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STREET & NUMBER northeast corner City, town Harro	of Short and Chiles St	VICINITY OF	CONGR	R PUBLICATION ESSIONAL DISTR 06	
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CATEGORY DISTRICT X_BUILDING(S) STRUCTURE SITE OBJECT	OWNERSHIP PUBLIC XPRIVATE BOTH PUBLIC ACQUISITION IN PROCESS BEING CONSIDERED	STATUS X OCCUPIED UNOCCUPIED WORK IN PROGRES ACCESSIBLE X YES: RESTRICTED YES: UNRESTRICTED NO	C SSE E G SDIN	PRES GRICULTURE OMMERCIAL DUCATIONAL NTERTAINMENT OVERNMENT NDUSTRIAL IILITARY	ENT USE MUSEUM PARK PRIVATE RESIDEN X_RELIGIOUS SCIENTIFIC TRANSPORTATION OTHER:
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7 DESCRIPTION

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DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

St. Phikip's Episcopal Church, whose cornerstone was laid on April 17, 1860, and was opened for services on September 12, 1861, is situated on the northeast corner of Chiles and Short Streets in Harrodsburg, Kentucky. The church is located one block northeast of Morgan Row (placed on the National Register February 16, 1973), one block northwest of the Mercer County Courthouse, one block east of U.S. Hwy. 127, and two blocks southeast of the original site of Fort Harrod. Bishop Benjamin Smith designed and supervised its construction; but instead of providing delineations, he made a model in wood that is said to have been a small replica of a church in England he had attended as a boy.¹ An account of St. Phillip's appearance in 1901 was given by a Mr. Sneed who described it as being:

90 feet long and 30 by 35 feet wide. It is early English in style, is constructed of brick with granite dressings, and has a graceful octagonal spire surmounted by a cross. The windows are of stained glass, fitted with proper tracery symbols and monograms . . . It is a most beautiful specimen of rural church architecture, and . . . certainly does honor to the taste of Bishop Smith.²

St. Phillip's Church, little changed since its completion in 1861, is a halfcruciform structure of red brick laid in common bond with a row of headers every eighth course; the masonry resting on a stone foundation. At the north end is an apse whose five sides are framed by two-tier buttresses; at the southwest corner is a spire-crowned tower. Piercing the front wall of the nave are three lancet windows. The central window of these is considerably taller, but projecting bricks form a pointed arch that envelopes the apexes of all, unifying them as a whole.

The lower section of the tower is square-shaped and has lancet-arch passages from the west and south sides.³ Slightly off-center above each of these openings is a quatrefoil of stone. The top corners of the square are beveled, transforming

¹Neva L. Williams, <u>The History of St. Philip's Episcopal Church</u> (Harrodsburg: Harrodsburg Historical Society, 1948), p. 5.

²Letter contained in the Sneed Collection (Library of the Historiographer, 225 S. Limestone, Lexington, Ky.); quoted in "Benjamin Bosworth Smith: Early Kentucky Clergyman", Reverend Robert W. Insko, <u>Register of the Kentucky</u> Historical Society, July, 1951, p. 181.

³Assumedly, the western passage was reserved for slaves.

8. SIGNIFICANCE

SPECIFIC DAT	ES 1860	BUILDER/ARCI	HITECT Bishop Benjamii	n Bosworth Smith
1900-	COMMUNICATIONS	_INDUSTRY	POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	OTHER (SPECIFY)
<u>X</u> 1800-1899	COMMERCE	EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	PHILOSOPHY	TRANSPORTATION
1700-1799	ART	ENGINEERING	MUSIC	THEATER
1600-1699	XARCHITECTURE	EDUCATION	MILITARY	SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
1500-1599	AGRICULTURE	ECONOMICS	LITERATURE	SCULPTURE
1400-1499	ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	CONSERVATION	LAW	SCIENCE
PREHISTORIC	ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	COMMUNITY PLANNING	LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	RELIGION
PERIOD	AF	EAS OF SIGNIFICANCE CH	IECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW	

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

St. Phil**/**ip's Episcopal Church, located in Harrodsburg, Kentucky, oldest permanent settlement west of the Allegheny mountains, was designed by Bishop Benjamin Bosworth Smith--a leading figure in the establishment of the Episcopal Church in Kentucky. The church is the finest Gothic representative in an area of several blocks which contain architectural styles ranging from Federal to Georgian Revival. Rexford Newcomb, a noted historian of Kentucky architecture, has pronounced St. Phil**f**ips as "the most perfect specimen of pure Gothic architecture, exterior and interior, of its size in Kentucky... (and perhaps) ... in the entire Middlewest."¹

Lewis Collins' <u>History of Kentucky</u> describes late 19th century Harrodsburg as such:

Harrodsburg, the oldest county seat--first of Lincoln and then Mercer county--and the oldest town in the state, is situated on a commanding eminence, 34 miles s.w. of Lexington, 30 s. of Frankfort, 10 n.w. of Danville, 8 from the Kentucky and 1 mile from Salt river; is the seat of Daughters' College, and of a prospective male college under the control of the Independent Order of Odd Fellows in Kentucky; has substantial and some elegant residences and businesses houses, and is the center of trade for a very limited but wealthy region... (a population of) 2,205 in 1870 without railroad facilities nearer than 16, 22, and 30 miles in as many directions; named after Capt. James Harrod, one of its founders in 1774.²

The year 1830 marked the congregation's beginning, for this was when the Reverend Gideon McMillan assumed his duties at the newly founded Trinity Episcopal Church in nearby Danville. He chose to make the entire region his parish, covering

¹Neva L. Williams. <u>The History of St. Phillip's Episcopal Church</u> (Harrodsburg: Harrodsburg Historical Society, 1948), p. 5.

