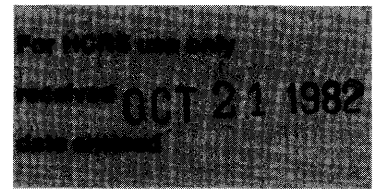


**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**



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

1. Name

historic First Church of Christ, Scientist

and/or common N/A

2. Location

street & number 315 Wisconsin Avenue ___ not for publication

city, town Madison ___ vicinity of congressional district Second

state Wisconsin code 55 county Dane code 025

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture <input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial <input type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input 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
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N/A	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military <input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name The Congregation, First Church of Christ Scientist, c/o Mary Jo. Brechtel, Clerk

street & number 315 Wisconsin Avenue

city, town Madison ___ vicinity of state Wisconsin 53703

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Dane County Register of Deeds

street & number 210 Monona Avenue

city, town Madison ___ vicinity of state Wisconsin 53709

6. Representation in Existing Surveys (continued)

title City of Madison Landmark has this property been determined eligible? ___ yes no

date March 10, 1980 ___ federal ___ state ___ county local

depository for survey records Madison Landmarks Commission

city, town Madison ___ vicinity of state Wisconsin 53710

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

The building of the First Church of Christ, Scientist stands today the same as it was in 1929 when designed and erected. The Wisconsin State Journal described the building's appearance when it was completed in 1929:

"...the church on Wisconsin Avenue [was] built with dignified simplicity and grace along the lines of Georgian architecture...Built to accommodate 850 people, the imposing edifice is equipped with opera-like seats in walnut brown to blend with the speaker's pulpit. There is a large Sunday School room on the lower floor and a reading room on the second floor. Large stone pillars quarried in one place, the only kind in the city, grace the entrance lending an attractive colonial atmosphere. Red brick and limestone constitute the exterior construction, while the interior walls are decorated in a cream color finish. The floor is of terrazzo."¹

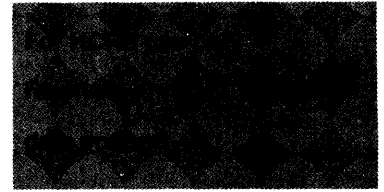
Aside from interior repainting, the building has not been altered. The front facade features a large graceful classical dome over the entrance supported by four Doric columns. The doors are early Regency in style with fluted pilasters between them. The red brick walls are done in Flemish bond. Each side of the building is pierced by arched colonial windows with many small lights.

The design of the interior conveys a feeling of serenity by its almost Puritan simplicity. The foyer has terrazo flooring in a pattern of white and black squares. Rounded archways lead to the stairways at each side of the foyer. The main hall has a segmented-arch vaulted ceiling. Art Deco lamps are designed with a classical motif. Nine bays on each side wall are demarcated by simple rectangular pilasters; in each bay is a round-arched window. The theater seats are of walnut, and a walnut rear balcony is supported by two octagonal columns. The platform in the chancel area is raised high above the floor of the hall. Fluted pilasters on the rear wall are flanked by two large columns with composite capitals. The organ loft behind the chancel is supported by six very large modillions and decorated with four columns featuring floral capitals. Upstairs the second floor Reading Room ceiling is the inside of the shallow classical dome. An exquisite Georgian fireplace and the light streaming through French windows on the semicircular front wall enhance the quiet simplicity of the room. The lighting is in the form of small art deco wall lamps. Three large folding doors lead to small chambers on two sides of the room.

¹"New Chistian Science Church Open Sunday," Wisconsin State Journal, October 25, 1929, p.6.

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First Church of Christ Scientist, Madison, Dane Co., Wisc.
Continuation sheet

Item number

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REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS:

Wisconsin Inventory of Historic Places

1973

State

State Historical Society of Wisconsin

Madison

Wisconsin 53706

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 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/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

Specific dates 1929¹ **Builder/Architect** Frank M. Riley¹

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The First Church of Christ Scientist building is of historical importance for two reasons:

- (1) It is one of the finest church designs in Madison, and,
- (2) its architect, Frank Morris Riley, ranks among Madison's major architects in the first half of the 20th century.

History of the Building

The church structure at 315 Wisconsin Avenue has been a focal point for the Christian Science movement in Wisconsin for most of the 20th century. Christian Science was introduced in the city in the mid 1880's about five years after Mary Baker Eddy, the movement's leader, organized the first congregation in Boston (April, 1879). Many of the early adherents to the religion in Madison became active followers after they experienced physical healings of one sort or another.

During the formative years Madison's pioneering Christian Scientists met informally in private homes. They officially organized themselves in April, 1895 and shortly thereafter moved into their first public meeting place -- the Jewish synagogue then located on West Washington Avenue. The congregation grew apace and in 1908 moved into a larger facility, the Women's Building. First Church of Christ Scientist was to meet there until the mid 1920's.

In 1912 the congregation purchased the lot and building at 315 Wisconsin Avenue, once the home of Wisconsin Supreme Court Justice J. H. Carpenter. The congregation used the former Carpenter residence as its reading room (a place where Christian Science literature can be studied borrowed, or purchased). Meanwhile, the church members struggled to raise funds for a new church facility. In 1919, for an unknown reason, the congregation sold the Wisconsin Avenue property to the Methodist Hospital Association for \$14,000. A year later the church members repurchased the property for the same price.

In 1918 some of the members of First Church of Christ Scientist broke away to form Second Church of Christ Scientist. The new group purchased a residence at 263 Langdon Street and converted it into a church facility. In the mid 1920's the two congregations began to reconsider the need for two churches and in 1927 merged as First Church of Christ Scientist. The united congregation sold the Second Church building and used the funds to promote the program for a new church facility.

