

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

For NPS use only
received SEP 28 1984
date entered

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

1. Name

historic Saint, Georges Presbyterian Church

and/or common Saint Georges Presbyterian Church

2. Location

street & number ~~SW side of Main Street~~ NA not for publication

city, town St. Georges NA vicinity of

state Delaware code 10 county New Castle code 003
002

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational	<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government	<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
	<u>NA</u>	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name Rev. John Oldman, III, c/o St. Georges Presbyterian Church

street & number NA

city, town St. Georges NA vicinity of state Delaware

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. New Castle County Recorder of Deeds

street & number City/County Building, 800 French Street

city, town Wilmington state Delaware

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Delaware Cultural Resource Survey, N-9561 has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date 1984 federal state county local

depository for survey records Bureau of Archaeology and Historic Preservation
Old State House, The Green

city, town Dover state Delaware

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

Saint Georges Presbyterian Church is located in the village of Saint Georges on the southwest side of Main Street where it intersects Church Street. With its back to the Chesapeake and Delaware Canal, the facade points northeast, toward town. Dating to 1844, Saint Georges Church is a brick, one-story, temple form, Greek Revival style building with a frame steeple. A small brick wing was added to the rear endwall late in the nineteenth century, and a frame lean-to, dating to the 1940's, abuts the rear of the brick wing. The church manse, a frame, two-story, Italianate dwelling built in 1856, stands on the southeast side of the church.

Set on an uncoursed fieldstone foundation, the main block of the church measures 43 feet, 6 inches wide by 77 feet, 8 inches long. The walls are constructed of a hard-faced machine made brick laid in stretcher bond with one row of headers at the base of the wall and another row at the seventh course up from the base. The walls are 1 foot, 4 inches thick. The brick addition at the rear is as wide as the main block and 25 feet, 2 inches long. The frame lean-to, which is set on a wood post foundation, is 25 feet wide and 9 feet, 8 inches long.

The main building is a single story above a three-foot-deep (approximately) dirt cellar. Running longitudinally down the middle of the cellar is a 9 inch wide brick wall. Three inch by 9½ inch floor timbers on 20 inch centers stretch from one outside foundation wall to this center wall on each side of the building. Additional modern support posts have been placed halfway between these spans. The cellar was partially excavated on the southeast side of the center wall in the 1940's to accommodate a modern furnace. One interesting feature in the cellar is the presence of a long disused brick furnace.

The facade of the church is a rectangular block with a low pediment atop it, forming the gable. The facade is a smooth brick expanse with four slightly projecting pilasters supporting a plain brick entablature. Crowning this rectangular block is a smooth brick pediment with a projecting molded wooden cornice and two raking cornices meeting at the peak of the roof.

The front door frame is a stepped wooden casing set on a granite base topped by a wooden molding strip and crowned by a flat brick arch. The door itself is divided into four sections with only the bottom two sections moveable. The doors have six double-stepped panels. Leading up to the front door are four granite steps.

The southeast and northwest elevations are identical except for a modern chimney on the southeast side and steel reinforcing girders, two on the southeast side and one on the northwest side. There are five window openings, 3 feet, 9 inches wide by approximately 13 feet tall, on each side. Stepped wooden frames set on granite sills topped by flat brick arches enclose the stained-glass windows (later additions). The rear wall of the main block is of a coarser brick with an exterior brick chimney running up the middle of the wall. This chimney appears to be original owing to evidence seen in the cellar.

The rear brick addition has the same fenestration on each side wall: one door and two stained glass sash windows. Four similar windows occupy the rear wall. One of these windows in the rear wall was converted into a doorway for an entrance to the frame

8. Significance

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

Specific dates 1844-45 **Builder/Architect** Edward Allen

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

Saint Georges Presbyterian Church is significant architecturally, in terms of its stylistic expression and in its construction details. It is an important and well-preserved example of Greek Revival style church architecture in Delaware, and is a rare example of a building with a roof that is supported by a Town lattice truss. It is being nominated to the National Register on the basis of Criterion C. Since its significance lies primarily in its architectural excellence rather than in its religious history, the church is being nominated as an exception to the rule that disallows the inclusion of properties that are owned by religious groups.

