

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

For NPS use only

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

received NOV 28 1988
date entered

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic Mount Zion Baptist Church

and or common Mount Zion Baptist Church

2. Location

street & number 301 N. W. 9th Street

___ not for publication

city, town Miami

___ vicinity of

state Florida 33136 code FL

county Dade

code FL 025

3. Classification

Category

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

Ownership

- public
- private
- both

Public Acquisition

- in process
- being considered

Status

- occupied
- unoccupied
- work in progress

Accessible

- yes: restricted
- yes: unrestricted
- no

Present Use

- agriculture
- commercial
- educational
- entertainment
- government
- industrial
- military

- museum
- park
- private residence
- religious
- scientific
- transportation
- other:

4. Owner of Property

name Mt. Zion Baptist Church

street & number 301 N. W. 9th Street

city, town Miami

___ vicinity of

state Florida 33136

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Dade County Courthouse

street & number 75 W. Flagler Street

city, town Miami

state Florida 33130

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title FMSF-Miami Multiple Resource
Historic Preservation Survey

has this property been determined eligible? ___ yes ___ no

date June, 1985

___ federal state ___ county local

depository for survey records Bureau of Historic Preservation

city, town Tallahassee

state Florida 32399-0250

7. Description

Condition

excellent
 good
 fair

deteriorated
 ruins
 unexposed

Check one

unaltered
 altered

Check one

original site
 moved date _____

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

SEE CONTINUATION SHEET

8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below				
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> religion	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/ humanitarian	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> theater	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-1938	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)	
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		comm. development	

Specific dates 1928 **Builder/Architect** Bennett; Bragg

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

SEE CONTINUATION SHEET

9. Major Bibliographical References

Please see Bibliography for Cover Nomination

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property less than 1 acre

Quadrangle name Miami

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UTM References

A

1	7	5	8	0	3	0	0	2	8	5	0	5	7	0
Zone		Easting				Northing								

B

Zone		Easting				Northing								

C

Zone		Easting				Northing								

D

Zone		Easting				Northing								

E

Zone		Easting				Northing								

F

Zone		Easting				Northing								

G

Zone		Easting				Northing								

H

Zone		Easting				Northing								

Verbal boundary description and justification

Miami, Lots 19 and 20, less street, and a portion of Lot 19 further described as follows:

Please see continuation sheet

boundary follows historic/legal boundary

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state	N/A	code	county	code

state	code	county	code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Sarah Eaton /Vicki L. Welcher, Historic Sites Specialist

organization Bureau of Historic Preservation date October, 1988

street & number 500 South Bronough telephone (904) 487-2333

city or town Tallahassee state Florida 32399-0250

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national state local

As the designated State Historic Preservation 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.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature *George W. Perry*

title State Historic Preservation Officer date October 17, 1988

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

located in the

National Register

date 12/29/88

Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

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DESCRIPTION:

Condition: Fair

The Mount Zion Baptist Church building is a large two-story masonry structure executed in a Mediterranean Revival architectural style. Construction of the church began in 1928 according to plans provided by the architect William Arthur Bennet.¹ with the main sanctuary of the church completed in 1941.²

Situated on the northwest corner of N. W. 9th Street and N. W. 3rd Avenue, the church is a rectangular plan structure built of reinforced concrete atop a concrete foundation. The lower story of the church is dedicated to a large auditorium and classroom space, while the taller upper story is dedicated to sanctuary use. As originally planned, the principal entrance to the church fronted to the south beneath a projecting gable portico. At present, the principal entrance is located at the east, placed within a recessed porch that spans five bays of the elevation parallel to N. W. 3rd Avenue. The exterior of the church building is clad in stucco, and its gable roof is clad in asphalt shingles. A square corner tower, rising to a height of four stories, is capped by a pyramidal hipped roof. The corners of the tower are highlighted by masonry quoins rising from the second story to the roofline.

The principal elevation of the church features three bays set within a gable end facing N. W. 3rd Avenue. The center bay contains the projecting gable portico with double stairs ascending to it from the sidewalk level. Below the portico is an entrance to the lower story. Within the gable end is a stylized quatrefoil window set within a masonry surround. The east elevation is characterized by an open porch that is comprised of a recessed arcade five bays long. Each bay is defined by a simple Tuscan column supporting a classically-inspired entablature. The porch is situated at the level of the second story and reached through double stairs rising parallel to the sidewalk. This elevation is five bays long and has had its original window openings blocked up. There is an entrance from each end of the porch into a vestibule that leads to the sanctuary.

