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United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

MAY 25 1993

National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form

NATIONAL
REGISTER

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the Instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name First Presbyterian Church

other names/site number First Presbyterian Church, USA

2. Location

street & number 210 North Spring Street not for publication

city or town Murfreesboro vicinity

state Tennessee code TN county Rutherford code 149 zip code 37130

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant nationally statewide locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Herbert L. Byers 5/19/93
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer, Tennessee Historical Commission
State of Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

- entered in the National Register. See continuation sheet.
- determined eligible for the National Register See continuation sheet.
- determined not eligible for the National Register.
- removed from the National Register.
- other, (explain:)

Signature of the Keeper

Helene Byers

Entered in the
National Register

Date of Action

6/24/93

First Presbyterian Church
Name of Property

Rutherford County, TN
County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

Category of Property
(Check only one box)

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Number of Resources within Property
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	buildings
		sites
		structures
		objects
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	Total

Name of related multiple property listing
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

N/A

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

RELIGION/religious facility

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

RELIGION/religious facility

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)

Classical Revival

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation LIMESTONE

walls BRICK

roof ASPHALT, RUBBER

other SHEET METAL, WOOD, ALUMINUM, STEEL, CAST IRON

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

First Presbyterian Church
Name of Property

Rutherford County, TN
County and State

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations
(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B removed from its original location.
- C a birthplace or grave.
- D a cemetery.
- E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F a commemorative property.
- G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

Architecture

Period of Significance

1914

Significant Dates

1914

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Maugans and Bell

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS): N/A

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository:

Center for Historic Preservation
Middle Tennessee State University

First Presbyterian Church
Name of Property

Rutherford County, TN
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreege of Property Less than one acre

Murfreesboro 315SW

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1 11 6 5 5 5 1 2 10 3 19 6 16 9 14 10
Zone Easting Northing
2

3
Zone Easting Northing
4

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Lauren Batte and Gail Reed

organization Center for Historic Preservation date December 22, 1992

street & number Box 80, MTSU telephone (615) 898-2947

city or town Murfreesboro state TN zip code 37132

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A Sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative black and white photographs of the property.

Additional items

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

name First Presbyterian Church, Ernest Hooper, Clerk of the Session

street & number 210 North Spring Street telephone (615) 893-3882

city or town Murfreesboro state TN zip code 37130

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 *et seq.*).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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Architectural Description

The First Presbyterian Church is located on the corner of College Street and Spring Street in Murfreesboro, Tennessee, in Rutherford County. The building, constructed in 1914, is an excellent example of the Classical Revival style of architecture. The common bond brick church is a rectangular building, two stories high over a raised basement, with a rusticated stone foundation, painted white, under a limestone stringcourse. The roof is flat and covered with new asphalt shingles. A square metal truss system supports the roof and ceiling, with wood used as a support for the dome, located in the center of the roof. The complex roof structure has cross gables terminating in a flat rubber membrane roof and surmounted by a truncated octagonal roof which supports the barrel of the dome. The dome is covered with standing seam sheet metal with a lantern on top. The base of the dome is also covered in sheet metal. A sanctus bell is mounted on the roof in the rear of the structure, with a wood cover forming a bell cot for protection. The name of John Gallager, Pittsburg, is printed on the bell.

According to church history, the bell was originally located in the steeple of an earlier Presbyterian Church on Vine Street. That building was destroyed by federal troops during the Civil War. The bell was saved by a young man by the name of McFadden, and hidden in the basement of a grocery store. It was later installed in the 1867 Church after the War. When the tornado struck the building in 1913, the bell crashed from the roof into the sanctuary. It was later placed on the roof of the 1914 building.

A brick wall may be seen emerging at the rear of the main church building, between the 1914 structure and the 1959 addition. This wall is most likely the rear wall of the 1867 Gothic Revival church which was heavily damaged in a tornado in 1913. The entablature of the roof is covered with sheet metal, and painted white. The frieze is decorated with a bull's-eye and indented rectangular design, with dentils just below the cornice. The pedimented side gables on the east and west, are indented with a cartouche design in the center. The front facade gable has a stained glass oculus window in the center of the pediment with scroll work on either side in triangular frames. At the apex of the pediment is a triangular cap decorated with scroll work which further extends the verticality of the

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pediment. A parapet wall above the cornice extends out from either side of the central pediment. The south or front facade of the church faces College Street. A center recessed and raised portico is approached from the sidewalk at street level up a flight of eight limestone steps. The recessed portico is supported by four cast iron columns topped with Ionic Capitals. The entablature above the four columns identifies the building as "A.D. First Presbyterian Church 1914." Inside the portico are three double wood doors which face the south. Each of the doors is divided into four panels. Three of the panels have a bull's-eye design, while the second panel from the top has a single pane of glass for viewing. Above each of the three double doors is a 1:2 sash window with stained glass. Hidden from view from the street are two other doors which also provide entrance into the church from the portico. Single wooden doors, each with three wood panels and one glass panel, provide access to the east and west anterooms on the eastern and western side of the portico. Each of the three double doors and the eastern and western doors off of the portico are surrounded by brick patterning.

