

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

FINAL

National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form

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

1. Name of Property

historic name First Unitarian Church of Hobart

other names/site number N/A

089-232-04087

2. Location

street & number 497 Main Street

N/A ☐ not for publication

city or town Hobart

N/A ☐ vicinity

state Indiana

code IN

county Lake

code 089

zip code 46342

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 36CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property
☒ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant
☐ nationally ☐ statewide ☒ locally. (☐ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

[Signature]
Signature of certifying official/Title

7/26/99
Date

Indiana Department of Natural Resources
State or Federal agency and bureau

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

Signature of certifying official/Title

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

- ☐ entered in the National Register.
☐ See continuation sheet.

- ☐ determined eligible for the
National Register

☐ See continuation sheet.

- ☐ determined not eligible for the
National Register

- ☐ removed from the National Register

- ☐ other, (explain:) _____

First Unitarian Church of Hobart

Lake IN

Name of Property

County and State

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
☐ district
☐ site
☐ structure
☐ object

Number of Resources within Property
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1	0	buildings
0	0	sites
0	0	structures
0	0	objects
1	0	Total

Name of related multiple property listing

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

N/A

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

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

RELIGION: Religious Facility

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

RELIGION: Religious Facility

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

LATE VICTORIAN: Italianate

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation BRICK

walls BRICK

STONE: limestone

roof ASPHALT

other

Narrative Description

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

First Unitarian Church of Hobart
Name of Property

Lake IN
County and State

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.)

Property is:

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

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

ARCHITECTURE

Period of Significance

1875-1876

Significant Dates

1875

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

O.D. Pollard and Co.

Narrative Statement of Significance

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

9. Major Bibliographic References

Bibliography

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

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- ☐ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- ☐ previously listed in the National Register
- ☐ previously determined eligible by the National Register
- ☐ designated a National Historic Landmark
- ☐ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
- ☐ recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

Primary location of additional data:

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

Name of repository:

First Unitarian Church of Hobart
Name of Property

Lake _____ IN _____
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property less than one

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

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☐ See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

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

Boundary Justification

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

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Christopher Baas and Elin Christianson
organization _____ date 7/25/98
street & number 7934 Harcourt Road telephone 317-471-8999
city or town Indianapolis state IN zip code 46260

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

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

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

Photographs

Representative black and white photographs of the property.

Additional items

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

Property Owner

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

name First Unitarian Church of Hobart, Indiana
street & number 497 Main Street telephone 219-942-1611
city or town Hobart state IN zip code 46342

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

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

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**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 7 Page 1 *Unitarian Church of Hobart, Lake County, IN*

Section 7 - Description

The Unitarian Church of Hobart is a two-story brick structure with a noncontributing wood frame addition. It is located between the south edge of Hobart's Main Street commercial district and a residential neighborhood. The main brick structure was constructed throughout 1875 and dedicated in January of 1876. A single-story wood frame addition was constructed in 1954-55 and expanded in 1990.

The church property is flat with turf, several trees, and foundation plantings of shrubs and flowers. A concrete sidewalk is on the building's west and south side. To the building's north is a concrete drive and parking area, and the east has an asphalt parking lot. Utility poles and electrical lines are located on the south side, with guy wires extending in front of the west. A small memorial garden, surrounded by a low stone wall, is located on the north between the church and the addition.

The church's form is a simple rectangular block with common bond brick walls and a gable roof. A three-tiered steeple is located above the main entrance which faces onto main street. The tall and narrow arched wooden windows are divided into three sashes of three amber-colored panes. They have stone sills and are topped with a semicircular brick crown with brick tabs. The window frames on the main facade resemble arches supported by piers with a capital and base. The walls are topped by a plain frieze-like cornice with a simple quarter-round molding.

The church's steeple is divided into three, incrementally smaller, sections by two shingle covered hip roofs. The base and middle stages are covered by white clapboard siding and house the church's bell. The deck of the highest roof is topped by a small, four-sided, copper covered spire that ascends to a point.

