

**RESPONSE TO THE APPLICATION FOR HISTORIC LANDMARK OF THE
STRUCTURES AT 16th AND I STREETS, N.W.
BY THIRD CHURCH OF CHRIST SCIENTIST. WASHINGTON, D. C.**

SUMMARY: Third Church of Christ, Scientist, Washington, D. C. ("Third Church") requests that the *Application for Historic Landmark of the Third Church of Christ, Scientist and Christian Science Monitor Building* ("Application") be withdrawn or denied because it fails to demonstrate that the Third Church building and the Christian Science Monitor office building meet the standards for Historic Landmark designation. Two of the three arguments on which the Application is based, namely that the structures are an example of the national church movement in Washington, D.C. and that the structures were an important part of a centennial celebration within the Christian Science Church, are demonstrably false. Its third claim, that the structures are a key example of the modernist architectural movement, fails the common standard of the test of time. The fallacies in the Application are detailed below.

First Claim: That the Third Church building is an important example of the national church movement. (Application, "The Christian Science Church in Washington and the National Church Movement.")¹

• **Rebuttal**

- The Third Church building at 16th and I Streets N.W. is not a national church. It was conceived, initiated, built and financed by a local organization, Third Church of Christ, Scientist in Washington, D.C.
- Third Church, Washington, D. C., is an independent organization, incorporated in the District of Columbia and governed by its own membership and its own bylaws. (See second supporting point below and notes 8-12)
- The Third Church building was not part of a national church movement. It was designed to fulfill a local mission: to serve the people who live or work in, or visit, downtown Washington, the neighborhood in which this church was founded in 1918 and the neighborhood that this church has served for 89 years.²
- Third Church became interested in constructing a new local church building in 1950, shortly after the corner lot at 16th and I was purchased by The First Church of Christ Scientist, Boston ("The Mother Church"). Between 1950 and the early 1960s, Third Church repeatedly offered to buy part of that site in order to construct a building for its own membership.³

¹ The Application states: "Thus, this complex is a relatively late, and therefore rare, local example of the national church movement, whose greatest building activity occurred at the turn of the twentieth century."

² See also Third Church, "Plan of Action," 19 Feb, 1963, which states: "There must be within all of us – within every member of Third Church – a desire and determination to be of service to our community."

³ "Summary of building progress," (no date but likely 1964 given its location in Third Church files) states: "A careful check of the files beginning in 1950 clearly shows that the initiative and interest in acquiring use of this property originated and continuously have come since[sic] from Third Church."

- o Third Church members raised all of the \$1.2 Million (approx.) required to construct the church building.
- o When The Mother Church finally agreed to sell part of the site to Third Church, it clearly stated that Third Church would be responsible for the construction of any new church building, and that Third Church should not expect any subsidy from The Mother Church.⁴

Letter from Board of Trustees, Third Church of Christ, Scientist, Washington, D. C., to Board of Directors, The First Church of Christ, Scientist, Boston Massachusetts, 27 Dec. 1950: “[Third Church] is giving serious consideration to its need for a new and more adequate church building.” Third Church inquired as to whether “any amplification of the present structure at Sixteenth and Eye Streets is contemplated that might include space which would be available to the ‘downtown’ church of Washington.” (Reply Letter from The Mother Church, 9 Jan. 1951, stating that it is “not contemplating any plans.”)

Letter from Board of Trustees, Third Church of Christ, Scientist, Washington, D. C., to Board of Directors, The First Church of Christ, Scientist, Boston Massachusetts, 2 Mar, 1952, in Third Church: “...if it is decided to sell a portion of the land, Third Church would appreciate the opportunity of considering the purchase of any portion of it that would be adequate for a church site.”

Letter from Board of Trustees, Third Church of Christ, Scientist, Washington, D. C., to Lincoln T. Prescott, Manager Church Realty Trust, 17 Dec, 1952, in which Third Church: “May we ask you to let us know if The Mother Church would be willing to sell this property to Third Church and, if so, on what terms.”

Letter from Board of Trustees, Third Church of Christ, Scientist, Washington, D. C., to Board of Directors, The First Church of Christ, Scientist, Boston Massachusetts, 23 June, 1953: “Recognition was given to the need to provide for our own church home in Washington and also the need of a downtown church in the nation’s capital where visitors from all parts of the United States as well as from all parts of the world would find an adequate reflection of church.”