Stylistically, Saint Georges Church is unusual in that it is the only church in the County that follows a low Greek temple front plan. One story tall, with a pedimented facade that has four pilasters and a doorway as its only decorative features, this building echoes the proportions and characteristics of the Greek temple form quite closely. The Greek Revival style was commonly used on mid-nineteenth century churches in New Castle County, however, the style tended to be more loosely interpreted than in Saint Georges. Most common is a two story, brick temple front plan with facade windows and first floor shutters. Two local examples of this particular type are Saint Paul's M. E. Church (NR 1982) and Pencader Presbyterian Church (NR 1977). In its proportions and its simplicity, Saint Georges Presbyterian Church is a more literal interpretation of the Greek Revival style.

This church is the only known building in the State that has a Town lattice truss supporting its roof. Patented in 1820 by Ithiel Town, the lattice truss was primarily advocated for use in covered bridge construction. Although Town did mention in his pamphlet on the subject that "...this mode has equal advantages also in supporting wide roofs of buildings, centres of wide arches in masonry, trussed floorings, partitions, sides of wood towers, steeples &c. &c. of public buildings,..." He did not stress that use nor did he give any particulars on how it should be implemented in building construction. On bridges the Town truss takes the form of a rectangular frame filled with a lattice of planks that is secured by several treenails at each intersection of the lattice. The Wooddale Covered Bridge (NR 1973) and the Ashland Covered Bridge (NR 1973), the only surviving covered bridges in the State, both employ the Town truss.

The roof system in Saint Georges Church is made up of a series of triangular trusses that are filled with lattice and further strengthened by an iron turnbuckle that extends from the peak to the bottom chord. The truss below the steeple is doubled, reflecting Town's 1835 improvement of the system involving a doubling or tripling of the lattice in order to sustain greater weight. However, it also appears that the Town lattice system was not fully understood by the builder of Saint Georges Church. Town specifically stated that the strength of the lattice depends on the creation of a rigid construction which, he stressed, requires four, or at the least three, tree-nails at each intersection of the lattice. The trusses in Saint Georges Church have only one treenail at each intersection, which would not be enough to prevent movement

9. Major Bibliographical References

See continuation sheet.

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property 1.0

Quadrangle name St. Georges, Del.

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UTM References

A

1	8	4	4	3	9	6	0	4	3	7	8	4	4	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

See continuation sheet.

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

state NA code NA county NA code NA

state NA code NA county NA code NA

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Erik S. Nord, Student
(Valerie Cesna, Historic Preservation Planner)

organization University of Delaware, American Studies
(New Castle County Dept. of Planning) date May 1984

street & number (2701 Capitol Trail) telephone (302-366-7780)

city or town Newark state Delaware
(Newark)

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

John R. Ken

title Director, Division of Historical & Cultural Affairs date September 24, 1984

For NPS use only

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

Entered in the
National Register

date 11-7-84

for *Allores Byers*
Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

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lean-to. The door on the northwest side is missing its porch, but evidence for it remains in the wall. The shed-roofed porch on the southeast side is a modern reconstruction. It is obvious that the brick wing is an added structure because of the butted joint between the two buildings, the difference in the quality of the brick, and the different mortar compound that was used. The evidence for a later date can also be seen in the difference in the brick and the joining of the two foundations in the cellar.

The frame lean-to attached to the rear of the brick addition is of a balloon frame, two-by-four construction set on wooden posts with concrete footings and concrete block piers. It was constructed in the 1940's for use as a kitchen.

The steeple is located above the facade entrance and is composed of a base, a square louvered belfry, and a six-sided spire. The belfry is highlighted by a denticulated cornice, corner pilasters, and louvered panels that are topped by bracket-supported cornices. The base has been covered with aluminum siding. The bell that was contained in it bears the inscription: T. I. Dyre, Phila. 1845. It has recently been removed because of a structural weakness in the roof and walls, and is being stored in the vestibule of the building.

Upon passing through the front door, one enters a vestibule, 9 feet, 8 inches deep by the whole width of the church. At either side of this room are stairways leading to the balcony. Each stairway consists of a straight run of 7 treads, then a landing, then another run of 8 treads breaking off at a 90 degree turn. Behind each stairway is one of the five windows of each side wall. Underneath the southeast stairway is a modern bathroom and underneath the northwest stairway is a closet. There is a plain dado-rail on the sanctuary wall. The stairway balusters and newel posts are machine turned and appear to be stock items.