The west, or main, facade faces onto Main Street and features the symmetrical placement of the main entrance between two windows. Each window is recessed within large arches created in the brickwork. Each semicircular arch is defined by brick headers. The arched entrance has wood paneled double-doors with gothic-like details. Like the window frames, the door frame displays an arch supported by two piers. The wood door frame is surrounded by brick headers, and the entire doorway is recessed and set beneath a brick arch that, like the windows, is defined by brick headers. The piers have a capital and a base that rests on the stone sill. A horizontal molding along the top of the door connects the two capitals. The arch over the double-doors is filled by a wood panel with gothic-like carvings. Centered above the door and near the gable peak is a decorative circular wood insert carved with a floral-like detail. The insert may have replaced a circular window that was never installed or was enclosed when the interior was remodeled. Directly below this stone is a square stone block carved with the date 1874, the year of the congregation's formation.

The north and south facades are identical. Each wall is divided by pilasters into four bays. The end bays are longer than the two center, and pilasters are located at each building corner. Windows, equidistant apart, are located within each bay. The center pilaster of the south facade has a brick chimney that services a basement furnace. It starts at ground level and projects up through the eaves.

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The east, or rear, facade is covered by the single-story wood maintenance shed and hallway that connects the church to the 1950's parish house. The top two-thirds of an enclosed window is visible above the shed roof.

The adjoining parish hall and church offices are a single-story, gable roofed wood structure which does not contribute to the historical significance of the church. It is covered in vertical wood siding, has several windows, and has doors accessing the main floor and basement.

The church's interior is comprised of three primary spaces: the vestibule, gallery, and assembly room. The vestibule is a small space inside the main entry doors that provides access to the assembly room, a small bridal room, closet, and the stairs to the gallery. Its walls and ceiling sit within the main space of the church, and partially cover the west wall's two windows. It has contemporary floor and wall coverings and a plain baseboard topped with a decorative molding. Entry into the assembly room is through a set of double-doors centered between two single doors. All four doors are wooden with four panels.

The gallery is located over the vestibule and is used as a choir. The short parapet wall is topped by a decorative molding. A wood balustrade was added in 1997.

The assembly room is a rectangular space approximately two stories in height. Both the north and south walls have four arched windows set in square frames. A washboard wainscot, topped by a chair rail the height of the window sills, wraps the north, south, and east walls. All four walls are topped by a large frieze-like molding. The junction between the ceiling and the north and south walls is rounded.

The east end of the assembly room has a stage two steps high. The east wall has a decorative wood backdrop added in 1964 and wood double-doors that access the hallway to the parish hall. The original wood floor is covered by carpeting, and the walls are painted white. Two modern chandeliers, also added in 1964, hang from the ceiling.

Section 8 - Statement of Significance

The Unitarian Church of Hobart is eligible for the National Register for its outstanding architecture. The church is significant as an example of the nineteenth century's Italianate style as expressed in a religious facility. It meets Consideration A because it is one of the earliest public buildings in the community and because of its locally outstanding architecture. The building's simple interior and exterior design maintains its integrity.

The Unitarian Church is significant in the context of late nineteenth century architecture in Hobart, Indiana, 1875-1876. Its construction is tied to the Town's development. George Earle began platting Hobart in 1848 on the property he owned surrounding his saw and gristmill. He promoted its growth with free land offers and created economic opportunities by establishing a railroad line to Chicago, which resulted in a boom to local trade and industry. To entice people to the town, Earle provided free land for congregations wishing to construct a church as long as regular services were held by a

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Section number 8 Page 3 *Unitarian Church of Hobart, Lake County, IN*

resident minister.

In 1874, a group of Hobart citizens met to organize "a society founded on the principals taught and promulgated by the Unitarians, and for the public worship of God, [and] also for the advancement of the principles of morality and the ultimate good of society in general." Articles of association were written and the original 48 member congregation was formed.

In February 1875, the congregation discussed how money could be raised to build a church. By May they had hired Valparaiso's O.D. Pollard & Co. for a bid of \$1,400. Pollard was a prolific builder in the Calumet region in the late 19th century. The firm likely played the role of contractor, builder, and designer in most of their projects. In December, the congregation hired J.R. Perkins to paint and grain the interior woodwork and outside doors, and George Neef to do the plastering.

