

# Massachusetts Cultural Resource Information System

## Scanned Record Cover Page

<b>Inventory No:</b>	SBR.T
<b>Historic Name:</b>	Saint Mark's Church Complex
<b>Common Name:</b>	
<b>Address:</b>	
<b>City/Town:</b>	Southborough
<b>Village/Neighborhood:</b>	Southborough
<b>Local No:</b>	
<b>Year Constructed:</b>	
<b>Architect(s):</b>	
<b>Architectural Style(s):</b>	
<b>Use(s):</b>	Other Institutional; Other Religious
<b>Significance:</b>	Architecture; Community Planning; Religion
<b>Area(s):</b>	
<b>Designation(s):</b>	
<b>Building Materials(s):</b>	



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Commonwealth of Massachusetts  
Massachusetts Historical Commission  
220 Morrissey Boulevard, Boston, Massachusetts 02125  
[www.sec.state.ma.us/mhc](http://www.sec.state.ma.us/mhc)

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# FORM A - AREA

Massachusetts Historical Commission  
220 Morrissey Boulevard

Assessor's Sheets

54

USGS Quad

Marlborough

Area Letter Form Numbers in Area

A, T

28, 29, 426



St Mark's Church, view north

Draw a map of the area indicating properties within it. Number each property for which individual inventory forms have been completed. Label streets including route numbers, if any. Attach a separate sheet if space is not sufficient here. Indicate North.

Town Southborough

Place (neighborhood or village) \_\_\_\_\_

Southborough center

Name of Area St. Mark's Church

Present Use church, rectory, and parish

house

Construction Dates or Period 1863; 1890;

early 20th century

Overall Condition church: excellent; rectory

and parish house: good

Major Intrusions and Alterations recent win-

dow replacement on rectory and parish house;  
2000: new rectory garage

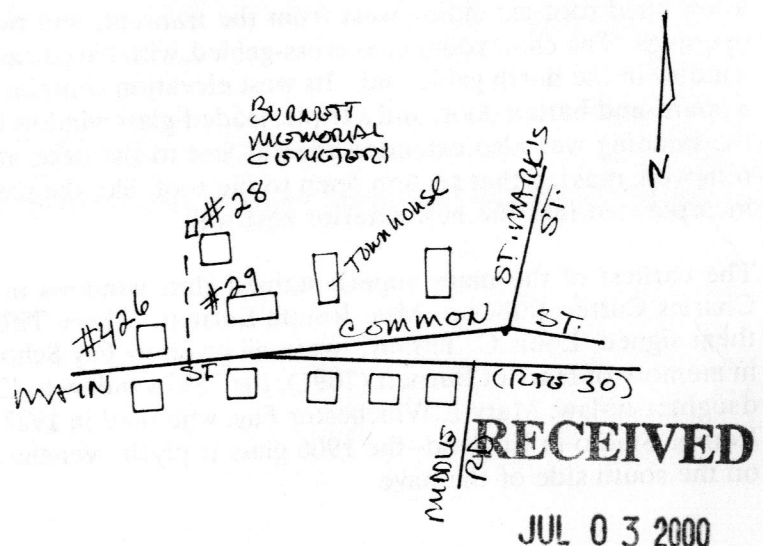
Acreage 1.83 acres

Recorded by Forbes/Schuler, consultants

Organization Southborough Historical

Commission

Date (month/day/year) March, 2000



## AREA FORM

SBR.T

### ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION [x] *see continuation sheet*

*Describe architectural, structural and landscape features and evaluate in terms of other areas within the community.*

The St. Marks Church property occupies a 1.8-acre sloping site on the north side of Main Street at Southborough center. The complex includes the 1863 church, its 1940s rectory, and nineteenth-century parish house, updated in the twentieth century.

