

**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

For HCRS use only

received JAN 26 1982

date entered MAR 10 1982

1. Name

historic Pastorium, Dexter Avenue Baptist Church

and/or common Pastorium, Dexter Avenue King Memorial Baptist Church

2. Location

street & number 309 South Jackson Street not for publication

city, town Montgomery vicinity of congressional district II

state Alabama code 01 county Montgomery code 001

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 type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name Dexter Avenue King Memorial Baptist Church

street & number 454 Dexter Avenue

city, town Montgomery vicinity of state Alabama

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Montgomery County Courthouse

street & number Washington Avenue

city, town Montgomery state Alabama

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Alabama Inventory has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date 1970-present federal state county local

depository for survey records Alabama Historical Commission

city, town Montgomery state Alabama

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved date _____
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed	slightly	

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The house is an unpretentious clapboard cottage with a truncated pyramid roof and a south front gable ornamented by a round-arched light inset with slender muntins. A shed roof porch with Tuscan columns spans the front and is ornamented with small modillions. The modillions are repeated on the eaves of the main block of the house. The central entrance, surrounded by diamond-paned sidelights and transom, has a glass light outlined by egg and dart detail and has its original hardware. Windows on either side of the door are 1/1. The house rests on a high brick foundation and the front porch floor, originally wooden, was replaced with concrete which bears a scar from the 1956 bombing.

The interior was remodelled slightly in 1966, but much of the original remains. The living room has a handsome mantel with beveled glass mirror and an overmantel supported by Doric colonnettes. Narrow crown moulding, eight inch baseboards and doorways with simple block facings attest to the restrained tastes of the builder. The original floors have been replaced by narrow strip hardwood. Doors throughout are of horizontal panels with the exception of a pair of French doors, outlined by sidelights, which lead from the entrance room to the living room. All walls are plaster. During the remodelling, the back porch was enclosed for a second bathroom and the kitchen modernized.

Much of the furniture in the eight room house was that used by the Kings during their occupancy. The study holds many mementoes of the Civil Rights leader and his family. Furniture in the Pastorium used during the ministry of King includes: dining room-dining suite; living room - three tables and two lamps; bedroom - bedroom suite, rocking chair; study - table and chair.

The house is located in a neighborhood of small frame cottages dating from about the same time. Structures are closely spaced and are close to the street.

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 checked="" 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> other (specify) Black History

Specific dates 1912 ; 1954-60 **Builder/Architect** Unknown

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

Architecture: This small one-story frame cottage is representative of the type of housing available for upper and middle-class blacks in Montgomery during the first decades of the 20th century. It is located in Centennial Hill, an area which developed in the late 1870s as a black neighborhood of significance. It was, and still is, the home of blacks who have attained prominence and distinction as community leaders. Alabama State University, which moved to Montgomery in 1887, is at the southernmost end of Jackson Street, some eight blocks from the pastorium.

Black History/Social-Humanitarian/Religion: The house is primarily significant as the Pastorium of the Dexter Avenue Baptist Church. In this capacity it served as the home of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., during his ministry in Montgomery (1954-1960) and his leadership of the Montgomery Bus Boycott in 1955-56. The Bus Boycott launched both the Civil Rights Movement and King's highly successful career as its foremost advocate. Through its associations with King and the Bus Boycott, The Pastorium also reflects the role of the Black church in the struggle for equal rights for black citizens.

* * * * *

The house was constructed about 1912 and was acquired by the Dexter Avenue Baptist Church in 1919 for use as its pastorium. Dr. King assumed the pastorate of the Church in October, 1954 and occupied the house until his move to Atlanta in early 1960. Dr. King's occupancy of the house brought it onto the national scene when, on the night of January 31, 1956, it was bombed during the arrest provoked by the Bus Boycott and King's leadership of the first concerted effort for Civil Rights. A bomb, thrown about 9:15, ripped a hole in the south side of the front porch about two feet from the steps (the scar is still in the concrete). The explosion, caused by either a hand grenade or a half stick of dynamite, shattered windows on the south front and sent glass into both the den and the living room. The bombing helped focus national attention on the movement in Montgomery, and paradoxically, on King's firm stand on non-violence.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Abstract. In possession of Dexter Avenue King Memorial Church
Interviews. Mary Ann Neeley with Dr. Murry Branch (current minister) and Dr. Zelia Evans.
Montgomery Advertiser, January 31, 1956
Sanborn Map, Montgomery, Alabama, 1910.

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property less than one

Quadrangle name Montgomery South

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UMT References

A

1	6	5	6	6	2	4	1	0	3	5	8	1	7	6	1	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

Lot beginning 50 feet south of Key Street, running east 150 feet, more or less, thence South 55 feet, thence running west 150 feet, more or less to Jackson Street, thence east on Jackson Street 55 feet.

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 Ellen Mertins / Mary Ann Neeley (Landmarks Foundation of Montgomery)

organization Alabama Historical Commission date September 1, 1981

street & number 725 Monroe Street telephone (205) 832-6621

city or town Montgomery state Alabama

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 


title State Historic Preservation Officer date 1/20/82

For HCRS use only

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

 date 3/10/82

Keeper of the National Register

Attest:  date 3/10/82

Chief of Registration