One enters the sanctuary by passing through either of two doors at the sides of the vestibule. An interesting feature on these molded four-panel doors is the weighted closing mechanism that is enclosed in a pilaster-like box adjacent to the hinge. The sanctuary encompasses the rest of the main building. This large room is illuminated by four of the five windows of each of the side walls. In these frames are stained-glass windows made by William Reith of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, in 1904. Mr. Reith scratched his name on the glass of the window at the rear of the northwest wall. These windows were installed during a refurbishment of the church at that time.

The ceiling is decorated with a coffered plaster molding running around the perimeter of the room; gilded plaster medallions on a red background fill every other block. Lining the inside edge of this coffered field is a gilded egg and dart molding. The crown molding has a prominent bead and reel motif and a plain frieze below it. In the center of the ceiling is a large medallion with a louvered center section that allows ventilation to the attic. The windows have a wide grey stencil border around them with red and gilt highlights.

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The balcony, at the rear of the sanctuary, was closed off circa 1960. When the church was repainted a few years later, the balcony area was not included, thereby preserving an earlier decorating scheme. While the main church is primarily pale blue with grey, red, and gilt details; the balcony area is pale green with free-hand decorative painting in shades of yellow, white, and grey in the flat field at the edges of the ceiling. In addition, an olive green stencil pattern with yellow highlights borders the frieze. Gilding was used here as well, but with a much lighter hand than in the sanctuary. Only those features on the medallions and moldings that stand in highest relief are highlighted with gilding. Apparently the free-hand painting and the frieze stencilling were painted over in the sanctuary. It is not certain if the stencil border around the windows in the sanctuary duplicates an earlier pattern, but it is known that stencilling existed there before the 1960's repainting.

The dado consists of a molded rail and vertical boarding. The door frames have stepped moldings and a crossetted doorhead. This woodwork is stained and varnished a dark brown.

The church furniture appears to have been replaced during the 1904 refurbishment due to marks on the floor indicating previous pews, and the existence of an old pew in the balcony. The chandeliers are modern.

Tradition states the pipe organ behind the altar is original to the building. This is quite possible because it sits perfectly in its niche; that niche being an original part of the main building owing to evidence seen in the cellar where the back wall of the main building and the walls of the niche are of the same brick and are continuous. The applied decoration around the organ is certainly of a Greek Revival design with pilasters, capitals and a denticulated cornice. Tradition also states the organ was built by John Brown of Wilmington, Delaware, but no documentary evidence could be found to substantiate that claim. Comparison of this organ to known examples of Brown's work (First Presbyterian Church in Delaware City, and Old Asbury Methodist Church in Wilmington) does indicate a strong possibility that Brown was the maker of the Saint Georges Church organ. It is an old organ, being of a tracker action design. The painted decoration on the organ was restored during the 1960's redecoration of the church. The pipes are painted olive green with gold highlights and floral forms; the words "Praise Ye the Lord" are painted across the cornice in black letters with red shadows. The paint colors and the freehand painting on the pilasters resemble the decoration in the balcony.

The balcony floor is tiered in three steps. This incline is reflected in the vestibule below with a tilted ceiling. The balcony is illuminated by a window in each of the walls separating the balcony from each stairwell, thus light comes through the stained-glass window into the stairwell and through the window in the balcony well.

Above the balcony in the attic, the common rafter roof of 3-by-4 inch rafters on 21 inch centers is held up by a Town lattice type system of trusses similar to ones used

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in covered bridge construction. This truss system is doubled underneath the steeple and single ply for the other trusses running the length of the building. On the truss below the steeple is an arrangement of three iron turnbuckles. There is one vertical from the peak of the roof to the bottom of the truss, the other two are at angles on either side of the vertical one. These turnbuckles provide extra support to hold this truss together in order to span the building and hold up the extra weight of the tower. Each of the other trusses have a single vertical turnbuckle.

The interior decoration of the brick addition is rather plain, consisting of only the door and window trim. A modern dropped ceiling has been installed. There is no attached church furniture in this room. The organ niche projects into this room, which is used for Sunday School and social functions. This addition sits on the same kind and size beam construction as the main building. As stated before, the wooden element attached to the rear of this addition is used as a kitchen.

