

United States Department of the Interior National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

NATIONAL REGISTER

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

1. Name of Property

historic name Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church other names/site number N/A

2. Location

street & number 805 Monroe Street N/A not for publication city, town Vicksburg N/A vicinity state Mississippi code MS county Warren code 149 zip code 39180

3. Classification

Table with 3 columns: Ownership of Property, Category of Property, and Number of Resources within Property. Includes checkboxes for private/public ownership and building/site/structure/object categories.

Name of related multiple property listing: Historic Resources of Vicksburg, Mississippi Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, 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. See continuation sheet. Signature of certifying official: Kenneth H. P. Pool, Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer. Date: June 12, 1992.

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet. Signature of commenting or other official: State or Federal agency and bureau.

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is: entered in the National Register. determined eligible for the National Register. determined not eligible for the National Register. removed from the National Register. other, (explain:). Signature of the Keeper: Date of Action: 7/30/92

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)

Romanesque

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation brick

walls brick

roof slate

other

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

Located in downtown Vicksburg on the southeast corner of Monroe and Grove Streets, the Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church is a one-story brown brick Romanesque Revival building built in 1912. The slate-covered cross gable roof ends in a stepped corbelled parapet on each of four sides. There are narrow buttresses at regular intervals on each facade. The main (north) facade is dominated by a four-story square tower which has a crenellated top capped with a slate-covered pyramidal roof. The tower projects from the main body of the Church and has a one-over-one, double-hung window on each of the first two floors and a rectangular vent on each of the top two floors.

A large stained-glass rose window occupies the center of each of three facades. The north facade rose window rests on three rectangular stained glass windows. A long limestone lintel caps these three windows. To the right of the rose window is a round-arched bay with a one-over-one double-hung window set over double-leaf, non-historic doors.

The west (Monroe Street) facade features a rose window over three rectangular stained-glass windows. This bay is flanked on either side by a one-over-one double-hung window topped with a round-arched vent. This window is set above a one-over-one double-hung window capped with a heavy limestone lintel. At street level are double wooden doors leading to a cellar. This bay is also capped with a limestone lintel.

The south facade also has a rose window below which are two rectangular stained-glass windows and a paneled door. To the left of this window is a round-arched bay with a one-over-one, stained-glass, double-hung window. Under this window is a set of non-historic double-leaf doors capped with a limestone lintel.

The interior of the church is filled with a large square sanctuary with a balcony overhanging three sides of the auditorium floor. The focal point of the sanctuary is the southeast corner with rows of pews set in an angle from each of the other three corners to face the pulpit in this corner. A large pipe organ purchased in 1923 dominates the southeast corner. The ceiling is beaded board as is the underside of the balcony. The floor is heart pine. The pews are original, as are the light fixtures and balustrade around the pulpit.

Attached to the east side of the building is a one-story brick room set back from the main facade with a slate-covered hipped roof. There are three bays: three one-over-one, double-hung windows each supporting a limestone lintel. This space now houses the fellowship hall, restrooms and kitchen.

See continuation sheet

8. Statement of Significance

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

nationally statewide locally

Applicable National Register Criteria A B C D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions) A B C D E F G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)
Architecture

Period of Significance
1912

Significant Dates
1912

Cultural Affiliation
N/A

Significant Person
N/A

Architect/Builder
unknown

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church, constructed in 1912, is a locally significant example of auditorium-plan, Romanesque Revival religious architecture of the early twentieth century. It is a very intact and representative example of churches erected in the style throughout the state in the 1890s and early 1900s. Information currently available in the Mississippi statewide survey files indicates that the Bethel A.M.E. Church is one of the more notable examples of the Romanesque Revival, auditorium-plan churches remaining in the state. Other significant examples include the 1898 First Methodist Church of Greenwood, designed by Reuben Harris Hunt (listed in the National Register in 1986); the 1898 Moore Memorial Methodist Episcopal Church South in Winona, also designed by Hunt; the 1907 Bay Street Presbyterian Church in Hattiesburg (included in a National Register district); and the 1899-1900 First Presbyterian Church in Kosciusko. While the first three churches named above are more monumental than the Bethel A.M.E. Church, the First Presbyterian Church in Kosciusko is similar in size and scale.

Bethel, the first African Methodist Episcopal Church in Mississippi, was organized in January 1864 by the Reverend Page Tyler of Indiana and was named for the denomination's mother church in Philadelphia. The building first occupied by the congregation was an 1828 structure purchased in the late 1860s from the First Presbyterian Church and located at the site of the present church building. Within this early building the first Negro Masonic lodge in Mississippi was organized in 1875 and in 1890 Campbell College was organized. Campbell College was moved to Jackson in 1897, where it evolved to become Jackson State University. The present church building was constructed in 1912 under the direction of Dr. John J. Morant, who according to church lore visited Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, and returned with ideas for a new church building. He demolished the old building and on its site erected the present Bethel Church.

See continuation sheet

9. Major Bibliographical References

Deed Books. Warren County Court House.

Historical Marker Files. Mississippi Department of Archives and History, Jackson.

Statewide Survey of Historic Sites. Mississippi Department of Archives and History, Jackson.

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- 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 # _____

See continuation sheet

Primary location of additional data:

- State historic preservation office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Specify repository:

Vicksburg Foundation for Historic Preservation

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of property less than one (1) acre

UTM References

A

1	5
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6	9	9	6	0	0
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3	5	8	1	5	3	0
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Zone Easting Northing

B

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Zone Easting Northing

C

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D

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See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

Warren County Parcel Number: 094L-19-0010-06-8

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

The boundary includes the entire city lot that has historically been associated with the property.

See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Nancy H. Bell, Executive Director
organization Vicksburg Foundation for Historic Preservation date 7/30/90
street & number P.O. Box 254 telephone (601) 636-5010
city or town Vicksburg state MS zip code 39181