

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

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National Register of Historic Places  
Registration Form

NATIONAL  
REGISTER

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "X" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name The First Evangelical Lutheran Church of Gypsum, Colorado

other names/site number First Lutheran Church (5EA647)

2. Location

street & number 400 2nd Street N/A not for publication

city or town Gypsum N/A vicinity

state Colorado code CO county Eagle code 037 zip code 81637

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this  nomination  request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant  nationally  statewide  locally. ( See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Amesha Hartmann May 21, 1993  
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

State Historic Preservation Office  
State of Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria. ( See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

- entered in the National Register.  
 See continuation sheet.
- determined eligible for the National Register  
 See continuation sheet.
- determined not eligible for the National Register.
- removed from the National Register.
- other, (explain): \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of the Keeper

Melous Byers

**Entered in the  
National Register**

Date of Action

6/24/93

**5. Classification**

**Ownership of Property**  
(Check as many boxes as apply)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

**Category of Property**  
(Check only one box)

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

**Number of Resources within Property**  
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1	1	buildings
0	0	sites
0	0	structures
0	0	objects
1	1	Total

**Name of related multiple property listing**  
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

N/A

**Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register**

0

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

RELIGION: religious facility

**Current Functions**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

RELIGION: religious facility

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

LATE VICTORIAN: Gothic

**Materials**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation CONCRETE

walls WOOD/weatherboard

roof ASPHALT

other

**Narrative Description**

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

**8. Statement of Significance**

**Applicable National Register Criteria**

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

**Criteria Considerations**

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B** removed from its original location.
- C** a birthplace or grave.
- D** a cemetery.
- E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F** a commemorative property.
- G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

**Areas of Significance**

(Enter categories from instructions)

ARCHITECTURE

**Period of Significance**

1890

**Significant Dates**

1890

**Significant Person**

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

**Cultural Affiliation**

N/A

**Architect/Builder**

S. Broughton

**Narrative Statement of Significance**

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

**9. Major Bibliographical References**

**Bibliography**

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

**Previous documentation on file (NPS):**

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # \_\_\_\_\_
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # \_\_\_\_\_

**Primary location of additional data:**

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository:

\_\_\_\_\_

First Evangelical Lutheran Church  
Name of Property

Eagle County, CO  
County and State

**10. Geographical Data**

**Acreage of Property** Less than one acre

**UTM References**

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1 

1	3	3	2	5	0	0
Zone	Easting		Northing			

3 

Zone	Easting		Northing			

2 

Zone	Easting		Northing			

4 

Zone	Easting		Northing			

See continuation sheet

**Verbal Boundary Description**

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

**Boundary Justification**

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title Peggy L. Burr, Council edited by H. L. Wilson 3/93

organization First Evangelical Lutheran Church date January 25, 1993

street & number 770 Castle Drive/P. O. Box 193 telephone 303 328-6853

city or town Eagle state CO zip code 81631

**Additional Documentation**

Submit the following items with the completed form:

**Continuation Sheets**

**Maps**

A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

**Photographs**

Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

**Additional items**

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

**Property Owner**

(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

name Trustees of the First Evangelical Lutheran Church of Gypsum, Colorado

(c/o The Reverend Jeffrey C. Hanson) 303 524-7919 (w)

street & number Post Office Box 391 telephone 303 524-7791 (h)

city or town Gypsum state CO zip code 81637

**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.).

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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Eagle County, COSection number 7 Page 1

## DESCRIPTION

The First Evangelical Lutheran Church is located in the Gypsum Valley in the heart of the Rocky Mountains. The church occupies a corner lot in the midst of a residential area in the small town of Gypsum, at the intersection of 2nd and Eagle Streets. Fronting the church are two large lilac bushes, one on each side of the sidewalk leading to the front entrance. A large Chinese elm tree flourishes behind the church. A white basket weave fence stands on the northern boundary of the property, between the church and a private home. The small, front gabled, one story, wood frame church is covered in shiplap siding. It has Gothic-inspired pointed arched windows and door openings, and a steeple with a tall, wood shingled spire. All the windows are of brightly colored stained glass. The property is in good condition, with the exception of the woodpecker holes in the steeple, and has had little alteration since its construction.

Facing 2nd Street on the east, the main body of the church is rectangular in plan, approximately 36 feet by 25 feet. There are two projections off the front and rear elevations of this rectangular main portion. Projecting out 4 feet and 8 feet wide (approximately) on the front is a vestibule that also forms the steeple. Centered on the rear of the building is the chancel, projecting out 5 feet and 10 feet wide (approximately). The original stone foundation was covered with concrete in the early 1960s. The shiplap siding is painted white with a blue-gray color trimming the windows, doors, attic vents, cornerboards and fascia. The very steeply pitched front gabled roof is covered with asphalt shingles. The shingling has been replaced several times over the years; the latest was in October and November of 1992 when the current fiberglass/asphalt shingles were installed.

