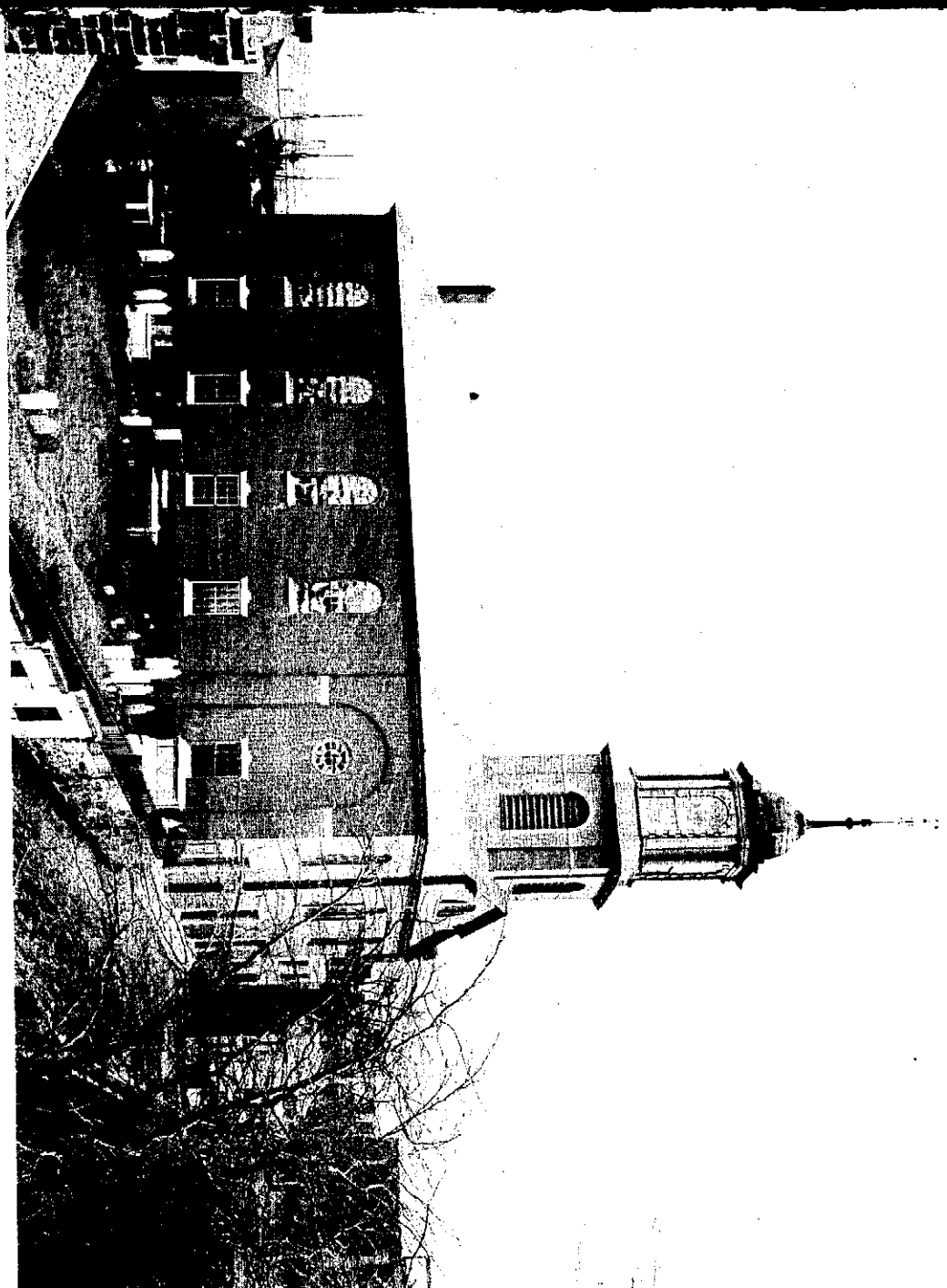


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St. John's Church in Portsmouth: An Architectural Study

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AT about six o'clock on the morning of December 24, 1806, the stillness of the awakening town of Portsmouth was shattered by the dread cry of fire. The alarm came too late, for the flames (which allegedly commenced under an improperly laid hearth in a new wooden store on Bow Street)¹ had reached a great height before their discovery. An engine speeding from the south part of town found its route blocked by a newly-built fence, and the moments that were wasted in its detour gave the flames time to reach great quantities of rum and brandy that were stored in the burning building. The spirits burst into flame with an explosive fury, sending debris high into the air. As one observer later recalled:

some burning shingles or other light stuff, lodged on the steeple of St. John's Church, and set it on fire. The most powerful engine could not throw water high enough to extinguish it. An attempt was made to cut down the steeple, but it did not succeed. The fire reached the main body of the church, and it fell a sacrifice to the devouring flames.²

As St. John's Church burned, the fabric of much of New Hampshire's ecclesiastical history was consumed. The old church, named "Queen's Chapel" until 1791, had been built in 1732 as the seat of Anglican authority in New Hampshire. From 1734 until 1773