Flanking the portico on the front facade are double doors, on the east and west, which provided access to the sanctuary from the street level. Each door has a limestone surround and is topped by a projecting entablature supported by two stone brackets. A fixed light with stained glass is located on the second floor over each street level door. According to an old photograph, the original doors were identical to the wood panel doors on the portico, with three wood panels with bull's eye design and a pane of glass for viewing in the panel that is second from the top. Today these street level doors on the front of the building have been replaced by solid metal fire escape doors which can not be used from the exterior, but can be exited through in case of an emergency from the interior.

The asymmetrical west side of the building, which faces Spring Street, has nine bays and three projections. The center projection has a cross gable roof and four brick pilasters, with limestone plinths resting on top of the rusticated foundation and limestone capitals. Three arches between the engaged columns are topped by limestone keystones and voussoirs. Each of the three arches contains a four paneled stained glass window, covered with a vinyl protective cover.

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The southwest projection on the west elevation is the same width as the area flanking the front portico and contains one over one sash stained glass windows on the first and second floors. A recessed wall north of the southwest projection contains one over one sash stained glass windows on the first and second floors.

North of the center projection on the west elevation is another recessed section that contains a single wood door which is topped by a semi-elliptical stained glass light. A one over one sash stained glass window is located on the ground floor, and two one over one sash stained glass windows are on the second floor.

The northern projection of the western facade is hexagonal in shape with one over one sash windows on the ground and second floor, facing southwest. A vertical line of honeycomb brickwork marks the divisions between each of the hexagonal sides. Each window is surrounded by brick patterning.

The eastern facade of the 1914 church is identical to the western facade. All of the windows on the western and eastern facade have a limestone apron, and brick pattern work around the door and windows.

The rear addition, built in 1959, is a rectangular building which is connected to the 1914 Church auditorium by a recessed connecting wing that covers the apse/chancel area. The eastern facade of the recessed section is identical to the western recessed facade in every way, except that a concrete handicap accessible ramp with rails has been built leading up to the door on the eastern side. The roof is flat, covered with asphalt shingles and with aluminum gutters and downspouts. The east side of the connecting wing, built directly flush with the rear wall of the 1914 building, is brick, with double doors, and three replacement aluminum one over one double sash windows on the ground floor and three steel one over one double sash windows on the second floor. A large stationary steel window with six lights is located directly over the double doors on the second floor. A flat aluminum canopy extends out over the double doors supported by two aluminum posts on the eastern side. All of the

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windows have a limestone apron, which mirrors the window aprons on the 1914 Church.

The rear of the brick addition is rectangular with a flat roof. The symmetrical east facade has three pairs of ground floor double hung aluminum sash windows and three pairs of double hung steel sash windows on the second floor.

The rear northern facade is symmetrical with, from north to south, a pair of double hung sash aluminum windows; a double aluminum fire exit door, with one side closed off, with a stationary rectangular light over the door; a pair of small vertical double hung sash windows; another double aluminum fire exit door, with one side closed off, with a stationary rectangular light over the door; two pairs of double hung aluminum sash windows, and four projecting squares of brick to balance the large stationary steel window above with eight lights.

On the second floor of the rear northern facade are two pairs of double hung steel sash windows; followed by two small vertical steel sash windows; followed by three pairs of double hung steel sash windows and then the stationary eight light window, which lights up the interior stair well. The rear or northern facade has three vertical aluminum downspouts. Loading ramps, which consist of concrete slabs with metal railing are located at each of the two double metal exit doors.

The western rear facade of the 1959 addition, which fronts on Spring Street, is three bays, with six squares of brick patterning work projecting out from the facade on the ground and second floor. Recessed double wood doors are protected by a metal canopy. A pair of one over one double sash steel windows are centered over the door on the second floor. To the south of this double door, triple one over one double sash steel windows are located on the first and second floors. One over one steel double sash windows are located around the corner of this section on the first and second floors, facing south.

The main auditorium of the church is entered either through one of the triple doors at the front or east facade or through single doors on the east and west side of the portico. These side doors enter into identical anterooms on each side of the portico. Each of the anterooms contains a

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door which leads into the main auditorium, and a stairwell which leads up to the gallery or down into the basement. The interior of the church auditorium is rectangular with plaster walls and a coffered ceiling. It retains its 1914 interior, with only the light fixtures, carpeting, and the addition of wallboard to the north wall of the choir area dating to the early 1960's. Dark wood wainscoting is found around the lower portion of the auditorium. The dark stain of the wood mirrors the other woodwork found throughout the auditorium, and is in the Arts and Crafts Style of decoration. The east and west walls are pierced by three large arched stained glass windows. All six of the large windows are framed by Ionic columns. Four of the windows contain a diamond pattern with a fleur-de-lis and medallion design, and are topped with a cartouche. The center window on the east and west sides depicts Jesus in different poses. In the center window on the west, Jesus is standing with outstretched arms. In the center window on the east, Jesus is flanked by a flock of sheep and is holding a lamb in his arms. Easter lilies are found at the bottom of all six windows. There are two stained glass windows on the ground floor and two directly above them on the second floor, located to the north and south of the three large stained glass windows. The rear of the auditorium is lighted by the six lights from the three paired entry doors and three stained glass windows above the rear gallery. The stained glass throughout the auditorium is in green, gold, and brown tones.

