Massachusetts Cultural Resource Information System
Scanned Record Cover Page



Inventory No:	FRM.1027
Historic Name:	Edwards Congregational Church Chapel
Common Name:	
Address:	11 Elm St
City/Town:	Framingham
Village/Neighborhood:	Saxonville;
Local No:	
Year Constructed:	C 1871
Architectural Style(s):	No style;
Use(s):	Business Office; Chapel; Community Center;
Significance:	Architecture; Education; Recreation; Religion;
Area(s):	FRM.S
Designation(s):	Nat'l Register District (08/20/1992);
Building Materials:	Roof: Asphalt Shingle; Wall: Vinyl Siding; Wood; Foundation: Concrete Unspecified;
Demolished	No

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Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Massachusetts Historical Commission
220 Morrissey Boulevard, Boston, Massachusetts 02125
www.sec.state.ma.us/mhc

This file was accessed on: Thursday, November 5, 2026 at 9:33 AM

FORM B – BUILDING

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

Assessor's Number	USGS Quad	Area(s)	Form Number
050-33-2728	Boston North	S	FRM.1027

NR DIS 8/20/1992

Town/City: Framingham

Place: *(neighborhood or village)*: Saxonville

Address: 11 Elm Street

Historic Name: Edwards Chapel

Uses: Present: office

Original: religious building, chapel

Date of Construction: ca. 1871

Source: society and church histories; historic maps

Style/Form: Gothic Revival, nave plan

Architect/Builder: unknown

Exterior Material:

Foundation: not visible; assessor: concrete

Wall/Trim: Vinyl/Aluminum

Roof: Asphalt shingle

Outbuildings/Secondary Structures: none

Major Alterations *(with dates):*
Conversion from religious uses after 1961. Siding applied in 1989, skylights 2003, windows replaced 2007.

Condition: fair

Moved: **no** ☒ **yes** ☐ **Date:**

Acreage: .085 acres

Setting: Dense mill village of commercial, industrial, and residential structures.

Photograph



Locus Map *(North is up)*



Recorded by: Claire W. Dempsey

Organization: Framingham Historic District Commission

Date (*month / year*): June 2017

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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 Edwards Chapel maintains its original overall form, though its late 20th-century shift from religious to office purposes has resulted in a number of changes to its apertures and ornament. Its core volume is a single-story rectangle measuring about 32 feet across and 50 feet deep. Its very high gable roof is oriented with its gable end to the main street in the traditional fashion of 19th-century religious buildings. The center entry on the Elm Street front is shielded by a small vestibule measuring about 12 feet across and 6 feet deep, now with a flat roof. That portion of the building retains elements of its Gothic character in the pointed entry which includes a double-leafed door composed of diagonally set boards. New vinyl windows are located in the side walls of the vestibule. The former double-windows of the main block have been removed and large square picture windows were added to the front of the building, flanking the vestibule, and on the long side elevations. Smaller windows are located at the rear end of the building, paired on the north side and a bay window on the south, and another pair lights the gable end. A modern door is centered on the north elevation facing Chestnut Street. At the rear is a shallow hip-roofed ell measuring 28 feet across and 18 feet deep. There is a rear entry under a small porch and small windows on its east elevation. Skylights pierce the large roof slopes at their lower edges. The Chapel is positioned on a very small corner lot just larger than the building's footprint on the sides, with a strip of lawn on the modest west setback and the south side.

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.

The Edwards Chapel was built probably in the 1860s as a second meeting place for the congregation of the nearby Edwards Congregational Church, located to the north on Edwards Street. The Edwards Congregational Church was built in 1827 as the Saxonville Meeting House to serve the growing population of Saxonville, an early mill village in the northeast part of Framingham. With much of the land owned by the Saxonville Factory Company (later the New England Worsted Company and Roxbury Carpet Company), the village included the mill buildings, a commercial core nearby, and company- and privately-owned residences surrounding these. At the north end, a cluster of public buildings emerged over the mid-nineteenth century, including the Church, the nearby schools on Elm and Edwards streets, the Methodist Church on Elm Street, and the Chapel just next door. The Saxonville Company apparently played a role in the Church's founding, as early meetings of the religious society were held in its offices and when the land on which the building stands was finally given to the society, in 1916, it came from Frank E. Simpson, then company president. Initially, the building was to serve as a union meeting place, and Unitarians and Methodists preached here in the early years, but in 1833, 25 members of that church sought dismissal to form a Congregational Church in Saxonville and took over the Church. For more information on the Edwards Congregational Church Area see FRM.AH.

The precise date of construction for the Chapel did not emerge from current research. The time line of the parish history (versions published in pamphlets as "Historical Sketch" in 1977 and "Edwards Church" in 2012) noted a vote to build a chapel in 1865 and to sell the old chapel in 1871 for $250. It is not certain that either of these took place or to what building(s) they refer. A newspaper article of 1952 says the Chapel was built in 1871, and Gene Reid noted that Simpson donated land for the "new Edwards Chapel in that year; Simpson converted the old building into two tenements" (1982, p. 7). A Chapel was noted on the Walling map of the village of 1872. In 1886 a piano was purchased for the chapel. In 1887, the Edwards Evangelical Society and Parish purchased the Chapel from the Saxonville Mills, described as a lot (with buildings) that measured 42 by 98 feet at the corner of Elm and Chestnut streets. The consideration for this sale was "of its having relinquished formerly by its Parish Committee all its right title and interest in and to a certain building formerly occupied by it for religious purposes," suggesting an earlier building. The deed also set a condition that "the grantees and their successors and assigns shall only use the granted premises for meetings for the use and convenience of the said Society and Parish and for public worship."

If the choice of the society to build a "Gothick" church was unusual in 1827, when the Edwards Congregational Church was built, the selection of a Gothic Revival style for the Chapel at mid-century was not. At that time, the style was enjoying exceptional popularity among all Protestant Congregations, and Kilde has argued that they became a symbol of Christian unity in complicated times (see especially chapter four). As the earlier images of the building show, it was a simple evocation of the style, embodied in the high gable roofs of the main block and vestibule, the pointed arch of the entry, and the paired narrow sash windows. The most recent photograph before major alterations also shows small brackets at the eaves of the main block and the vestibule. One is tempted to speculate on whether the building might have once been covered in the board and batten siding so popular in small ecclesiastical buildings of the mid-19th century. That photograph may indicate asbestos shingle wall cover and otherwise simple trim prior to the application of vinyl.

It is not entirely clear how the Society chose to build here or even how the Chapel was used. But common patterns of the period would suggest that it provided meeting space for Sunday School and the increasing number of voluntary associations formed by church members, here including the Friendly Circle, which undertook missionary and fund-raising activities, and likely other groups. In 1952, when it was known as the Community Hall, it was used for suppers and social events; it may have had a kitchen. By the mid-20th century, however, the fact that it was separate from the Church became an impediment, and as the church membership and attendance grew, the Church decided to expand its holdings on the hill, consolidate its plant there, and sell this property. At that time, the building was known as Edwards Hall and used for religious education and as a social hall, but it was crowded and caused transportation problems for parents and children. They considered moving the building to the land they acquired next to the church, but that plan was rejected. The chapel was sold in 1961 to an electronics firm. Building Inspectors' records indicate the vinyl siding was applied in 1989, skylights added 2003, and windows replaced in 2007.

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North side of Edwards Chapel, along Chestnut Street.



Bailey birds eye view of 1882 showing Chapel at number 7 at the corner of Elm and Chestnut and to the south of the Methodist Church (with steeple).



Edwards Chapel ca. 1980? Framingham History Center.