“Report on Church Building,” (No Date but likely 1954 given placement in Third Church files): “It is the proposal of this committee that we should build a new church structure. . . . The church should be located in the downtown area. Your committee plans to give immediate consideration to the selection of a location for the church to be built either (a) on the present church property at 13th and L streets; or (b) on a location nearer the center of the downtown area; or (c) on some other location in the fringe section of the downtown area.”

Letter from Board of Directors, The First Church of Christ, Scientist, Boston Massachusetts to Third Church of Christ, Scientist, Washington, D. C. Board of Trustees, 13 Mar, 1956: The Mother Church declines request by Third Church to sell part of land at 16th & I.

Letter from Board of Trustees, Third Church of Christ, Scientist, Washington, D. C., to Board of Directors, to The First Church of Christ, Scientist, Boston Massachusetts, 5 July, 1958 reiterated its request to purchase land at 16th & I: “In this connection and before we investigate other sites, we wish to inquire if there has been any change in the thinking of The Mother Church with regard to the use of its property at 16th and I Streets in Washington.”

Letter from Board of Trustees, Third Church of Christ, Scientist, Washington, D. C., to Board of Directors, The First Church of Christ, Scientist, Boston Massachusetts, 5 April, 1959, repeating Third Church’s request to purchase land at 16th & I.

Letter from Board of Trustees, Third Church of Christ, Scientist, Washington, D. C., to Board of Directors, to The First Church of Christ, Scientist, Boston Massachusetts, 28 Mar, 1963, repeating Third Church’s request to purchase land at 16th & I.

⁴ Third Church, “Summary of Building Progress,” (No date, but clearly 1965). “He [Mr. Rechner, construction consultant to The Mother Church] then proceeded to state that The Mother Church was not in a position to subsidize any branch church, even though they recognized that Washington D. C. was a

- **Supporting Points**

- The Application falsely states that the Third Church building was owned by The Mother Church.⁵
 - The church building was never owned by The Mother Church but was financed entirely by the members of Third Church.
 - On the 16th and I, N.W. Streets site, The Mother Church owned the office building, but not the Third Church building.
 - Until 2007, the land (and office building) at 16th & I were owned by The Mother Church, which leased a portion of the site to Third Church.⁶
- The Application misrepresents the relationship between Third Church and The Mother Church. (Application, Section "Christian Science and Church Architecture," paragraph 1.)⁷
 - The Christian Science movement is not "highly centralized" as the Application claims but consists of a collection of independent, locally organized churches that follow the theological standards maintained by The Mother Church.⁸

unique situation. However, he said many other branches considered their situations unique and therefore they had to maintain a very strict policy in this regard."

"Notes on Meeting with Mr. Carl Rechner, Development Consultant, The First Church of Christ, Scientist, 15 June 1965. "Mr. Rechner indicated that The Mother Church wants to go as far as it can in being liberal and doing what is right, but it does not want to go so far as to subsidize Third Church.

⁵ Application Coversheet.

⁶ See Lease Agreement between The Mother Church and Third Church, executed on November 9, 1972, and amended on March 9, 1976.

⁷ The Application reads "Local churches are branches of the central church rather than independent entities."

⁸ See *Church Manual of The First Church of Christ, Scientist in Boston, Massachusetts*.

Article XXIII:

Local Self-Government. Section 1. "The Mother Church of Christ, Scientist, shall assume no general official control of other churches, and it shall be controlled by none other. Each Church of Christ, Scientist, shall have its own form of government. No conference of churches shall be held, unless it be when our churches, located in the same State, convene to confer on a statute of said State, or to confer harmoniously on individual unity and action of the churches in said State."

Titles. Section 2. "'The First Church of Christ, Scientist', is the legal title of The Mother Church. Branch churches of The Mother Church may take the title of First Church of Christ, Scientist; Second Church of Christ, Scientist, and so on, where more than one church is established in the same place; but the article "The" must not be used before titles of branch churches"