The choir, located on the north side of the auditorium, is set back and flanked by double wood French doors with diamond panes. Two engaged columns topped with Ionic capitals are located on either side of the choir. Also flanking the recessed choir are two more engaged columns topped with Ionic capitals and two wood French doors with four vertical lights and a four light transom across the top. These doors open out onto two wood choir balconies with metal railing in a semi-circle shape. These choir balconies are supported by two decorative brackets which mirror the Ionic capitals found throughout the auditorium.

The north wall of the auditorium, where wallboard was added in the 1960's behind the choir, holds the organ pipes and chimes. A low dark wood railing separates the choir from the pulpit area. This low railing has been topped by a metal rail with fabric inserts. The floor of the choir is

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wood and is built in two layers, giving the rear row a higher position than the first row. Wood doors lead to the rear anterooms on either side of the recessed choir. The pulpit area is raised above the auditorium floor in front of the choir and is carpeted like the rest of the auditorium floor.

On the east and west sides of the north wall of the main auditorium are wood doors with a single light which lead into two rear anterooms. Metal fire exit doors lead to the street and a short staircase leads up to the choir. A hallway leads further north to offices and storage rooms on either side. The offices are located in the hexagonal shaped area at the rear of the 1914 structure. Each has a fireplace with cast iron firescreen and plain wood mantel on the outer wall. Stained glass windows are located on either side of the fireplace. This sequence of rooms is repeated on the second story above in the hexagonal shaped area. The hexagon then holds four matching offices, two on each side, with fireplaces and stained glass windows. The office on the second floor of the west side has an additional single leaf pocket door which leads to a room above the auditorium and choir. This is the room that one must enter in order to exit onto the small choir balconies. Double french doors with diamond panes open out onto the choir area from here also. This arrangement is repeated on the east side as well.

Three stained glass windows pierce the east and west walls of the auditorium. This main room has engaged columns with Ionic capitals at the four corners. A wide cornice is located around the top of the plastered walls. Ten gold light fixtures hang in the main room of the auditorium from the coffered ceiling. The center of the ceiling contains the recessed area of the dome.

Dark wood pews, probably dating to 1914, are placed in three sections separated by two aisles. The carpeted floor gradually slants down from south to north in this room. The original wood floor is extant. The auditorium was carpeted in the 1960's.

A wood gallery, located in a recessed section, and protected by a wood and brass rail, which mirrors the choir rail, is located on the south side of the auditorium on the second floor. This area can be reached by two sets of stairs

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located in the anterooms on each side of the front portico. Double wood doors at the top of the gallery are found on the east and west side, which lead to the stairs. The gallery backs up to the south wall of the church and the top portion of the three front stained glass windows can be seen rising above the seats. Stained glass windows also light up the east and west walls of the gallery. Two small engaged columns with Ionic capitals are found on the south wall, which mirror the larger ones on the east and west walls of the main auditorium. The gallery, supported by iron columns, provides a cover for the entrance area to the main auditorium. Five doors are located on the first floor under the gallery on the south wall. The three center doors lead to the portico. There are two sets of double wood doors with matching single lights which lead to the anterooms on either side of the portico. Stained glass windows are located on the first floor under the gallery on the east and west sides. Lighting is provided to the gallery and to the area under the gallery by ceiling fixtures which are similar in design to the hanging fixtures, but smaller in detail.

From the stairs in the front anterooms, one enters the basement on the south side of the 1914 building. The main room of the basement of the auditorium has paneled walls and carpeted floors. The ceiling, supported by metal poles, has been lowered. These alterations probably took place at the time of the 1959 addition. You can see portions of the original board ceiling on the east and west sides of the room. Wood ceiling panels cover heating ducts or pipes. The ceiling has a tract which could provide support for partitions to separate the large room into smaller rooms, if needed. A furnace room is located on the north side of the room. Storage rooms are located on the south side. Four wood casement windows are located on the east and west walls of this room. These windows have been covered with protective iron bars on the outside.

A hallway leads from the north side of the main room of the basement to a library on the east and restrooms and storage room on the west of the hallway. At this point, one enters the 1959 addition to the building. A hall way, running east and west separates the 1914 building from the 1959 building. Across the hall, heading north, are the kitchen and dining area.

The 1959 addition has stairs on the north and south.

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The first floor of the 1959 addition has three classrooms, one of which can be divided with a partition to make an extra room, a chapel, a room for the heating and air conditioning equipment, and a storage room.

The second floor has two large class rooms divided with partititons into three classes on either side of the hall and a storage room for heating and air conditioning equipment.

The second story of the recessed part of the 1959 addition, which backs up to the 1914 building, contains two large rooms with storage closets on the second floor. U shaped stairs lead down on the east and west side of the newer addition to the first floor, which contains an office on the east and one on the west, separated by a large hall and waiting room. From this center area, a hall on the north leads to the classroom area and two halls to the south leadback to the office area, rear anterooms and main auditorium of the church.

Asphalt parking lots are located on the north and east side of the church. A small landscaped area is located on the east side where it fronts the sidewalk and College Street. The church is located close to the North Maney Avenue Historic District. (N.R. 4/4/85).