St. Mark's Church, (#29), 1863. St. Mark's, Southborough, is an extremely well-preserved American imitation of a small stone English country Gothic church. A long, low building with a patterned slate roof, it stands long-side to the street on a rise overlooking a lawn descending to Main Street, just west of the Southborough Town House. Its walls are built of multi-colored stone blocks in random ashlar, standing on a granite-block foundation. The main corners of the building have shallow, stepped buttresses. The main building consists of a long, six-bay nave, abutted on the east end by a slightly narrower two-bay choir. The east end of the building is one-bay wide; the west end is three bays, with a low center entry, two pointed-arched colored-glass windows to either side of the door, and a circular, or rose, window in the gable. The west entry has a tongue-and-groove double-leaf door with large, ornate iron hinges in a pointed-arched surround of staggered stone blocks and voussoirs. A similar door, but with diagonal boards, is located in the shallow stone vestibule that connects the south bell tower with the third bay of the south side of the building. The seven nave windows of that elevation are also pointed-arched--some with leaded diamond panes; others are pictorial windows of colored glass. The south face of the choir has two triple leaded-glass windows with diamond panes, set into large rectangular openings.

The church was expanded four times. Its original west end had a wood-frame vestibule and anteroom; a low, free-standing wooden tower just northwest of the building held the bell. In 1880, a small transept was added to the north side to accommodate the church organ. This section has a steeply-pitched, cross-gabled roof of uneven pitch. Its north gable-end wall has a half-timbered upper section, and a slightly-projecting, gabled entry bay with a small tongue-and-grooved board door in a pointed-arched opening. The wooden sections were demolished when the west end of the building was lengthened in 1889-90 by one bay, which also eliminated a small integral tower which rose about two feet from the west gable peak.

In 1890-1891, a 45-foot-high, 15-foot-square bell-and-clock tower was added on the south side, abutting an entry vestibule in the third bay of the nave. The tower, donated by Charles F. Choate, has a crenelated top, and an open first story with front and side flat-arched openings under a stone, pointed-arch tympanum. In the upper part of each outer wall is a circular clock; above the clock is a pointed-arched belfry opening inset with double, pointed-arched louvered openings crowned by a small oculus.

The building was again enlarged in 1905. An aisle chapel and a choir room/vestry were added west of the transept on the north side in memory of Elizabeth Carlile Choate, wife of Charles F. Choate. The chapel has a low shed roof extending west from the transept, and two tripartite stained-glass windows in rectangular openings. The choir room ell is cross-gabled, with flared eaves, and has a wide segmental-arched stained-glass window in the north gable end. Its west elevation contains a quoined, segmental-arched recessed entry with a board-and-batten door, and a triple, leaded-glass window in a rectangular opening. At about the same time, the building was also extended several feet to the east, and the barrel-vaulted chancel (choir) ceiling was removed, making that section open to the roof, like the nave. A stone plaque honoring Joseph Burnett was incorporated into the new exterior east wall.

The earliest of the many superb stained glass windows in the church was given in 1864 as a memorial to Charles Cutter, father of Mrs. Joseph Burnett. Three Tiffany windows at the west end of the nave, one of them signed "Louis C. Tiffany," were all given by Fay School students and their families: the rose window, in memory of Harriet Burnett (1891), the 1897 window to Eliza Burnett Fay, and one given in memory of her daughter-in-law, Mary E. Winchester Fay, who died in 1923. Three stained-glass windows were made at the Kempe Studio in England--the 1906 glass triptych over the altar, one in the north wall of the choir, and one on the south side of the nave.

[x] Recommended as a National Register District. *If checked, you must attach a completed National Register Criteria Statement form.*



## INVENTORY FORM CONTINUATION SHEET

Community

Property

Southborough

St. Mark's Church

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## ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION, cont.

Church interior. The plastered interior of the church is open to the roof. Curved, chamfered principal rafters create a Gothic-vaulted space of pointed arches, reinforced by a tiebeam above the lower arch, with a trefoil above it. The space is enhanced by many early or original decorative features, included large brass lanterns hung from every principal rafter pair, and iron candle sconces at the juncture of the rafters and their supporting posts. The north aisle chapel is entered through two broad, segmental wooden arches. Its slanted wooden ceiling is unplastered, and has exposed, chamfered rafters and one set of purlins. The choir is separated from the nave by a wide plastered, Gothic arch. In contrast to the severely plain pews of the nave, the carved choir benches and the imported Italian altar and screen are highly ornate, as is the corner pulpit--another gift by the Choate family, in memory of Helen Thompson Choate.

