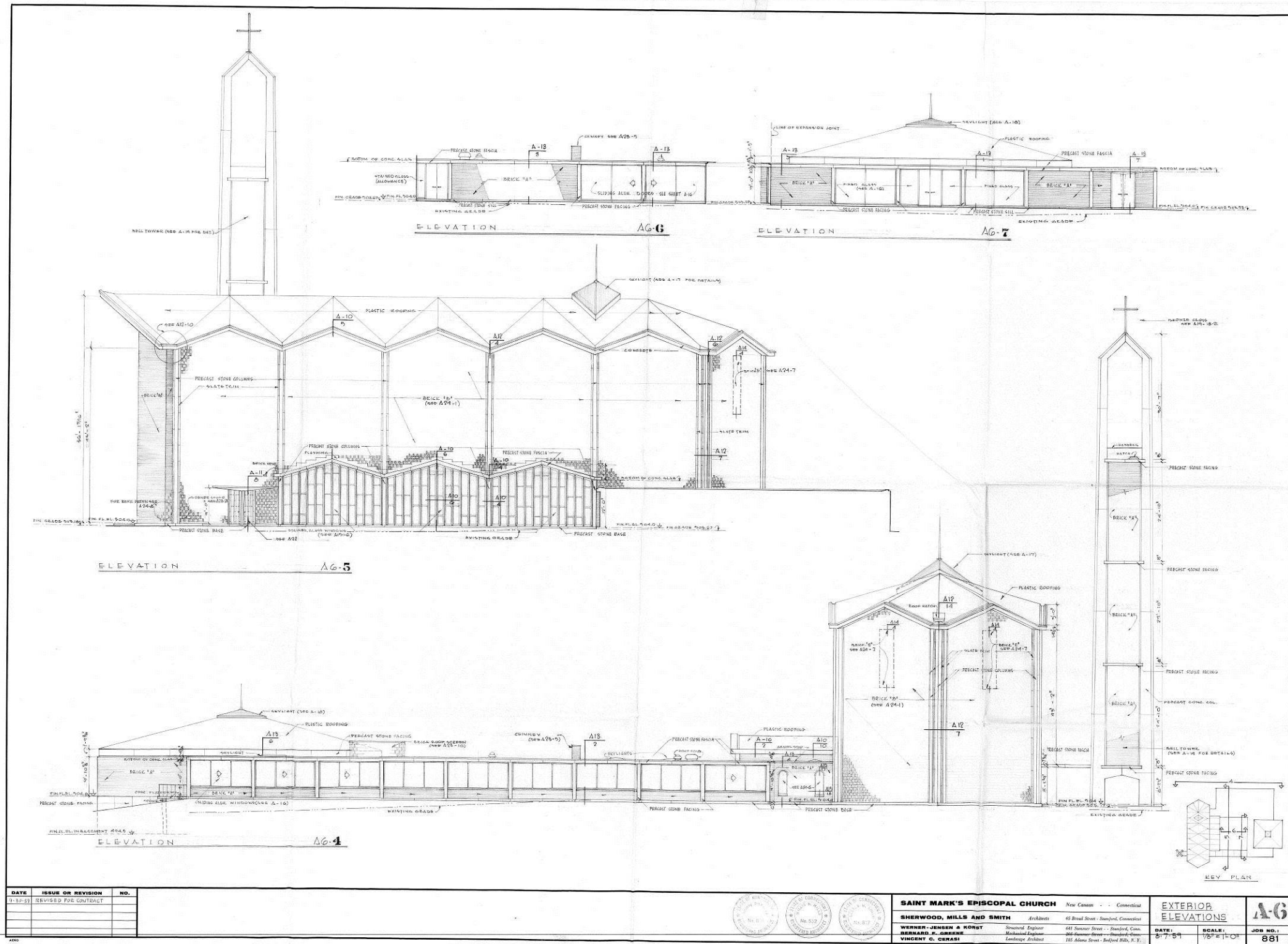


Figure 8. North and west elevations, St. Mark's Episcopal Church (1959 Sherwood, Mills and Smith drawing, courtesy of St. Mark's Episcopal Church, New Canaan, CT).

