OFFICE OF THE SELECTMEN
115 Main Street, PO Box 96, Voluntown, CT 06384

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS:
VOLUNTOWN METHODIST MEETING HOUSE

The Town of Voluntown is issuing this Request for Proposals for the Purchase and Relocation of the former Methodist Meeting House, 2 Church St., Voluntown CT.

Bid Proposal Data:

RFP#:	VOL2023/2023-2
Title:	Voluntown Methodist Meeting House
Issue Date:	July 1, 2022

Bid Proposals Timeframe:

RFP Issued:	July 1, 2022
Optional Site Visit:	Wednesday, July 20, 2022 10:00 a.m. – Convene at Voluntown Town Hall, 115 Main Street, Voluntown CT 06384
RFP Responses Due:	Thursday, August 11, 2022 1:00 p.m.
Responses Sent to:	First Selectman's Office 115 Main Street, PO Box 96 Voluntown, CT 06384
Questions Sent to:	John Guszkowski, Planning & Development Director via email: planner@voluntown.gov

I. Introduction

The Town of Voluntown, acting by and through its Board of Selectmen, is actively seeking proposals to purchase and remove the historic Methodist meeting House (1841) for private use.

The Town encourages proposals from private for-profit or nonprofit developers and partnerships for the purpose of removal of the former meeting house from its current site for relocation, dismantling, or salvage.

The Town will consider all qualified proposals.

II. The Building

The former Methodist Meeting House in the village center of Voluntown, Connecticut, is a one-story high-ceilinged wood frame building erected in the Greek Revival style before 1841. Based on documentation, the property began as a meeting house in the early 1800. The 1841 land lease indicated that the building was already in existence as a church. In 1968 the Voluntown Methodist Church merged with the Bethel Methodist Church ending the use of the building as a church. In the years since it was owned by the Voluntown Historical Society, then sold for private use, and is now owned by the Town of Voluntown.

It is one of the last authentic representations of its unique design in New England. This design includes a sloping floor, pulpit at the entrance, original barrel-vaulted ceilings, and a seating capacity of 200.

It has clapboarded walls, wide frieze with moldings, and the steeple is currently unattached.

The building currently has no running water, or sewer hookup. The electrical and heating system have been disconnected.

III. Goals for Preservation and Rehabilitation

The Voluntown Meeting House Relocation and Renovation Building Committee, appointed by the Board of Selectmen, provided a final report and initial cost estimates to the town in October 2014. The committee evaluated three scenarios:

1. Restoring the building in its current location
2. Relocating the building and restoring it in a new location in town
3. Demolishing or dismantling the building and leaving a clear site.

The Committee recommended that the former meeting house be rehabilitated for use as a community meeting house either in its current location or on a town-owned parcel between Gate St. and the Town Hall parking lot.

A town referendum in August 2017 voted not to allocate town funds to demolish and remove the building. Local efforts to secure funding and sufficient access to the building have been unsuccessful, and the property is now at a status where it is likely unworkable and unsalvageable at its current location. Therefore, this RFP is focused on an offer to purchase the building only and remove it from the property. The Meeting house in its current location has no water of sewer service and the property size limits the addition of a well and sewer. Further, the existing lot lines run just outside the east and west foundations of the building. An easement is in the process of being negotiated to permit access to the property for the purpose of maintenance and repair.

IV. Selection Criteria

Without limiting the ability of the Board of Selectmen to consider and evaluate all responses, the current criteria for selection of the successful proposer includes the following:

a. Feasibility and suitability of the proposed program for rehabilitation and reuse.
b. Evidence of adequate financial resources to undertake and complete the project.
c. Project schedule with benchmarks for performance.
d. Experience and track recorded of the project proponent.
e. Financial terms of the proposed purchase

V. Restrictions

a. The former Methodist Meeting House is individually listed on the State Register of Historic Places and must remain listed if it is relocated within the Town of Voluntown.
b. If the building remains in Voluntown, any restoration work on the building must comply with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties (36 CFR Part 68).

VI. Submittal Requirements

Proposals submitted must include the following information:

1. The name, address, and contact information for the lead respondent and all other principals on the development team.
2. A description of the acquiring entity along with the resumes of key personnel.
3. A certificate of insurance showing commercial liability coverage of at least $1, 000, 000.
4. A one-page summary of the proposed ownership structure, the anticipated scope of work for the project, and the proposed use of the building.
5. A preliminary project schedule showing key benchmarks for performance.
6. Proposed acquisition price and timeline for payment.

There will be an optional pre-bid building viewing on Wednesday, July 20, 2022 at 10:00 a.m. Due to the close proximity of adjacent private property and the condition of the structure, no other viewing will be permitted.