²Lewis Collins, <u>History of Kentucky</u> (Berea, Kentucky: Kentucky Imprints, 1976), Vol. II, p. 603.

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Bevins, Ann. "A Famous Civil War Church Service." <u>Kentucky Heritage</u>, Vol. X, No. 3 (Spring, 1970), p. 1.

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY <u>approximately 1/2</u> acre UTM REFERENCES

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VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

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NAME / TITLE				
Daniel Kidd, Architectur	al Historian		·	
ORGANIZATION			DATE	
Kentucky Heritage Comm	ission		June 1977	
STREET & NUMBER			TELEPHONE	
104 Bridge Street			(502) 564-3741	
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St. Phillip's Episcopal Church				
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the tower's shape into an octagon. This section serves as a belfry and is divided by a string course of stone. Lancet windows appear on four alternate sides-those above the string course are louvered; those below contain diamond panes as do all but six of the entire church. Atop the tower is an eight-sided, unornamented spire rising to a height of 43 feet.

Two sets of lancet windows with small circular lights centered above each appear on the western wall between the tower and the projecting transept. Between and flanking these are two-tier buttresses that rise to a height slightly above the lancets, but not meeting the shed roof covering this area. The gabled end of the transept is unfenestrated save for a rose window in its upper half. The remainder of the eastern facade, or its northern-most section, is flush with the transept. Here is contained this facade's third set of coupled lancet windows.

The eastern wall's fenestration differs. Here are found three lancet windows equally spaced, each separated by a pair of two-tier buttresses. A stonecapped chimney projecting beyond the wall is at the southern end and a door at the northern end. This door gave access to an education wing that was added to the church in the 1950s, but this addition was torn down by the conscientious members of St. Phil/ip's in 1976 and a neighboring building was purchased to serve the one-time addition's purposes. The door appears to be the only alteration of St. Phil/ip's exterior except for the replacement of some masonry.

All given corners of the church are treated with two-tier buttresses set at a diagonal. These define the structure's elements and render the building a sense of stability. The nave, situated on a north-south axis, is covered with a gable roof of steep pitch. A shed roof covers the western side: this is interrupted by the transept whose roof is steeply gabled, but does not achieve the height of the nave's roof which it intersects. 'Sweated-seam'' tin roofing is the material used to cover all roofs.

The nave is entered from the southwest by one of two lancet arch doors. A central aisle approaches the narrow chancel and is flanked on either side by two rows of

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St. Phillip's Episcopal Church

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pews. The sacristy and organ are at the northwest; a processional aisle leads from these past additional pews that face eastward (those of the nave face north). The former were occupied by slaves in the church's early history. The interior contains seven bays, these being defined by Gothic columns on the west and half-columns on the east. Arched braces and half-timbering of walnut aged to a deep, rich brown form a pleasing contrast with the stuccoed walls that are painted white. All floors within the church are of poplar. Bishop Smith not only designed and supervised the church's construction; he also carved three ecclesiastical chairs in the chancel, the communion rail around the chancel, and a tripod supporting the baptismal font.⁴

Above the slaves' pews along the western wall are four stained-glass windows: Two contain symbols of the sacrements and two are dedicated to charter members of the parish whose dates of death are 1851 and 1853. Another memorial window is the central one of the apse, directly behind the altar:

Four salient facts of the Harrodsburg Episcopal Church are incorporated in the beautiful stained glass windows back of the altar. Its name, its purpose, its founder and the date.

Main motifs of the upper sash of the window are an illuminated Golden Crown (the purpose of the Church to seek the heavenly reward), the legend "The Cross of St. Phillip"; a blood red cross, and below the cross a circle within which is "Faithful Unto Death." At the bottom of the lower sash is a memorial tribute to "Rev. Gideon McMillan, the first Rector of Trinity Church, Danville, and the first Episcopal Missionary here on July 30, 1833."⁵

⁴Neva L. Williams has written in <u>The History of St. Phillip's Church</u>: "The baptismal font of fine old English china is priceless, say connoisseurs who have examined its maker's mark, as the art of making porcelain of that type passed out of existence many years ago " p. 5.

⁵Ibid., p. 3.

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All stained glass windows appear to be English-made, and it can be safely assumed that they date from the mid-19th century.⁶ Interestingly, the McMillan window is the only window of the entire interior that is centered within its respective half-timbering. Legend states that Bishop Smith taught that only Providence is perfect and that man should ever be mindful of such.⁷ This perhaps explains the asymmetrical arrangement of the exterior and interior, and the peculiar arrangement of the windows.