The church was constructed in a traditional rectangular block, gable-front with steeple form. It was simply detailed in the Italianate style which was popular in United States commercial, residential, and religious structures from the 1850's into the 1890's. The style was based on the rural "picturesque qualities" of Italian villas and Renaissance architecture. Defining characteristics included tall and narrow arched windows with a decorative crown, roof overhangs supported by a decorative cornice and brackets, and elaborate decorative porch supports. While minimal, the Unitarian Church's Italianate details are evident in the tall and narrow windows, brick crowns, overhanging eaves, and sizable cornice (however, without the characteristic brackets). Other existing examples of the style in Hobart include the William Rifenburg House (one of the founders of the church), Bullock-Killigrew House, and the German Evangelical Lutheran Trinity Church (also built by O.D. Pollard & Co.).

Tradition claims that the church's bell was the gift of U.S. Senator George Frisbie Hoar of Massachusetts. Hoar was active in the National Unitarian Conference (NUC) and served as its president from 1895 to 1901. However, the bell might simply have been the gift of the NUC.

Over the years, the roof has been replaced and the interior remodeled several times. While undocumented, an 1881 account mentions the existence of a second gallery. Photos of the structure indicate that the original spire was removed sometime between 1910 and 1930, although no records exist indicating the cause of the alteration. The present smaller one was added in 1964. The most significant interior remodeling was in 1964 when the chandeliers, carpeting, and the paneling behind the pulpit were added to the assembly room.

In 1954, the congregation built a basement for a parish hall which was completed in 1955. The addition was connected to the rear of the church through a narrow hallway. In 1990 the addition was expanded to add offices, restrooms, and accessible entries.

The church was dedicated January 27, 1876 by Reverend Robert Collyer of the Unity Church of Chicago. Although the claim is undocumented, the structure is considered the first building in Indiana constructed as a Unitarian Church. While there were other Unitarian churches in the state, they occupied buildings constructed by other denominations. However, it is documented that it is the first church to be built in Hobart still occupied by its original congregation. In 1878 the Indiana Unitarian

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Conference was organized in meetings at the church, and over the years several prominent ministers have spoken at the church including Jenkin Lloyd Jones, Dr. Preston Bradley, and Rev. Donald Harrington.

The path of existence has not always been smooth; early in this century the congregation underwent challenges that threatened its survival. Around 1900, John Earle (George's son), claimed the deed to the church property was forfeited because the congregation did not have a resident minister and did not hold regular services. The congregation claimed that they held weekly Sunday School, and church minutes indicate that at least part-time ministers were employed. The dispute was resolved in favor of the church. In April of 1913, another dispute arose between John Earle and the church trustees over how much land was granted to the church. A suit was brought against Earle to keep him from repossessing the land. The church claimed ownership of the entire block while Earle claimed the congregation owned a single lot. The suit eventually ended in a compromise with the church retaining the portion facing Main Street and Earle taking the section facing on Center.

In 1926, "because of lack of funds and parishioners," the property was given to the Meadville Theological Seminary in Chicago with the understanding that the congregation could recover ownership when their financial conditions improved. The seminary provided support and at least one "student minister" to maintain the church. Ownership was returned in 1949 after 23 years. The present congregation is stable and active in the Hobart community.

Section 9 - Bibliography

Hobart Historical Society. *Downtown Hobart*. Self published, 1988.

Indiana Historic Sites and Structures Inventory. *Lake County Interim Report*. Historic Landmarks Foundation of Indiana, 1996. (P. 17 & 20, No. 04087).

Northwest Indiana Regional Planning Commission. *Historic Preservation Inventory and Assessment*. Self published, 1977. (P. A-4).

White, Joseph. *Where God's People Meet: A Guide to Significant Religious Places in Indiana*. Carmel, IN: Guild Press of Indiana, 1996.

Section 10 - Geographical Data - Verbal Boundary Description

A part of the South $\frac{1}{2}$ of the North $\frac{1}{4}$ of Section 32, Township 36 North, Range 7 West of the 2nd P.M., Lake County commencing at a point on the East line of Main Street, Hobart, at a point where the North line of Fifth Street intersects the said East line of Main Street, and thence running East along the North line of Fifth Street, 125 feet, thence Northerly and parallel with the East line of Main Street, 100 feet, thence Westerly to a point on the East side of Main Street Sixty-eight and eight tenths feet North of the place beginning, thence Southerly along the East line of Main Street to a place of beginning, containing $\frac{1}{4}$ of an acre, more or less.

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Boundary Justification

The boundary was chosen because it includes the church and addition and it is the legal boundary..