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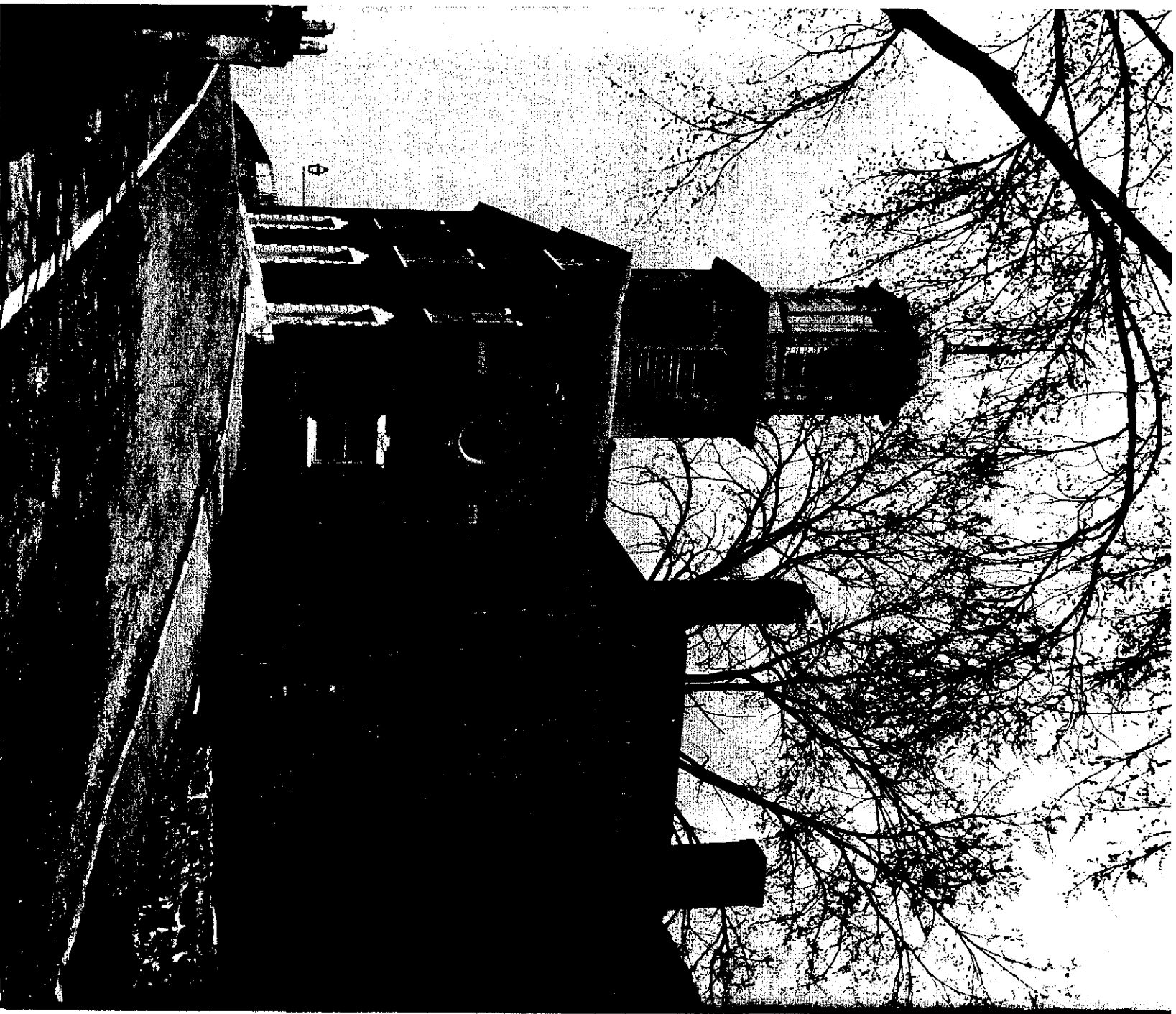


Fig. 1. St. John's Church as seen from the south about 1890, showing the adjacent three-story wooden parsonage, since demolished. Patch Collection, Strawberry Banke.

the Reverend Arthur Brown preached from its pulpit and, as an active agent of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts, made Queen's Chapel the focus of missionary activity extending into the towns of Nottingham, Barrington, Canterbury, Rumford, Bow and Contoocook.⁸ Over the years, the venerable church became the repository for many valuable gifts and relics of religious activity in New Hampshire. Fortunately, the manner in which the building took fire permitted many of these treasures to be rescued as the flames burned downward from the steeple.⁹

The parish wasted no time in arranging to provide itself with a new home. Three days after the fire, seventy-four subscribers signed a pledge to rebuild the church. On New Year's Day, 1807, they petitioned for a legal meeting of the parish in order to ascertain whether they would be permitted "to build a new church and completely fit up the same, they having the whole direction in selling the pews and appropriating the money arising therefrom to their own use."⁸ This was an expedient commonly used to finance church buildings in those days: a group of well-to-do subscribers would individually underwrite the costs of construction, obtaining reimbursement through the sale of pews in the completed structure. In this case, the seventy-four subscribers, who divided the expenses and the profits into 961½ shares, agreed

with the S^d St. John's Church that we will contribute and pay our respective proportional parts to the expense of building and furnishing a Brick Chappel . . . of Dimensions not less than the building lately destroyed there, and also with furnishing the same with a Bell, Organ, and all other necessary furniture, our said proportional parts to be computed according to the number of Shares by us respectively affixed to our several Names, hereto underwritten . . .⁹

The names of the principal subscribers, some of whom took as many as six shares each, read like an index to the mercantile elite of Portsmouth, for it is noticeable that the Episcopal parish drew to itself most of the town's men of business rather than the craftsmen, laborers or common mariners.¹

On the tenth of January, 1807, the parish met in the old State



Fig. 2. Interior of St. John's Church as it appears today. The *trompe l'oeil* wall and ceiling frescoes were painted by Daniel M. Shepard of Salem, Massachusetts, in 1848. Photograph by Douglas Armsden.

House in Portsmouth's Market Square and granted the committee of underwriters permission to build a new "Chappel." The new St. John's Church was destined to be the first brick religious building ever erected in New Hampshire, and to remain for many years the finest church in the state. Work began almost immediately, probably before plans for the new edifice had been secured. On January 27, the *New-Hampshire Gazette* carried a notice that "Bricks, hewn Stones & Lumber are wanted to rebuild St. John's Church." A month later, Matthew S. Marsh, agent for the building committee, had secured a detailed schedule of the timber needed for the church — a good indication that plans for the building had been agreed upon.⁹ By June, the *Gazette* reported that "a new brick building is in considerable forwardness on the same spot where the former church stood." The foundation, built at a cost of \$1,500 by stonemason Thomas Pinkham, was completed.⁹

Now was the time for the laying of the cornerstone, a ceremony that once received far greater attention than it does today. On June 24, 1807, six months to the day after the old church burned, the cornerstone of St. John's was laid "in ample Masonic form" before an audience of more than 5,000 — an assemblage equivalent to nearly 80% of Portsmouth's population at the time. One can easily imagine the dignified ceremonies on that long-ago summer day as the great procession of military, civil and Masonic officers and dignitaries wound its way through a triumphal arch "exhibiting the principal orders of architecture, and ornamented with a large spread golden eagle, the globes emblematic of masonry universal, and other civic and masonic decorations." At high noon, as the *Gazette* reported:

The ceremony then commenced by an ode, after which the Grand Master ordered the craft to prepare to lay the corner stone. . . . It was first examined and tried by the Grand officers, and found to be "well formed, true and trusty," it was then raised up by an engine, the [Grand] Chaplain rehearsed a prayer and an anthem was sung, when by order of the Grand Master, the Grand Treasurer and Secretary deposited beneath the stone the coins of the United States, medals of

Fig. 2. Interior of St. John's Church as it appears today. The *trompe l'oeil* wall and ceiling frescoes were painted by Daniel M. Shepard of Salem, Massachusetts, in 1848. Photograph by Douglas Armsden.