St. Mark's Rectory (#28), early 1940s. The rectory is a long, two-story stuccoed Tudor Revival cross-gabled building facing west over a circular drive. (This building was erroneously referred to as the parish house on the 1971 survey). It has a parged foundation and a slate roof. Its front section is an asymmetrical, three- by one-bay, one-room-deep side-gabled building with a deep recess at the northwest half of the first story forming a wide entry porch supported on wide stuccoed posts. The entry opening onto the porch is through a vestibule with a hipped slate roof. In the inner wall under the porch overhang is a 6-over-6-sash window, beside the main door--a Gothic-inspired example of grooved vertical boards with a leaded-glass light with diamond panes. The south part of the facade has a pair of 9-over-9-sash windows. (Most windows in the building are modern metal replacements). The second story is three bays, with two single and one paired 6-over-6-sash windows.

A tall brick chimney rises from the rear southeast corner of the front section of the building, behind the roof. Extending east behind the main house is a long, wide, two-story east-west gabled wing with a wide polygonal bay window at the first story, and a paired 6-over-6-sash window above it at the second. Windows in the projecting bay are also 6/6--a triple at the center, and one on each side plane. A cross-gabled section at the east end of the wing has a large half-timbered gabled wall dormer which projects slightly over the first story. The dormer has one paired 6-over-6-sash window; a modern sliding door has been installed below it. A new two-car, gable-front shingled garage is under construction directly behind the building.

St. Mark's Parish House (#426), early-19th century/early 1940s. The closest building to the street on the St. Mark's complex, the parish house faces east over a long drive leading to the rectory. Formerly a wood-frame, side-gabled "three-quarter" house, it originally served as the rectory, until the present rectory was built, at which time this building underwent a radical updating to the Tudor Revival style. Like the rectory, it is clad in stucco, with a slate roof. The foundation is granite block. The main part of the building is a distinctive, two-story block with twin gabled roofs added during the renovations, their east gable ends faced with half-timbering. The facade is four bays--at the second story consisting of one window in the south gable, two in the north, and one in between. (Nearly all the windows in the building are replacement metal 1-over-1-sash or sliding windows.) At the first story, the center bay has a hexagonal, stuccoed projecting entry with an asphalt-shingle roof and a 6-panel, varnished door. A small 4-over-4-sash window occupies each side plane of the entry. The basement story at the south end of the building has a recent, multi-light door and sidelights, sheltered by a long gable-roofed passage, its roof supported on granite-block posts, and its open end marked by a large king-post truss. The passage, new windows, and some interior renovations were done during the late 1960s. Abutting the north end of the main house, its east facade set back slightly from the main front wall plane, is a two-story wing with a side-gabled roof of shallow, unequal pitch. One brick chimney rises from the inner end of the roof. The three-bay facade of the addition is faced with slate at the second story.



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HISTORICAL NARRATIVE [x] *see continuation sheet*

*Explain historical development of the area. Discuss how this area relates to the historical development of the community.*

St. Mark's Church is significant, not only for its association with the religious development of the town of Southborough, but as an illustration, with **St. Mark's School** (see Area Form U), of the remarkable role played in this small community by its principal benefactor of the second half of the nineteenth century, Joseph Burnett, and his family. In the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries, the church continued to be the recipient of extraordinary gifts by other members of the Burnett family, as well as the Choates, Sears, and several other prominent citizens who shaped the development of the town. St. Mark's was one of the earliest Episcopal churches to be established in the smaller communities of Worcester County, and the "mother church" of at least one nearby church, Holy Trinity in Marlborough.