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First Presbyterian Church, Rutherford County, TN

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The First Presbyterian Church of Murfreesboro is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion C as a significant local example of the Classical Revival style. The style was introduced to the country through the world's fairs in Chicago in 1893, St. Louis in 1904 and San Francisco in 1915. These fairs spurred the City Beautiful movement which so molded the nation's image of how buildings, particularly public buildings, should be designed. In particular, the World's Columbian Exposition of 1893 in Chicago was extraordinary for its scenery of aligned buildings all in the Classical Revival style painted entirely white. The visual imagery established by the Columbian Exposition provided inspiration for the restoration and elaboration of the Capitol Mall in Washington and climaxed with McKim, Mead and White's Pennsylvania Station in New York in 1910. The well established architectural firm of McKim, Mead and White were national leaders in the Classical Revival style. Following that lead were architects and builders across the country who designed and built in the newly popular Classical Revival style. The enthusiastic response by the nation was manifested most often in public buildings such as courthouses and school buildings, churches, and private homes. First Presbyterian Church in Murfreesboro is a good example of this trend in architecture. The building has a front portico with Classical columns, a central rotunda, and ornately detailed architrave and cornice. The interior continues this style with Classical motifs in the stained glass windows, Ionic pilasters, decorative knee braces on the balconies, and an interior rotunda which mirrors the exterior dome. One of the first buildings constructed in this style in Murfreesboro, First Presbyterian became an influential model for future building in the small city. The church has had few alterations and continues to be an important symbol of the early twentieth century building trends of Murfreesboro.

The Classical Revival First Presbyterian Church replaced an earlier one destroyed by a tornado which damaged much of the town in 1913. After the tornado the church membership acted quickly to replace the damaged building and construction began in 1913. Once completed in 1914 the church structure became an important local landmark on the corner of College and Spring Streets just two blocks off the square. As evidence of its prominence an early county history published in 1924 included a history of the congregation and photograph of the new stylish building housing it.

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One of the early churches organized in Middle Tennessee, First Presbyterian Church in Murfreesboro began in 1812 near Murfree Spring. The original building was a log schoolhouse on land belonging to the town's namesake, Colonel Hardy Murfree. The second church home was the first brick building in town on Vine Street next to the old city cemetery. After the courthouse burned in 1822, this brick building served as a meeting place for the state legislature because Murfreesboro was then the state capital. The building was modified somewhat for the legislature with the addition of a full second floor on the level of the gallery. This addition provided two separate spaces with the House of Representatives meeting downstairs and the Senate above.

This church building served the congregation until the Civil War. During the Union occupation of Murfreesboro soldiers dismantled the building. Whether this was an act of random destruction or simply due to the need for building materials is unclear, but bricks from the church were used for Union encampments. In 1867 a replacement church was erected on a new site where the present church building now stands. In 1913 this Gothic Revival structure was badly damaged and replaced by the present Classical Revival building.

Before the tornado an addition was made to the Gothic Revival building. This rear addition served as Sunday school rooms for an enlarged congregation. In 1906 a part of the Cumberland Presbyterian congregation joined the First Presbyterian congregation to form one church body. The meetings continued to be held in the First Presbyterian church; however, the increased church membership put an extra strain on the already limited Sunday School space. An addition for Sunday school classes was proposed to accommodate all of the attending members. This new addition, completed in 1908, extended from the North side of the 1867 building. When the tornado damaged the 1867 church in 1913 the Sunday school addition was not badly damaged and therefore remained when the 1914 building was constructed.

By 1959 the 1908 Sunday school addition had become too small and more space was needed to accommodate the growing congregation. A new Sunday school addition was constructed in 1959 to replace the earlier Sunday school building on the same site. While larger than the 1908 building the 1959 building maintains the overall plan for the church. Thus the 1959 addition does not disturb the design rhythm that existed when the 1914 church was constructed and attached to the 1908 Sunday school.

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The popularity of the Classical Revival style can be attributed to a number of factors. Chief among them is the promotion of the style by the prominent and successful New York firm, McKim, Mead and White. However, their designs were not financially feasible to everyone who desired a Classical Revival building. This was particularly true for non-profit organizations like church congregations, and local governments that were responsible for public buildings such as courthouses and schools. As a result local builders who learned new architectural styles and techniques from area examples and publications known as builders guides were often asked to copy or interpret new styles for proposed buildings. This resulted in a number of Classical Revival style buildings done with a vernacular interpretation of the style. While these buildings were not designed by trained architects they serve as significant architectural contributions to their communities. The construction and style of First Presbyterian Church fit this pattern. No extant records of First Presbyterian's architect have been found. The only reference is to a local contractor, Maugans and Bell, Builders and Lumber Suppliers, located on West Main Street in Murfreesboro.

In the early history of Murfreesboro, local builders or contractors such as Maugans and Bell often filled the traditional role of architects. If this was the case for First Presbyterian, as it appears, the firm would have looked to extant Classical Revival buildings in the vicinity as models for First Presbyterian. There were at least two such churches in the region which would have served as models. Central Christian Church in Murfreesboro and First Presbyterian Church in Chattanooga in Hamilton County.

