

By the first quarter of the nineteenth century, the size and form of church buildings represented a transformation in the sacred landscape seen not only in New Hampshire, but throughout New England and along the Atlantic seaboard (Dempsey 2001: 33). The Historic District includes one church from this period. **Peterborough Unitarian Church**, originally the **First Church (25 Main Street, Photos 17-20)** and one of two churches fronting on Main Street, was completed in January 1826 and dedicated the following month. The design is attributed to a Mr. Kilburn (first name unknown) and appears to be based on plates in Asher Benjamin's 1820 edition of *The American Builder's Companion* (Morison and Smith 1954:164, 163).¹ Rectangular in massing and set on a granite foundation the nave church consists of a three-bay by three-bay pedimented gable main block with full-height windows set in the blind arches on the long elevations. On the façade each entry is set in a blind arch, with a sash window at the top of the arch. A fan is centered in the flush-board sided closed pediment. A three-stage steeple-clock tower straddles the front of the roof ridge. A bell was added in 1828 and a clock in 1856 which was subsequently replaced in 1947 and is owned by the Town. The roof was first slated in 1853. Over the years the interior has been modified and remodeled. An organ was added in 1866 (rebuilt 1933) and two furnaces were installed in 1870 (it had been heated with wood stoves since 1842). Interior changes were done in 1868 and again in 1895 and 1924. A chapel had been added to the rear in 1880 but was replaced with the Morison Memorial Parish House in 1926, designed by Benjamin F. W. Russell of Little and Russell, his last major known design work in Peterborough (Morison and Smith 1954:165, 168-169; First Church of Peterborough 1953:9; Tolles 1979:111; Zimmerman 1972). The church was listed on the National Register 1973. A row of fifteen horse stalls, located northwest of the church, along the west property line were built in 1905, replacing earlier ones; they have since been converted to garages. The Peterborough Unitarian Church was listed on the National Register in 1973.

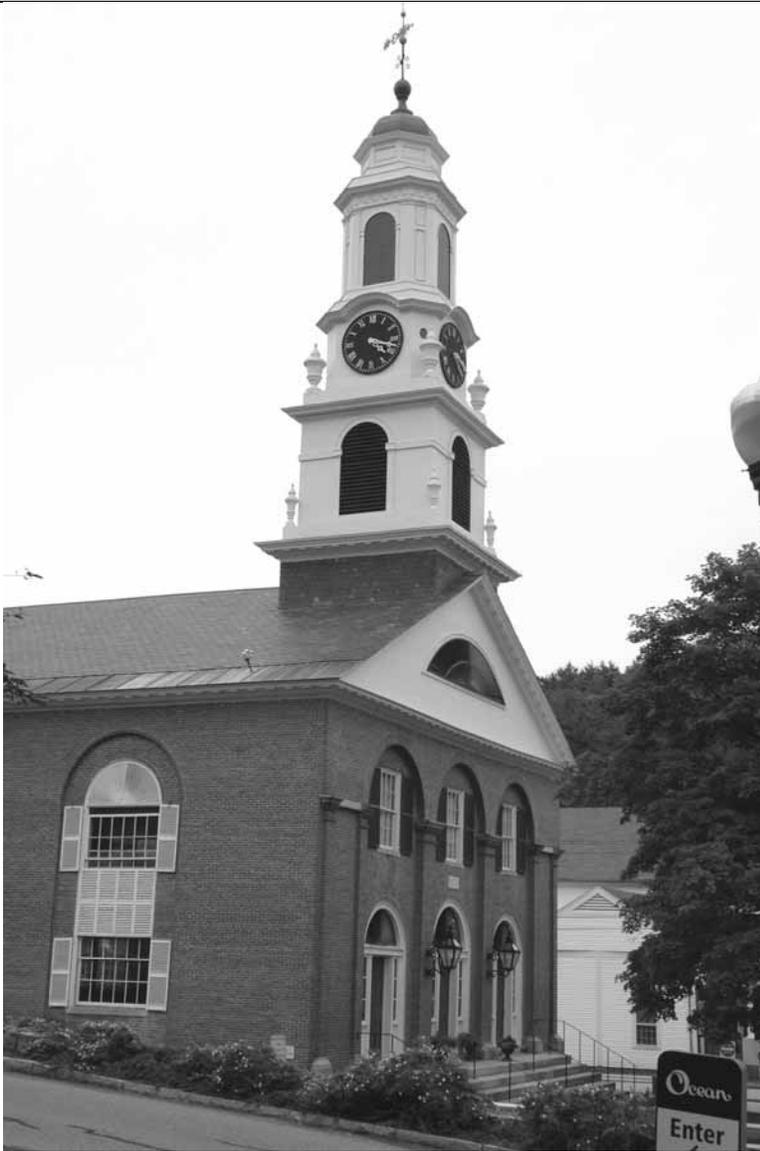


Photo 18) 25 Main Street (Peterborough Unitarian Church), U017-122 Direction: NE