

# FORM B – BUILDING

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION  
MASSACHUSETTS ARCHIVES BUILDING  
220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD  
BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

## Photograph



View looking southwest from North Main Street.

## Locus Map



**Recorded by:** Stacy Spies

**Organization:** Avon Historical Commission

**Date (month / year):** December 2022

Assessor's Number USGS Quad Area(s) Form Number

D6/ 1/ 3/ /

Blue Hills

AVO.5  
AVO.51

**Town/City:** Avon

**Place:** (*neighborhood or village*):

**Address:** 119 North Main Street

**Historic Name:** East Stoughton Baptist Church

**Uses:** Present: Church

Original: Church

**Date of Construction:** 1848

**Source:** Hanna

**Style/Form:** Greek Revival

**Architect/Builder:** Joseph Sanger (likely)

**Exterior Material:**

Foundation: Stone, Cut

Wall/Trim: Vinyl Siding / Vinyl Trim, Wood Trim

Roof: Asphalt Shingle

**Outbuildings/Secondary Structures:** Parsonage (ca. 1896); Parsonage garage (ca. 1920)

**Major Alterations** (*with dates*): Large additions in 1920 and 1966; Vinyl siding and replacement vinyl sash windows (2015)

**Condition:** Fair

**Moved:** no ☒ yes ☐ **Date:**

**Acreage:** 1.98 acres

**Setting:** Located at a busy suburban intersection at the north end of Goeres Square. Commercial buildings and the fire house are located south and east of the church. St. Michael's Church (1962) is located to the north. Mid-19<sup>th</sup>-century dwellings along West High Street are located to the west.

# INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

AVON

119 NORTH MAIN STREET

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

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☐ Recommended for listing in the National Register of Historic Places.

*If checked, you must attach a completed National Register Criteria Statement form.*

*Use as much space as necessary to complete the following entries, allowing text to flow onto additional continuation sheets.*

## ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION:

*Describe architectural features. Evaluate the characteristics of this building in terms of other buildings within the community.*

The church is prominently located at the northwest corner of Goeres Square and oriented to the east. The area between the church and North Main Street is covered with a lawn that gently slopes up from east to west and terminates in an asphalt-paved walkway at the façade. The north foundation is banked, allowing for an exposed basement at the side elevations. The remainder of the lot is paved with asphalt. Parking areas are located along the north and west edges of the lot and along West High Street beside the church's south elevation.

The church rests on a stone foundation and rises to a gable roof with overhanging eaves. Unless otherwise noted, the building is covered with vinyl siding and trimmed with vinyl and aluminum. The building features Doric corner pilasters, an entablature, and a frieze surmounted by a pedimented gable. A triangular panel centered in the pediment features louvered panels. The façade (east elevation) is five bays wide with three recessed bays at center. The recessed bays are framed with Doric pilasters; monumental Ionic columns separate the inner bays. Three cut stone steps lead to the heavy, paneled wood doors located in the recessed bays. A poured concrete ramp leads from the walkway to the north bay and door. A rectangular, stained-glass clerestory window is located above each of the doors. The main block's side (north and south) elevations each contain four bays of large stained-glass windows with shallow pointed-arch crowns. The south elevation contains one bay of metal doors; the remaining bays contain vinyl replacement sash windows.

The steeple rests on a square base located at the east end of the roof ridge. A round clock face with gilded numerals and hands is centered on each elevation. A wide frieze and projecting cornice tops this bottom stage. (Presently enclosed with vinyl siding, given the proportions, the frieze and cornice likely echo those still visible at the second stage.) The second stage, clad with wood flushboards, contains a large louvered rectangular panel in each elevation. A shallow pointed-arch crown with curvilinear "ears" is located atop each panel. Ionic corner pilasters rise to meet the entablature, frieze and projecting cornice. The octagonal third stage rests on a substantial plinth and is also clad with wood flushboards. A small 8-light window (or a panel simulating a window) is located in four of the eight elevations. Corinthian pilasters rise to meet the entablature, frieze and projecting cornice. The spire rests atop a three-stage plinth and rises to an ovoid tip. A gilded metal weathervane caps the steeple.

Two, 2-story ells extend from the west elevation. The center section (the ell constructed in 1920) is four bays deep with a gable roof aligned with that of the main block. The large, west ell (constructed in 1966) is set perpendicular to the church. Nine bays wide and three bays deep, the ell features Doric corner pilasters. The ell's south elevation contains a projection, one bay deep, with a pedimented gable echoing that of the church façade. The paired doors on the south elevation lead to a playground.

Oriented to the south toward West High Street and clad with vinyl siding, the 1½-story frame Parsonage (ca. 1896, AVO.51) rests on a river rock foundation and rises to a front-gabled roof with overhanging eaves adorned with a bargeboard. The bargeboard features a floral motif; the gable peak is adorned with a triangular panel with a foliate design above a spindle valance. A slender brick chimney rises from the center of the roof ridge. The two-over-three-bay building has a side-hall plan entrance in the west bay. A hipped-roof porch supported by wood posts wraps around the south and east elevations. A vinyl or metal square-section wood balustrade encloses the porch. A 1½-story cross-gabled projection with an identical bargeboard and triangular panel is located on the east elevation. The projection is one-over-two bays wide. Another gable-roof projection (added after 1916) extends from the west elevation. Windows throughout the building are 1/1 vinyl sash replacements.