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The original fenestration of the church has been slightly altered through the blocking up of some windows. An old photograph of the church reveals that the church had nine-over-nine, double-hung sash windows set within wooden frames.³ Many of these windows have been replaced with more contemporary double-hung windows set within metal frames.

The interior of the sanctuary is rectangular in plan and contains an altar at its northern end. Behind the altar is a choir gallery, and behind it is a baptismal font. Four aisles divide the sanctuary into three main seating areas which contain the original wooden pews. A shallow balcony is found parallel to the south wall. A cross section of the sanctuary reveals a basilica-type space with a peaked ceiling following the ridge of the gable roof, and lower ceiling heights on either side. The interior is rather plain and devoid of decorative ornamentation. The only windows that bring natural light into the space are found high above the floor level, located underneath the roof eaves. Although there have been minor modifications to the building's architectural fabric, the original design intent is readily perceived.

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STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE:

Specific Dates: 1928

Architect: William Arthur Bennet

Builder: H. S. Bragg

The Mount Zion Baptist Church is architecturally significant as it is one of the few examples of the Mediterranean Revival style found in Overtown, a neighborhood within downtown Miami originally known as "Colored Town." The church building also houses one of the oldest and most prominent black congregations in South Florida, founded in 1896. The present church building also possesses important historical associations with the pastorate of Reverend J. R. Evans at the church.

The exterior of Mount Zion Baptist Church embodies the distinctive physical characteristics of the Mediterranean Revival style of architecture. The visual composition of the building is architecturally noteworthy for its adaptability to the area's climate.⁴ The tall ceiling and the placement of the porch along the longer elevation assist in alleviating the impact of the hot climate on the interior. The appearance of the building is also significant because it is one of the most imposing buildings remaining in Overtown, an area with few buildings of any architectural significance. The scale and location of the church make it one of the "anchor" landmarks of the Overtown neighborhood.

The present building houses a congregation that was organized on 17 September 1896.⁵ The first church building consisted of a palmetto shack located near the courthouse.⁶ A frame structure was eventually erected on the present site only to be damaged by the hurricane of 1926. As a result of the damage, the congregation worshipped for two years in a tabernacle built from the wreckage.⁷ Construction of the present church building began in 1928, with the congregation worshipping in the basement until 1941, when the sanctuary was finally completed.⁸

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The present church building was constructed under the direction of Reverend J. R. Evans, one of the most prominent religious leaders of Overtown. Reverend Evans was born in Brownville, Tennessee, in 1870 and went on to study at Roger Williams College.⁹ He became Dean, and eventually president of the college, but preferred the "active ministry" and pastored in several churches in Tennessee and Kentucky.¹⁰ Under his pastorate, which he assumed in 1918, the enrollment of Mt. Zion Baptist Church exceeded 1,400 parishioners. Reverend Evans was also active in the city's interracial and interdenominational activities. He died in 1947.

Although the architect of the church has been identified through the application for a building permit, research has not provided any biographical information on him.

NOTES

1. City of Miami, Building and Zoning Department, Building Permit Applied for 11 April 1928.
2. "From the 1956 Souvenir Program: Mt. Zion Baptist Church," Miami Times, 3 February 1983, p. 17.
3. See note 2 above.
4. Dade County Historic Survey, "Site Inventory Form" for 310 N. W. 9th Street, "Statement of Significance."
5. Dorothy J. Fields, "What Can We Tell The Children," Miami Times, 3 February 1983, p. 17.
6. See note 5 above.
7. See note 5 above.
8. See note 2 above.
9. Miami Times, 8 January 1949.
10. See note 9 above; and "Rev. J. R. Evans' Work in Miami," Miami Times, 16 August 1947.
11. See note 9 above.

