

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: ADDITIONAL COVER DOCUMENTATION

MULTIPLE

NAME: Downtown Architecture of H.M. Francis, Fitchburg, MA MPS

STATE & COUNTY: MASSACHUSETTS. Worcester

DATE RECEIVED: 1/18/13 DATE OF PENDING LIST:
DATE OF 16TH DAY: DATE OF 45TH DAY: 03/06/13
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER:

REASONS FOR REVIEW:

APPEAL: N DATA PROBLEM: N LANDSCAPE: N LESS THAN 50 YEARS: N
OTHER: N PDIL: N PERIOD: N PROGRAM UNAPPROVED: N
REQUEST: N SAMPLE: N SLR DRAFT: N NATIONAL: N
NEW MPS: N

COMMENT WAIVER: N

___ACCEPT ___RETURN ___REJECT ___DATE

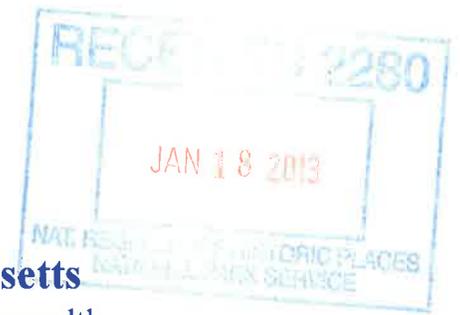
ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

Additional Documentation Approved

RECOM./CRITERIA Accept
REVIEWER E Beall DISCIPLINE History
Phone _____ Date 3-6-13

DOCUMENTATION see attached comments Y/N see attached SLR Y/N

If a nomination is returned to the nominating authority, the nomination is no longer under consideration by the National Park Service.



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts
William Francis Galvin, Secretary of the Commonwealth
Massachusetts Historical Commission

December 26, 2012

Mr. J. Paul Loether
National Register of Historic Places
Department of the Interior
National Park Service
1201 Eye Street, NW, 8th floor
Washington, DC 20005

Re: Downtown Architecture of H.M. Francis, Fitchburg, MA, MPS (Worcester County)

Dear Mr. Loether:

We are writing to request a technical correction in the National Register records for the above referenced National Register Nomination.

Section F, page 4 of the context statement for the Multiple Property Submission incorrectly reported that the Academy Street School had been demolished. I have enclosed a revision of Section F, page 4 for your files.

Please let us know if you need additional information in order to make the correction.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Betsy Friedberg".

Betsy Friedberg
National Register Director
Massachusetts Historical Commission

XC: Fitchburg Historical Commission

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service****National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet****Downtown Architecture of H.M. Francis, Fitchburg, MA, MPS
Fitchburg (Worcester), MA**Section number F Page 4

Buildings under this property type should retain sufficient exterior integrity to convey a sense of original design and architectural detailing. Integrity of location, design, workmanship, feeling, and association are particularly important in this property type. Because of the changing nature of Fitchburg's downtown, the integrity of setting should be secondary to physical integrity in evaluating ecclesiastical buildings designed by the firm. Expected alterations that do not compromise the overall integrity of the buildings include window and door replacements. In some cases, the addition of synthetic siding has completely obscured the building's original detail and character, and this factor combined with window replacements may have compromised the building's physical integrity and may thus render the building ineligible for listing in the National Register. One church building identified in the survey, the First Universalist Church, has lost its distinctive turret and the top part of its tower; in addition, a small open gallery above the entry porch has been filled with windows. Nevertheless, the building retains sufficient character-defining features, including polychromatic ornament and trim, slate and copper roof, and elaborate rose window, to retain its physical integrity. Another building, the Swedish Congregational Church, has been sheathed in synthetic siding, entirely masking its details and trim; in the process, it also appears that windows were either partially obscured or removed entirely. Although this property may be found to retain physical integrity were the siding to be removed, it is at present not eligible for listing under the context. One church building, the Calvinistic Congregational Church, was individually listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1979.

In recent years, with urban decline and urban renewal, a number of Francis' buildings in the downtown have been lost to neglect, fire, and demolition. Two identified examples of this property type, churches altered by Francis or Francis and Sons to serve a new purpose, have since been demolished (the former Trinitarian Church of 1844, remodeled by Francis in 1875 and 1883, at which time it was in commercial use; and the former First Methodist Church, remodeled into apartments by Francis in 1888 and known as the Wesley Building). Thus all surviving examples of the work of the most prolific and skilled architect practicing in the city become increasingly significant, and even those that have seen some compromise to their integrity are potentially eligible for National Register designation. The churches of H.M. Francis surviving in downtown Fitchburg serve as testament to the architectural beauty of the ecclesiastical buildings designed in the late 19th century during Fitchburg's heyday.

3. Institutional / Educational Buildings

A. Description

This property type is associated with at least eight institutional/educational buildings in downtown Fitchburg, of which three have been demolished. Within this property type are two subtypes: institutional buildings, such as the Fitchburg Art Museum, the YMCA, the Library (now demolished), and the historical society; and school buildings, such as the Second Empire style Academy Street School (1869), the second Fitchburg High School (now demolished), and several grammar schools, one of which has also been demolished. A third subtype is buildings for which Francis or Francis and Sons was responsible for major additions to or alterations of pre-existing structures.

Francis worked in a variety of architectural styles and his institutional/educational buildings reflect his familiarity with a broad vocabulary. His earliest known building under this property type is the Second Empire-style Academy Street School (1869), Fitchburg's first high school. Later buildings include the Romanesque Revival-style Wallace Library and Art Building (1894 [demolished]); the Renaissance Revival-style Hastings School (1860 with 1884 alterations by H.M. Francis [demolished]); the Gothic Revival-style Francis-designed building that is now part of the complex forming the Fitchburg Art Museum (1885); the Romanesque Revival-style School Street School (1890); the Renaissance Revival-style YMCA (1894); and the Fitchburg High School (1895, burned 1934 and demolished). The Georgian Revival-style Fitchburg Historical Society (1911, NR, 2003) was designed by H.M. Francis and Sons.

(continued)