Central Christian Church was erected in 1913 with a very similar floor plan to First Presbyterian Church. As with First Presbyterian the architect for Central Christian was a local builder, W.R. Bell, Jr., of Bell Brothers and Company. There is no evidence to link this Bell to Maugans and Bell. Central Christian is executed in a different color scheme than First Presbyterian but it has a strikingly similar rectangular floor plan with large pediments and brick pilasters on either side. The front porches are also very alike with Ionic columns which rise from the porch and support the architrave which is set back slightly from the flanking wings. A set of stairs lead up to these porches which precede the recessed entries. While the two churches are very similar First Presbyterian has four columns and Central Christian has two columns. Generally, First Presbyterian is a more ornate design with elaborate decorative

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elements such as a larger pediment, emphatic cornice, knee braced door lintels, ornament in the pediments and additional detail on most every surface.

First Presbyterian in Chattanooga is an outstanding local example of Classical Revival architecture. Murfreesboro residents would have been aware of this church through the Nashville, Chattanooga and St. Louis Railroad which was an important commercial and cultural link between Murfreesboro and Chattanooga. When the Chattanooga congregation commissioned a splendid new church in 1912, it undoubtedly caught the eye and impressed Presbyterian congregations throughout the region. The design for the Chattanooga First Presbyterian church was done by McKim, Mead and White. It is very similar to McKim, Mead and White's famous Madison Square Presbyterian Church located in New York and constructed in 1903-1906.

The Chattanooga church is a more emphatic statement of style than the Murfreesboro church but the Murfreesboro church includes many of the same stylistic elements. Forms such as the central rotunda, Ionic capitals, bold pediments, panelled doors with heavy pediments, emphatic cornices rich in their use of dentils, and geometric moldings are employed on both buildings. The buildings contrast in their use of color, the size of the porticos and building plans. The height and scale of Murfreesboro's First Presbyterian is more traditional and conservative in keeping with the training and expertise of the builders who were generally more experienced with simpler designs and techniques of construction.

All of the Classical Revival churches mentioned here capitalize on the Classical temple introduced in the architectural wonders of the ancient Greeks and Romans. This temple form still held close associations with religion and worship for contemporary American society despite the fact that the ancients worshiped many gods. Crucial to the heart and soul of the ancient temples is the elaborate sculptural relief of the tympanum; however, modern Greek and Classical revivals did not include an equivalent artistic expression. Distinctive of the Murfreesboro and New York churches is the use of ornament for the tympanums of the buildings. Undoubtedly, McKim, Mead and White were not ignorant of this aspect and consciously included it in the Madison Square design which was imitated in the Murfreesboro church. But it was not included in the Chattanooga church.

While the training and experience of the Maugans and Bell firm

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are unknown, they were local contractors and lumber suppliers. Very few contractors would have had extensive training in the tenets of Classical architecture. It was from the examples provided by existing buildings that contractors made use of these architectural elements. These companies took both their inspiration and architectural elements from existing buildings rather than training. It is clear that much of what was included on the Murfreesboro church owes a legacy to the earlier Chattanooga church. As outlined here the two Tennessee churches have very similar decoration and stylistic themes. The Murfreesboro church is really a vernacular interpretation of the McKim, Mead and White's Madison Square and Chattanooga designs.

The interior of First Presbyterian Church reflects the Classical Revival style of the exterior. However, it is typical of a vernacular tradition popular with church architecture. Builders of vernacular structures often affected an academic style without a strict adherence to that style. This was true for exteriors as well as interiors. First Presbyterian is a good example of this with mixed stylistic elements in the interior. While the interior has Classical Revival aspects, it also continues to use more traditional elements such as dark wood panelling, brass trim, multiple panes of glass in the choir balconies, and a coffered ceiling. These aspects were commonly used in churches of the Victorian or Picturesque period; but they were also part of the Arts and Crafts style which was becoming fashionable during the 1910's and 1920's.

The interior is highlighted with Ionic capitals on pilasters, the same bull's-eye detail on the doors, and a central domed ceiling. Within the stained glass windows of the church are decorative aspects typical of the Classical Revival period. The windows echo the elements of the exterior through fluted Ionic columns with swags that surround the customary Biblical scenes. Elaborate knee braces with heavy decorative detailing accent two small choir balconies.

In addition to church architecture as a model for a new building in the latest style, plenty of public buildings in Murfreesboro were executed in the Classical Revival style in the 1910's. The first four buildings of Middle Tennessee State Normal School, now Middle Tennessee State University, erected in 1911, and the main building of Tennessee College for Women, constructed in 1906, were the most notable. Particularly interesting is the Normal School Administration building. This stately red brick building has the same coloration, repetition of pediments, fluted Ionic

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columns, heavy entablature with bold vertical lines, geometric recessed panels, decorative brickwork, and brick pilasters similar to First Presbyterian.

First Presbyterian Church was a prominent and important feature on the local landscape. The congregation of First Presbyterian Church included many of the most influential bankers, merchants and civic leaders of Murfreesboro. Some of the town's founding fathers and their families were and continued to be important members of First Presbyterian's congregation. An endorsement of this new style by this leading group of citizens served to encourage and even solidify the use of this newly revived architectural style. The popularity of the Classical Revival in Murfreesboro's public and domestic architecture during the early twentieth century could be attributed to the endorsement of the new style by both the religious congregations such as First Presbyterian Church and Central Christian Church as well as local academic institutions like Middle Tennessee State Normal School and Tennessee College.