- The Mother Church maintains and promotes the theology of Christian Science through means such as a publishing organization, a board of education, a lecture board, a committee on government relations, but it does not control or influence the actions of local churches.⁹
- The Mother Church, as the American Institute of Architects has observed, provides no guidance for the design and construction of local churches.¹⁰
- Third Church, like the other six Christian Science Churches that were established in the District of Columbia, and all branch churches of The Mother Church, is independently governed. Third Church is incorporated in the District of Columbia as a religious organization that is governed by its members and meets the theological standards of The Mother Church. Third Church, like all other local Christian Science Churches, has no financial or managerial relationship to The Mother Church.¹¹
- Though Third Church, like all local Christian Science churches, is termed a “branch church,” it is not a satellite entity under the control of a central organization, as the common current usage of that term now implies. Instead, it is an independent organization as described above. (Application, “Christian Science and Church Architecture,” paragraph 2.)¹²
- The only additional facet to the relationship between Third Church and The Mother Church was that of tenant and landlord. Between 1969 and 2007, Third Church leased the land upon which its church stood from The Mother Church. (See text associated with note 6 above). Third Church continues to lease space in the Christian Science Monitor office building for its public Reading Room. Third Church

No Interference. Section 10. “...In Christian Science each branch church shall be distinctly democratic in its government, and no individual, and no other church shall interfere with its affairs.”

⁹ See *Church Manual of The First Church of Christ, Scientist in Boston, Massachusetts*, notably Article XXV (The Christian Science Publishing Society), Articles XXVIII-XXX (Board of Education), Articles XXXI-XXXII (Board of Lectureship), Article XXXIII (Committee on Publication.)

¹⁰ Grigg, Milton, “A Guide for Planning Buildings for Christian Science,” *American Institute of Architects Journal*, October 1963, pp. 92-96: “The Christian Science church does not publish any mandatory requirements. It is unfortunate that the Board of Directors has not prepared fuller material to supplement that very brief and inadequate general statement bulletin made available only to local church or society boards.” (p. 95)

¹¹ Third Church, Washington, D. C., Incorporation documents.

¹² The Application states: “Local churches are branches of the central church rather than independent entities.”

had earlier leased space for its Reading Room at 15th and H Streets, N.W.¹³

- The Application falsely implies that the project was initiated by The Mother Church. (Ref: Application, "The Christian Science Church in Washington and the National Church Movement," paragraph 7.)¹⁴
 - As stated above, Third Church first contacted The Mother Church in 1950 to inquire whether Third Church could use a portion of The Mother Church property at 16th and I Streets, N.W.
 - As stated above, starting in 1952, Third Church repeatedly asked The Mother Church to sell Third Church land at that site for a new Third Church building. The Mother Church repeatedly declined Third Church's requests.
 - In 1963, Third Church convinced The Mother Church to sell part of the land at 16th and I Streets as a site for a new church. Third Church agreed to the one condition set by The Mother Church, that Third Church raise sufficient funds for the building within five years.¹⁵
- The Application falsely implies that the church and the office building were conceived as a complex. (*Application*, "Construction of the Third Church Complex and the Christian Science Centennial," paragraph 7.)¹⁶
 - As noted above, Third Church's interest in the 16th and I Streets site was only to construct a new church building.¹⁷

¹³ See Agreement of Lease between The Mother Church and Third Church, executed on August 20, 1996, and amended on September 27, 2001 and January 5, 2007.

¹⁴ The Application states: "It was decided to include a new church in the plans for this highly visible Washington corner lot." In the Section of the Application, "Construction of the Third Church Complex and the Christian Science Centennial", it adds "Since the Boston Project did not involve the construction of a new church, the Third Church complex more completely illustrated this concern of The Mother Church."

¹⁵ Letter from Board of Directors, The First Church of Christ, Scientist, Boston, Massachusetts, to Board of Trustees, Third Church of Christ, Scientist, Washington, D. C., 23 May 1963: "The sale of the property would be conditional on the Full purchase price being in hand, plus one-half the estimated cost of constructing the edifice." "Should you wish to undertake the demonstration [(construction)] of building a church at this location under these conditions, we would be glad to hear from you to that effect. In that event, we would be willing to hold the property for you for a period of five years assuming that there would be no significant change in circumstances during that time." See also Letter from Board of Trustees, Third Church of Christ, Scientist, Washington, D. C, to Board of Directors, The First Church of Christ, Scientist, Boston, Massachusetts, which reports the vote of the membership meeting of June 10 to accept the offer to sell.

¹⁶ The Application states: "the impetus for construction of the new complex also had its origins outside of local considerations."

