

PROPERTY REPORT

Property ID: **-1963015433**

Property Name: First Presbyterian Church of Cranbury
Address: 22 S MAIN ST

Ownership: Private
Apartment #: **ZIP:** 08512

PROPERTY LOCATION(S):

County:	Municipality:	Local Place Name:	USGS Quad:	Block:	Lot:
MIDDLESEX	Cranbury township			23	79

Property Photo:



Old HSI Number: **NRIS Number:** **HABS/HAER Number:** 64

Description:

PS&S recommends that the First Presbyterian Church property, which includes the 1839 church building with later additions, the chapel/Sunday School building to its north, and 22 S. Main Street, as well as the historic cemetery backing the buildings on the west, is a key-contributing property in the Cranbury Historic District.

The main, 1839/1859, rectangular-plan, Greek Revival-style, frame, gabled church building is backed on the northwest by a lower, 1 bay-deep, gabled, centered, 1936 chancel flanked on the northeast and southwest by 1-story, shed-roofed secondary volumes. A square-plan steeple in 2 main sections rises near the southeast end of main nave volume. The main, southeast elevation, facing S. Main Street, is finished in stucco to resemble stone, and presents an entrance in antis with 2 monumental Doric columns the main, centered entrance includes a double-leaf, recessed panel, historic wood door and surround with an architrave and historic pilasters. The architrave, in 2 sections, includes a dentiled course. The doorway is surmounted with a recessed panel in a frame with the name of the building. The doorway is flanked by tall windows with triple-hung, wood windows with 20 lights per sash. Smaller doors give access to the side aisles in the small walls in the outer parts of the entry. The relatively simple pediment includes cornices with both small and larger dentils and a broad, basket handle-arch window in the pediment. The clapboard-clad steeple includes segmental-arch, louvered openings in both levels. The lower level rises to a cornice with corner returns and a parapet topped with urns. The upper, octagonal-plan level rises to a copper-clad roof topped in turn by a pinnacle with a weather vane. The northeast and southwest, side elevations of the nave volume are

Survey Name: Cranbury Local Historic District Survey 2018

Principal Investigator: Emily Cooperman

Organization: Paulus, Sokolowski & Sartor

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Property ID:

-1963015433

Page 1

fenestrated in the triple-hung windows with 18-light, wood sash in most locations. The chancel is primarily fenestrated in 6/6, double-hung windows in most locations. The side and rear elevations are clad in painted clapboard. The chancel volume includes secondary doorway with a replaced door in the southeast bay of the southwest elevation of the chancel side volume. The rear elevation of the main volume is lit at the top level by quarter-round windows with historic, multi-light sash.

The 1878 chapel/Sunday school building to the northeast of the church is a frame, vinyl siding clad, 2-story, gable-roofed building. The main, cross-gabled volume is fronted on the southeast by a 1-story, gabled entrance porch supported by Tuscan columns projecting from the cross-volume. A large, mansard-roofed addition projects from the rear of the main volume on its southwest side. The main entrance, in the entrance porch on the southeast elevation, includes a large, double-leaf, replaced door. The main volume is fenestrated in 2 bays on the southeast elevation, with double-hung, 8/8 windows with historic wood sash. The northeast, side elevation, in 6 bays, is lit in the central bays by triple-hung, 18-light wood sash. The northwest elevation is fenestrated in 3 bays of 6/6, double-hung, historic wood sash windows on both floors of the main volume, and 3 bays of 6/6 windows in the addition.

The chapel and main church are linked by a 1 ½-story, gabled addition clad on the northwest and southeast elevations with buff brick and vinyl siding on the gable end elevations.

22 S. Main Street, associated with the church property from at least 1876, is a frame, 2-story, asymmetrically gable-roofed, vinyl siding-clad, former dwelling on a stone base. The main, southeast elevation, 6 bays wide, is fronted by a central, gabled, small, replaced entry porch that shelters a replaced door. A historic, interior, brick, ridge chimney is located near the southwest end of the main roof. The windows throughout have replaced, double-hung sash.