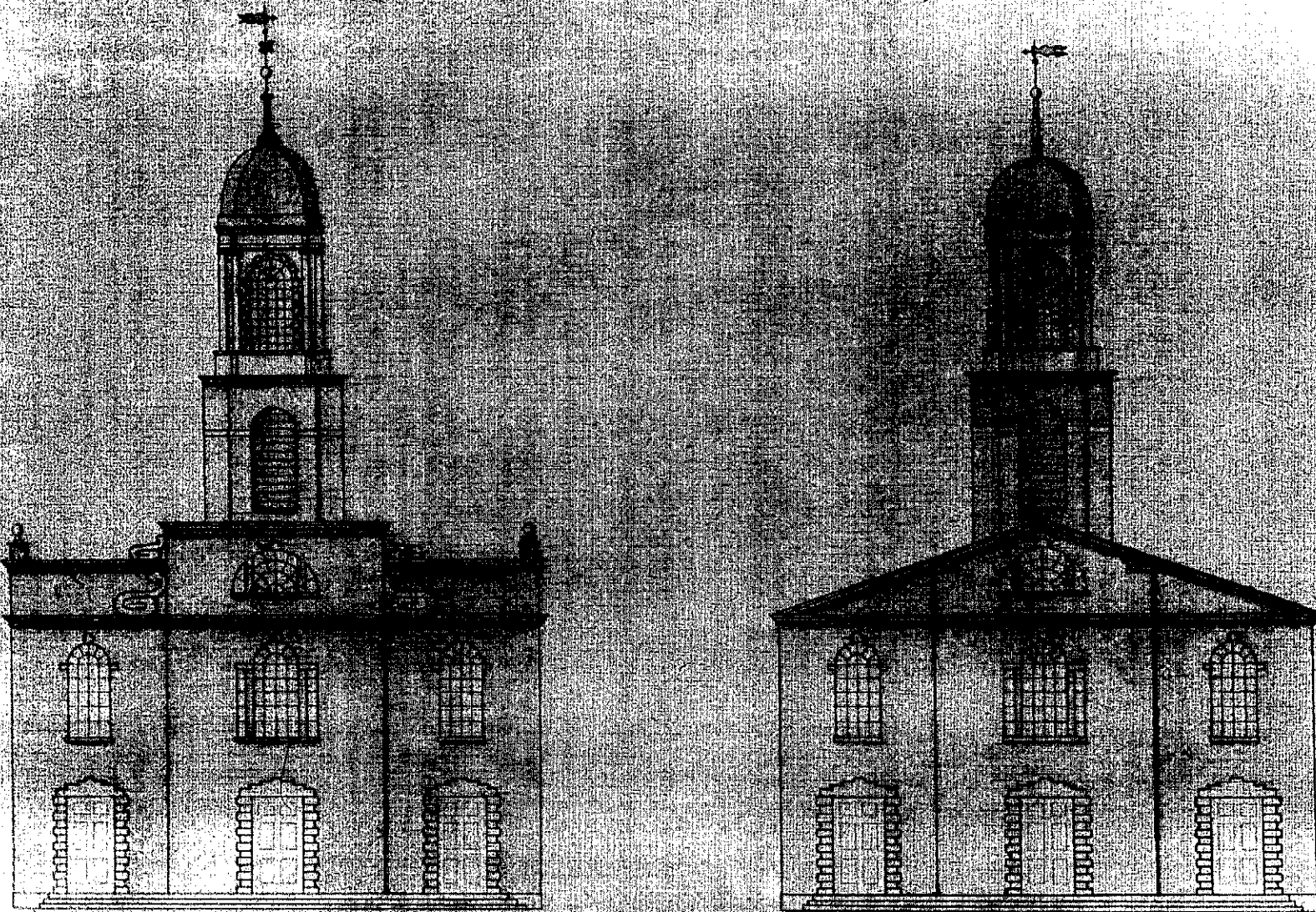


Fig. 3. Front (east) elevation of St. John's Church as it originally appeared (left) and as it appears today (right). Drawing by the author.

the illustrious Washington, and a silver plate . . . The stone was then let down and cemented by the operative masons. The Grand Master then poured the corn, wine and oil upon the stone with the usual ceremonies, and struck the stone three times with his ivory mallet: three flourishes of music followed, denoting the ceremonies finished.¹⁰

Following this ceremonious occasion, the "operative masons" set to work with a will.¹¹ They must have been dauntless men, for, according to local legend, the "roguish" local boys did little to ease their task. Coming to work one morning, the bricklayers spied their hanging staging raised to the top of the nearly completed tower. Calmly surveying the broad sweep of the Piscataqua River from this lofty perch was a horse, one of the shaggy derelicts owned by a local truckman and usually allowed to roam the streets at will.¹² Despite such vexatious incidents, the masons persevered, constructing an edifice of great beauty. The church measures about sixty-one by eighty-eight feet. The bricks, most of which were obtained from the brickyard of George Walker, are of a beautiful warm red color and are carefully laid in Flemish bond, except on the back of the church.

The superb joiner's work of St. John's church was fashioned by about fifteen men. Predominant among them was James Nutter (1775-1855), a man of intelligence and skill whose bill for \$1,770.00 amounted to more than twice the sum paid to any other joiner on the job.¹³ Nutter, later described as "the head of his craft" in Portsmouth, had apparently served his apprenticeship with Elisha Whidden, son of Portsmouth's leading pre-Revolutionary woodworker. As an independent tradesman, Nutter had begun his career by working on the Piscataqua Bridge of 1794, a mighty span that linked Fox Point in Newington and Cedar Point in Durham, and connected the First New Hampshire Turnpike with Portsmouth.¹⁴ In 1805, Nutter executed the fine joiner's work in the office of the New Hampshire Fire and Marine Insurance Company (today the Portsmouth Athenaeum); the bills he submitted for himself and his men totalled \$758.49.¹⁵ After completing the woodwork of St. John's, Nutter drew plans for several build-

Fig. 3. Front (east) elevation of St. John's Church as it originally appeared (left) and as it appears today (right). Drawing by the author.