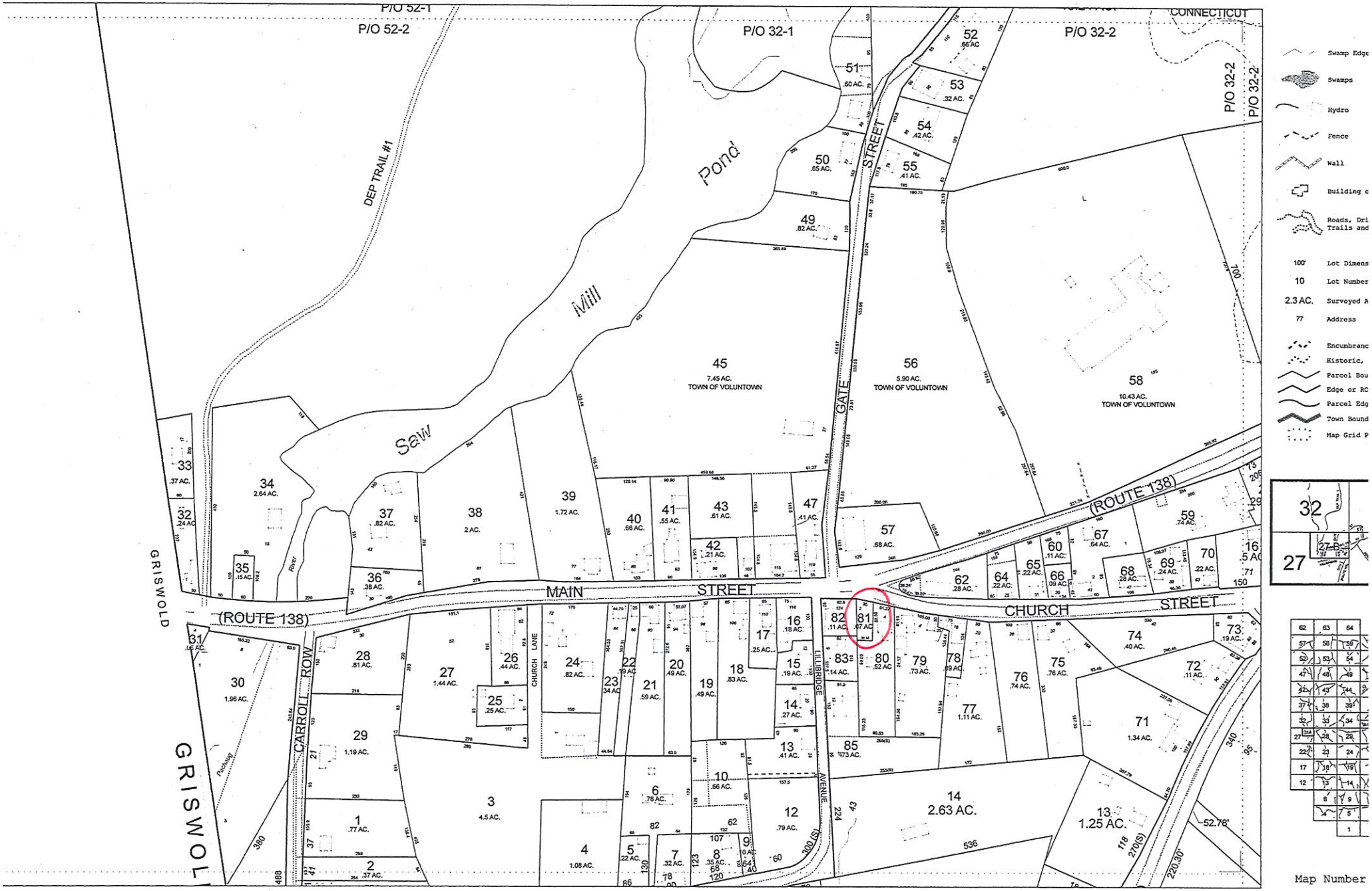
VII. General Terms and Conditions

This Request for Proposals is believed to be accurate as of the date of release. The Town of Voluntown does not make any warrants or guarantees as to the condition of the property, the condition of the site, or the suitability for rehabilitation and reuse.

The Town of Voluntown reserves the right to reject any or all proposals, to negotiate with one or more respondents, and to modify or reissue the Request for Proposals as needed to serve the best interest of the Town.

VIII. Attachments

- Parcel map
- Historic photographs
- Photographs of existing conditions
- Voluntown Meeting House Renovation and Relocation Committee reports
- Structural evaluation by Cirrus Engineering LLC (The last inspection was done in 2017)



