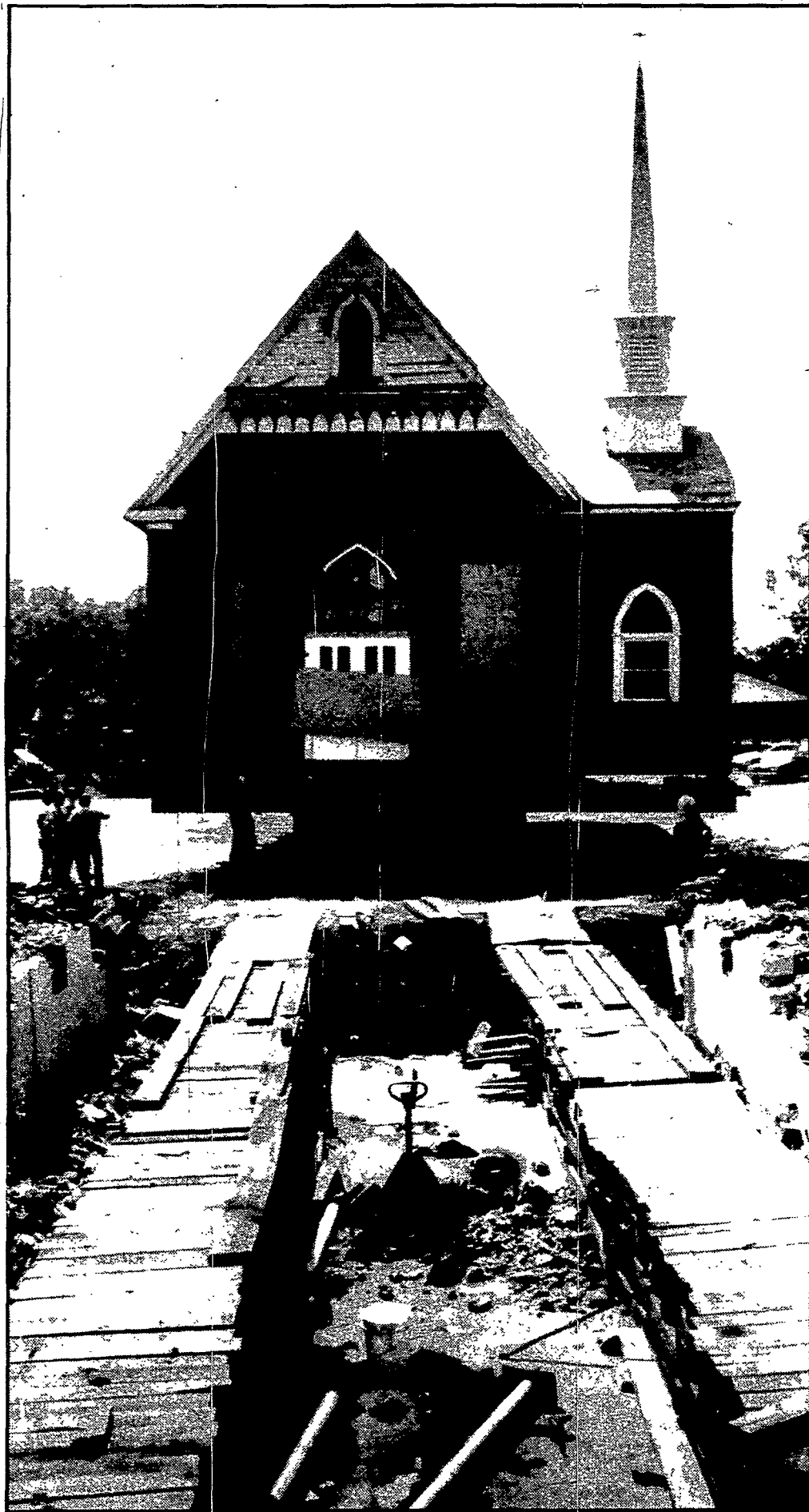
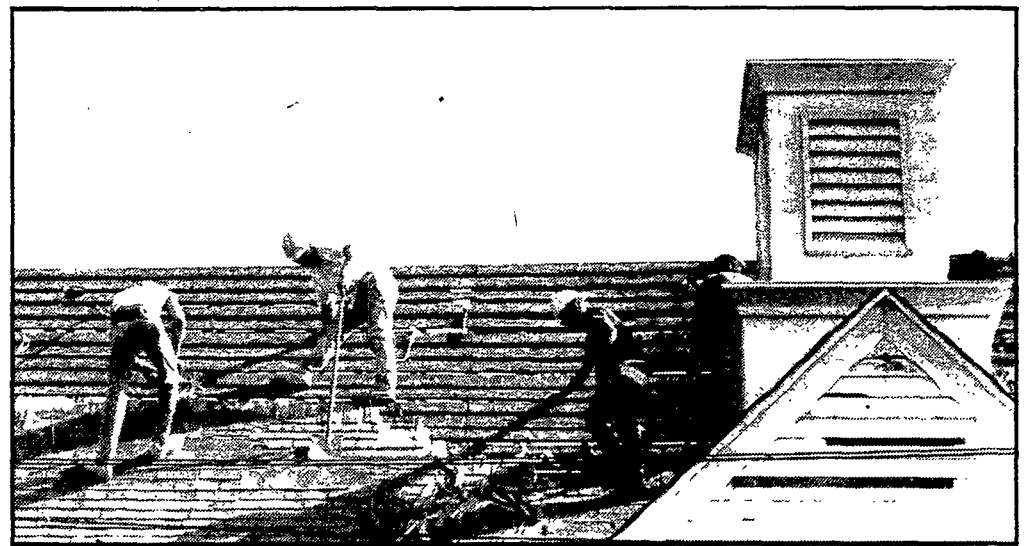