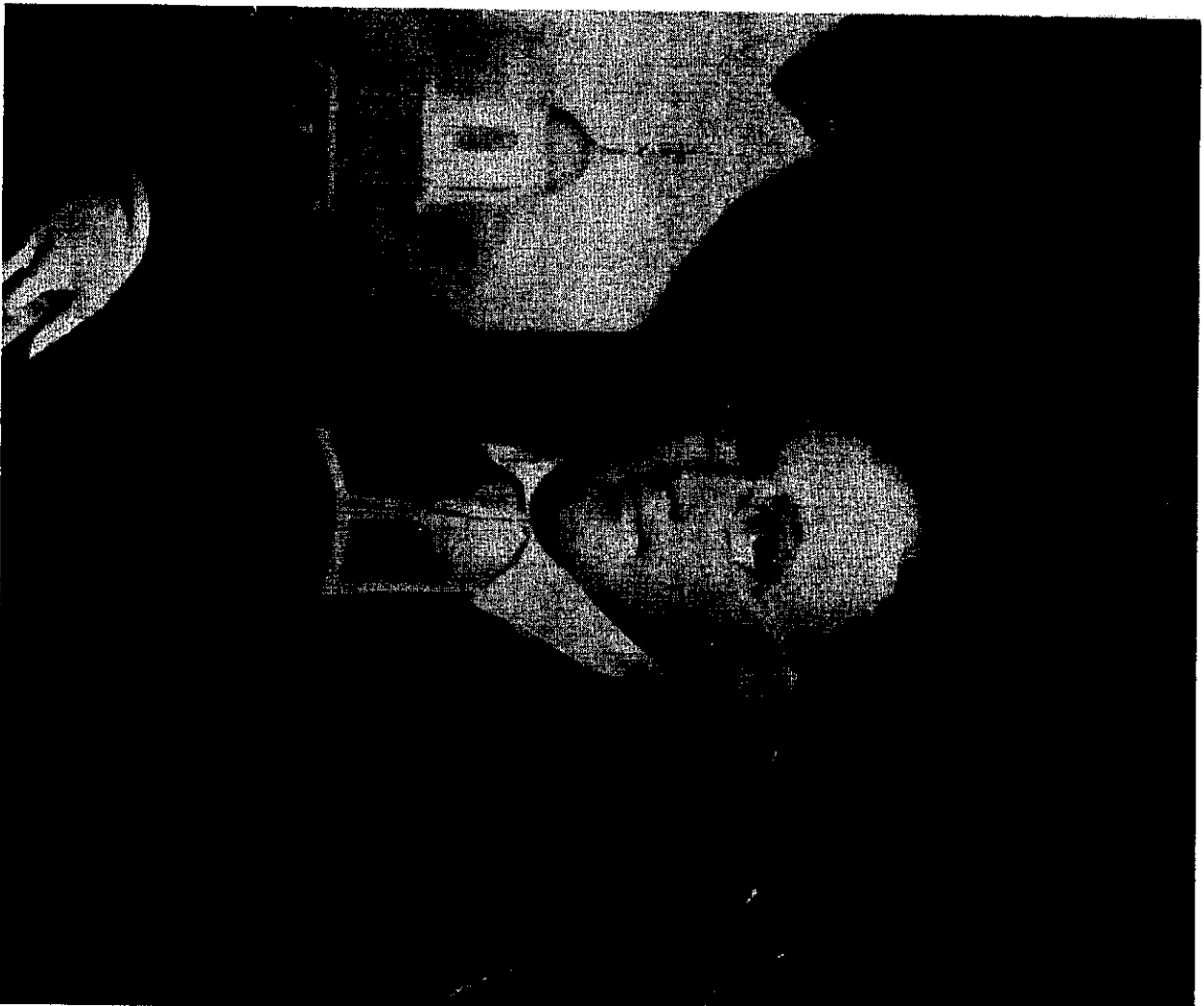


Fig. 4. Lithograph entitled, "Rev. Charles Burroughs, Rector of St. John's Church, Portsmouth, N.H. Drawn on Stone by M.E.D. Brown, from a Painting by G. Stuart — Pendleton Lith. N.York," with the original tower and upper facade of St. John's shown in the background. Photograph by the author, courtesy of St. John's Church.

ings, including the Portsmouth Academy (now the Portsmouth Public Library),¹⁶ constructed in 1809. At about the same time, he built a unique double house on School Street for himself and blacksmith Christopher Rymes — a building pierced with an arched opening that provides access to the yard behind. Much of the final beauty of St. John's is due to the sensitivity and skill of this gifted joiner.

Nutter was not the only craftsman whose skills contributed to the quality of the building. John Miller, later to become the chief joiner in the construction of the Portsmouth Academy, received \$713.78 for his work on the church. William Dearing, the most skilled carver in the region, supplied Ionic capitals that were placed upon columns fashioned by turner and blockmaker Mark Leighton. The finely-tooled marble trim for the church was supplied by Noah Smith, a gravestone cutter who also provided marble for the Academy. Thomas Phillips executed the ornamental plastering and stucco work that enhance the effect of Dearing's woodcarving. Nutter's associate Christopher Rymes forged most of the blacksmith's work. The labors of this galaxy of Portsmouth craftsmen were fittingly complemented when the subscribers furnished the church with a London-made organ that cost \$1,835.15 — equivalent to 70% of the entire bricklayers' bill for the structure — and with a bell from Paul Revere and Son. The total cost of building and furnishing the church was \$30,000.00, of which \$29,392.88 were recovered by sales of the pews and other income. This left the subscribers with a deficit of \$607.12 to divide among themselves according to the number of shares that they had pledged to underwrite.¹⁷

St. John's has always been recognized as one of New Hampshire's outstanding religious buildings, but it has usually been appreciated for its rich associations rather than as an architectural monument. Only recently have a few persons speculated about the possible architect of St. John's. The church's official guidebook attributes the building's design to William Durgin of Sanbornton, New Hampshire.¹⁸ Durgin, described as "an architect of some reputa-

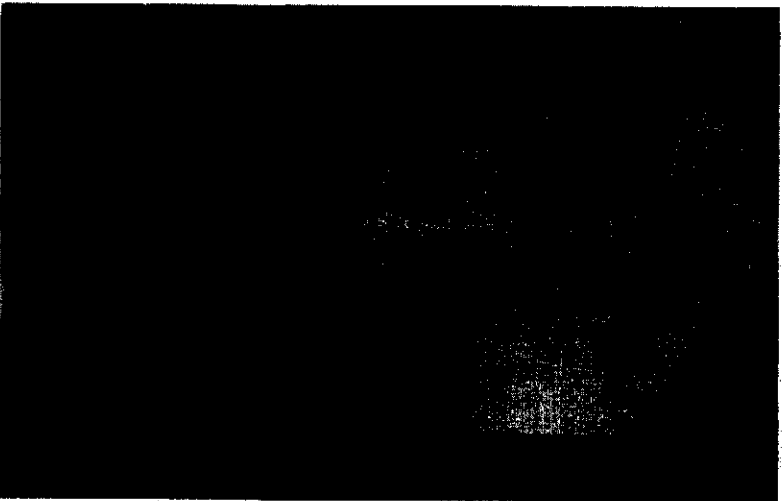


Fig. 5. Original tower and upper facade of St. John's Church. Detail of lithograph (see Fig. 4). Photograph by the author, courtesy of St. John's Church.

of Boston's St. Paul's Church and Quincy Market, was already an active and respected architect in Portland when old St. John's burned. Though he was only twenty-six at the time, he was a superb draftsman, a careful student of several architectural guidebooks, and was engaged in the design of the Portland Bank (plans drawn April, 1806; built 1807), one of the most graceful and ingeniously-planned commercial structures of its day.²¹