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Voluntown, Connecticut

Planimetric Data and Property Maps 2010

Map Produced: January 2010

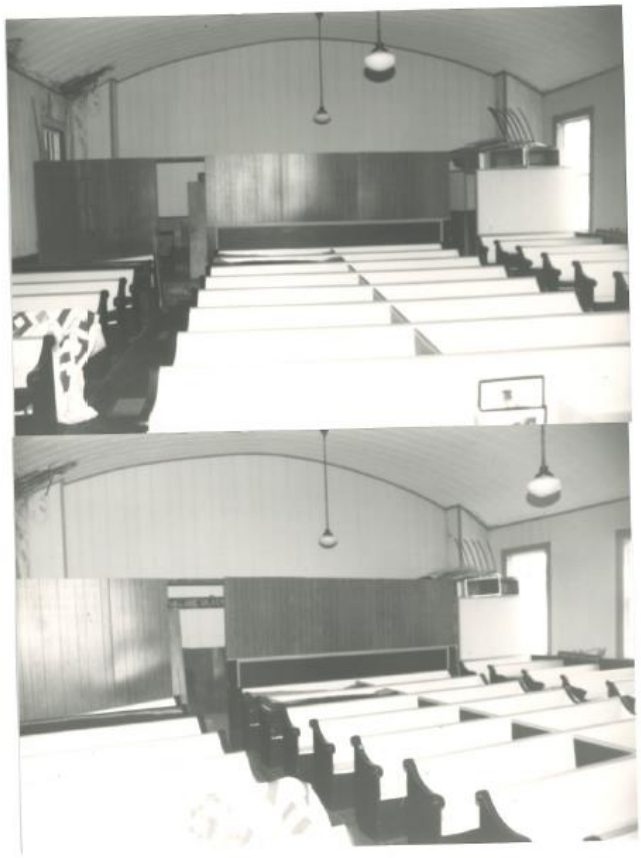
1 inch = 100 feet

100 50 0 100 200 300 Feet

THE METHODIST-EPISCOPAL CHURCH OF VOLUNTOWN EARLY IN THE CENTURY.

Early 1900s

Circa 1930s-40s



No date on photos, maybe 1980s-90s

Interior from 2014

Methodist Meeting House – Voluntown CT – Existing Conditions photos 6/15/2022


KEEP
OUT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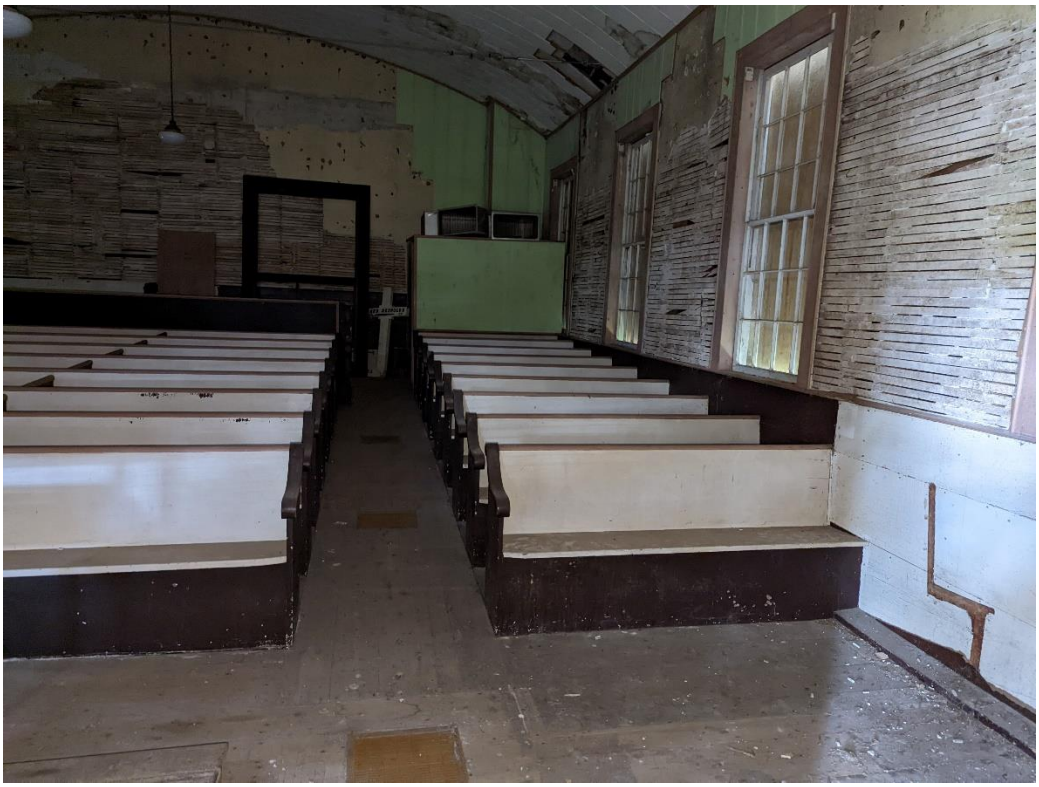


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10/27/14

To: Voluntown Selectmen

From: The Voluntown Meeting House Committee-
Jack Wesa, Greg Gardella, Doug Forrest, Peggy Morningstar, Rachel Ricard & Ty Cool
Re: Voluntown Methodist Church Committee Estimated Cost Analyses

We have completed our collection and compilation of estimated moving/renovation costs addressing three options regarding the disposition of the Church Street Meeting House. The three options are:

1. Fixing the building at its current location.
2. Moving the building to a new location.
3. Tearing the building down.

Options 1 and 3, although not requested by the Selectmen, were evaluated as a reference and comparison to option 2.