The church maintains a very high degree of stylistic integrity on both the exterior and interior; however, the building has a serious structural weakness which has caused it to be closed as an unsafe structure. Apparently, the excavation of the cellar weakened the foundation under the side walls. This, combined with the weight that the bell exerted from above, has caused the side walls to bow out. Steel I-beams were strapped to the sides of the building, but this has not prevented further movement of the wall. The congregation has had the bell removed and is currently investigating ways to stabilize the building.

Because they are important features to the design and function of the church, the organ, the bell, and the pews are being included in this nomination as contributing architectural elements.

The church manse, which stands adjacent to the church, is being included in this nomination as a related, contributing structure. Constructed in 1856, it is a frame, two-story, flat-roofed Italianate dwelling on a brick foundation. The facade has a symmetrical three-bay, center door arrangement with paired 4/4 sash windows on the first floor and 6/6 sash windows on the second floor. A deep box cornice with brackets outlines the roof. Modern alterations include asbestos shingle siding, a modern facade door, and the addition of a door hood and a brick patio at the facade entrance.

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in the system. It was most likely for that reason that the iron turnbuckles were installed. Both the Wooddale and Ashland bridges have two treenails at each intersection and no additional bracing.

The various church records and church histories disagree on a founding date for the church. Some sources maintain that a congregation was formed in 1698. Others believe that Saint Georges Church was founded in 1742 as the result of a division in Drawyers Church. The original church, a brick building similar in design to Old Drawyers Church in Odessa (NR 1973), was located where the Saint Georges Cemetery still stands, approximately one mile northwest of the present church, on Kirkwood-Saint Georges Road. The old church was torn down in 1844 when the congregation moved into its new church in the village.

Construction of the new church began in July of 1844 with Edward Allen under contract to complete the building by November of that year for the sum of \$4,500. Allen did not fulfill the agreement so the Trustees managed the completion of the building, which cost about \$6,000 including grounds, fence and furniture. Nothing is known about Edward Allen since he does not even appear in census records of the period. It is possible, however, that he is related to the Allen family in Wilmington that worked in various building trades, which included bricklaying, plastering and stonecutting.

Level of Significance

Because it is an outstanding example of a Greek Revival style building, a style that formed a major trend in Delaware during the middle of the nineteenth century, and because it is the only known example of a building in Delaware that employs the Town lattice truss, state significance is being claimed for Saint Georges Presbyterian Church.

Justification of Boundaries

The boundaries of the nominated property coincide with the 1.0 acre legal parcel on which it stands. These boundaries contain the church and also the manse which is being included as a contributing structure.

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How, Rev. James C. Session Minutes of the St. Georges Presbyterian Church. Manuscript records in the possession of the church.

Saint Georges Presbyterian Church. Deeds and other records in the possession of the church.

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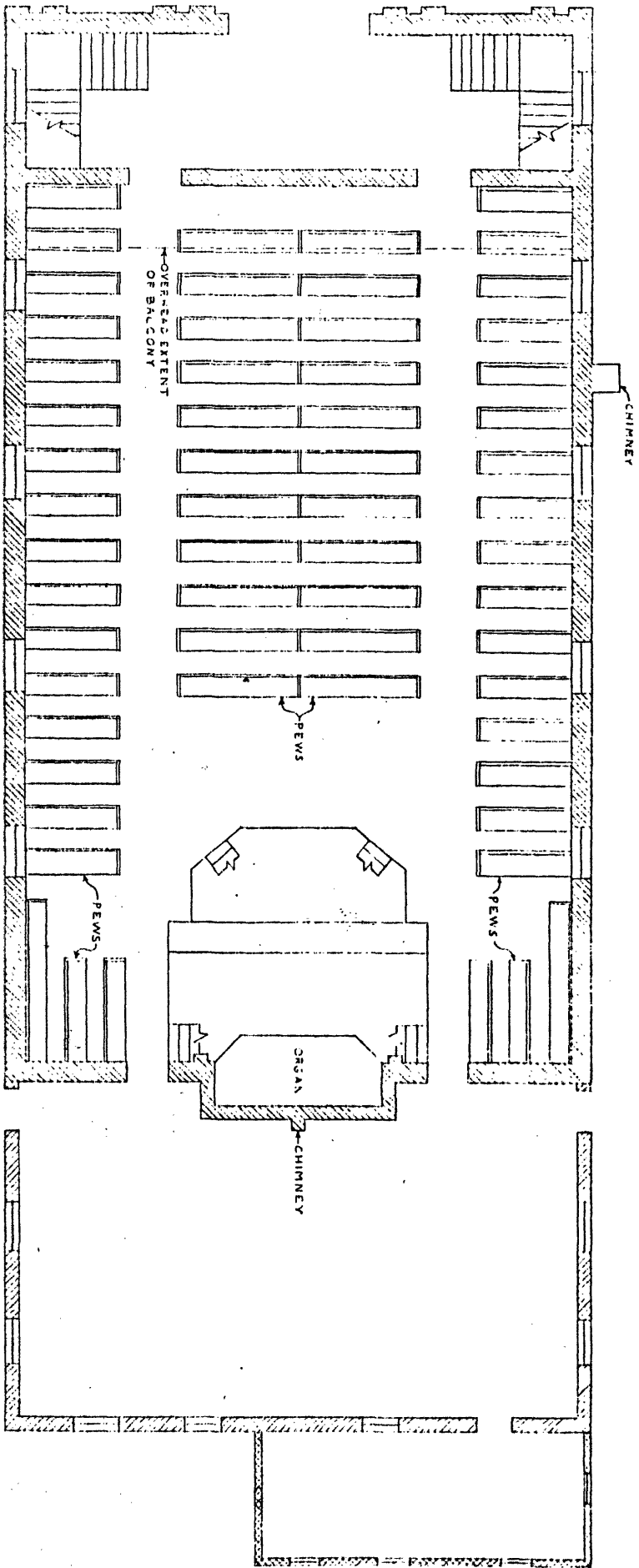
Item number 10

