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Bell Street Chapel, located on a short street branching off Broadway in the western section of Providence, was designed in 1875 by William R. Walker, a prominent local architect. It stands on land--donated by James Eddy, a prosperous art dealer--which in 1875 was far from the city center; but the surrounding area was rapidly becoming a fashionable residential section.

Set drmatically on the sidewalk's edge, the chapel rises high above the pavement, forcing the viewer to look sharply upwards to see its temple front. A timber-framed, hip-roofed structure, it is composed of a piano nobile faced in brick and trimmed with wood and brownstone, which is set upon a full-storey basement of rusticated brownstone that serves as a podium. The general scheme was adapted to the current Victorian taste of this country from a long-standing French academic mode (cf. the buildings of the Place de la Concorde); and for the important portico feature of the building the architect has referred to the Maison Carrée as a model. Today in all major respects the building stands unchanged. The correctly Corinthian tetrastyle portico prefacing the upper part of the building is backed by two Corinthian pilasters at its extremities, and the ornament of its entablature and pediment is heavy and complex. Piercing the stone "platform" at street level are two arched doorways flanking a blank central bay; above, within the portico, the facade displays one tall central round-headed window emphasized by enframing wooden moldings and flanked by two blind arches lesser in height. These blind arches originally were given some visual importance by iron latticework, now lost. Originally surmounting the building were a balustrade just above eaves-level and another balustrade railing the flat deck of the hip roof; these no longer exist. The "parade" façade of the chapel is de sribed above; the sides and rear are of finely-mortared brickwork, running back to a depth of five bays on each side, where there are flat-headed windows on the ground floor and round-headed ones for the church auditorium on the second floor; the rear elevation has two contiguous roundheaded windows at auditorium level, flanked by two blind arches.

Entrance to the building is gained through the two doorways of the enclosed "loggia" at sidewalk level which lead to two small vestibules and then into a low-ceilinged ante-room with wainscoting and cornice of dark-stained wood. (Immediately behind is a large room with a stage at its further end. The doors to this room are covered with imitation leather and have maxims and proverbs lettered upon this surface by small tacks.) From the ante-room lateral stairs-carved posts punctuating the plain railings--lead up to another ante-space on the main floor, where the large central window gives on the portico.

From this upstairs area doors lead into the chapel proper, which can be described as a large Protestant preaching hall. It is lighted by four of the five large windows filling the side bays; these retain

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Form 10-3000 (July 1969)	UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR NATIONAL PARK SERVICE	Rhode Island	
	NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES	COUNTY Providence	
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7. Description.

frosted panes with narrow colored borders; each window is equipped with folding, louvred interior shutters. Dark wainscoting along the walls carries a heavy upper terminating molding. The closely-set rows of pews are of heavy wood construction, panelled at the ends, where an S-scroll motif forms both an ornament and an arm-rest. The preaching and "altar" or offertory area forms a high segmentally-arched niche (not a chancel) which is emphasized by very heavy moldings, supported on side brackets and having a heavy sculptural keystone, enframing the upper arched portion. The pulpit is given elegant carving and panelling, with curved corners. Within the preaching niche there are two side openings which are bordered by wooden moldings enriched with gilt. One opening is a doorway to a vestry, and the other contains a large organ console with carved "Gothic" adornment. The platform upon which the organ now rests is curved and balustraded but is of more recent date than the organ itself. There are many paintings hanging in the church, supplied or donated by James Eddy. They are mostly of romantic scenes and ancient ruins, in keeping with the inspiration of the exterior architecture.

8. Significance.

is, as a result, filled with many fine buildings that exemplify seventy or more years of American public and private architectural style and tastes. Plans to protect as much of the area as possible are presently being made. Important in itself, the Bell Street Chapel is also significant as part of Broadway's architectural development.

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The significance of the Bell Street Chapel lies in its role as an example of the taste of its time, and as a well-preserved and important landmark in a community which developed mostly in the second half of the 19th century. This is a community which-up to the moment of writing-has remained largely intact and is deserving of careful attention and appraisal today in order that it may remain intact in the future.