The First Church congregation staged a cornerstone laying ceremony on January 1, 1929 and moved into its new facility the following October. Twenty years later, on October 23, 1949, the congregation celebrated in a dedicatory service the final payment of its indebtedness for the building. It had taken the congregation of First Church of Christ Scientist sixty-five years to form, build the church, and pay off the debts.

(continued)

9. Major Bibliographical References

See Continuation Sheet

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property .3 Acre

Quadrangle name Madison West, Wis.

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UMT References

A	<u>16</u>	<u>305680</u>	<u>4771960</u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing

B			
	Zone	Easting	Northing

C			
---	--	--	--

D			
---	--	--	--

E			
---	--	--	--

F			
---	--	--	--

G			
---	--	--	--

H			
---	--	--	--

Verbal boundary description and justification

SE 66 ft. of Lot 10 and all of Lot 2, Block 92

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

state	code	county	code
-------	------	--------	------

state	code	county	code
-------	------	--------	------

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Kenneth D. Nordin and Katherine H. Rankin, Secretary

organization Madison Landmarks Commission

date February, 1981

street & number 215 Monona Avenue telephone 608-266-6552

city or town Madison

state Wisconsin 53710

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 Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

Richard Noyes

title Director, State Historical Society of Wisconsin

date 4/29/82

For HCERS use only

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

Sharon Byrum
Keeper of the National Register

Entered in the 11/24/82
National Register

date

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

**United States Department of the Interior
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First Church of Christ Scientist, Madison, Dane Co., Wisc.

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Significance

Architecture

Frank Morris Riley, the congregation's choice for architect, was a logical selection. The church members wanted someone who could build them a grand, classical temple. Riley (1875-1948), who had studied at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and in Europe before returning to settle in Madison in 1915 specialized in the Period Revival styles of architecture. By the end of his career he had designed many grand homes, including the present mansion of Wisconsin's governor, fraternity houses, and commercial buildings, such as the Madison Gas and Electric Building. The major characteristic of Riley's work was his skilled use of period details. He was probably Madison's finest practitioner in the Tudor and Georgian Revival styles. First Church of Christ Scientist was to be the only Madison area church he designed.

The Neo-classical building Riley designed for the First Church congregation was consistent with a general trend of architecture for urban Christian Science churches built in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Across the country Christian Science facilities were being erected that looked like Roman temples on the outside and featured quiet, dignified interiors. The architecture reflected the sense of progress and bigness and optimism for the future that Christian Scientists of the day felt. The attitude came in part from the fast growth the churches were experiencing then as well as from values of the American society as a whole.

City planners, architects, church leaders, and politicians were glorying in the early part of the 20th century in their country's advances -- its economic growth, its technological progress, its cultural achievements. Community leaders wanted their public buildings to be grand in style to reflect the greatness they felt. The classical style, articulated at the World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago in 1893 as the ideal expression of architecture for the new American city, was widely used for banks, government offices, and other public buildings. The Christian Science movement had a display at the Chicago fair and its members believed strongly in the progressive themes stated there.

The classical style, consequently, became the architectural expression of early 20th century Christian Science thought. The building for First Church of Christ Scientist in Madison became part of that tradition. Architecturally, it serves today as a local monument of a once important national trend.

Its grand style and exquisite detail also are testimony to the craftsmanship of Frank Morris Riley.

The First Church of Christ, Scientist was built during a decade of heavy construction activity by religious institutions in Madison. More than a dozen churches were built in Madison between 1920 and 1931. Of the twelve churches constructed during this time which retain their original integrity, six were built to serve expanding suburban congregations, four were constructed for university-connected institutions and two, including this building, were built for downtown congregations. The First Church of Christ Scientist was built on Wisconsin Avenue, a wide street which extends from the Capitol Square to Lake Mendota. In the 19th century and early 20th century, the vista of this street was dominated by churches. However, in the 1950s many of the downtown churches were destroyed

(continued)

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Significance (cont.)

as a need for parking for suburban commuters forced the congregations to build new edifices on the outskirts of town. Today only three churches remain on Wisconsin Avenue, the First Methodist Church (the 1870s sandstone building was destroyed in early 1972 when a new church was constructed next door), Bethel Lutheran, which located from another downtown site to Wisconsin Avenue in 1940, and the First Church of Christ Scientist.

Nine of the twelve churches which were built from 1920 and 1931 and which remain intact have the potential to be nominated to the National Register of Historic Places. Because of the importance all nine have as visual landmarks, and because of the excellence of their design it is difficult to make a comparison judgement. Of these nine churches, one other is in a neo-classical Georgian design, the First Congregational Church in University Heights. The design and workmanship of this church is also of excellent quality. Both of these Georgian Revival churches rank among the finest of Madison's religious architecture.

¹Blueprints in the possession of the church prepared by Frank M. Riley in 1928; and, "New Christian Science Church Open Sunday," Wisconsin State Journal, October 25, 1929, p.6.

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Item #9, Major Bibliographical References

Dedication Service Historical Sketch, (October 23, 1949).

Christian Science in Madison, Wisconsin, a report submitted to the Mother Church, 1932.

"Have You Seen This Madison," Wisconsin State Journal, December 30, 1973.

"New Christian Science Church Open Sunday," Wisconsin State Journal, October 25, 1929, P.6.

"Frank M. Riley," Wisconsin State Journal, May 23, 1949.

"The Cultural Climate of Christian Science in 1890-1910," an interview with Charles Hosmer, Progress at Principia (Summer, 1979), pp. 1-3.

Gottschalk, Stephen, The Emergence of Christian Science in American Religious Life, Berkeley: 1973.

Miscellaneous records, First Church of Christ Scientist, Madison, including blueprints of church prepared by Frank Riley and dated 1928.