Parris' connection with the design of St. John's Church is firmly established by several interesting and somewhat embarrassing records in the church archives. Apparently the earliest of these references is a notation in the accounts for the construction of the church. An entry under the date April 20, 1807 reads, "Alex Paris

tion, having planned and built several churches and many other buildings in Sanbornton . . . and in different parts of the State,"²² might have had the skill to design St. John's, though the church records reveal no mention of his name. Certain local men, like James Nutter, Ebenezer Clifford of Exeter, or Bradbury Johnson (formerly of Exeter but then residing in Saco, Maine) might likewise have been chosen as the architect of the church.²⁰ Both documentary and stylistic evidence, however, point clearly to another author of the church's design: Alexander Parris of Portland, Maine.²¹

Parris (1780-1852), who later became eminent as a civil engineer, a leading proponent of granite architecture, and the designer

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for coming from Portland —
 24.00.""²⁸ As will be seen, plans
 for the new church had almost
 certainly been selected by Feb-
 ruary, so this entry implies that
 Parris' submission of drawings
 had been accepted and that he
 had been called for consultation.
 Equally important is an entry
 under the heading "Sundry bills
 unsettled" and dated August,
 1808. Significantly, it reads "Alex.
 Paris 50\$, say 30.00.""²⁸ Why did
 Parris request this \$50.00 fee,
 which was obviously regarded as
 unrealistically high by the build-
 ing committee? The answer is
 clearly given in a letter to the
 "Committee for Building St.
 John's Church in Portsmouth,"
 dated May 15, 1809, from a law-
 yer in whose hands Parris had
 placed the troublesome affair:

Gentlemen

Mr. Alexander Parris of this
 town has lodged with me to be
 collected a demand against your Society of fifty dollars for sundry
 drawings of Plans for a meeting house &c — presuming it could not be
 necessary to take legal measures to compe^[sic] payment I have pre-
 sumed to acquaint ^[sic] you with the circumstance of its being left
 with me — If you will write me that it shall be paid on being pre-
 sented to you I will find means of forwarding it unless you should
 prefer remitting the money to me here — Please Gentlemen to write
 me on the subject on receipt of this — I am respectfully yr.

Mo. obt. hble Servt.

Ezekiel Whitman²⁹

It must be admitted that even these extensive references do not



Fig. 6. Pencil sketch showing pro-
 posed alterations of St. John's Church
 facade from its original design to its
 present appearance. Photograph made
 by light transmitted through the pa-
 per, showing elements of the original
 facade (obverse) superimposed over
 the present facade (reverse). Photo-
 graph by the author, courtesy of St.
 John's Church.

absolutely prove Parris' authorship of the design of the church as it was finally built. It would appear, in fact, that the building committee considered more than one plan for St. John's, leaving a slight possibility that Parris' designs were not finally chosen. On February 27, 1807, about two months before Parris was paid for coming to Portsmouth, Matthew Marsh addressed a letter to Captain Daniel Hayes, supplier of much of the timber for St. John's:

. . . I wrote to you a few days since & enclosed a schedule of timber that will be wanted for a Church as the dimentions [sic] are so different from the former one sent I tho't it would materially alter your opinion of the price as the committee will be oblig'd to close with some proposals in a few days I wished to decide with you as I should prefer you to any other person . . .²⁶

Marsh's reference to the dimensions of the planned church being "so different from the former one sent" suggests that at least two plans had been considered. The timber schedule that Marsh annexed to his letter is meticulously detailed and would appear to pertain to St. John's as it was finally built. Unfortunately, only the cellar framing of the church is exposed to view today for comparison.

Despite the slight uncertainties in the documentary record, the fact that Parris' plans are the only ones specifically mentioned in the building accounts, and the fact that the church authorities acknowledged their obligation to pay at least part of the architect's \$50.00 fee, suggest that Parris' plans were used. This supposition is rendered almost a certainty by stylistic evidence.

Much of this evidence has been hidden from the eye of the observer for well over a century. In fact, no writer has ever before recorded one startling fact about St. John's: the original design of its facade was strikingly different from the present design. The original facade strongly suggests a connection with Parris' early work.

Evidence for the original appearance of the front of the building is seen first in an undated lithographic portrait of the Rev. Dr. Charles Burroughs, rector of St. John's from 1809 to 1858. This portrait, drawn by M. E. D. Brown and published by Pendleton of

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Unusual as it may appear today, the original design of the facade was in keeping with the trends of the time and with Parris' own ideals. The concept of the baroque church facade, with frontal parapets that screened the gable roof behind, had been introduced into New England at the turn of the century by Charles Bulfinch. The treatment may be seen in the recently-restored New North (now St. Stephen's) Church in Boston, designed by Bulfinch about 1802. Still earlier, the Boston architect had used the same principle in his design for Holy Cross Church (built 1800-1803; demolished c. 1862). The visual effect of both churches depended heavily on applied pilasters, balustrades and finials,