⁶Information provided by James Cogar, former Curator of Colonial Williamsburg, Virginia, and Director of Pleasant Hill at Shakertown, Kentucky, Inc.

⁷Information provided by Star Kephart and Mr. and Mrs. Morgan Soaper, present communicants of St. Phil²/_pp's Mission Church.

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the area regularly on horseback. In 1831, he reported that he was preaching one-fourth of the time in Harrodsburg.³ The parish was officially organized on February 12, 1858, with the members agreeing to construct a house of worship.

Bishop Benjamin Bosworth Smith (1794-1884), first Bishop of the Episcopal diocese of Kentucky and later founder of the Protestant Episcopal Theological Seminary of Kentucky, the Commonwealth's third Superintendent for Public Instruction, and ninth Presiding Bishop of the Protestant Episcopal Church in America, was responsible for the design and construction of St. Phillip's Church which he supposedly based on a church he had visited in England:

He had built several other churches in central Kentucky, but it is said he was inspired to put his talent as a designer and builder of churches to his best efforts to create an edifice worthy of the town. Harrodsburg at that time (1850s) was known as the 'Saratoga of the South' due to old Harrodsburg Springs... (which) ... drew throngs of wealthy Southerners to this city, a large number of whom were Episcopalians.⁴

A letter written by a young communicant of St. Philips many years after its erection provides the most authentic witness to Bishop Smith's invaluable role in the building's construction:

The Bishop put his whole soul and every energy that he possessed in this work. He made a model of the entire church out of wood--perhaps every part. He whittled it out with his knife, much of the interior of the model as well as the furniture was done by him at the fireside of the church people. When he would visit them of evenings as soon as seated--would

³Frances Keller Swinford and Rebecca Smith Lee, <u>The Great Elm Tree</u> (Faith House Press: Lexington, Kentucky, 1969), p. 221.

⁴Williams, <u>op. cit.</u>, p. 5.

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spread out his handkerchief on his knees, take out his piece of wood and knife and commence work... He superintended everything (of the construction) himself. 5

"According to the legend cherished at St. Phillips, the little model was lent a few years later to the parish in Georgetown to guide them in erecting their church and was never returned."⁶ Apparently, this parish found such an edifice too expensive to copy.

Parish churches in England were noted for their "undistinguished texture and color of their building materials... (enriching) ... their whole composition."⁷ This is certainly true of St. Phillips. And typical of English ecclesiastical architecture of the 1840s, its interior and exterior are unpretentious. Yet despite this quality and despite its small size, the church possesses a dignity beyond its physical dimensions. The buttresses and windows are in tasteful proportion with the masses and its function is well articulated.

Supposedly, St. Phillips boasted the first stained-glass windows in Harrodsburg. "They excited much interest and people came from far and near to view them."⁸ The church was among a few in this region that were not used as a hospital following the Battle of Perryville (a battle said to have been the bloodiest of the Civil War and whose site was added to the National Register December 19, 1960). Because of the windows, St. Phillips was too poorly lit for use as such. "It is said that soldiers considered breaking the windows so that the building would be light enough for the housing of soldiers. But another soldier with enough authority placed a guard to protect the stained glass."⁹

⁵Swinford and Lee, <u>op. cit.</u>, p. 224; Sarah Smedley Fife to "Mr. Cooley," September 30, 1901 (Archives of Diocese of Lexington, University of Kentucky Library).

⁶Ibid., p. 224.

⁷Phoebe B. Stanton, <u>The Gothic Revival and American Church Architecture</u> (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1968), p. 5.

⁸Maria Thompson Daviess, <u>History of Boyle and Mercer Counties</u> (Harrodsburg: Harrodsburg Herald, 1924), p. 14.

⁹Ann Bevins, "A Famous Civil War Church Service," <u>Kentucky Heritage</u>, Vol. X, No. 3, Spring, 1970, p. 1.

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The most famous event in the church's history occurred during the aftermath of the Battle of Perryville. General Leonidas Polk, C.S.A., who had been Bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of the Southwest prior to the war, entered St. Phillips on October 9, 1862. Having witnessed so much bloodshed, the General, popularly known as the "Fighting Bishop of the Confederacy," offered 'peace to the land and blessings on friend and foe alike.' Worshipers and the Bishop wept. Briefly in St. Phillip's Church on that October day peace and brotherhood were felt in the midst of much turmoil."¹⁰

¹⁰Ibid., p. 1.

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- Additional information provided by: Mr. James Cogar, Former Curator, Colonial Williamsburg, Virginia, and Director of Shakertown at Pleasant Hill; Mr. John Hourigan, Blum Ornamental Glass Co., Louisville, Kentucky; Mrs. Star Jordre Kephart, Mr. and Mrs. Morgan Soaper, and Vicar Chester King, St. Phillip's Episcopal Mission Church, Harrodsburg, Kentucky.