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The building typifies the French academic style of architecture which had, in the 1860's, taken firm root in this country and of which better-known examples were the former (but extant) New England Museum of Natural History and the (demolished) Rogers Building of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, both in Boston and both designed by William G. Preston. Both Boston structures were, however, fairly elaborate in their adornment--and the Rogers Building was even "fussy" by present standards. These qualities are not to be found in the Bell Street Chapel, which keeps to the strict essentials of the style, emphasizing its forced verticality, sparing and calculated use of decoration, and historical allusions. Sited above a landscape declivity at the end of Broadway, and itself upon a high base, the chapel originally rose over surrounding trees and greenery (as can be seen in old photographs); it no doubt was intended to beckon the viewer, like a temple far away on a hill.

Its architect, William Russell Walker (1830-1905), was born and trained in Rhode Island. He was talented and prolific, and left a son and a grandson to carry on his practice. Not many of his major works now survive in the state, but the two which can be considered outstanding, the classical chapel and the old Brown University Library in the north-Italian style advocated by Ruskin, still stand.

The Bell Street Chapel remains generally well-preserved and is in use for a congregation of the Unitarian Church. It is an important landmark in a section of the city (Broadway) which developed in the latter half of the 19th century as a fashionable residential area and

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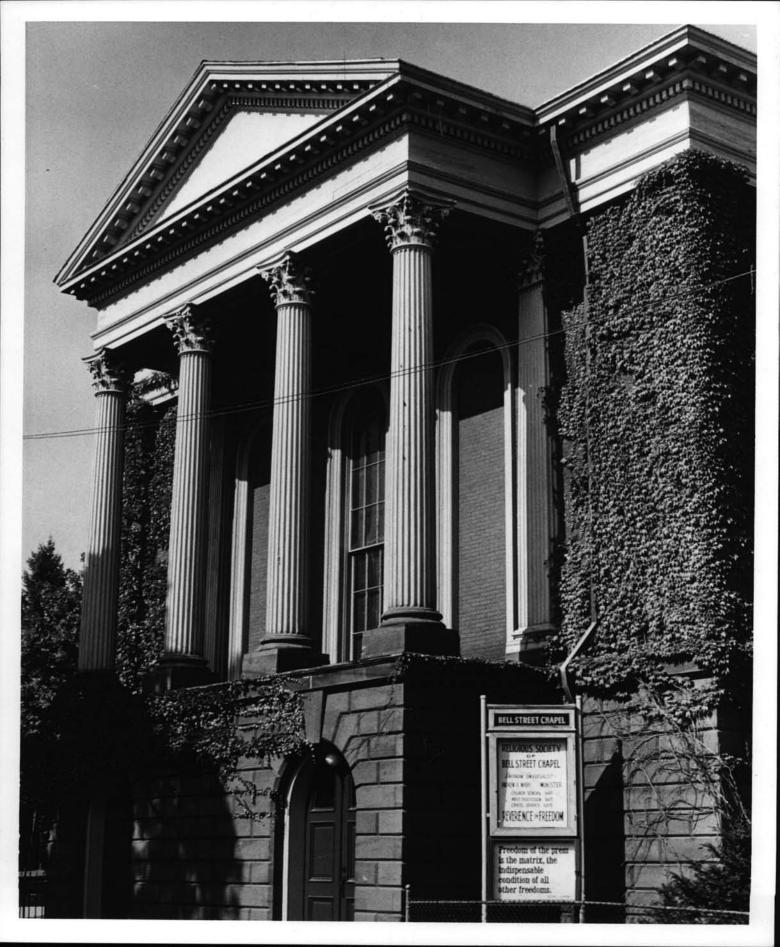
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	TMENT OF THE INTERIOR	Rhode Island		
NATIONAL REGISTER	OF HISTORIC PLACES	Providence	*	
PROPERTY PHOTOGRAPH FORM FOR NPS USE ON				
(Type all entries - attach to	o or enclose with photograph)	ENTRY NUMBER	DATE	
1. NAME		1		
COMMON: Bell Street Chapel				
AND/OR HISTORIC:			÷	
2. LOCATION				
STREET AND NUMBER:				
5 Bell Street				
CITY OR TOWN:				
Providence				
STATE:	CODE COUNTY:		CODE	
Rhode Island		ridence	007	
Rhode Island	44 Prov	idence		
Rhode Island	44 Prov	ridence		
Rhode Island 3. PHOTO REFERENCE PHOTO CREDIT: B. Christopher DATE OF PHOTO: 1971	Bene		-007	
Rhode Island 3. PHOTO REFERENCE PHOTO CREDIT: B. Christopher DATE OF PHOTO: 1971 NEGATIVE FILED AT: Rhode Island	Bene d Historical Preservati	on Commission, Stat	-007	