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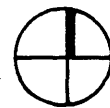
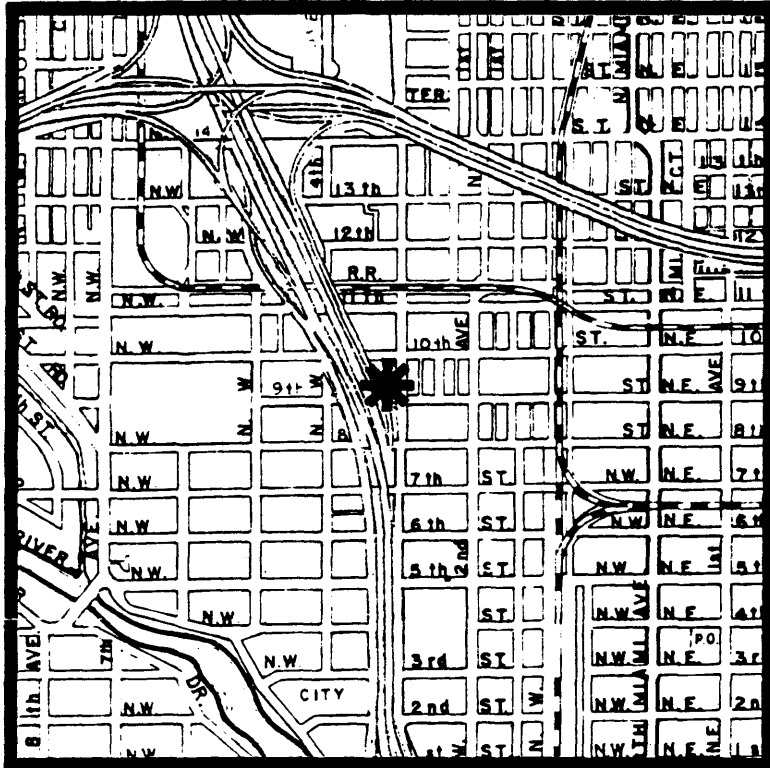
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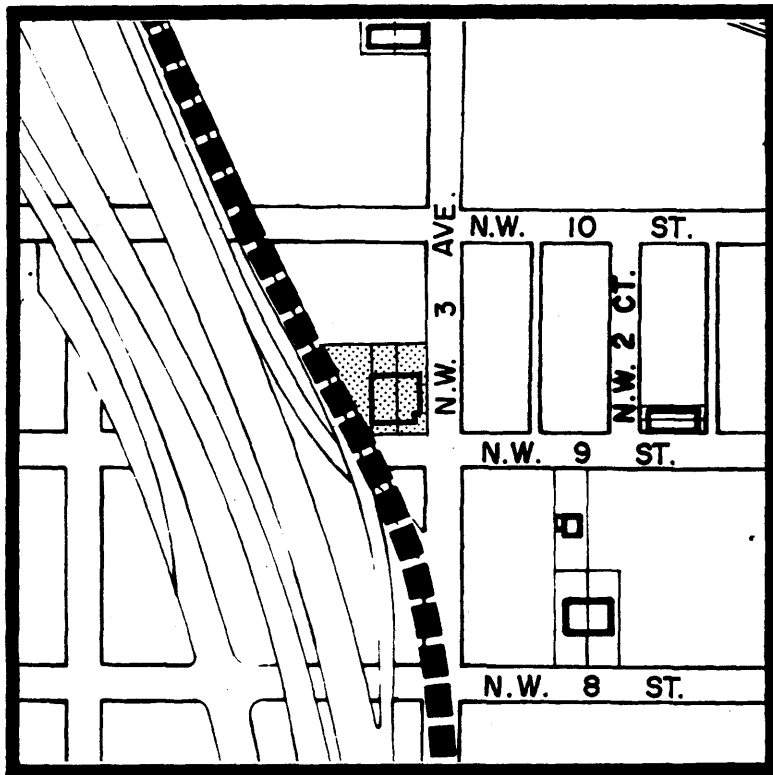
VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION: Lots 19 and 20, less street, and a portion of Lot 18 further described as follows: beginning 6.89+ feet north of the southeast corner of Lot 18, thence running N. 24o9'08" W. along the easterly right-of-way line of I-95 for 86.64+ feet, thence continuing N. 29o09'26" W. along the right-of-way line of I-95 for 39.15+ feet to the westerly line of Lot 18, thence running N. along the westerly line for 27.87+ feet to the northerly line of Lot 18, thence running E. along the northerly line for 50.01+ feet, thence running S. along the easterly line for 143.15+ feet to the point of beginning, of Block 27 of the plat of MIAMI NORTH (PB B-41)

MT. ZION BAPTIST CHURCH

301 N.W. 9 STREET



location



site plan