It was suggested by our Selectmen that the use of the renovated Methodist Church facility be primarily used as an extension of our current town's meeting facilities with a secondary use of housing a museum and other community activities. It was with this in mind that we pursued this undertaking.

It is our **recommendation** that the structure's use be that of a **Community Meeting House and Museum**. It would be available for community use for variety of events such as;

- a museum for Voluntown historic artifacts, pictures, story, famous citizens, and records.
- for use for small events and shows/fairs (flower, quilt, wellness-holistic/health, antique, chamber music, Sacred Art Show, etc.).
- be used for town group meetings such as Scouts, Recreation Committee functions movies, plays, yoga classes, cooking classes.
- It could serve also as a Welcome Center, helping to promote the Voluntown area as a destination; explaining Voluntown's historic past and present attraction for exploring Connecticut's largest State Forest-the Pachaug State Forest with its Lakes, Ponds, river and streams providing (boating , fishing swimming), and numerous old hiking trails and Colonial Roads with both State and private Campgrounds.

In order to arrive at credible cost estimations the Committee gathered input from several qualified sources, all experts in their related fields. As a baseline for restoration estimations the Committee used the Gilley Report, provided by Gilley Design & Architects summarizing the costs for the building's restoration with input from Beth Acly of Cirrus Structural Engineering. Estimated costs for additional construction initiatives were provided by Tim Pahl of Heritage Building & Design, Al Dawley of A. Dawley Excavating, and Jody Grenier, Chief of the Voluntown Fire Dept. Estimated costs for moving the building to a new location across the street to the green on the east side of the town hall were provided by Ray Barnes of Eastman Building Movers and the Road Foreman for the Town of Voluntown, James Crider. Cost information on utility requirements was collected by Greg Gardella, a committee member, included (moving wires – CL&P, AT&T, Comcast cable) and traffic control. We conversed with the Town Sanitarian, Mr. Al Goselin, regarding the septic and water requirements. We received survey estimate from John Faulise, of Boundaries LLC.

As previously mentioned, the Committee made numerous references to the initial `Estimate of Probable Construction Cost Voluntown Methodist Church' report by Mr. Roy Gilley of Gilley Design Associates & Architects 8-14-12.

This report includes eighteen detailed spreadsheets for the renovation of the complete building in-situ. The estimated cost of this work was $250,000. The Committee now estimates this cost to be **$311,525 as OPTION 1.**

In developing cost estimates for **Option 2** (relocate the building to the Town green between Gate Street and the Town Hall parking lot), Mr. Ray Barnes of Eastman Building Movers was consulted and spoke with Ty Cool and met on-site with Mr. Greg Gardella. Because of telephone pole obstruction Mr. Barnes indicated that the best course for moving the building is across 138 to Constitution Field and moved across that expanse to its final location next to the Town Hall. He indicated that a temporary ramp would need to be built off 138 to the field in order to accommodate the move.

In consideration of the Selectmen's directive to make recommendations, I , as Chairman of the Voluntown Methodist Church Committee, believe it a significant recommendation to indicate that the costs associated with Option 2 should logically be understood as having two parts. The first part would include the prep, foundation, move, utilities, traffic control and landscape repair estimated at **$209,185.00** inclusive of line items #2,4,5,11,13,14, and 15% contingency of $27,285.00 as indicated on the attached spread sheet `VOLUNTOWN MEETINGHOUSE OPTIONS ESTIMATES' Oct 30, 2014 update.

After the move, part two, of the estimated costs to complete the restoration project are as indicated on lines #18, 23, 24, 26,27,28,29,34,36,and 37, with a 15% contingency (excluding Line 23) of $10,050.00, would total $327,050.00.

Option 2 then totals $536,235.

It is my **recommendation** that the restoration covered by the $327,050.00 be addressed in phased increments over a 5 year + time span to allow for the acquisitions of funds through grants and other fund raising programs. The current structural soundness of the building has been validated for this time period by Beth Acly's (PE Structural Engineer, Cirrus Structural Engineering) report to the Selectmen after completion of recommended repair work by Heritage Building & Design.

The final **recommendation** is that it should be noted that there are some divergent opinions among Committee members regarding utilities costs and the cost of building a ramp utilizing Constitution Field as the route for moving the church to its new location. More information should be gathered to validate the estimates associated with these steps as listed below:

1. AT&T cost needs Selectmen approval of $190 fee for their estimate $25,000.
2. CL&P's cost at $40,000.
3. The ramp cost estimate $25,000.

Finally **OPTION 3**, the estimated cost to tear down the building is $29,900.