St. Mark's Episcopal Church
 Name of Property

Fairfield Co., Connecticut
 County and State

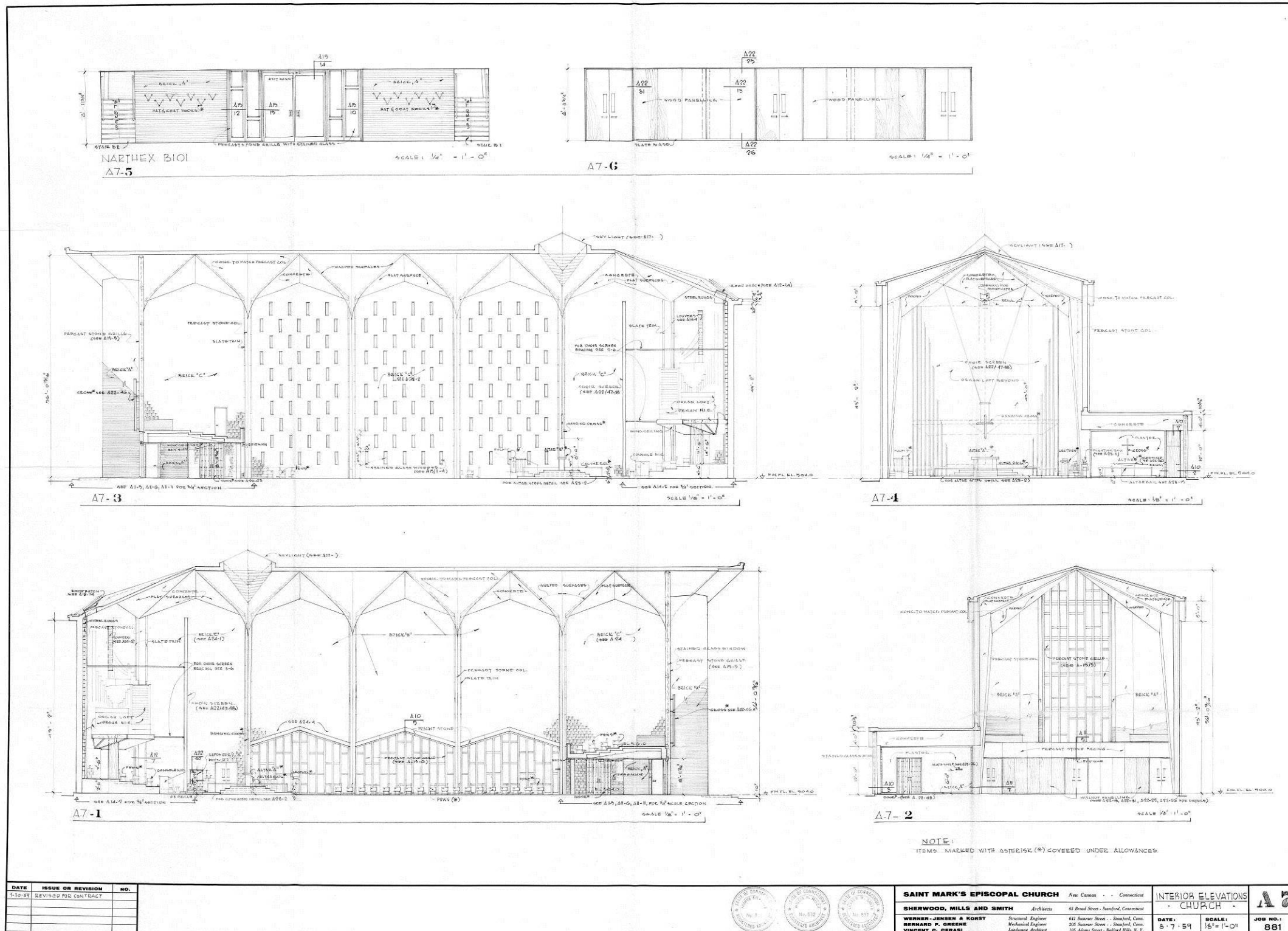


Figure 9. Interior elevations, St. Mark's Episcopal Church (1959 Sherwood, Mills and Smith drawing, courtesy of St. Mark's Episcopal Church, New Canaan, CT).



Photograph 1. St. Mark's Episcopal Church complex and Great Lawn, looking north.



Photograph 2. St. Mark's Episcopal Church and Bell Tower, looking north.