The church was officially established on December 12, 1860, by eleven men who met in Joseph Burnett's parlor on Main Street to incorporate a Religious Parish and Society of the Protestant Episcopal Church. At its establishment, Joseph Burnett was chosen Senior Warden. Among the others present were George Gilmore, (chosen Junior Warden), Charles S. Cutter, (Burnett's brother-in-law), Dr. John Robinson, Heman Este, who owned the property on which the church was to be built, and the architect who was to design it, Alexander R. Esty. By Christmas, Worcester Justice William Greenwood had signed the act of incorporation naming the Society St. Mark's.

Several years earlier, the Episcopalian faith had literally been introduced to Southborough by Joseph Burnett and his wife, Josephine (Cutter). Both were devout Episcopalians while living in Boston before their 1848 marriage, and shortly after they moved to Southborough in late 1849 or early 1850 they began to bring visiting clerics to town to hold prayer services. The first such service was held in the summer of 1850 at the Southville schoolhouse--an event which Mr. Burnett advertised throughout the town. In 1853, Mr. Burnett had two lawyers draw up a declaration of trust establishing the first Episcopal Church in Southborough in the form of a family trusteeship. The stated purpose of the trust was to "procure a lot of land to erect upon the same a small chapel of simple, unpretending style but yet of correct proportions and in agreement with the laws of ecclesiastical architecture, which shall stand as, at least, a silent witness of the Faith, and afford a proper place for the due celebration of Public Worship, the administration of the sacraments, and the preaching of the Gospel." (Cheney). In contrast to traditional New England protestant practice, no pews were to be sold. On the other hand, with Joseph Burnett's funding, no such sales would have been needed.

No construction took place for the next six years, however, during which time the Burnetts and other Southborough Episcopalians traveled to the Hopkinton church to worship, or attended periodic services in the Burnett house. In 1859, Joseph and Josephine Burnett arranged to have their newest child, Esther, christened by the Rector of St. Mark's Parish in Boston in the recently renovated Pilgrim Church in Southborough (see Form #31). Partly in his honor, Joseph Burnett began to call the planned Southborough Episcopal church St. Mark's Church, even while still holding services in the Burnett home, the Town House, or occasionally at the Pilgrim Church. The next year, when the little stone shop on the Burnett property (see Form #21) became vacant, Mr. Burnett had its upper floor fitted up as a chapel, and informal services were held there throughout 1860. The first official service of the new St. Mark's Church after its incorporation in December of that year was held in the stone chapel on Whitsunday, 1861, under its first Rector, the Rev. Joshua Peirce.

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## HISTORICAL NARRATIVE, cont.

At the end of that first service, it was announced that Alexander Esty, architect of Emmanuel Church in Boston, had been hired to design the new church building. For Southborough's St. Mark's, he used as his inspiration two English country churches--St. Peter's Chapel at Tunbridge Wells (attributed to Decimus Burton), and St. Thomas Church at Kent.

The new church was built on the property Joseph Burnett bought from Heman Este, adjacent to the Southborough Town House. The Este house was demolished, and the cornerstone of St. Mark's was laid in August, 1862. Included in the leaden box buried with the cornerstone was Joseph Burnett's deed of gift for the church land. The building was completed and consecrated in May of 1863.

After St. Mark's Church was completed, Joseph Burnett turned his relentless energy, persistence, and a good portion of his fortune to other philanthropic pursuits. He went on to found St. Mark's School, which opened a short distance to the east on Main Street two years after the church was finished. Although the two institutions were not formally affiliated with one another, over the years the church and school maintained many close ties, including a longstanding tradition of having St. Mark's students sing in the choir--an association that was later to include younger boys from the Fay School, as well. It was at Joseph Burnett's suggestion that an arrangement was made for the Rector of St. Mark's Church to also serve as Headmaster of the school. The first to hold the combined position was the Rev. John Kerfoot Lewis, who served from 1865 to 1866. While the next Rector of the church, however, the Rev. Charles Wingate, became the school's chaplain rather than headmaster, the dual office was reestablished for the duration of the next two pastorates--that of Dr. Robert Traill Spence Lowell from 1868-1873, (brother of poet James Russell Lowell), and Dr. James Ivers Trecothick Coolidge, a member of the school Board of Trustees, from 1873 to 1882.