¹⁷ "Minutes of Development Committee," 28 March, 1963: "That we should continue our efforts to secure a portion of the property at 16th and I Streets N.W. as the most desirable downtown location for our branch church edifice." To this end, the Committee passed the following resolution: "That Third Church of Christ, Scientist, Washington, D. C. make an offer to The Mother Church of \$350,000 for a sufficient

- The Mother Church wanted to replace an existing house at the site, known as the Payne-Gray House, which it used as an office for its legislative activities and for an exhibit room.¹⁸
- Third Church and The Mother Church originally agreed that the two projects would be designed separately.¹⁹
- The Mother Church planned to construct an independent office building on part of the land. It stated that this building need not be designed by the same architect as the church, built by the same firm or constructed on the same schedule.²⁰
- The Mother Church originally planned to sell part of the land at 16th and I Streets to Third Church(see text related to footnote 15) but found it could not divide the plot as it desired since the land was designated as a single tax lot.. This led The Mother Church to grant a long-term leasehold to Third Church for space for a church building separate from any proposed office building.²¹

portion of the property at 16th and I Streets N. W. for the location of a branch church edifice and that we pay \$200,000 cash when the Contract of Sale is signed and the balance at the time to be agreed upon."

¹⁸ "Notes on Meeting with Mr. Carl B Rechner, Development Consultant, The First Church of Christ, Scientist in Boston Massachusetts, 15 June 1965: The Board of The First Church of Christ, Scientist is planning to build a new office building at 16th and I "if we can get together on all things." "The board realizes that they will either have to move the Committee on Publication to some other location as a tenant or secure an architect, development plans and have an [office] building built on the site so they will make one move into the new building."

As late as 1959, The Board of Directors of The Mother Church was satisfied with the office in the Payne-Gray house. "Report of Interview with the Directors of The Mother Church, 15 April 1959: "He [Mr. Pittman of the Board of Trustees] added that they were not sure whether the demands of church activities in Washington warranted a larger [office] building or whether expansion of such activities was desirable. He cited attendance at the Exhibit Hall as good but not large."

¹⁹ "Notes on Phone call with Mr. Carl B Rechner, Development Consultant, The First Church of Christ, Scientist in Boston, Massachusetts, 7 June 1966: "He [Carl Rechner] also stated that with regard to design, The Mother Church could not do too much on their building until we had decided the type of building for our church."

²⁰ "Notes on Meeting with Mr. Carl Rechner, Development Consultant, The First Church of Christ, Scientist, 15 June 1965: "We [The First Church of Christ, Scientist and Third Church] do not have to have the same architect for both church and building; however, there should be a harmonious relationship between the two."

"Minutes of Building Committee," 1 Sept, 1965. "Mr. Nichols described the main features of the plan of TMC to build an eight or nine story office building on 16th St. It is expected that this building will be completed within two years, and that after it is finished we will break ground for a church at the corner of 16th and I."

²¹ Appeal No. 9806 by the First Church of Christ, Scientist, applicant, before the Board of Zoning Adjustment; Public Hearing on October 23, 1968; Effective Date of Order on June 10, 1969; Lease between Third Church and The First Church of Christ, Scientist, Boston, Massachusetts and subsequent documents.

- District of Columbia zoning laws forced the two buildings into a single arrangement against the desires of both Third Church, Washington, D. C., and The Mother Church. In order to place two buildings on the single tax lot and avoid a request for a variance of the definition of building, Third Church and The Mother Church had to agree to a revised design for their independent facilities that included a “connecting wall” to give the illusion of a single structure. (see note 21)
 - Even in 1967, after Third Church dismissed its original architect and hired Araldo Cossutta, both The Mother Church and Third Church considered the new church building at 16th & I to be a project of Third Church only.²²
- The Application falsely suggests that the initiation of the two buildings at 16th and I was connected to the complex that The Mother Church was constructing in Boston. (Application, “Construction of the Third Church Complex and the Christian Science Centennial,” paragraph 1.)²³
 - As noted above, the construction of the church was initiated by a local organization, Third Church.
 - Third Church, selected a local architect, Leon Chatelain, because of his ability to work with local institutions and local firms. The Mother Church followed the lead of Third Church and also hired Chatelain to be the architect for the office building.²⁴
 - The Mother Church originally told Third Church that it could not use I. M. Pei & Partners for its architect because the firm was going to