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AVO.5  
AVO.51**HISTORICAL NARRATIVE**

*Discuss the history of the building. Explain its associations with local (or state) history. Include uses of the building, and the role(s) the owners/occupants played within the community.*

East Stoughton Baptist Church, now known as Avon Baptist Church, had its beginnings in 1780, when 22 men and 14 women "entered into a covenant constituting a Baptist church."<sup>1</sup> "The first parishioners came from East Stoughton, North Bridgewater, and South Braintree... Many of the first covenant members were from prominent East Stoughton families. Among them were the Howards, Briggses, Blanchards, Littlefields, Goldthwaites, and Curtises."<sup>2</sup> Construction of the congregation's first meetinghouse was begun in 1784 on the east side of North Main Street, just over the town line in present-day Randolph.<sup>3</sup> The congregation called its first minister, Rev. Joel Briggs (1757-1828),<sup>4</sup> the following year.

The East Stoughton Baptist Church was dedicated in 1848. Having outgrown two earlier meetinghouses, the congregation purchased land at the northwest corner of Main Street and High Street. The building committee, consisting of Isaac Blanchard, Charles Packard and Samuel Chase, was appointed in 1846. The building's cost was financed through subscriptions and by the sale of the parsonage, the second meetinghouse, and its bell.<sup>5</sup>

In 1846, the Trustees of the East Stoughton Baptist Church purchased from Albert Smith a one-acre parcel of land at the northwest corner of Main Street and "the new road."<sup>6</sup> (East and West High Streets were constructed in the mid-1840s.) Accounts of the building's construction state that "the sides of the building were framed on the ground and raised into position using oxen and block and tackle...[A] sailor from the Boston Navy Yard was hired for the sum of \$9.83 to supervise the raising of the 1,300 pound bell into position in the steeple."<sup>7</sup> The plans called for "70 or 74 pews nine feet in length with a Centre Isle four feet wide, the wall Isles three and one-half feet wide" in addition to reuse of the pews from the second meetinghouse.<sup>8</sup> "The Building Committee submitted its report on Oct. 16, 1848:

Paid to J. Sanger for building house .....	\$4,831.83
Land purchased from Albert Smith.....	840.47
For stone and setting with expense of carting.....	256.50
For digging and stoning cellar .....	148.30
For painting house.....	301.22
For pulpit.....	300.00
For lumber for fence .....	16.47
New Bell .....	381.30
Hanging same .....	9.83
Carpet .....	94.31
Total .....	\$7,363.06" <sup>9</sup>

"J. Sanger" is likely churchwright Joseph Sanger (1803-1878),<sup>10</sup> a native of Watertown, Massachusetts. A brief obituary of the Watertown master carpenter called him a "well-known master builder." "He was born in Watertown in 1802 [*sic*], and up to within a few years he had been a citizen of that town. In his younger days, he was connected with the State Militia, and in the time of President Harrison he was captain of the Watertown and Waltham Artillery company."<sup>11</sup> His other projects include the Pleasant Street Congregational Church in Arlington (ARL.430, ca. 1844),<sup>12</sup> the First Parish Church in Bridgewater (BRD.201, ca. 1845),

<sup>1</sup> Hanna: 29.

<sup>2</sup> Hanna: 31.

<sup>3</sup> Hanna: 31.

<sup>4</sup> Findagrave.com Memorial #27377768. Accessed Sept. 14, 2022.

<sup>5</sup> Hanna: 32.

<sup>6</sup> Norfolk County Registry of Deeds Book 171, p. 629.

<sup>7</sup> Hanna: 32.

<sup>8</sup> 1888-1963 Diamond Jubilee 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration.

<sup>9</sup> 1888-1963 Diamond Jubilee 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration.

<sup>10</sup> U.S. Mason Membership Cards; Massachusetts, U.S. Death Records.

<sup>11</sup> "Capt. Joseph Sanger," *Boston Post*, 3 August 1878.

<sup>12</sup> Fitch and Lyman, "Pleasant Street Congregational Church" National Register nomination.

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the Old Washington Street School in Belmont (BLM.66, ca. 1858), a house at 106 Mount Auburn Street, Watertown (WAT.194, ca. 1851), Watertown High School (1854, demolished). According to another obituary, "As a builder he stood high, and among the buildings which now stand as monuments to his skill is Quincy Market."<sup>13</sup> 22-year-old Sanger would have worked in a supporting role in the construction of Quincy Market. (Research here on Joseph Sanger compiled by Peter Stott, MHC.)

The E. Howard & Co. clock, "said to be the only one of its kind outside of the company museum," was installed in the steeple in 1870.<sup>14</sup> The two-story ell (now the middle section) was added circa 1920.<sup>15</sup> The large ell at the west end of the building was added in 1966. The Parsonage was constructed in 1896.

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<sup>13</sup> "Obituary. Joseph Sanger," *Boston Evening Journal*, 2 August 1878.

<sup>14</sup> Hanna: 59.

<sup>15</sup> Massachusetts Division of Public Safety, Building Inspection Records. Massachusetts State Archives.



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View looking west from North Main Street.



Steeple detail.



View looking west from North Main Street.



View looking northwest from West High Street.

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View looking northeast from West High Street. Parsonage visible at right.



Parsonage. View looking northwest from West High Street.



Parsonage. View looking northeast from West High Street.