Even though Dr.s Lowell and Coolidge apparently lived at the school, in the early 1870s Joseph Burnett purchased the old Franklin Este house just west of the church from the Cook family for both a rectory and parish hall for the church. Upon his death he left a substantial fund for the building of a new parish house and rectory for St. Mark's Church. (A new rectory was eventually built, but the Este House was again renovated to become the parish house.)

During the Rev. Coolidge's pastorate, a new transept was built onto the church for an organ, paid for by students of both St. Mark's and the Fay School, and their families. For a brief period after he resigned in 1882, there were two temporary ministers, followed by one more in 1883, Joseph Burnett's son, the Rev. Waldo Burnett. Waldo Burnett was named to a permanent position as Rector in 1886, which he held until 1900.

It was under the Rev. Burnett that the church newspaper, the *Church Chronicle*, was established in 1889, in conjunction with Holy Trinity Church in Marlborough. Toward the end of the nineteenth century there was much activity among various groups in the church. The women's auxiliary group, the St. Agnes' Guild, inaugurated the annual Southborough Strawberry Festival at this time. They were also involved in such charitable outreach activities as sending supplies to Indian reservations out west, and clothes and books to a black congregation in Richmond, Virginia.

In 1889-90, with its congregation steadily increasing, the nave of the church was lengthened, by one bay to the west. In 1890, the square bell tower on the south side was built. It was the gift of Charles F. Choate, in memory of his daughter, Helen. In 1895, both the tower and the western extension of the nave were formally consecrated by the Bishop of the Diocese.

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## HISTORICAL NARRATIVE, cont.

The early 1890s saw the donation of two stained glass windows. One, the rose window at the west end, which was made by Phipps, Slocum & Co. of Boston, was contributed by both current and former Fay School boys and families in memory of school founder Harriet Burnett. It was dedicated in 1891. The other was contributed by St. Mark's School students and families in memory of Rachel de Koven Peck, daughter of William Peck, former St. Mark's Headmaster. It was designed by Maitland Armstrong of New York and made by the company bearing his name, agents of the London firm of Clayton & Bell, in 1893.

In 1893, women were first allowed to become full members of the church. An altar guild was soon formed, and early in the twentieth century women were singing in the choir. Massachusetts split into two Episcopal Dioceses in 1895. Due largely to the Boston connections of Southborough's Burnetts and Choates, Southborough and St. Marks were included in the old Boston-based Diocese of Massachusetts, rather than that of Western Massachusetts. By that time, Joseph Burnett had died, and his son, Harry Burnett, had succeeded him as Senior Warden. (The Burnett legacy continued into the middle of the twentieth century, as Harry Burnett was succeeded as Warden by one of Joseph Burnett's grandsons, George Burnett, who served from 1927 to 1949.)

In 1900, the Headmaster of St. Mark's School, William Greenough Thayer, was named Rector of the church. By that time both institutions had expanded to the point that assistance was needed, and a succession of vicars was appointed to the church over the next several years. The first, George H. Hazzard, saw to the establishment of two new youth groups--the Sir. Galahad organization for boys, affiliated with St. Mark's School, and, at the Parish, the Girls' Friendly Society. The fourth vicar, Robert F. Cheney, served the church longer than any other minister--twenty years as Vicar from 1910 to 1930, and then sixteen more as Rector through the Depression and the Second World War, until 1946.

In 1949, due largely to the efforts of Rev. Cheney's successor, the Rev. Edward Harris, St. Mark's Church finally became a full parish church of the Episcopal Diocese of Massachusetts, having been classified as a chapel for nearly ninety years.