²² Letter from William Collins, Chairman of the Board, Third Church of Christ, Scientist, Washington, D. C. to Arthur May, I. M. Pei and Partners, 7 August, 1968. “In every way possible we want to make a deliberate effort to keep the two projects separated in the public’s eye. This is necessary because we have a unique relationship with the Board of Directors of The Mother Church. Building programs in Christian Science branch churches are distinctly local affairs. The fact that we are leasing the property from The Mother Church does not alter our responsibilities. The church building part of this project is exclusively a Third Church program.” See also “Statement by Chairman of Building Committee at Informal meeting with Partner of I. M. Pei,” 27 February 1967, “Our edifice and The Mother Church building will be designed by the same architect. Otherwise there will be no connection between them. With the architect, there will be two separate contracts, one with Third Church and one with The Mother Church. For the sake of economy, however, construction of our two buildings will be simultaneous.

²³ The Application states: “the impetus for construction of the new complex also had its origins outside of local considerations.” At the end of the paragraph, it states: “Since the Boston project did not involve the construction of a new church, the Third Church complex more completely illustrated this concern of The Mother Church.”

²⁴ Report of Third Church Building Committee, March 1967: “The committee finally chose a local firm here on the home ground who knew the local regulations; one who could be every day on the job during construction; one who had a modest organization and would give personal attention to our project.” The Mother Church hired the same firm a few months later. “In 1966, the Christian Science Board of Directors also signed a contract with same firm”

be too busy with the construction of an expansion of The Mother Church complex in Boston.²⁵

- Third Church cancelled its contract with Chatelain after the membership was unable to agree on his designs; only then did it decide to hire Araldo Cossutta of I. M. Pei & Partners. The decision to choose Cossutta was made entirely by Third Church and was not urged by The Mother Church.²⁶
- The Application falsely connects the editor of the *Christian Science Monitor*, Mr. Erwin D. Canham, to the initiation of the Third Church building. (Application, "Construction of the Third Church Complex and the Christian Science Centennial," paragraph 1.)²⁷
 - Third Church has no records of any involvement by Mr. Canham in the initiation of the Third Church building.
 - Mr. Canham privately criticized the design of both the Church Center in Boston and the 16th and I Streets structures in Washington, D. C. because they "walled out the neighborhood."²⁸
 - In public, Canham never criticized the design for the new Mother Church complex Boston, but he freely criticized the bad ideas that he felt were embodied in the design. While serving as President of The Mother Church, he told the participants in the annual meeting of The Mother Church: "We must not be left by the wayside, preoccupied with ourselves, cloistered behind our own church walls. Our mission is in the world."²⁹

²⁵ Report of Third Church Building Committee, March 1967: "Before we [Third Church of Christ, Scientist, Washington, D. C.] selected our architect, we asked if theirs [The Mother Church] was available, but were given to understand that he was not." See also, "Memo for the Record, Third Church of Christ, Scientist," 29 July 1965: "Pei will be too busy with the Boston project to undertake architectural design for their building in D. C."

²⁶ Special Meeting of the Third Church Board of Trustees with Carl Rechner and Araldo Cossutta, 27 February 1967: In that meeting, Carl Rechner, who was serving as the liaison with The Mother Church stated: "I would like to say that you know that I did not in any sense urge you to select I. M. Pei & Partners."

²⁷ The Application states: "During this period of expansion, Erwin D. Canham, the influential Editor-in-Chief of the prestigious *Christian Science Monitor*, newspaper, consistently advocated a 'more enlightened attitude toward architecture and urban planning,' an attitude which was reflected in these two projects."

²⁸ Interview with Darrow Kirkpatrick, 12 Sept 2007. During the construction of the Church Center in Boston, Mr. Kirkpatrick worked with Mr. Canham as a liaison with the neighborhoods around the Church Center who were protesting the construction of the new facility.

²⁹ Canham, Erwin D., "Address of the Retiring President," *Christian Science Journal*, Vol. 85 No. 7, July 1967, pp. 337-338. He went on to state: "Christian Science does not need to be modernized. It does need to be demonstrated and communicated. It needs to reach human thought with its proof of God's living reality, with its message which awakens into vital spiritual service those who have been asleep in materialism."

