

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

STATE:
COUNTY:
FOR NPS USE ONLY
ENTRY DATE
JUL 24 1975

1. NAME

COMMON: Mt. Zion United Methodist Church (Within the boundaries of the Georgetown	Historic District)
AND/OR HISTORIC:	

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER: 1334 - 29th Street, N.W.			
CITY OR TOWN: Washington		CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT: Walter E. Fauntroy, District of Columbia	
STATE District of Columbia	CODE 11	COUNTY: District of Columbia	CODE 001

3. CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
<input type="checkbox"/> District <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Building <input type="checkbox"/> Site <input type="checkbox"/> Structure <input type="checkbox"/> Object	<input type="checkbox"/> Public <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Private <input type="checkbox"/> Both	Public Acquisition: <input type="checkbox"/> In Process <input type="checkbox"/> Being Considered	<input type="checkbox"/> Occupied <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress
PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)			
<input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural	<input type="checkbox"/> Government	<input type="checkbox"/> Park	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation
<input type="checkbox"/> Commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> Industrial	<input type="checkbox"/> Private Residence	<input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Educational	<input type="checkbox"/> Military	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Religious	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> Museum	<input type="checkbox"/> Scientific	_____

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY

OWNER'S NAME: Mt. Zion United Methodist Church		
STREET AND NUMBER: 1334 - 29th Street, N.W.		
CITY OR TOWN: Washington	STATE: District of Columbia	CODE 11

5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.: Recorder of Deeds		
STREET AND NUMBER: Sixth and D Streets, N.W.		
CITY OR TOWN: Washington	STATE: District of Columbia	CODE 11

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE OF SURVEY: District of Columbia's Inventory of Historic Sites		
DATE OF SURVEY: June 27, 1974 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Federal <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> State <input type="checkbox"/> County <input type="checkbox"/> Local		
DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS: joint District of Columbia/National Capital Planning Commission Historic Preservation Office		
STREET AND NUMBER: National Capital Planning Commission 1325 G Street, N.W.		
CITY OR TOWN: Washington	STATE: District of Columbia	CODE 11

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

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7. DESCRIPTION

CONDITION	(Check One)					
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> Good	<input type="checkbox"/> Fair	<input type="checkbox"/> Deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> Ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> Unexposed
	(Check One)			(Check One)		
	<input type="checkbox"/> Altered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unaltered	<input type="checkbox"/> Moved	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Original Site		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Mt. Zion United Methodist Church faces west at 1334 29th Street, N.W. within the boundaries of the Georgetown Historic District. The church is a simple, brick building with "Gothic" decorative elements which give a feeling of dignity and verticality to the main entrance facade.

The Mt. Zion Church is two stories high except on the east where the addition does not extend to the full height of the rear elevation. The building is about 50 feet wide by 75 feet deep, with a 15 foot rear addition (which was added in 1904). The facade was originally smooth-faced brick which has been sandblasted and repointed. The brick is laid in common bond with a brick belt course at the level of the main window sills and at the spring level of the tower windows.

The front facade is divided into three main bays, a central entrance bay flanked by tower bays. The central bay consists of an entrance door and two 3/2 light sash windows of colored leaded glass. These have flat hood molds with sandstone keystones. The entrance door is modern but the jambs and soffit are original with moulded panels; the door is framed by pilaster strips and a pointed arch. Above the door is a tympanum with a two-light colored glass window. On the second story is the large central window flanked by two lancet windows of triple sash with 3/2/2-lights, all of colored glass with a decorative geometric pattern and divided by wooden mullions. The lower portion of the central window consists of two 2/2-light windows supporting a horizontal strip defined by eight shallow pointed arches (which correspond to the interior balcony). From this rises a 16 pane lancet window with the same hood molding and keystone as is found in the other arches. Directly above the arch in the apex of the gable is a small, pointed arch ventilator. The side towers rise from each side of the building and form a parapet for the lower slope of the gable roof which is hidden behind them. The fenestration on each tower is identical. On the ground floor are three blind pointed arches with sandstone sills and keystones, and on the second story of each tower is one lancet window of colored glass with 3/2/2-lights and the same moulding and keystone as the other arches.

The walls of each side are red brick laid in common bond with headers every seven rows. The basement is lighted by seven 6/6-light clear sash with tudor arch heads. All have red painted stone sills. At the sanctuary level, are found six triple sash windows with 3/2/2-light color glass panes. Spaced between these windows are buttress pilaster strips approximately 21 inches wide. Also found on the side facades are star tie bars. There are four eight-pointed tie rod stars on the balcony level and three five-pointed stars on the sanctuary floor level. In the western addition, there are windows at the second floor level, each 1/1 sash; the eastern one is clear glass with a tudor arch and the western one has leaded colored glass with a pointed arch. Both have moulded wooden frames.