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Verbal Boundary Description

The boundary for the nominated site coincides with its 1.0± acre legal parcel as indicated by the bold black line on the attached map titled "1983 Real Estate Atlas of New Castle County, parcel number 12-027.40-055." The rectangular parcel has a frontage of 264 feet and a depth of 167 feet.

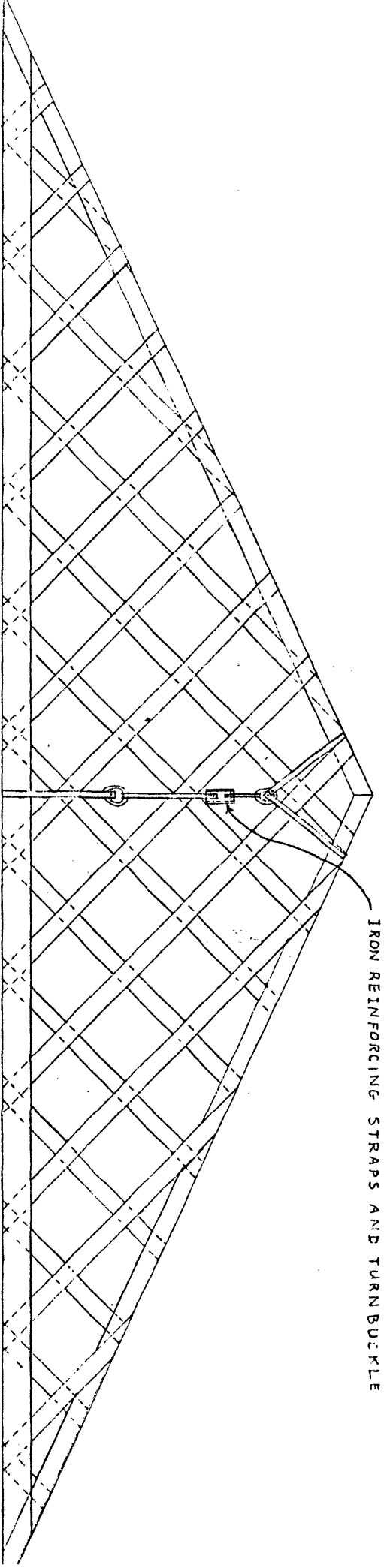


ST. GEORGES PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
 ST. GEORGES, DELAWARE