The associated cemetery is located to the north and west of the church. The oldest section, the Brainerd Cemetery, founded in 1740, is north of the church buildings, extending toward the west, with slightly irregular rows. The later sections of the cemetery, west of the church buildings and extending toward the south, are organized on an oriented grid pattern with east-west roadways. The cemetery is primarily planted in lawn, with a small number of freestanding trees. The surviving markers and monuments are predominantly of marble, sandstone, and granite, and exhibit the typical styles of the period of the burial.

The First Presbyterian Church was a key institution in the history of Cranbury from its earliest period.

In 1739, the lot adjoining the mill along Cranbury Creek was conveyed to the elders of the church for the purpose of erecting a house of worship, the first such instituted in Cranbury. The first church building was completed in 1740, and a 1788 building preceded the current one on the present site. The current building was completed in 1839 and extended from 3 bays to 5 in 1859. The 1980 National Register Nomination for the Cranbury Historic District does not provide detail on the dates of the chapel building and 22 S. Main Street; the 1989 Heritage Studies inventory dates the chapel to 1878 and notes that it was "altered to its present state in 1960." The 1876 Everts and Stewart map show 2 buildings north of the church itself as part of the church property, but does not provide any detail other than to identify the one that is closer to the church building as the Session House. This map also shows the extent the cemetery in this period, which did not extend south of a line parallel to the south side of the main church building. A historic postcard in the collection of the church that dates to the early 20th century shows the main church as being fenestrated with stained glass windows and the chapel building as a rectangular-plan, 1-story, gabled building fenestrated in large, multi-light, double-hung windows on the southwest elevation. The 1916 Sanborn map shows the plan of the nave volume as it exists today, and the rear volume as a narrow, 1-story, partial-width, metal-roofed secondary volume offset to the northeast. The map shows 3 large hitching sheds to the northwest (rear) of the building in the location of the present parking lot. This Sanborn map shows the chapel as a 1-story, cross-gabled building with the entrance porch and a lower, 1-story rear volume on the northwest. The building is also labeled as "Sunday School Rooms" in this map. 22 S. Main is shown as a rectangular-plan, frame, 2-story dwelling fronted on the southeast by a 1-story, metal-roofed, partial-width front porch. The 1933 Sanborn map shows the chapel/Sunday School building as 2-stories, indicating that it had acquired its current height by that date. A plaque on the rear of the church indicates that the current chancel dates to the unification of the First and Second Presbyterian Church congregations in 1936. The church's website notes a campaign to renovate the complex in 1953, including the "restoration" of the windows to clear glass from stained glass. Historic aerial photographs indicate that the current extent of the buildings and additions had essentially been achieved by 1963, but do not clearly indicate how much of this may have occurred in the 1950s. This source also indicates that the cemetery has been extending toward the south since at least the 1930s. Visual evidence indicates that more recent changes in the buildings include the replacement of the cladding of the chapel and 22 S. Main with vinyl siding, and the replacement throughout of the window sash of 22 S. Main.

This property is a key-contributing property in the district because it retains integrity and such character-defining features as the main volume of the historic church, including its main board front, historic entry, doorway, and doors, and clapboard cladding. The historic cemetery, as an integral part of the district, is contributing.

Setting:

South Main Street stretches from Brainerd Lake to the southern edge of Cranbury and is characterized by freestanding single-family residences of moderate scale ranging in date from the early 19th century to the early 20th century.