Rhode Island 3. PHOTO REFERENCE PHOTO CREDIT: B. Christopher DATE OF PHOTO: 1971 NEGATIVE FILED AT: Rhode Island 90 Smith St:	Bene	on Commission, Stat	-007	
Rhode Island 3. PHOTO REFERENCE PHOTO CREDIT: B. Christopher DATE OF PHOTO: 1971 NEGATIVE FILED AT: Rhode Island 90 Smith St: 4. IDENTIFICATION	Bene d Historical Preservati	on Commission, Stat	-007	
Rhode Island 3. PHOTO REFERENCE PHOTO CREDIT: B. Christopher DATE OF PHOTO: 1971 NEGATIVE FILED AT: Rhode Island 90 Smith St: 4. IDENTIFICATION DESCRIBE VIEW, DIRECTION, ETC.	Bene d Historical Preservati reet, Providence, Rhode	on Commission, Stat	-007	
Rhode Island 3. PHOTO REFERENCE PHOTO CREDIT: B. Christopher DATE OF PHOTO: 1971 NEGATIVE FILED AT: Rhode Island 90 Smith St: 4. IDENTIFICATION	Bene d Historical Preservati reet, Providence, Rhode	on Commission, Stat	-007	
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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR NATIONAL PARK SERVICE	Rhode Island	
NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES	COUNTY Providence	8
PROPERTY PHOTOGRAPH FORM	FOR NPS USE ON	
		DATE
(Type all entries - attach to or enclose with photograph)		
NAME		1
COMMON: Bell Street Chapel		
AND/OR HISTORIC:		
LOCATION		
STREET AND NUMBER:		
5 Bell Street		
CITY OR TOWN:		
Providence		
STATE: CODE COUNTY:	1	CODE
Rhode Island 44 Pro	vidence	007
PHOTO REFERENCE		
PHOTO CREDIT: B. Christopher Bene		
DATE OF PHOTO: 1971		
NEGATIVE FILED AT: Rhode Island Historical Preservat 90 Smith Street, Providence, Rhod	ion Commission, State	e House,
DENTIFICATION	e 131an(1, 0270)	
DESCRIBE VIEW, DIRECTION, ETC.		
Church auditorium, looking north-east tow	ands nulnit area	
the address address and the basis town	ardo putpro area.	
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Form 10-301 (July 1969)	UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF TH NATIONAL PARK SERVICE	E INTERIO	R	STATE Rhode Island	
	NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES			Providence	
	PROPERTY MAP FORM	4		FOR NPS USE ON	LY
	(Type all entries - attach to or enclo	ose with	map)	ENTRY NUMBER	DATE
1. NAME					1
соммо	Rell Street Chapel				
AND/O	R HISTORIC:				
2. LOCAT					
STREE	7 Bell Street			×	
CITY C	Providence			2	e ¹⁴
STATE	Rhode Island	CODE 44	COUNTY: Pr	ovidence	CODE 007
3. MAP R	EFERENCE				
SOURC	". U. S. Geological Survey				
SCALE	: 1: 24.000				
DATE:		2			
4. REQUI	REMENTS				
	INCLUDED ON ALL MAPS				

12 24 4-5

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