The corbeled brick entablature supports a sheet metal cornice painted white which is crowned by a finial in the shape of two double volutes at the peak of the gable. The east-west gable roof is covered with slate and the

(Continued on Form 10-300a)

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- | | | | |
|--|---------------------------------------|--|---------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pre-Columbian | <input type="checkbox"/> 16th Century | <input type="checkbox"/> 18th Century | <input type="checkbox"/> 20th Century |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 15th Century | <input type="checkbox"/> 17th Century | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 19th Century | |

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known) **constructed 1876-1884**

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- | | | | |
|--|---|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal | <input type="checkbox"/> Education | <input type="checkbox"/> Political | <input type="checkbox"/> Urban Planning |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Prehistoric | <input type="checkbox"/> Engineering | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Religion/Philosophy | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Historic | <input type="checkbox"/> Industry | <input type="checkbox"/> Science | <u>Black History</u> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture | <input type="checkbox"/> Invention | <input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture | _____ |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Landscape Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Social/Humanitarian | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Art | <input type="checkbox"/> Literature | <input type="checkbox"/> Theater | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Commerce | <input type="checkbox"/> Military | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Communications | <input type="checkbox"/> Music | | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Conservation | | | _____ |

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Joint Committee on Landmarks has designated the Mt. Zion United Methodist Church a Category II Landmark of importance which contributes significantly to the cultural heritage and visual beauty of the District of Columbia. The establishment of the congregation of the Mt. Zion Church dates to 1814, which makes it the oldest Black Church in Georgetown and one of the oldest Black churches in the District of Columbia. Mt. Zion has been thought to have been a station in the underground railroad, and the church records give some credence to this supposition. The present structure, which was constructed between 1876 and 1884 with the help of members of the congregation, is a simple, brick church with Gothic decorative elements. The visual interest provided by the articulation of the facade of the church and the scale of the structure make it a contributing element in the Georgetown Historic District.

The establishment of separate Black or Negro Methodist churches began in the early 19th century in the Middle Atlantic region when Black members split from the Methodist church and formed congregations consisting of both freedmen and slaves. This is true of the early history of Mt. Zion whose members originally formed part of the congregation of the Montgomery Street Methodist Church (now the Dumbarton Avenue Methodist Church). The Black members of this congregation elected to form their own church and on June 3, 1814, purchased a lot 35' x 50' on Mill Street (now 27th Street) from Henry Foxall, a Methodist church leader. The group, known as the Colored Members of the Georgetown Station, erected a church which was variously called "The Ark" and the "Meeting House" until 1844 when it was renamed Mt. Zion. The congregation did not have a Black minister, however, until the Reverend John Brice was appointed in 1864.

The church has long been alleged to have been a station in the underground railroad system, an allegation which is somewhat substantiated by an examination of the church records. The following is an analysis taken from HABS records (see bibliography):

Continued on Form 10-300a)

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

"Mt. Zion United Methodist Church," Georgetown Architecture--Northwest Washington, District of Columbia, Historic American Buildings Survey Selections, Number 10, issued jointly by the Commission of Fine Arts and the Historic American Buildings Survey, 1970, pp. 98-116.

Beyond the Fireworks of '76- A Study of Historic Sites in the District of Columbia of Special Significance to Afro-Americans, prepared by the Afro-American Bicentennial Corporation, December, 1972, pp. 52-55.

(Continued on Form 10-300a)

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY			LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES		
CORNER	LATITUDE	LONGITUDE	LATITUDE		LONGITUDE
	Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees	Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds
NW	° ' "	° ' "	°	' "	° ' "
NE	° ' "	° ' "	UTM REFERENCE		
SE	° ' "	° ' "	18/320,500/4,308,360		
SW	° ' "	° ' "	UTM OK HL		

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: **5,310 square feet. .121 acre**

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE:
Suzanne Ganschinietz Architectural Historian

ORGANIZATION **joint District of Columbia/National Capital Planning Commission Historic Preservation Office** DATE **October 29, 1974**

STREET AND NUMBER: **National Capital Planning Commission
1325 G Street, N.W.**

CITY OR TOWN: **Washington** STATE **District of Columbia** CODE **11**

12 STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION

As the designated State Liaison Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:

National State Local

Name [Signature]
Acting Director, Office of
Title Housing and Community Development

Date 6-25-75

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register.