First Presbyterian Church lost little time in using the newly fashionable style to update their building tradition after the tornado destroyed the earlier building. By using an architectural style that was being employed by the leading architects of the time, the congregation was asserting their status as important and forward thinking members of the community. This statement was quickly popularized with the addition of Classical Revival residential structures in Murfreesboro. At the time of the First Presbyterian Church rebuilding there were two residences in this style, 450 and 521 East Main Street constructed in 1912 and 1908 respectively. Soon thereafter, many more academic and vernacular interpretations of the Classical Revival were built in Murfreesboro. The East Main Street area was particularly influenced by the Classical Revival style. This area was listed on the National Register as an historic district in the 1985 (NR 7/11/85).

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First Presbyterian Church, Murfreesboro
210 N. Spring Street
Murfreesboro, Tennessee 37130

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The property is located on a city lot at 210 N. Spring Street in Murfreesboro, as defined in the attached tax map 091-M-Group A, lot 16. The property sits on the northeast corner of East College Street and North Spring Street and is bounded by East College Street on the south side and North Spring Street on the west side.

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

The boundary of the city lot at 210 N. Spring Street is the boundary of the property associated with the First Presbyterian Church, Murfreesboro.

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First Presbyterian Church
Murfreesboro, Rutherford County, Tennessee

Photographs by: Lauren E. Batte and
Gail Reed
Carroll Van West
Center for Historic Preservation
Box 80 MTSU
Murfreesboro, Tennessee 37132

Date: September and November, 1992

Negatives: Tennessee Historical Commission
701 Broadway
Nashville, Tennessee 38243

South facade, facing north
#1 of 33

East facade, facing west
#2 of 33

East facade, facing west
#3 of 33

Northeast facade, facing southwest
#4 of 33

Northwest facade, facing southeast
#5 of 33

West facade, facing east
#6 of 33

West facade, facing east
#7 of 33

Southwest facade, facing northeast
#8 of 33

West side of front portico, facing east
#9 of 33

Detail of front (south) facade, facing north
#10 of 33

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Detail of front (south) facade, facing north
#11 of 33

Interior choir balcony, front of sanctuary, facing north
#12 of 33

Interior choir balcony, front of sanctuary, facing north
#13 of 33

Interior choir balcony knee bracket, facing north
#14 of 33

Interior, front of sanctuary, facing north
#15 of 33

Interior, front of sanctuary, facing north
#16 of 33

Interior, front of snactuary, facing north
#17 of 33

Interior, front of sanctuary, facing northeast
#18 of 33

Detail of stained glass windows, facing east
#19 of 33

Rear gallery and ceiling, facing southeast
#20 of 33

Capital detail, facing east
#21 of 33

Rear gallery and ceiling, facing southwest
#22 of 33

Rear gallery and church overview
#23 of 33

Rear gallery and lower pews, facing southwest
#24 of 33

Side doors to vestibule stairs, facing southwest
#25 of 33

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Dome ceiling detail, facing southeast
#26 of 33