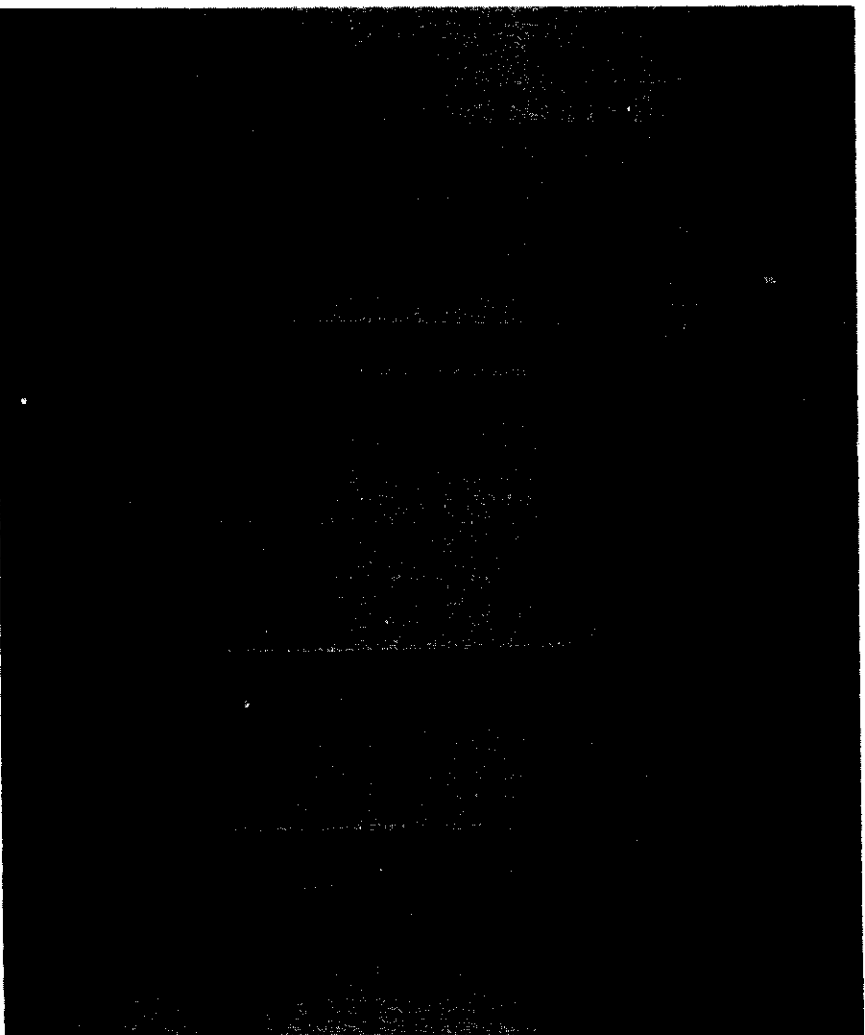


Fig. 8. Plate 137 from William Pain, *The Practical House Carpenter* (Philadelphia: Thomas Dobson, 1797), which provided the prototype for the altar-piece of St. John's Church, Photograph by the author, courtesy of the Henry Francis DuPont Winterthur Museum, Winterthur, Delaware.

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whereas the facade of St. John's was left unornamented except for four wooden volutes, rusticated door openings, and a dentilled cornice. Nevertheless, Holy Cross and the New North established the precedent that determined the design of St. John's — the use of a screen-like facade that avoided any hint of a triangular pediment and thereby denied the presence of the gable roof that lay behind the parapet walls.⁸⁰

Parris was certainly familiar with this new concept whether or not he had seen the new Bulfinch churches in Boston. In *The American Builder's Companion* of 1806 (a book with which Parris was well acquainted by April of that year),⁸¹ Asher Benjamin illustrates a church with a stepped facade (Plate 39) and another ornamented with baroque volutes (Plate 38). According to Benjamin, Plate 39 of *The American Builder's Companion* "was copied from the original drawing, which was made for the congregational meeting-house at West Boston." The West Church still stands, as does Benjamin's simpler 1807 Charles Street Church. Like Bulfinch's earlier churches, Benjamin's buildings display great emphasis on facade. In both cases, the facades are composed of flat-topped parapet walls that partially or completely hide the slope of the main roofs.

It is evident, then, that the original design of St. John's was in harmony with a new but already pervasive ideal in church design.

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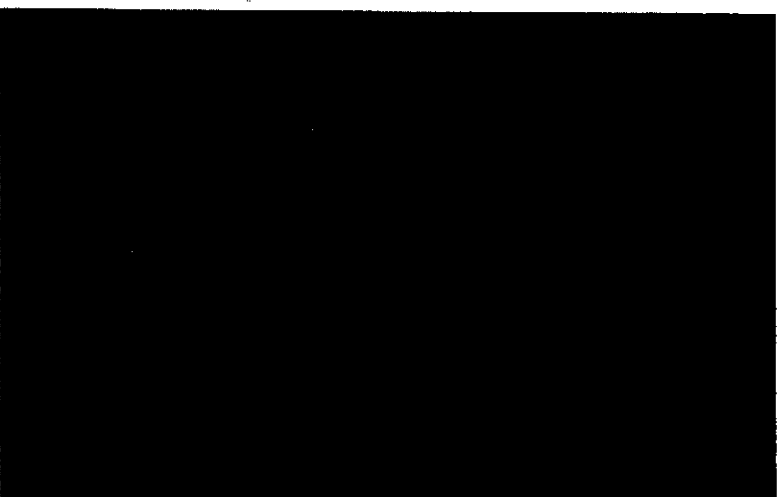


Fig. 9. Plate 136 from William Pain, *The Practical House Carpenter* (Philadelphia: Thomas Dobson, 1797), which served as the prototype for the original pulpit of St. John's Church. Photograph by the author, courtesy of the Henry Francis DuPont Winterthur Museum, Winterthur, Delaware.



Fig. 10. Surveyor's plan by Benjamin Akerman, dated July 26, 1811, showing the outline of the present St. John's Church superimposed upon the outline of the smaller 1732 Queen's Chapel. Photograph by the author, courtesy of St. John's Church.

Fortunately, Parris himself left documentary proof that he recognized and accepted this ideal. The proof is seen in a floor plan and elevation for a church, drawn by Parris on December 5 and 10, 1807. These church drawings, which are preserved in the American Antiquarian Society collections, show a strong kinship both to Plate 39 of Benjamin's *The American Builder's Companion* and to St. John's Church as it was originally built." Clearly, the young architect had so fully accepted the aesthetic that had dictated the design of St. John's that he planned a similar edifice — apparently never built — six or nine months later.

Further study of St. John's Church suggests that its architect used another sourcebook besides Benjamin's *The American Builder's Companion* in the design of the building, and strengthens the attribution of St. John's to Parris. One of the most interesting features of the design of the church is the use of blind arches and bull's-eye windows on the forward bays of the side elevations. While the use of brick arches may be seen in later meeting houses in Peterborough and Newport, N. H., Deerfield, Massachusetts, and in Boston's Park Street Church, the bull's-eye windows are rare indeed. They are, however, prefigured in Plate 133 (entitled "Plan and Elevation of a Church") of William Pain's English architectural guidebook *The Practical House Carpenter* (first American edition, Boston, 1796; Philadelphia edition 1797). Study of

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Alexander Parris' surviving drawings from the first years of the nineteenth century confirms his constant reference to Pain's book, which has not previously been mentioned as one of his sources." *The Practical House Carpenter* figured prominently in the interior design of the church as well, providing an almost exact prototype for the altarpiece and for the original pulpit, which was removed in 1848 but recorded in an early sketch in the parish archives." *The Practical House Carpenter* exerted little discernible influence over the Portsmouth builder-architects. Thus, the importance of the book in the design of St. John's, combined with other stylistic and documentary evidence, confirm Parris as the architect of the church. St. John's may therefore be regarded as one of the earliest surviving buildings designed by one of New England's most gifted architects.

The alteration of the facade of St. John's, which was perhaps done to bring the church into closer conformity with the classical ideals of the mid-nineteenth century, was only one of many changes to the building carried out during the 1800s. Like any structure that actively serves the needs of man, St. John's has slowly evolved over the years. Today, the church presents an interesting mixture of the intentions of its original builders and the accretions added by later generations. The appearance of antiquity engendered by many additions to the venerable fabric of the church has always made St. John's the object of affectionate regard by residents of Portsmouth.

The first substantial repairs required by the church after its construction in 1807 were a complete repainting and the recoppering of its dome, both completed in 1824 at a cost of \$302.35.³⁶ Peter Coffin of Boston, who supplied the sheet copper for the dome, took the opportunity to recommend a new mode of coppering that had been adopted in his city:

... In coppering houses here they neither use solder or nails, except 3 or 4 nails to a sheet.