DRAWING 1

Eric Nord
 April, 1984



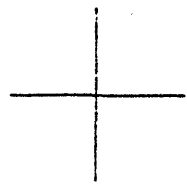
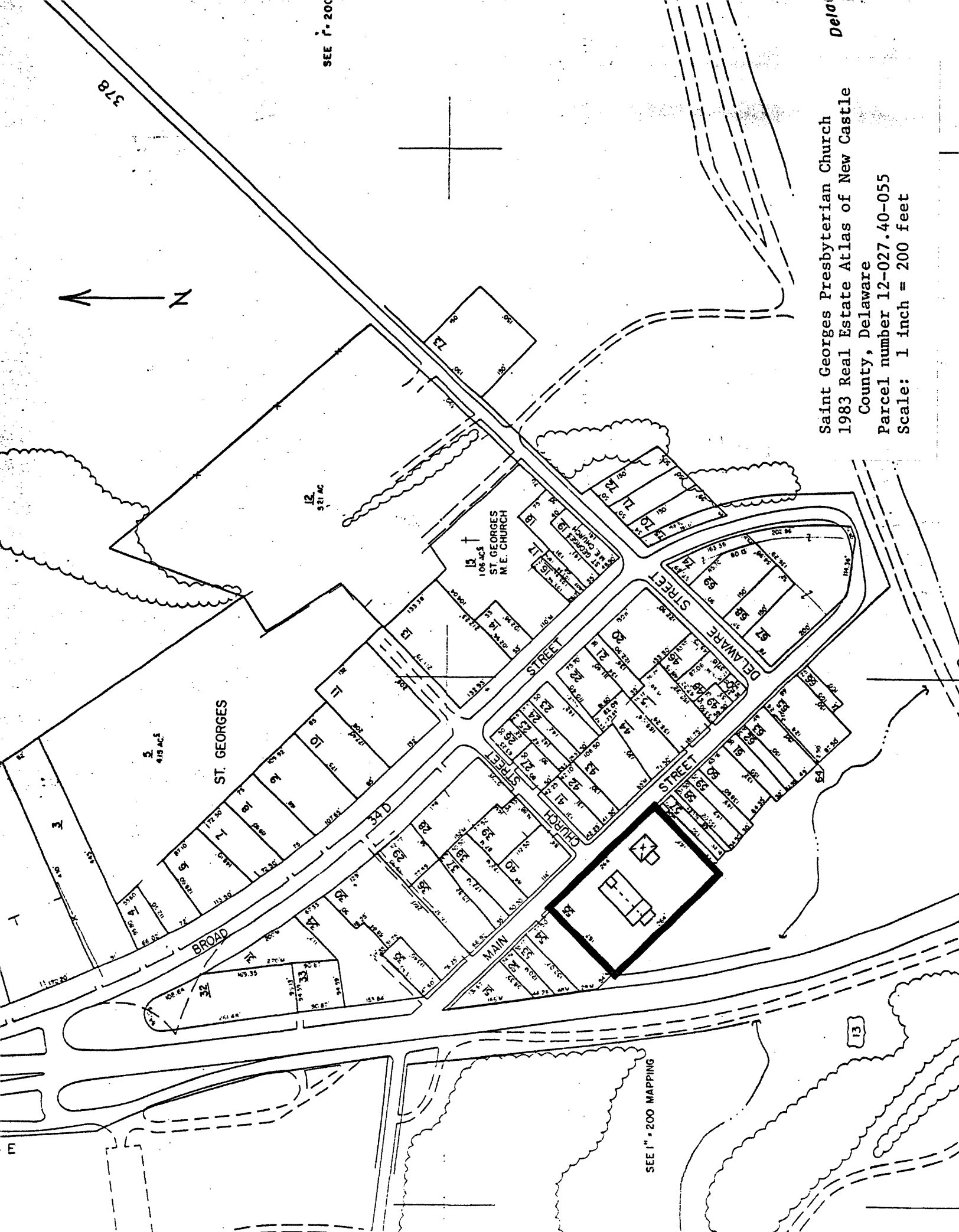
IRON REINFORCING STRAPS AND TURNBUCKLE

TOWN LATTICE ROOF TRUSS
 ST. GEORGES PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
 ST. GEORGES, DELAWARE

0 5
 ALL MEASUREMENTS
 APPROXIMATE

Erik Nord
 May, 1984

Saint Georges Presbyterian Church
1983 Real Estate Atlas of New Castle
County, Delaware
Parcel number 12-027.40-055
Scale: 1 inch = 200 feet



SEE P-200

SEE 1" = 200 MAPPING

378

5
4.15 AC

ST. GEORGES

12
3.21 AC

13
1.06 AC
ST. GEORGES
M.E. CHURCH

BROAD

MAIN

CHURCH

STREET

DELAWARE

STREET

13