[Signature]
Director, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

Date 7/24/75

ATTEST:
[Signature]
Keeper of The National Register

Date JUL 24 1975

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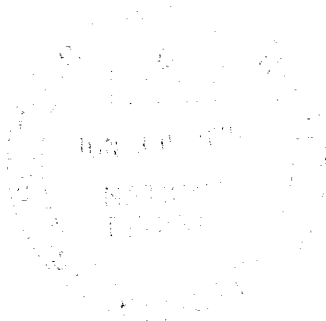
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7. Description - Continued

west addition has a standing seam roof. There are two chimneys.

The church consists of two stories, a lower level which contains a large lecture room and an upper level containing the sanctuary. The lecture room is approximately 51 feet by 48 feet and is divided into four east-west sections by three rows of cast-iron columns. The sanctuary is reached by two stairways which rise from the entrance hall to the upper vestibule. The main sanctuary is a rectangular hall approximately 61 feet by 47 feet. Within the sanctuary there is a balcony supported on columns which projects about 12 feet on each side and about 8 feet on the rear. The outer face of the balcony is decorated with applique gothic arches allegedly done by members of the congregation. The ceiling is the most notable part of the interior; it is composed of pressed tin tracery in 2 foot square panels with a deep cove around the edge.



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8. Significance - Continued

The first volume of records, A Register of the Colored Members of the Methodist Episcopal Church in Georgetown Station covers the period of 1830 to 1850. Lists of members' names are recorded with remarks mostly relevant to their attendance at church meetings. Many of the names are followed by remarks such as "gone away", "taken away," "cannot be found," "lost," "sold to the South," "sold and gone," or simply "sold" "...

In the second volume of the church records, dated from 1850 to 1865, there were more frequent remarks of "gone home," "sold off" or "escaped."

The HABS account also quotes from an article in the Pittsburgh Courier, July 24, 1948, which gives the following explanation for the remarks: " 'Gone away' " meant that the individual had been sent by Underground Railroad to Harper's Ferry and then to Canada...; 'taken away' meant one had come into the hands of patrollers; 'lost' indicated a mysterious and often tragic disappearance."

The Mt. Zion Church also provided educational services for its parishioners. A well-attended school existed at the church from 1840 until just before the Civil War. In 1864 a teacher for Blacks was sent to the church by the Pennsylvania Freedmen's Relief Association; the staff was shortly expanded to three, and the school enjoyed a large attendance.

In the 1830 City Directory the church was described as "a small brick building on Mill Street..." It was remodeled in 1856 to accommodate the large and growing congregation which numbered 549 as early as 1844. In 1875 the congregation elected to build a new church and to locate on a new site. Although the church had \$2,560 invested in the Freedmen's Savings Bank, the bank failed in 1874 leaving the church with only \$486. The members proceeded to raise new funds and the present site was purchased from Alfred Pope in July of 1875 for \$2,581. The cornerstone was first laid in July of 1876, and relaid in May of 1880. The members bought their own materials and did their own contracting thus saving on construction costs. At the time of construction, there was some dissension among the members, and one group split off from the Mt. Zion congregation and formed the African Methodist Episcopal Church at 26th and P Streets, with the Reverend James T. Morris as its first pastor. This, however, did not appear to diminish the congregation of the Mt. Zion Church.

The first services were held in the lecture room of the new building on October 31, 1880, although this room was not completed until 1882, and the building at that time had no roof. In 1883 galleries were installed, and the church was finished with wainscoting, plaster and a furnace. By July 6, 1884, the rest of the church furniture was in place and the building was dedicated.

(Continued on Form 10-300a)

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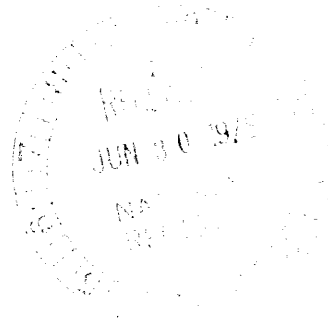
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8. Significance - Continued

The church has maintained its strength and congregation throughout the changing residential patterns of Georgetown. Although many of its 350 members no longer live in Georgetown, they continue to worship at this church, providing continuity to one of the oldest congregations in the District of Columbia.



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9. Bibliography - Continued

"The First Negro Churches in the District of Columbia", The Journal of Negro History, Volume VII, No. 1 January, 1922, pp. 64-105.

Church records, Mount Zion United Methodist Church.