A new method has been invented by a House Carpenter of this place which is the most effectual. It is called seaming the copper (as

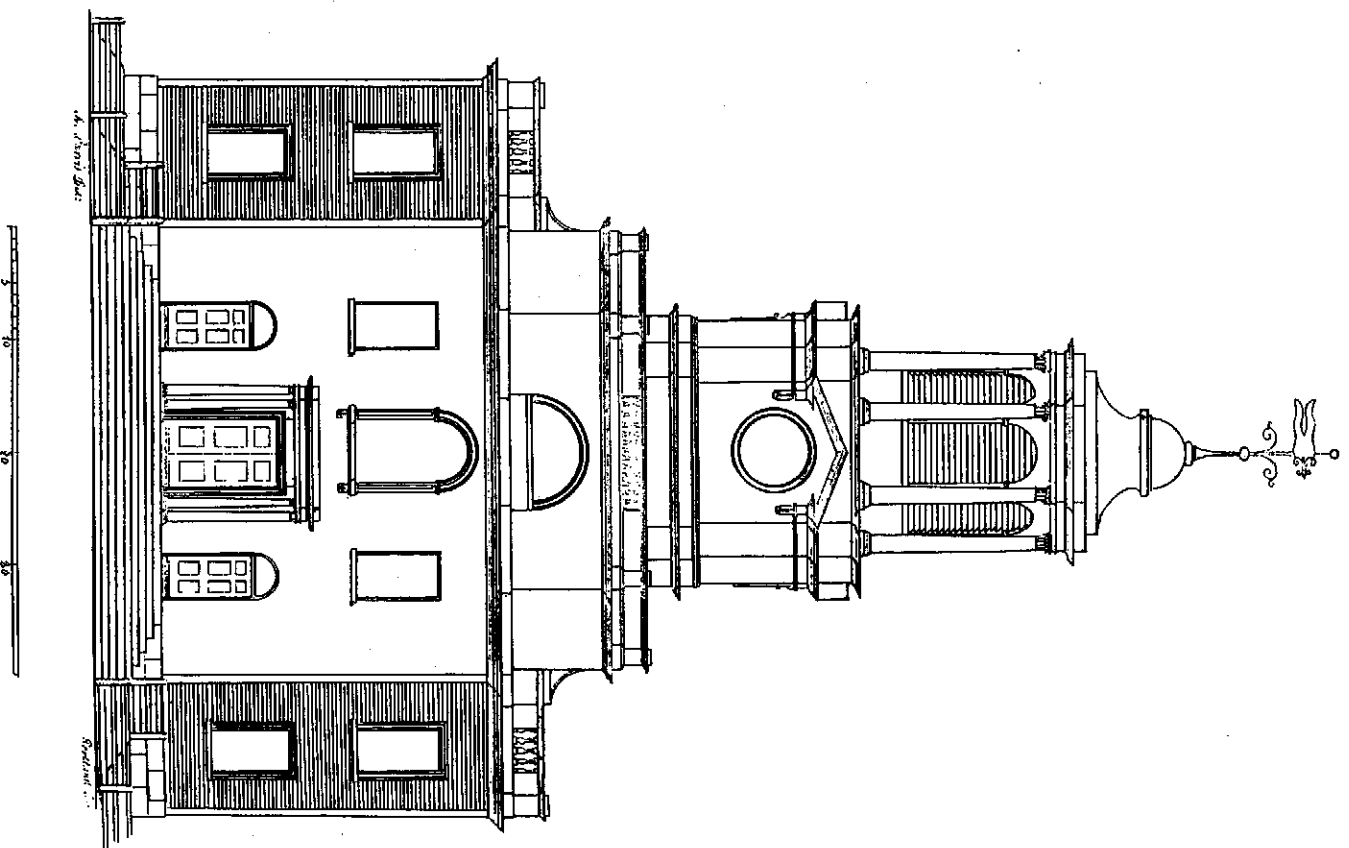


Fig. 11. Alexander Parris, elevation of a church, dated "Portland Decr. 10, 1807." Courtesy of the American Antiquarian Society, Worcester, Massachusetts.

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tinplate-workers seam tin) & then secured to the boards by clasps. . . . Houses that were done by this method ten years since are in perfect preservation, while those that were secured by soldering or nailing have been re-coppered by the new method some time since.

The person that invented this method has also made himself tools for the purpose, & is the best person to do work of that kind; & if you should decide on coppering your cupola he would be a very good person to employ. He is now engaged coppering the portico of the Church in Brattle Street. — Himself & 2 apprentices put on 15 sheets in a day. . . .³⁸

The frugal wardens of St. John's declined to hire the unnamed Boston mechanic, but took Coffin's hint and employed Jonathan Morrison, a local tin-plate worker, to do the job for \$23.00.

Among the extensive repairs of 1848, alluded to earlier, was the complete re-slating of the church roof with 9,000 slates weighing some eighteen tons.³⁷ This monumental task was the last major alteration until 1857, when a new spire was erected on the dome, the bell deck was newly coppered, and all the outside woodwork of the church and cupola were repainted. A year later, the two chimneys at the back of the church were constructed³⁸ (leaving one to wonder how the church had been heated previously, if at all).

The interior of St. John's began to acquire a new modernity during the Civil War era. Gas was introduced for illumination in 1863. Four years later, most of the old box pews were removed from the main floor and galleries of the church and replaced by 104 "slip seats" that remain to this day. At the same time, all soft bricks on the outside of the building were removed and replaced by hard-burned ones.³⁹

Beginning in 1885, parishioners began to donate stained glass windows for the main floor of the church — a practice which has continued as recently as 1956. The earliest of these windows are characteristic of Victorian stained glass, while others of the 1920s are marked by Tiffany-like "opalescent" glazing. The two most modern windows, designed by Charles J. Connick of Boston, represent a return to the brilliance of medieval glass.⁴⁰ These memorial windows have imparted a somber aspect to the church interior

which is attractive to the modern eye but at variance with the traditions of the original builders.

Today, St. John's stands as a physical record of the changing religious and aesthetic attitudes of its parishioners for nearly 170 years. The church embodies the finest workmanship of which the early nineteenth century craftsmen of Portsmouth were capable, and still bears evidence of the genius of one of New England's finest architects. The building is a fitting realization of the dreams of the early subscribers whose zeal to build a "Brick Chappel" left them \$600 in debt, but possessed of New Hampshire's finest church.

NOTES

¹*New-Hampshire Gazette*, December 30, 1806.

²Nathaniel Adams, *Annals of Portsmouth* (Portsmouth: By the author, 1825), pp. 339-40. Cf. memorandum written by Lyman Spaulding, M.D., Secretary of the Grand Lodge of New Hampshire, dated June 24, 1807 (Dartmouth College Library, MS 807374). According to Spaulding, the church remained unscathed until five hours after the first discovery of the blaze on Bow Street. The steeple 'caught fire in the cornish above the bell, by a spark that was blown upon it, and altho' it was immediately discovered, it baffled the exertions of the whole town & we were consigned to remain silent spectators and beheld that beautiful fabric in a gradual manner reduced to ashes."