Survey Name: Cranbury Local Historic District Survey 2018

Principal Investigator: Emily Cooperman

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☐ (Primary Contact)

-1963015433

Page 2

**Registration
and Status
Dates:**

National Historic Landmark?: ☐

National Register: 9/18/1980

New Jersey Register: 8/9/1979

Determination of Eligibility: 3/25/1977

Certification of Eligibility:

SHPO Opinion:

Local Designation: 9/26/1988

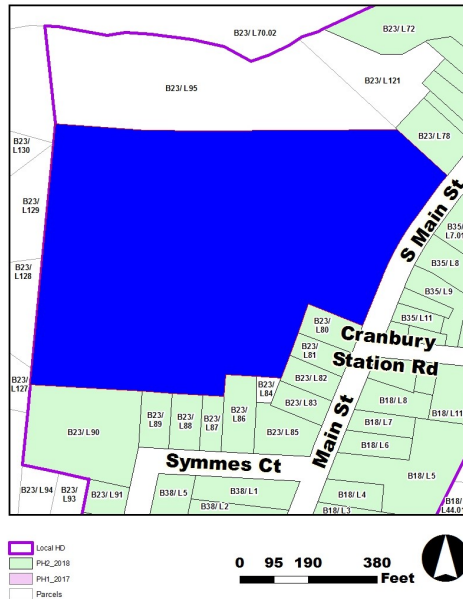
Other Designation:

Other Designation Date:

☒ Eligibility Worksheet included in present survey?

☐ Is this Property an identifiable farm or former farm?

Location Map:



Site Map:



BIBLIOGRAPHY:

Author:	Title:	Year:	HPO Accession #: (if applicable)
(None Listed)	1916 Sanborn Map	1916	
Heritage Studies	Preserving Cranbury Township	1989	
Brennan, Peggy and Frank J. Jr.	Images of America: Cranbury, Volume II	1998	
(None Listed)	1876 Everts and Stewart Map	1876	
(None Listed)	1850 Otley and Keily Map	1850	
(None Listed)	1933 Sanborn Map	1933	
Brennan, Peggy and Frank J. Jr.	Images of America: Cranbury	1995	
Chambers, John Whiteclay II	Cranbury: A New Jersey Town from the Colonial Era to the Present	2012	
Walsh, Ruth	National Register of Historic Places Nomination for the Cranbury Historic District, Cranbury Township, Middlesex County, New Jersey	1979	
(None Listed)	Aerial and street view photography for 1931, 1940, 1947, 1953, 1957, 1963, 1969, 1970, 1972, 1979, 1987, 1995, 2002, 2006, 2007, 2008, 2010, 2012, 2013, and 2015 available at historicaerials.com and for 1995, 2002, 2006,		

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Property ID:

-1963015433

Page 3

2007, 2008, 2010, 2013, 2016, and 2017 available
through Google Earth

Additional Information:

1202_23_79 / 2SF&B / 1950

More Research Needed? ☐ (checked=Yes)

INTENSIVE-LEVEL USE ONLY:

Attachments Included:

1	Building	0	Bridge
0	Structure	0	Landscape
0	Object	0	Industry

Historic District ? ☒

District Name: Cranbury Historic District

Status: Key Contributing

Associated Archeological Site/Deposits? ☐

(known or potential sites. If Yes, please describe briefly)

Conversion Problem? ☐ **ConversionNote:**

Date form completed: 8/24/2018

Survey Name: Cranbury Local Historic District Survey 2018

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-1963015433

Page 4

ELIGIBILITY WORKSHEET - Properties

Property ID **-1963015433**

History:

The First Presbyterian Church was a key institution in the history of Cranbury from its earliest period. In 1739, the lot adjoining the mill along Cranbury Creek was conveyed to the elders of the church for the purpose of erecting a house of worship, the first such instituted in Cranbury. The first church building was completed in 1740, and a 1788 building preceded the current one on the present site. The current building was completed in 1839 and extended from 3 bays to 5 in 1859. The 1980 National Register Nomination for the Cranbury Historic District does not provide detail on the dates of the chapel building and 22 S. Main Street; the 1989 Heritage Studies inventory dates the chapel to 1878 and notes that it was "altered to its present state in 1960." The 1876 Everts and Stewart map show 2 buildings north of the church itself as part of the church property, but does not provide any detail other than to identify the one that is closer to the church building as the Session House. This map also shows the extent the cemetery in this period, which did not extend south of a line parallel to the south side of the main church building. A historic postcard in the collection of the church that dates to the early 20th century shows the main church as being fenestrated with stained glass windows and the chapel building as a rectangular-plan, 1-story, gabled building fenestrated in large, multi-light, double-hung windows on the southwest elevation. The 1916 Sanborn map shows the plan of the nave volume as it exists today, and the rear volume as a narrow, 1-story, partial-width, metal-roofed secondary volume offset to the northeast. The map shows 3 large hitching sheds to the northwest (rear) of the building in the location of the present parking lot. This Sanborn map shows the chapel as a 1-story, cross-gabled building with the entrance porch and a lower, 1-story rear volume on the northwest. The building is also labeled as "Sunday School Rooms" in this map. 22 S. Main is shown as a rectangular-plan, frame, 2-story dwelling fronted on the southeast by a 1-story, metal-roofed, partial-width front porch. The 1933 Sanborn map shows the chapel/Sunday School building as 2-stories, indicating that it had acquired its current height by that date. A plaque on the rear of the church indicates that the current chancel dates to the unification of the First and Second Presbyterian Church congregations in 1936. The church's website notes a campaign to renovate the complex in 1953, including the "restoration" of the windows to clear glass from stained glass. Historic aerial photographs indicate that the current extent of the buildings and additions had essentially been achieved by 1963, but do not clearly indicate how much of this may have occurred in the 1950s. This source also indicates that the cemetery has been extending toward the south since at least the 1930s. Visual evidence indicates that more recent changes in the buildings include the replacement of the cladding of the chapel and 22 S. Main with vinyl siding, and the replacement throughout of the window sash of 22 S. Main.

Statement of Significance:

The First Presbyterian Church is locally significant under Criterion A for its association with and important place in the development of Cranbury and its history from the early 18th through 20th century.

Eligibility for New Jersey and National Registers: ☒ Yes ☐ No

National Register Criteria: ☒ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D

Level of Significance: ☒ Local ☐ State ☐ National

Justification of Eligibility/Ineligibility:

The First Presbyterian Church retains integrity of location, design, setting, materials, feeling, and association and thus continues to be able to convey its significance under Criterion A.

Total Number of Attachments: 0

List of Element Names: Church
Chapel
Cemetery
Dwelling

Narrative Boundary Description:

The First Presbyterian Church corresponds to block 23, lot 79, Cranbury Township, Middlesex County, New Jersey.

Date Form Completed: 8/21/2018

Survey Name: Cranbury Local Historic District Survey 2018

Principal Investigator: Emily Cooperman

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-1963015433

Page 5

BUILDING ATTACHMENT

Historic Sites #-1963015433

Common Name: First Presbyterian Church

Historic Name: First Presbyterian Church

Present Use: Institutional, religious assembly

Historic Use: Institutional, religious assembly

Construction Date: 1839

Source: _____

Alteration Date(s): 1859

Source: _____

Designer: _____

Physical Condition: Excellent

Builder: _____

Remaining Historic Fabric: Medium

Style: Greek Revival

Form: Other

Stories: 2

Type: _____

Bays: 5

Roof Finish Materials: Asphalt shingle

Exterior Finish Materials Wood, clapboard

BUILDING ATTACHMENT

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Exterior Description:

The First Presbyterian Church property, which includes the 1839 church building with later additions, the chapel/Sunday School building to its north, and 22 S. Main Street, as well as the historic cemetery backing the buildings on the west, is a key-contributing property in the Cranbury Historic District.

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BUILDING ATTACHMENT

Historic Sites #-1963015433

Interior Description:

This survey project did not include a review of building interiors. Further research/survey is recommended.

Setting:

South Main Street stretches from Brainerd Lake to the southern edge of Cranbury and is characterized by freestanding single-family residences of moderate scale ranging in date from the early 19th century to the early 20th century.

Survey Name:	<u>Cranbury Local Historic District Survey 2018</u>	Date:	<u>August 28, 2018</u>
Surveyor:	<u>Emily T. Cooperman</u>		
Organization:	<u>Paulus, Sokolowski & Sartor</u>		