St. Mark's Rectory and Parish House

The official rectory of St. Mark's was the former house of Hiram E. Cook (#426). The first parish house had been the former District Schoolhouse #1, which had been moved to the town property behind the Town House. It was later torn down. After over thirty years as Senior Warden, Harry Burnett died in 1927, leaving a substantial fund for the building of a new parish house and rectory. The southwest corner of the **Burnett Memorial Cemetery** lot (#803) was conveyed to St. Mark's to provide a large enough site for the new Tudor Revival **rectory** (#28), which was built about 1942. A new parish house was not constructed; rather, the former early-nineteenth-century rectory was enlarged, made over into a **parish house**, and radically altered to the Tudor Revival style at about the same time (#426).

At that time, with the Rector still the school's Headmaster and residing there, the church vicar, the Rev. Cheney, lived in the rectory. He remained there for the rest of his long pastorate. A well-rounded man, the Rev. Cheney (d. 1949) was a widely-respected amateur ornithologist, and a historian of Southborough. He was also a trustee of the Southborough Library, the town Boy Scoutmaster, and a director of the Massachusetts Audubon Society and of the regional branch of the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children.



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BIBLIOGRAPHY and/or REFERENCES [ ] *see continuation sheet*

Maps and Atlases: 1857 (H. Este, H. Wheeler & Mrs. Este); 1870 (F. Este, Episc. Ch.); 1898 (Mrs. HE Cook, St. Marks Epis. Ch.)

The Boston Globe. 11/22/1994.

Cheney, Rev. Robert F. St. Mark's Church, Southborough, 1860-1930. 1930.

Goll, Harry E. Pater Noster & Paternalism: a History of St. Mark's Parish. n.d.

Noble, Richard. Fences of Stone: a History of Southborough, MA. Portsmouth, NH: Peter Randall, 1990.

Town of Southborough: Vital Records; Assessor's Reports, various dates.

## AREA DATA SHEET

MHC#	Parcel #	Street Address	Historic Name	Date	Style/type
29	54-3	27 Main Street	St. Mark's Church	1863	English Country Gothic
28	54-3	27 Main Street garage	St. Mark's Rectory	early 1940s	Tudor Revival
426	54-3	27 Main Street	St. Mark's Parish House/ Este-Cook House	early-19th C./ early 1940s	Tudor Revival

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Property Address  
St. Marks Church

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## National Register of Historic Places Criteria Statement Form

Check all that apply:

- ☒ Individually eligible    ☐ Eligible only in a historic district  
☒ Contributing to a potential historic district    ☐ Potential historic district

Criteria: ☒ A    ☐ B    ☒ C    ☐ D

Criteria Considerations:    ☐ A    ☐ B    ☐ C    ☐ D    ☐ E    ☐ F    ☐ G

Statement of Significance by Forbes/Schuler, Consultants

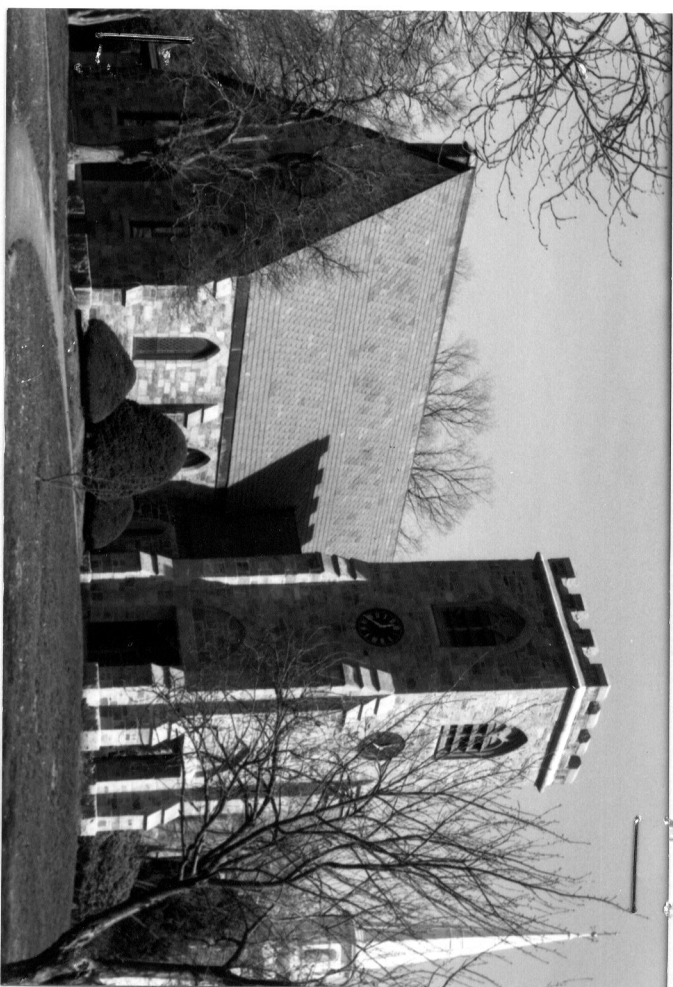
*The criteria that are checked in the above sections must be justified here.*