CIRRUS STRUCTURAL ENGINEERING

16 October 2013, updated 31 May 2017

Bob Sirpenski, First Selectman
Town of Voluntown
PO Box 96
Voluntown, CT 06384

Reference: Voluntown Methodist Church - Cursory Structural Conditions Assessment, 2017 Update

Dear Bob:

It is a pleasure to update the cursory structural conditions assessment of the Voluntown Methodist Church in Voluntown, CT, in the following report. The assessment was initially performed in 2013 and has been updated to reflect 2017 conditions in the following paragraphs.

Executive Summary

2017 Update: It has been approximately 3-1/2 years since the "make safe" shoring was installed in response to the observations made in our initial 16 October 2013 report. At that time, shoring was added below the tower (S-3) and cable added at the eaves of each interior truss (S-4); however, shoring in the south-east corner was not installed (S-2). Deterioration of the framing has continued from exposure to precipitation due to breaches in the building envelope, most prevalent at the north and south elevations. Without structural intervention, I do not have confidence that the north and south ends of the building could support snow, hurricane or seismic loads, and with continued deterioration may not be able to support their own dead loads. The areas in the middle of the building, not exposed to precipitation, remain in good condition; however, the sills (S-1) have continued to deteriorate.

2013: Much of the structure in this historic timber frame building is in excellent condition; however, breaches in the siding and roof due to many years of deferred maintenance have compromised the integrity of a few part of the building. The compromised areas should be temporarily supported before the winter and snow. Longer term repairs will include sill replacements, as well as local member replacements in the south-east corner and below the tower. Although outside the scope of this report, making the building water tight and directing roof run-off away from the building are imperative to maintaining the integrity of the building as a whole.

General Description

2017 Update: We visited the site on 4/May/2017 to review the condition of the existing building and shoring.

2013: We visited the site on 4/October/2013 to perform a cursory survey of the existing building, assess its structural integrity and make recommendations of ways to stabilize and / or repair it.

For the purposes of this report Main Street runs in the east/west direction with the main entrance being located on the north elevation.

Building Description

The Voluntown Methodist Church building is a timber frame ecclesiastical structure dating from pre-1841 and constructed in the Greek Revival style. The gable roof is oriented in the north-south direction with the former tower, taken off in 2012, situated at the north end. The meeting hall is single story and open plan with a cove ceiling. The floor framing sits atop granite ashlar foundations surrounding a crawlspace.

Timber frame scissor-trusses span in the east-west direction and divide the building into 5 bays each centered on the side-facing windows. Purlins at the eave, ridge and mid-slope connect the trusses and support common east-west spanning rafters. At the first floor framing, the building is divided into 4 bays with beams dividing each and supported by brick piers. The floor framing slopes toward the north / pulpit end of the building.

Noted Building Conditions and Repair Recommendations

The following conditions were noted at the site, and are accompanied by our *recommendations.* Photographs further describing the conditions are included in the appendices of the report. *This is intended to be a list of general structural conditions and is not considered comprehensive.*

S-1 Deteriorated sills. 2017 Update: We observed additional sill deterioration and termite damage on both walls adjacent to the north-east corner. 2013: The sill appears to be in a varying state of deterioration along the perimeter of the building. In addition to the area noted in item S-2 below, an outward rotation of the top of several of the granite foundation stones is indicative of deterioration of the outer half of the bottom face of the sill causing rotation of the wall above and foundation below. Deterioration often affects the bottoms of the posts and studs attached to the sill. *All deteriorated sills should be replaced with rot-resistant white oak timbers. In order to better define the scope of sill, post and stud damage, the sill should be further studied and consideration given to exposing it for investigation in certain locations. See below for discussion of immediate make-safe repair recommendations.*

S-2 South-east corner deterioration. 2017 Update: Shoring was not performed in this area and still remains compromised. 2013: Severe deterioration is evident in the south-east corner due to a breach in both the siding and cornice / roof in this area. There is very little integrity left in the sill or post-base, and eave beam and connecting rafters also appear to be compromised. The roof load in this corner has been shed to the adjacent studs; *however the sill, post, braces and possibly eave beam and rafter tails in this area must be replaced to restore full integrity. See below for discussion of immediate make-safe repair recommendations.*

S-3 Deterioration below tower. 2017 Update: Shoring was installed in early 2014. Deterioration of the framing has continued due to roof and siding breaches

creating additional areas of limited ability to support the end bay of the roof and north wall. Without structural intervention, there is no guarantee that this area can support snow, hurricane or seismic loads, and with continued deterioration this area may lose its ability to support its own dead loads. 2013: The roof and wall framing on the north elevation that once supported the tower has seen severe deterioration due to breaches in the roofing and siding. The raking end rafters have severed where the mid-slope purlin frames in on both east and west sides. The west side remains unsupported and the east side is shored with a temporary, but undersized, stud. The wind girt running at eave level is also severely compromised. *We recommend that all compromised members be replaced. Should a comprehensive restoration plan include resetting the tower, the former tower posts should all be assessed for condition and integrity. See below for discussion of immediate make-safe repair recommendations.*