Second Claim: That the two buildings at 16th and I Streets were constructed as part of a centennial celebration and are of symbolic importance. (Application, paragraph 4, "Statement of Significance"; and "Construction of the Third Church Structures and the Christian Science Centennial".)³⁰

- **Rebuttal**

- Neither The Mother Church nor Third Church made any effort to identify the structures as a symbol of Christian Science in Washington, D. C. or to celebrate any Christian Science centennial with the construction of the structures at 16th and I Streets.³¹
- Third Church initiated the construction of its new church for four reasons, none of which were symbolic nor tied to any centennial celebration. Those reasons were:
 - Desire to serve workers and visitors to downtown Washington;³²
 - Inadequacy of its existing church building at 13th & L Streets, N.W.;³³
 - Disruptions caused by a fire station across the street from its church building;³⁴
 - Concern that it would lose its church site at 13th & L to urban renewal projects; and³⁵

³⁰ The Application states: "the planning of Washington's Third Church complex was executed as part of the centennial commemorating the founding of the Christian Science faith."

³¹ The Washington structures are never mentioned in the official report of the Annual meeting of The Mother Church in 1966 (*Christian Science Journal*, July 1966, Vol. 84 No. 7, pp. 337-355). Nor are they mentioned in any subsequent report of the Annual Meeting of The Mother Church nor in any subsequent *Christian Science Journal* article.

³² Letter from Board of Trustees, Third Church of Christ, Scientist, Washington, D. C., to Board of Directors, The First Church of Christ, Scientist, Boston Massachusetts, 5 July, 1958: "In addition, a downtown location seems to represent the 'mission' location for the church to a major portion of its members, who for the last several years have preferred the idea of a future church home at 16th and I Streets to our present location." See also, Third Church "Plan of Action," 19 Feb, 1963: "There must be within all of us – within every member of Third Church – a desire and determination to be of service to our community."

³³ Third Church, "Special Committee on Church Building: Report and Recommendations" (no date probably 1954 given content and position in file): "The suggestions for remodeling and repairing our present structure for a permanent church home were carefully considered but it was the opinion of this committee that it would be too costly and entirely unsatisfactory to carry out an extensive remodeling and renovating program on our present church building."

³⁴ Third Church, "Summary of Building Progress," 1965: "We [the Third Church Board] explained the situation regarding the general area, the fire house problem, etc."

³⁵ Letter from Board of Trustees, Third Church of Christ, Scientist, Washington, D. C. to Board of Directors, The First Church of Christ, Scientist, Boston Massachusetts, 5 July, 1958: "Although we [Third Church] have had an architect draw plans for a new edifice (seating approximately 400 persons) on the present site, it did not seem wise to follow through with the building at the time the plans were completed. Washington, as you probably know, is planning urban redevelopment in several areas and our present property is within one of the plans. It seemed well to let the plan develop a little before making a decision."

- Desire to have a smaller church that better fit the size of the congregation. (Not larger, as the application implies.)³⁶
- The timing for the project was based on practical considerations for Third Church, including the ability to sell its structure at 13th and L.³⁷
- When Third Church identified its goals for the “second century of Christian Science,” it framed its goals in terms of practicing its religion and did not mention constructing a new building.³⁸
- The Mother Church did not view the Boston Church Center, much less the construction of a branch church in Washington, in symbolic terms.³⁹
- The founder of the Christian Science Church, Mary Baker Eddy, discouraged church members from viewing church buildings as important.⁴⁰

³⁶ The application reads “for many years Third Church was unable to construct a large or prestigious building to achieve a prominent architectural presence in the national capital...” (p 310.21/3). In fact, the congregation of Third Church desired to build a church that was smaller than the facility at 13th and L (500 vs 900 seats.) Through the 1950s and 1960s, the members were consistent in stating their desire to construct a useful, practical building rather than a prestigious structure. See Third Church, Report of Building Committee (1955 from place in file). “Your committee feels that the new church building should be a modest structure with an auditorium large enough to accommodate between 500 and 600 persons with an adequate Sunday School room and necessary office space.”

³⁷ Third Church, Report of Building Committee, March 1967: “What has sometimes appeared to be frustration and delay has worked out for us a bright prospect.” The Report makes it clear that the timing of the project was determined by many factors, including the attempts to purchase of the land, the hiring of the architects, an attempt to acquire additional land to the west and other issues.