St. Mark's Church is eligible for the National Register at the local level under Criterion A for its important association with Southborough's religious and community life from the middle years of the nineteenth century to the present day, and as one of the earliest Episcopal churches to be established in the smaller communities of Worcester County. It is also significant as an illustration of the remarkable role played in the community by Southborough's principal benefactor of the second half of the nineteenth century, Joseph Burnett.

The complex also fulfills Criterion C for its well preserved 1860s Gothic Revival architecture designed by architect Alexander Esty, as well as for the two other buildings on the property, both of which are good illustrations of the early twentieth-century Tudor Revival.

For all the above reasons it is also eligible as a contributing property in a National Register district encompassing the historic residential and institutional meetinghouse center of the town.

The property retains integrity of location, design, materials, workmanship, feeling, setting and association.



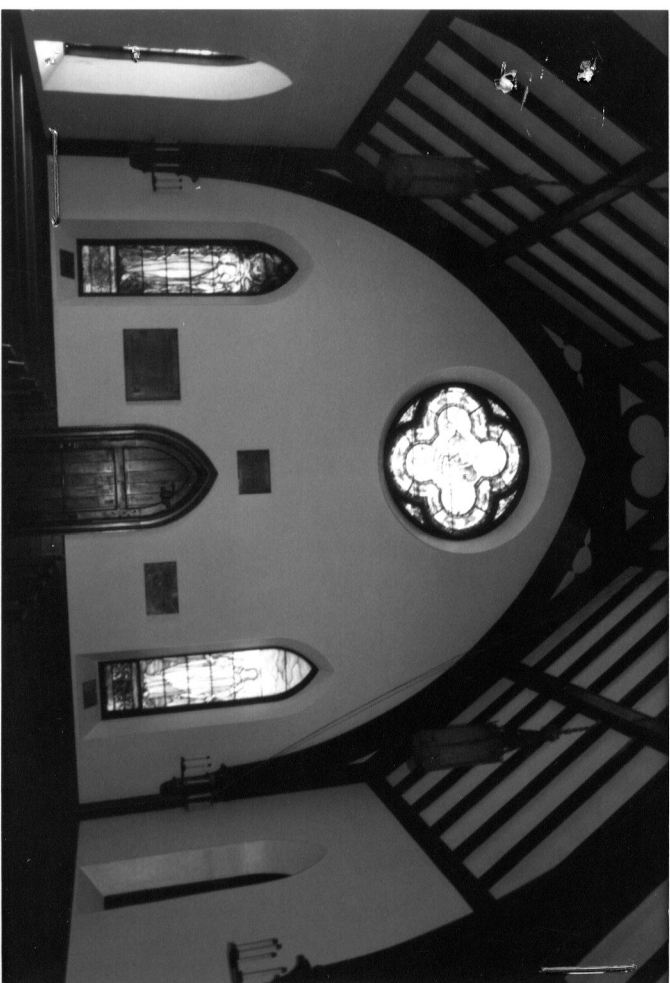
St. Mark's Church



St. Mark's Church, view southeast



Interior - chapel



Interior, view west





Interior, view east



Interior, view east