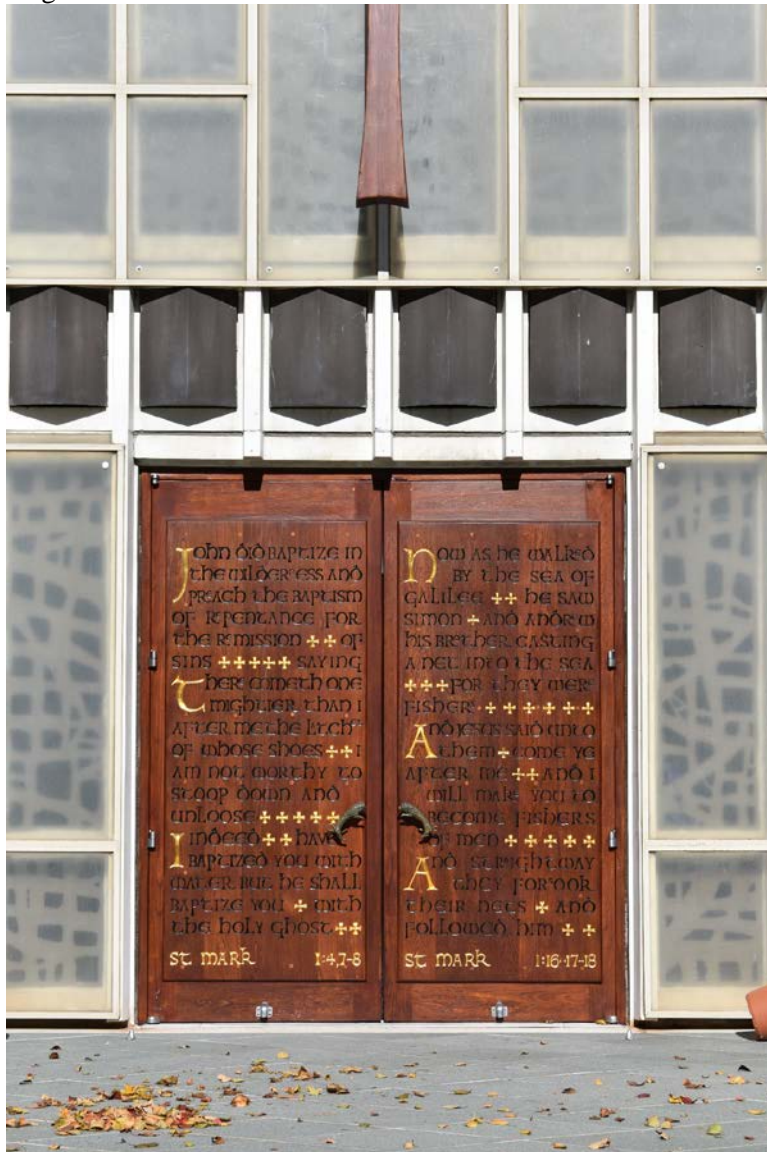
St. Mark's Episcopal Church National Register Documentation
PAL Project No. 3584
National Register Photographs
August 2019



Photograph 3. St. Mark's Episcopal Church and bluestone plaza, looking northwest.



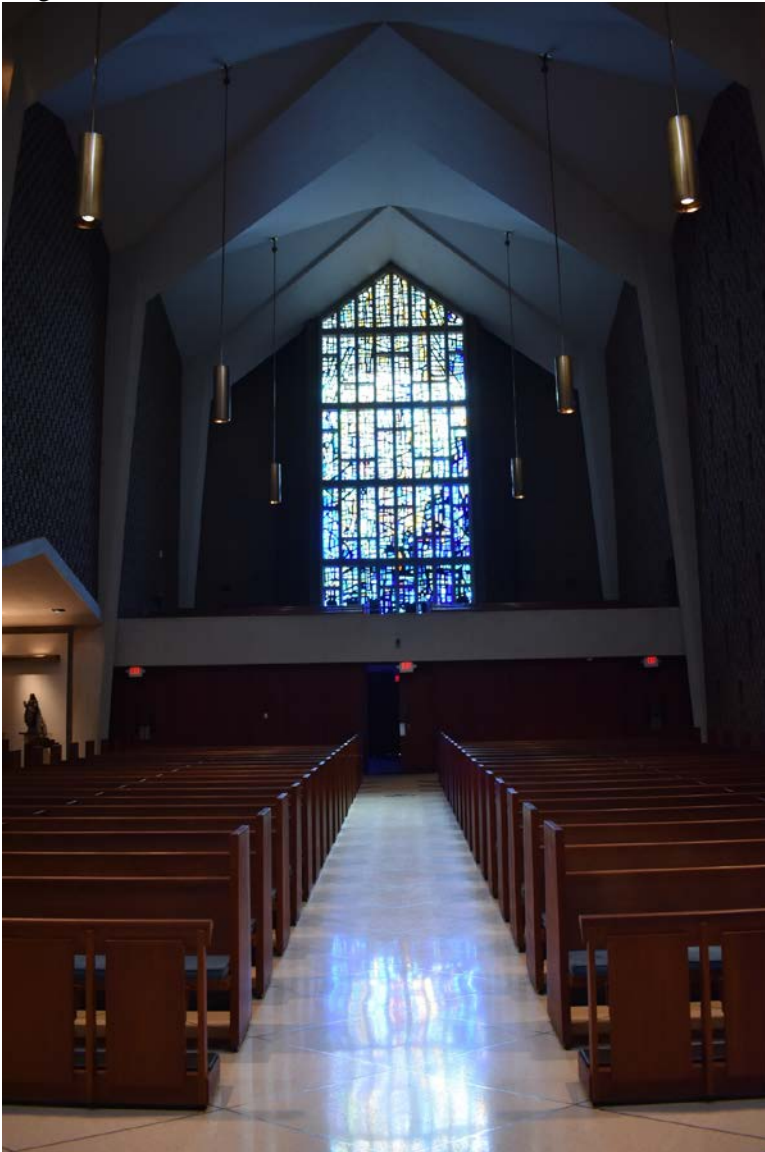
Photograph 4. St. Mark's Episcopal Church west elevation, campanile tower, and stone boundary wall, looking east.