S-4 Scissor truss separation. 2017 Update: Eave to eave cables were installed in early 2014. We were not able to evaluate whether lateral thrust loads are currently being supported by existing truss joinery at the eaves, or if joinery failures have occurred causing thrust loads to be transferred to cables. 2013: By nature scissor trusses have a tendency to spread due to the indirect orientation of the eave restraint, as opposed to direct eave to eave restraint typical of other truss types. In this case, I observed some minor separation at the scissor cross as well as some bowing at the eave on the east wall. I was not able to assess the integrity of the eave joint. *The truss should be more closely studied during a comprehensive restoration program to determine whether the joints require reinforcement. See below for discussion of immediate make-safe repair recommendations.*

S-5 Purlin Connection Splitting. 2017 Update: We did not observe any change in this condition. 2013: Horizontal splits are evident in the purlin at the connection to the trusses. The splits are evidence of a shear stress concentration where the purlin end is reduced into the mortise. *There are a number of joint reinforcement details that could be employed to address this problem during a comprehensive restoration project.*

S-6 Breaches in Weatherproofing and Absence of Gutters. 2017 Update: No progress has been made to address breaches in the building envelope and further deterioration of the structure has occurred. 2013: Although outside the direct scope of structural observations, the breaches in weatherproofing and lack of gutters at the eave have allowed water into the structure causing much of the deterioration noted above. *We recommend that weatherproofing and management of roof run-off be addressed as high priority to prevent further deterioration of the structure.*

Make-Safe Repair Recommendations

2017 Update: In 2014, shoring was installed to support the north elevation and cables installed at the eaves of the trusses. Shoring was not constructed in the south-east corner. 2013: We recommend that temporary support be added as soon as possible to ensure the stability of the building in the upcoming winter / snowy months. Cables should be constructed to connect the east and west eave beams beneath each of the interior trusses; these should be made snug-tight with a turnbuckle but not tensioned. Temporary support should be added

to the south-east corner and at the failed members below the former tower on the north elevation, particularly the currently unsupported roof purlins.

It has been a pleasure to perform this assessment. If you have any questions regarding this report, please do not hesitate to contact this office.

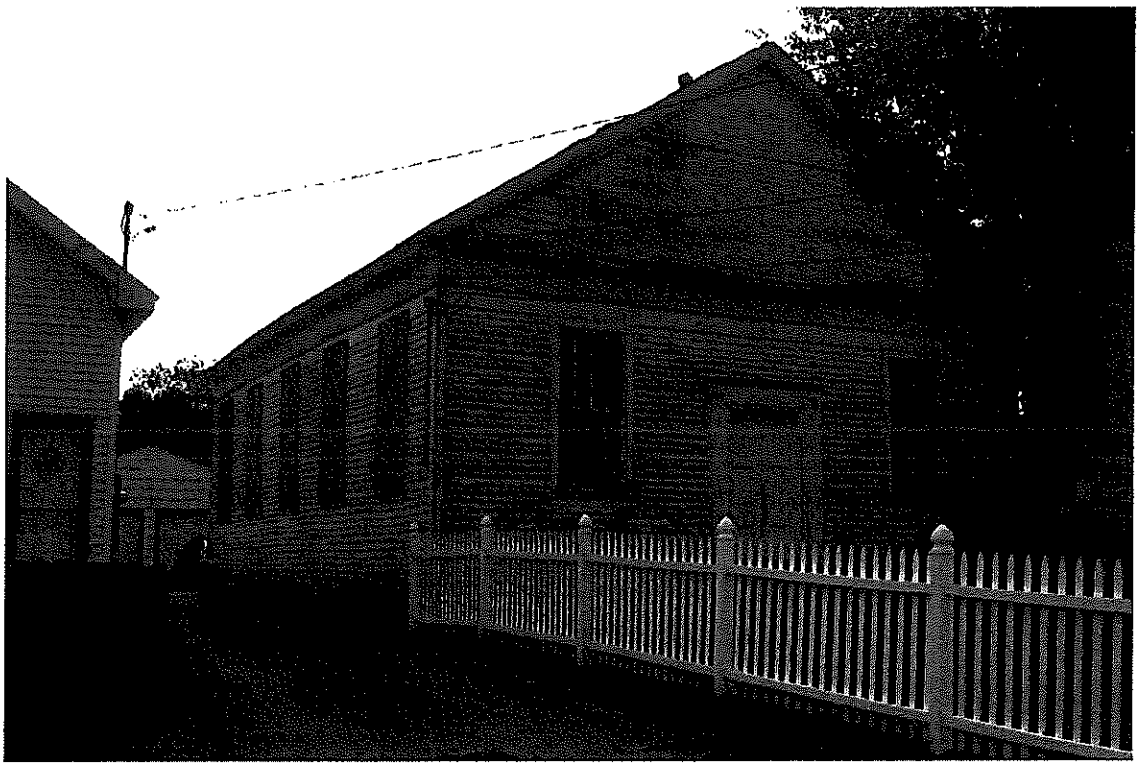
Respectfully Yours,

Cirrus Structural Engineering, LLC

Elizabeth Acly, PE
Principal

Appendices:

Photographs – pages 6 to 10



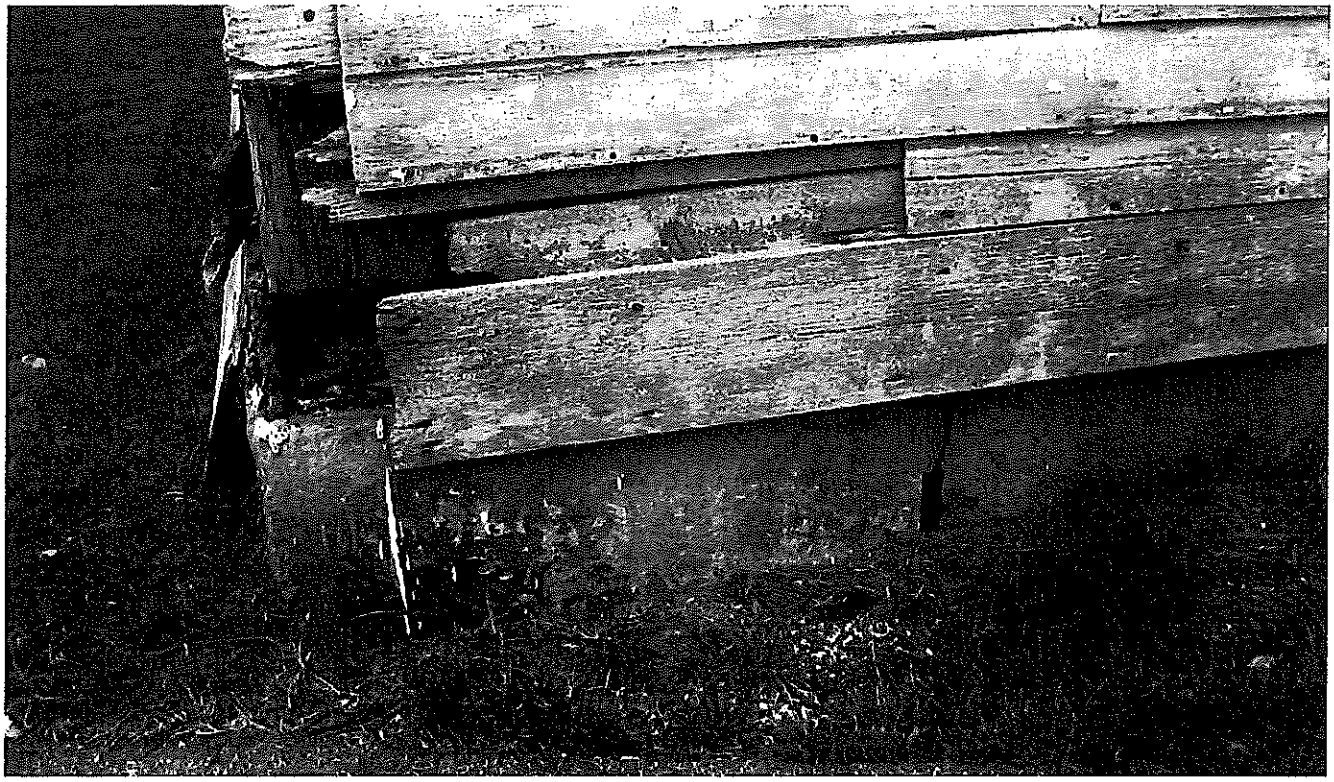
North and East Elevations (2013)

S-1 Deteriorated sill, north-east corner (2017)

S-1 Deteriorated sill, east side (2017)

S-1 Shifting at foundation below sill, north-west corner (2013)