Office interior, facing west
#27 of 33

Vestibule stairs to gallery, facing southwest
#28 of 33

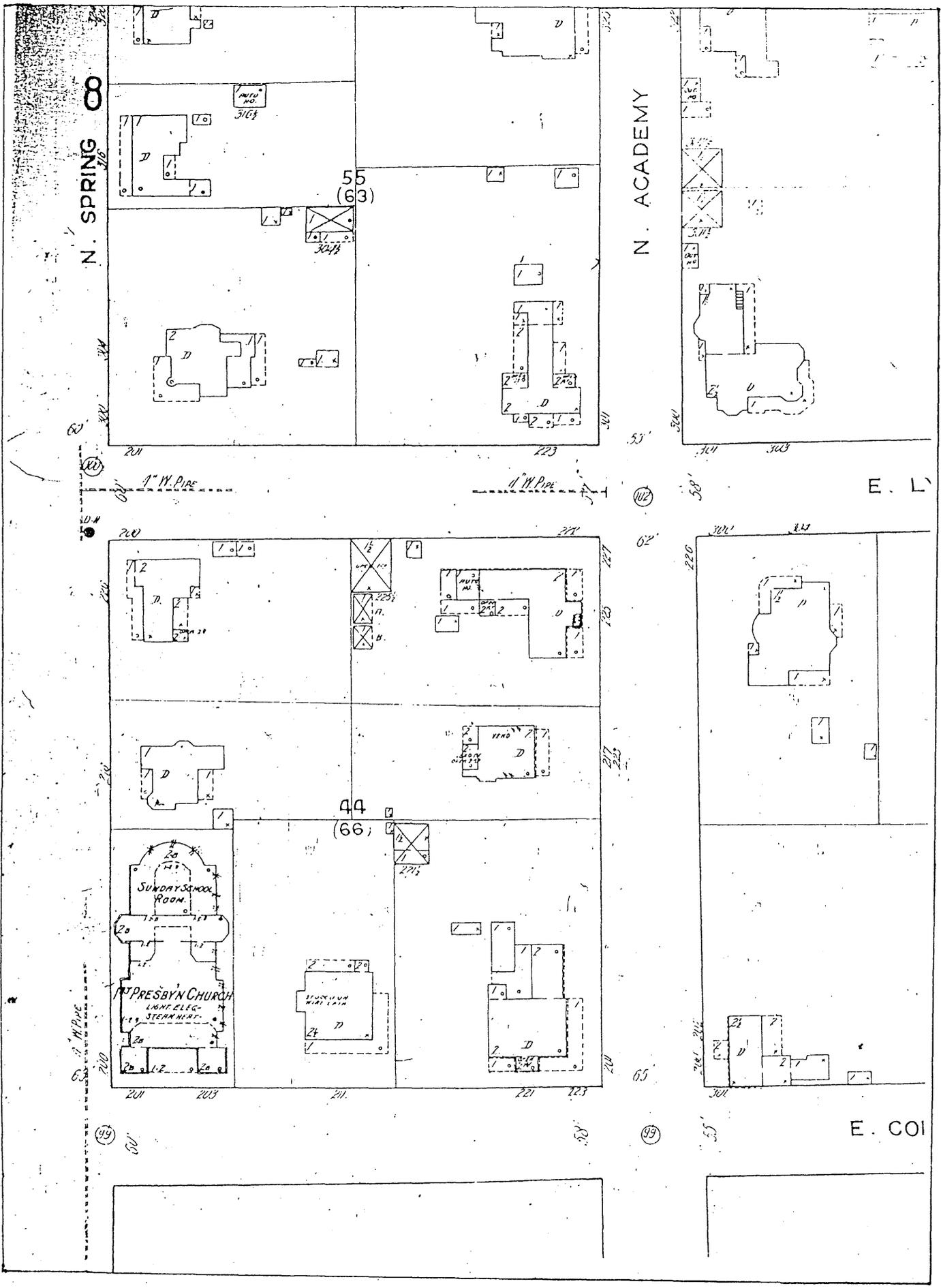
Stairs to choir, facing east
#29 of 33

Basement of sanctuary, facing east
#30 of 33

Basement of addition, facing east
#31 of 33

Hallway of addition, facing west
#32 of 33

Chapel in addition, facing east
#33 of 33



N. SPRING

N. ACADEMY

1" W. PIPE

1" W. PIPE

1" W. PIPE

55
(63)

44
(66)

SUNDAY SCHOOL ROOM

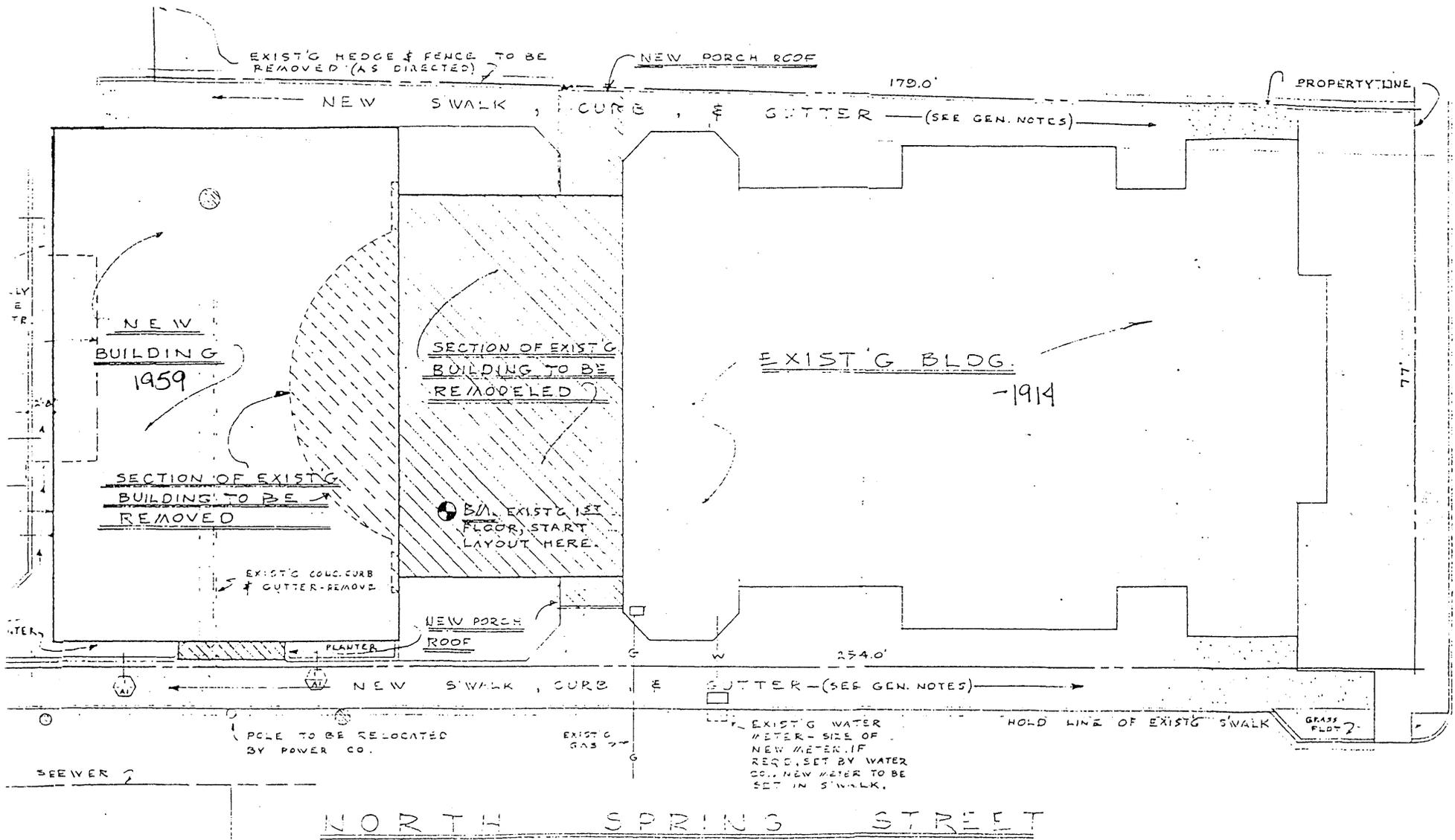
PRESBYN CHURCH
LIGHT ELEG.
STERN HURT.