Robert A. Healy, an architect with LaBella Associates, has created an interconnected complex for St. Catherine's of Siena Church in Mendon. In addition to using preexisting buildings for the complex, he designed a new church.



In an effort to preserve the old edifice within the structure of the new church, St. Catherine of Siena's original building was moved 200 yards.



Workmen prepare the roof of the old church before the move.



A sign directs visitors to the church.

Courier photos
by
Philip Archer

Holy rollers!

Old church makes a move

MENDON — Things are really moving in Mendon these days — including churches.

In an effort to preserve the old edifice within the structure of the new church, St. Catherine of Siena's original building has been moved 200 yards.

According to Father Charles J. Latus, pastor, work crews placed the 90-year-old church on wheels June 28 and completed the move July 1. The edifice was placed over the new foundation on July 3, and Father Latus said the church should be firmly set on the foundation by July 12.

Father Latus said the parish decided to incorporate the old church into a new structure after a committee reassessed the needs of the parish community three years ago. In addition to discovering that the parish needed a larger worship space to accommodate the more than 950 parish families, the committee saw the necessity to increase classroom space to meet the needs of the 450 religious-education students.

The priest added that — over the last eight years — an average of five to eight new families have joined the parish each month.

"It's not a huge development, but steady growth. And the potential of the area is enormous," Father Latus said.

The pastor noted that the main goal of the building project is to maintain the tradition and history of worship at St. Catherine's Church.

"We wanted to preserve the sense of closeness and participation of the old church but in a much bigger space," explained Father Latus, who has served as pastor of St. Catherine's for five years.

The new church building, which will accommodate approximately 600 people,

will connect the already existing community center with the original edifice. The complex will span more than 14,000 square feet.

The vaulted ceiling, stained-glass windows, wainscoting and front entranceway from the old church will all be restored, according to Father Latus.

The parish, which has been attending Mass under the Enright Community Pavilion, is scheduled to move into the new church on Labor Day weekend.

Although the moving of the church has caused some inconveniences for parishioners, Father Latus said most of the parish has expressed excitement over the new church.

Elena Lombardo, who has been a parishioner at St. Catherine's for more than 20 years, said she was pleased with the project.

"It seems kind of strange to see our little church gone from where it's always been, but once it is done it will be beautiful," said Lombardo.

Charlie Doran said he was glad of the decision to preserve the old church building.

"I think it is marvelous that it will be restored, kept and part of the new church," said Doran, a parishioner of St. Catherine's for 11 years.

And even though Sherry Strammiello has only been a parishioner for two years, she also expressed her gratification over incorporating the old with the new.

"It is important to maintain the history of the St. Catherine's community," remarked Strammiello. "It blends in beautifully and I think we are all proud of the effort that the parish has made."

— Barbara Ann Homick



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