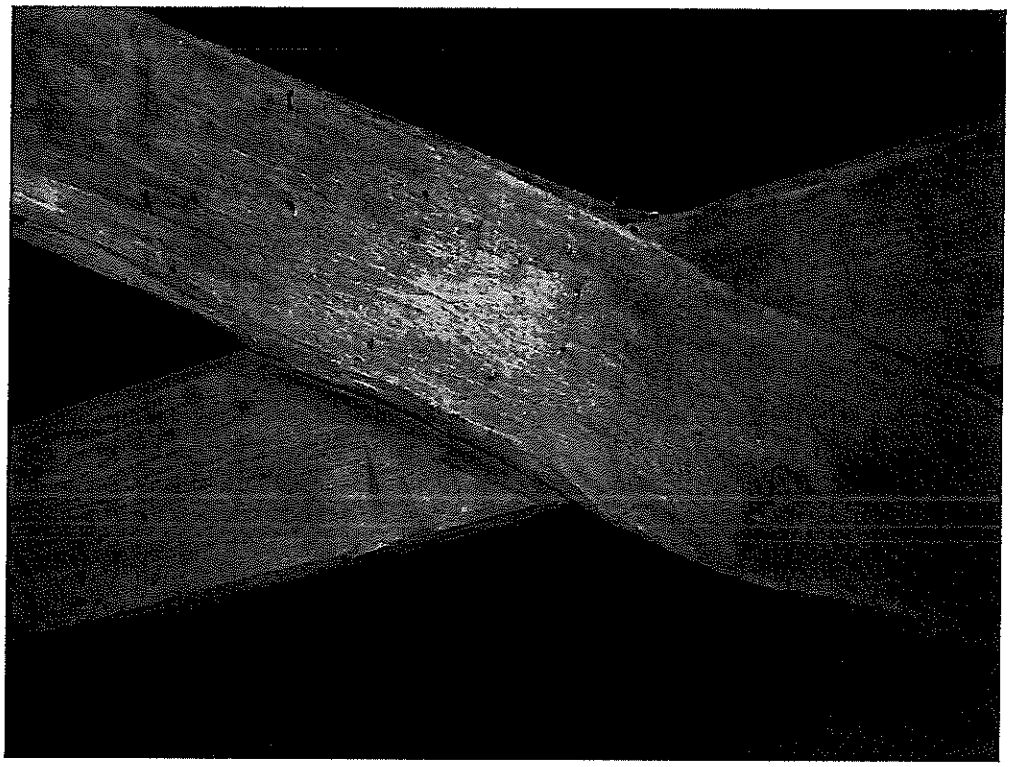
S-2 Deterioration at south-east corner (2017)



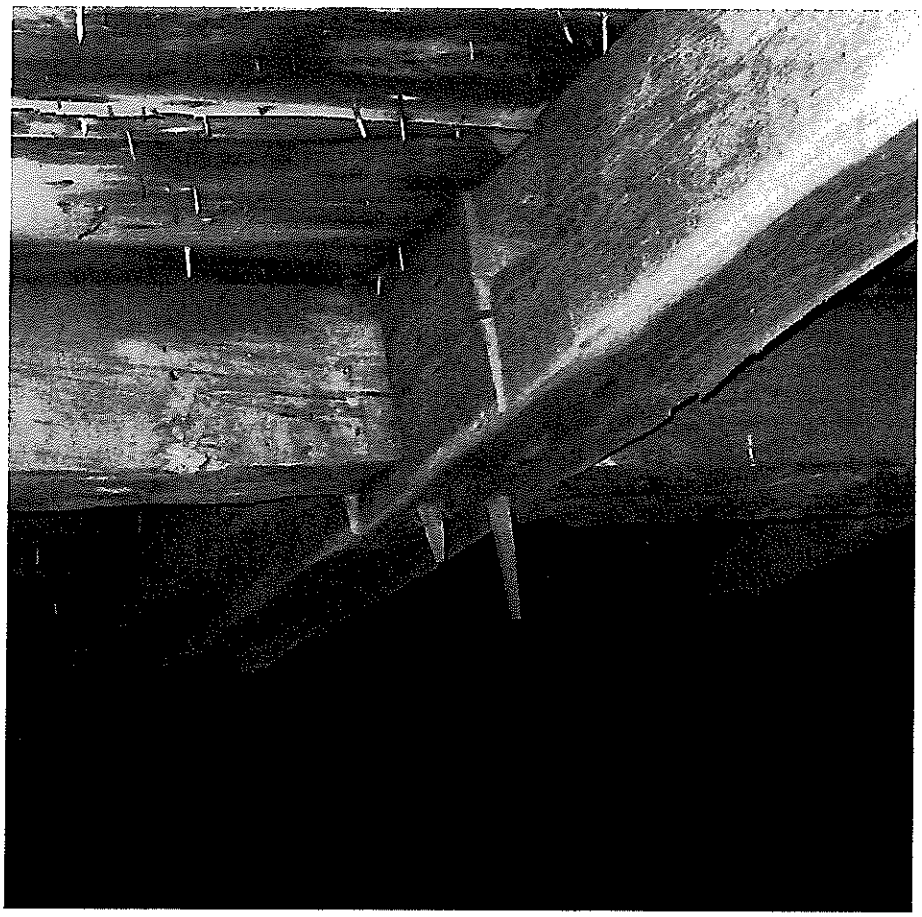
S-2 Deterioration at south-east corner (2013)

S-3 Deteriorated rafter and purlin connection on east slope of north wall with shoring (2017)

S-3 Deteriorated rafter and purlin connection on west slope of north wall (2013)



S-4 Joint opening at east eave end of scissor-cross (2013)



S-5 Horizontal shear split in purlin end (2013)