MUSEUM
HIST. LITH.

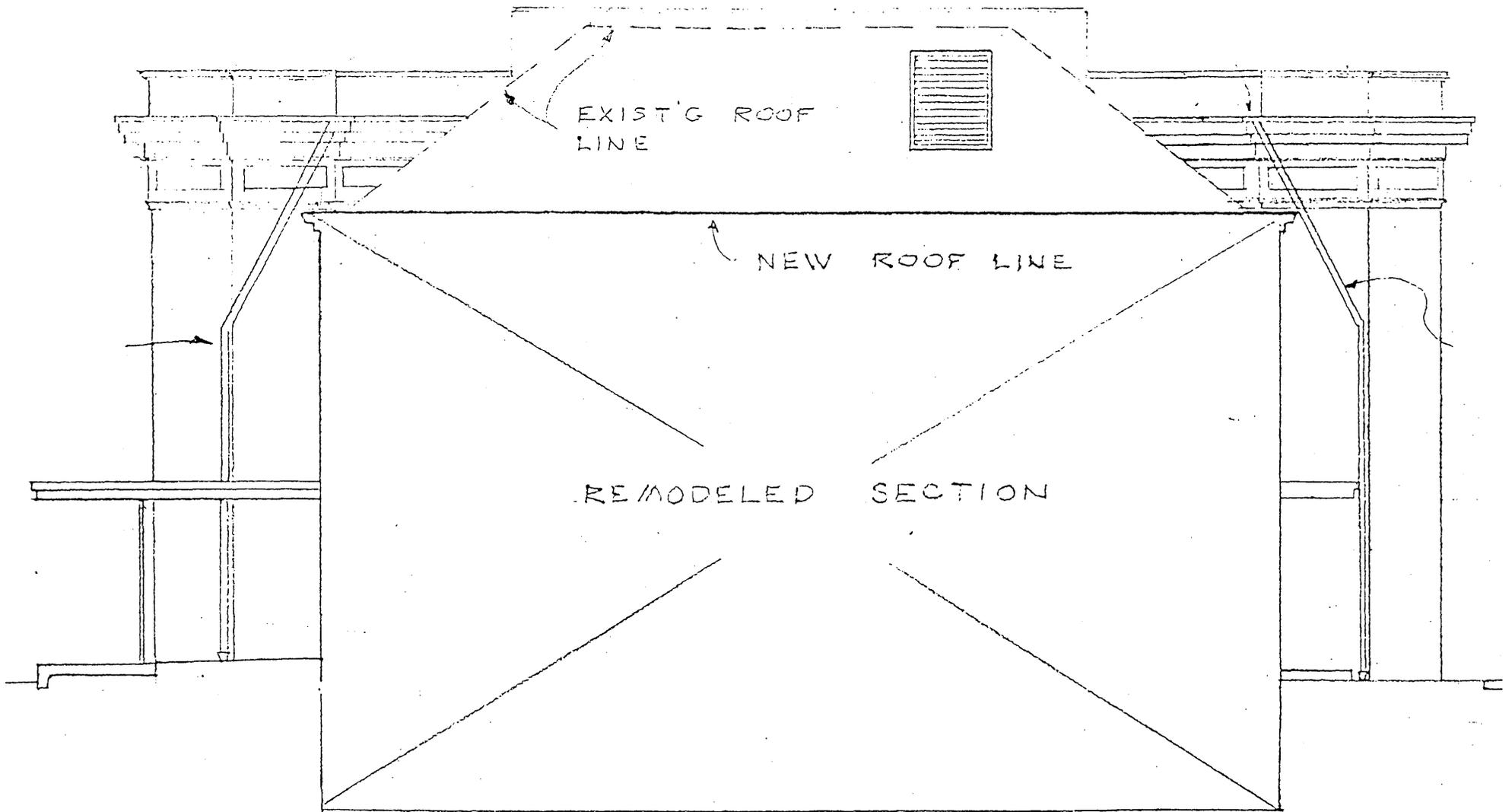
E. L

E. COI

1914 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map showing new building and 1908 Sunday School Addition



Plan for Sunday School Addition completed in 1959



Elevation from 1959 Sunday School Addition depicting 1914 building,
1959 addition, and changes to roof lines.

First Presbyterian Church
Murfreesboro, TN.
Rutherford Co.