³⁸ See Third Church, Minutes of the Regular Quarterly Meeting of the Membership, 3 January 1967. The Mother Church suggested the nature of those goals in a letter to the local churches: “The purpose of our goals is to meet the spiritual needs of the community that the church is serving; therefore they must be spiritually-impelled. They should serve to uplift thought from the material to the spiritual.” (Letter from the Board of Directors, The First Church of Christ, Scientist, Boston, Massachusetts, to the Executive Board of all Branch Churches and Christian Science Societies, 30 November, 1966.

³⁹ The Boston Center was developed to address practical needs, not as a symbol. “A Message from the Christian Science Board of Directors, Read by Thomas E. Hurley, Chairman, *Christian Science Journal*, Vol 85 No. 7, July 1967, pp. 338-340: “Two years ago it became apparent that the erection of an adequate Administration Building could no longer be postponed if the church were to function efficiently. As plans for the new building developed, an opportunity to make a significant contribution to the community became apparent.”

The church emphasized the practical nature of the Church Center in Boston as the buildings neared completion. “A Message from the Christian Science Board of Directors, Read by Inman H. Douglass, Chairman, *Christian Science Journal*, Vol. 87 No. 7, July 1969, pp. 338-340. “The motivating reason behind the enlargement of the physical facilities of the Church here in Boston isn’t to erect a monument or have a more imposing group of buildings to impress either ourselves or the world. Nor is the motive simply to provide those who work here with an adequate quarters and working conditions, important as that is. The real meaning, then, of our Church Center building program is quite simply this: that our headquarters here in Boston may be equipped to do as effective a job as possible in serving the world – all mankind in every nation.”

⁴⁰ In 1904, Mary Baker Eddy wrote: “Our proper reason for church edifices is, that in them Christians may worship God, - not that Christians may worship church edifices.” Eddy, Mary Baker, *The First Church of Christ, Scientist and Miscellany*, Christian Science Publishing Society, Boston, Massachusetts, p. 162.

- **Supporting Points**

- The two structures at 16th and I Streets were pushed into a single project in 1967, a year after the Annual Meeting of The Mother Church that the Application identifies as “the Christian Science Centennial.”⁴¹
- Cossutta became the architect in 1967, after Third Church had ended its relationship with Leon Chatelain, as noted above.
- The first connection between the two buildings was a common HVAC system.⁴²
- By the time that Cossutta joined the project, all parties were aware that they would have to work together to minimize costs⁴³ and to place two separate buildings on the single tax lot (see text related to footnote 21).

Third Claim: That the structures at 16th and I Streets are an important example of modernist architecture, and that certain aspects of the Church architecture are representative of Christian Science. (See Application, “Christian Science and Church Architecture”.)⁴⁴

- **Rebuttal**

- The final architect for the project, Araldo Cossutta, has denied that the buildings were inspired by either Christian Science or the writings of Mary Baker Eddy.⁴⁵
- The points that support this claim are not based on either a consistent understanding of Christian Science theology or any practical experience with the structures at 16th and I Streets, as noted in the examples below.
- If anything, the Application presents an optimistic view of the structures that misrepresents their connection to Christian Science, their effect upon

⁴¹ Letter from Third Church Board of Trustees to Carl Rechner, 17 March 1967.

⁴² Third Church agreed to the connection on 17 March 1967. See Letter from Third Church Board of Trustees to Carl Rechner, 17 March 1967: “On March 15, the board members agreed that Third Church will be willing to have its heating and air-conditioning shared in an equitable manner with The Mother Church building if it seems feasible to The Mother Church.”

⁴³ Special Meeting of the Third Church Board of Trustees with Carl Rechner and Araldo Cossutta, 27 February, 1967. Carl Rechner: “we have to design the kind of building that will fit the pocketbook. We are not dealing with the affluence of The Mother Church. This is a big step for Third Church. . . . If these people [the members of Third Church] build on this basis they are going to borrow. If they start to build tomorrow, they would have to borrow close to a half a million. That is an enormous thing for them. They are still short a half million. We deal in complete frankness and I want you to know this.”

⁴⁴ The Application states: “The broad expanses of unadorned wall surface and interior orientation of Third Church have their basis in doctrinal constraints as much as in stylistic predilections.”

⁴⁵ Interview with Araldo Cossutta, New York, 18 September, 2007.

the people who interact with them, and the response that they have drawn from critics.