Photograph 5. Entrance doors, looking north.



Photograph 6. Sanctuary with altar and reredos (left) and chapel (right), looking northeast.



Photograph 7. South wall stained glass window, looking south.



Photograph 8. Detail of stained glass windows in chapel, looking east.



Photograph 9. Church School wing, looking southeast.



Photograph 10. Arcade and Morrill Hall, looking northeast.



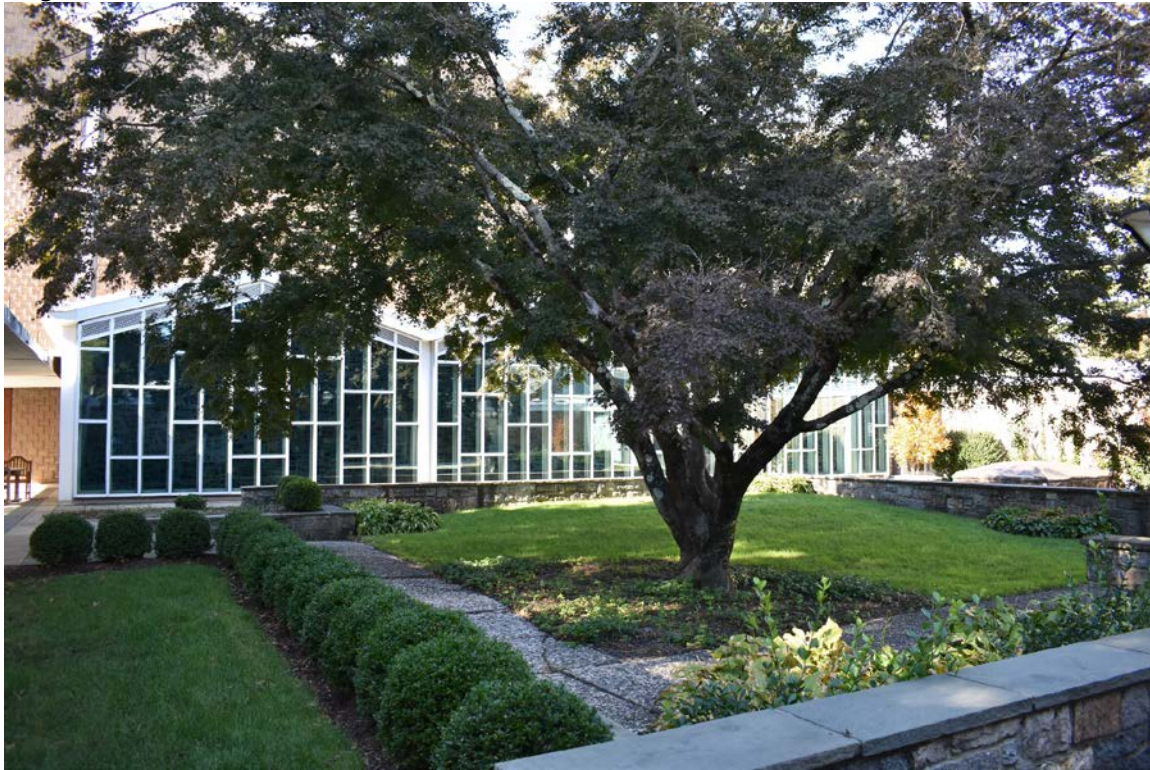
Photograph 11. Morrill Hall and entrance to lower teen room, looking northwest.



Photograph 12. Hallway connecting Morrill Hall and Church School, looking north.



Photograph 13. Morrill Hall, looking northeast.



Photograph 14. Courtyard garden, looking northwest.



Photograph 15. Courtyard garden, looking northeast.



Photograph 16. Gray Gables, looking northeast.



Photograph 17. Gray Gables entrance, looking east.



Photograph 18. Gray Gables (left) and Garage (right), looking northwest.



Photograph 19. Gray Gables entry vestibule, looking west.



Photograph 20. Gray Gables interior, south stair, looking southwest.



Photograph 21. Gray Gables Rector's study, looking southwest.



Photograph 22. Gray Gables sitting room, looking south.



Photograph 23. Great Lawn, looking south.



Photograph 24. Vehicular Circulation System, looking north toward Church.



Photograph 25. Vehicular Circulation System lower parking area with Stone Retaining Wall, looking south.