³Robert Hayes Dunn, "A History of the Diocese of New Hampshire, 1802-1952." *The New Hampshire Churchman* 6 (June, 1952), p. 6. In 1760, the Rev. Mr. Brown noted that "an uncommon Spirit of Conformity appears thro out the Province, and it is only for want of steady settled Preaching that Proselytes do not abound." (*ibid.*).

⁴Relics saved from the wooden church include a chair, originally a present from Queen Caroline, which Washington is supposed to have used in his visit to the church in 1789; a "Vinegar" Bible, also thought to have been a present from the Queen; a 1739 Book of Common Prayer; and a baptismal font given to the church in 1761 by two daughters of Col. John Tufton Mason. For an account of the rescue of this font and associated objects by the person who performed the heroic task, see the *Portsmouth Journal*, September 29, 1849.

⁵Book I, "Records of St. John's Parish, 1757-1856," p. 124.

⁶*Ibid.*, p. 140.

⁷Chief subscribers were James Sheafe (6 shares); Thomas Brown (6 shares); Reuben Shapley (3 shares); and Clement Storer, William Gardner, John Peirce, Jeremiah Mason, John S. Sherburne, Jonathan Warner, Elijah Hall, Thomas Thompson, Elihu D. Brown, and John Jeffries (2 shares each). Most of these men were merchants or sea captains.

⁸Letter, Matthew S. Marsh to Capt. Daniel Hayes, February 27, 1807, with attached "Schedule of Timber for St. John's Church," "St. John's Church collections."

⁹"Proprietors of St. John's Church To Matthew S. Marsh" (account), St. John's Church collections; hereafter cited as St. John's Accounts. Thomas Pinkham also provided cut granite from Durham for the New Hampshire Fire and Marine Insurance Company office (now the Portsmouth Athenaeum) in 1804 and built the cellar for the Portsmouth Academy (now the Portsmouth Public Library) in 1809.

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¹⁹*New-Hampshire Gazette*, June 30, 1807. A more accessible account of the ceremony is presented in Nathaniel Adams, *Annals of Portsmouth*, pp. 339-43. Both accounts give the full text of the silver plate that was placed under the cornerstone and was engraved by Andrew Gerrish, a Portsmouth silversmith who was also the keeper of the county jail in Portsmouth for twenty years before his death in 1835.

²¹The building accounts list the masons only as "Hasleton, Dennet & Clark." The first name evidently refers to James Hasleton, who worked as a bricklayer in the construction of the Portsmouth Academy in 1809 and in 1811 built the three-story Portsmouth house later owned by Governor Ichabod Goodwin. The second name could refer to either Ephraim or Nathaniel Dennett, both of whom worked on the Portsmouth Academy.

²²Charles W. Brewster, *Rambles About Portsmouth*, First Series (Portsmouth: By the author, 1859), pp. 201-202.

²³St. John's Accounts.

²⁴James Nutter, "The Experience of James Nutter," MS autobiographical account (privately owned; copy in possession of the author).

²⁵New Hampshire Fire and Marine Insurance Company bills, numbers 83 and 87, Portsmouth Athenaeum collections.

²⁶Portsmouth Academy to John Haven & John M'Climtock" (account), Portsmouth Public Library collections.

²⁷St. John's Accounts.

²⁸Charles T. Webb], *St. John's Church, Portsmouth, New Hampshire — A Visitor's Guidebook* (Portsmouth, 1967), p. 5.

²⁹Helen Philbrook Patten, "Clement Durgin," *The Granite Monthly* 36, No. 5 (May, 1904): 240. Cf. M. T. Runnels, *History of Sanbornston, New Hampshire* (2 vols.; Boston: Alfred Mudge & Son, 1881), II, 232; and Work Projects Administration, *Hands That Built New Hampshire* (Brattleboro, Vt.: Stephen Daye Press, 1940), pp. 29, 48.

³⁰James I. Garvin, "Portsmouth and the Piscataqua: Social History and Material Culture," *Historical New Hampshire* 26, No. 2 (Summer, 1971): 21-4.

³¹Two persons have previously suggested that Parris might have been connected with the design of St. John's. Talbot F. Hamlin in his article "Alexander Parris," *Dictionary of American Biography* (20 vols.; N.Y.: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1928-1936), XIV, 254-5, speculates that one of Parris' drawings in the Boston Athenaeum may relate to St. John's. William D. Morgan, a lecturer in the Department of Art and Archaeology at Princeton University whose M.A. thesis dealt with Parris, also theorized that St. John's might be the work of the Portland architect. (Letter, William D. Morgan to the author, October 13, 1967).

³²"Portfolio of Architectural designs by Alexander Parris," American Antiquarian Society collections. Parris' seven drawings of the Portland Bank show the building to have had a facade much like that of the Portsmouth Athenaeum, a flat roof, interior spiral stairways lighted by skylights, and large rear offices with semicircular or apsidal back walls.

³³St. John's Accounts.

³⁴*Ibid.* A similar undated entry, reading "A. Parris \$50, say \$20" occurs in an earlier rough estimate of the costs of constructing the church. Perhaps a twinge of the consciences of the members of the building committee had compelled the men to grudgingly allot ten more dollars to the architect by the time they compiled the final account. Actually, \$50.00 was not an excessive architect's fee at the period: Bradbury Johnson had charged \$30.00 for "modding and drawing" the Portsmouth Athenaeum in 1804, and James Nutter charged \$20.00 for plans and a timber school-ule for the Portsmouth Academy in 1809. In *Bulfinch's Boston, 1787-1817* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1964), pp. 38, 278, Harold and James Kirker show that Bulfinch's usual fee for architectural drawings was between \$40.00 and \$50.00.

³⁵Letter, Ezekiel Whitman to the Committee for Building St. John's Church in Portsmouth. The letter is specifically addressed to Capt. Thomas Brown, who, along with Benjamin Brierley and Matthew S. Marsh, formed the building committee that

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collections, and between Pain's Plate 39 and Parris' drawing for a doorway (Page 47) in the Boston Athenaeum collections.
⁵⁸Bill packet for 1824, St. John's Church collections.
⁵⁹Letter, Peter Coffin to Joshua W. Peirce, June 10, 1824. St. John's Church collections.
⁶⁷Bill packet for 1847-1848, St. John's Church collections.
⁶⁸Book I, "Records of St. John's Parish, 1757-1856," p. 336.
⁶⁹Index, Book I, "Records of St. John's Parish, 1757-1856."
⁴⁰Charles T. Webb, *St. John's Church* . . . , pp. 12-14.