- *Example 1:* The Application claims: “The emphasis on inward spirituality is exhibited in the windowless auditorium, which is naturally illuminated by skylights, and the orientation of the church toward the plaza rather than the street.” (Application, “Christian Science and Church Architecture”, paragraph 4.)
 - The skylights do not provide enough light to “naturally illumine” the main floor of the auditorium, even at noon in midsummer. One cannot read a hymnal much less conduct a service without artificial lights that are noisy, expensive and difficult to maintain.
 - Neither the Bible nor the writings of the church founder, Mary Baker Eddy, support a passive “inner spirituality” in Christianity or a connection between spirituality and a dark, windowless auditorium or a door that turns away from the street.
 - The location of the church’s door on the plaza was vigorously opposed by the members of the church. They accepted it reluctantly when Cossutta claimed that moving it would spoil his vision.⁴⁶
- *Example 2:* The Application identifies the plaza between the office building and Third Church as “a key feature in the design of the structures” and claims that “[t]he octagonal shape of the church permits easy circulation around it and invites people into the plaza area.” (Application, “Design Analysis of the Third Church and Christian Science Monitor Building,” paragraph 3.)
 - The plaza does not “invite” people to pass through it. Pedestrians rarely explore it, as they are faced by a blank concrete wall on the west side. There is nothing to draw pedestrians into the plaza.
 - Beyond those attending the church or entering the Monitor Building, the only people who freely enter the plaza are the homeless, who sleep in the doorway, unseen by most passers by, or who use the dark corridor by the church.
 - The plaza does not “permit easy circulation”, as the natural circulation of pedestrians goes against the shape of the walkways defined by the garden. The poor design is emphasized by the dirt path worn across the garden by valets for a parking service who frequently cross the plaza as a short-cut between 16th and I Streets. To correct the defect, the path has been bricked over.
- *Example 3:* The Application claims that “In scale and composition, the complex is skillfully designed to steer the eye towards the church, which,

⁴⁶ Third Church Notes on Teleconference with Carl Rechner, 1 Feb, 1968: The location of the entrance “is impractical and does not welcome the public, Carl believes, and here he feels that Mr. Cossutta should be asked to yield to our desires and make an entrance facing Sixteenth Street.” Third Church, Minutes of Meeting with Araldo Cossutta of I. M. Pei and Partners, 28 February 1968. The Minutes record the church’s request that: “The entry should be placed closer to 16th Street.”

according to Cossutta, is 'put into focus' against the backdrop of the taller Monitor building. (Application, "Design Analysis of the Third Church and Christian Science Monitor Building," paragraph 2.)

- In fact, from ground level on 16th Street, the eye is immediately drawn to the triangular shaped park, which points directly at the door of the office building.
- The front door of the church is invisible from three of the four approaches to the church (See note 44).
- *Example 4:* The Application claims that: "Even von Eckhardt praised the design of Third Church's interior for its skillful utilization of natural light." (Application, "Design Analysis of the Third Church and Christian Science Monitor Building," paragraph 6.)
 - The Application's statement is incorrect. In fact, Von Eckhardt could not have seen the interior of the church when he wrote his review because the building had not been completed. The actual quote from von Eckhardt is: "The interior may, in fact, turn out to be quite beautiful when the building is completed next spring." ⁴⁷
 - In fact, von Eckhardt's review was overwhelmingly negative: ". . . I can't help but feel that all this promising drama might have been expressed with far more humility and far less brutality." ⁴⁸

CONCLUSION: The Application fails to demonstrate that the structures at 16th and I Streets, N.W. warrant historic landmark designation. In particular:

- The Third Church building is not part of any national church movement, but a local church built to serve a local organization.
- The Third Church building was not connected to any "Christian Science Centennial" and has no symbolic importance derived from such connection.
- As the home of a local church of Christian Science, the Third Church building has no more symbolic importance than any other Christian Science local church.
- The Third Church building together with the Monitor Building is not an exemplary example of modernist architecture as it has not passed the common standard of the test of time. In fact represents a failed attempt to apply modernist principles to a church building.

For these reasons, Third Church of Christ, Scientist requests that the application for the landmarking of its building at 16th and I Streets NW, be withdrawn or denied.

⁴⁷ Von Eckhardt, Wolf, "New Church Design: 'Rude, Brutal, Military, Uncivilized'," *Washington Post*, 28 Nov, 1970, p B1.

⁴⁸ *ibid.*