Centered on the front of the building is the vestibule with two concrete steps leading to a concrete stoop and side walls that mark the entrance. Many years ago the concrete replaced the original wooden steps; the date of this change is not known. The main entrance is a pair of black wood paneled doors. Above the doors is a pointed arched transom of stained glass. Two pointed arched stained glass windows flank the vestibule. The vestibule, covered in shiplap siding, continues upward toward the apex of the gable forming a belfry which houses a tolling bell. Above the front door and below the belfry is a circular screened vent. The square belfry is covered in straight cut shingles and has a pair of pointed-arched, louvered openings on the front. Single versions of this louvered opening are also found on the north and south sides of the belfry. The louvered openings on the sides of the belfry do not appear in an 1890s photograph;

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First Evangelical Lutheran Church  
Eagle County, CO

DESCRIPTION (continued)

however there is no record of when these were added. Rising above the square belfry is a tall octagonal spire covered with alternating sections of straight cut and diamond cut wooden shingles. A wooden cross tops the spire and can readily be seen above the tree tops from outside the town limits.

Three Gothic-inspired pointed arch windows of stained glass are evenly spaced across each of the long sides of the building (north and south elevations). In the early 1960s, several broken pieces of glass were replaced and the windows were covered with heavy screening to protect them against further vandalism.

Centered on the rear of the building is the projecting chancel with its own steeply pitched hipped roof. To the south of the chancel is the shiplap enclosed chimney. The brick chimney was replaced for safety reasons in 1988 with a metal pipe that was covered with shiplap to match the exterior walls. To the north of the chancel is a paneled door with a pointed arch transom of stained glass. In the apex of the gable is a circular screened vent.

Partial excavation was made under the rear of the church in the early 1900s to provide for the installation of a wood/coal furnace, which replaced the wood stove. Wooden cellar doors were laid over the wooden access steps. No flooring or walls were installed in the excavation. In the early 1960s, a gas furnace replaced the wood/coal furnace.

The interior of the church has seen few alterations and contains much of its original fabric and features. The wood flooring is original. Two heat registers and a cold air return remain; these were installed in the floor when the first furnace was installed. The floors were sanded and restored to a natural wood finish in 1988, at which time maroon carpeting was placed in the tiny vestibule and extended into a narrow runner up the aisle between the pews to the raised altar, which was totally carpeted. A small area in the northwest corner of the altar, the width of the door, drops down one step to floor level for exiting the rear door.

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First Evangelical Lutheran Church  
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**DESCRIPTION (continued)**

The sanctuary is an open room with a pitched ceiling. The original dark wood wainscoting extends 44 inches high on the walls, with the exception of the chancel, where it is 32 inches high. The walls are lathe and plaster. Deteriorating wallpaper was removed in 1988 and the walls from the top of the wainscoting to the pitch of the ceiling were finished in textured plaster and painted white. The double vestibule doors opening into the sanctuary were removed in the early 1960s to alleviate overcrowding in the small, congested area. The original theatre-style wooden seats were removed and replaced with contemporary pews in September 1992 to provide more seating for the growing congregation.

The alcove in the chancel is outlined by a dark wood, pointed arched frame that matches all the woodwork in the sanctuary. The three crosses on the extended back wall of the chancel were installed in 1988 for the centennial celebration of the church.

The building was wired with electricity in the early 1920s. The gas lights which hung from hooks at the extreme pitch of the ceiling were eventually replaced by light bulbs on the slope of the ceiling. Four brass and white glass hobnail fixtures now hang from the ceiling on chains. Plumbing has never been installed in the church.

In the northwest corner behind the church is a gabled roof, wood frame storage shed. Approximately 19 feet by 11 feet, it is painted the same as the church. The building is considered noncontributing because it was moved onto the property in December 1991.

**SIGNIFICANCE**

The First Evangelical Lutheran Church meets criterion "C" for it embodies distinctive characteristics of a type, period, and method of construction. The church has architectural significance as an outstanding well-preserved example of the type of building that was constructed by early pioneers for their worship services. The building possesses the characteristics of the Gothic Revival style, which was the preferred choice among early pioneers and was also a style favored by the Swedish immigrants who settled in this country. As there have been no structural changes, the building also provides an excellent example of construction methods and craftsmanship. The property also meets criterion consideration "A" for as a religious property, it derives its primary significance from its architectural distinction.

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First Evangelical Lutheran Church  
Eagle County, CO

SIGNIFICANCE (continued)

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Gypsum was settled in 1882 as a ranching community. In August, 1887, the Denver and Rio Grande Railroad tracks reached Gypsum and by the following year the population of the town was fifty.<sup>1</sup> The congregation of the First Evangelical Lutheran Church was organized October 12, 1888 by the Oleson, Engstrom, Gustafson and Norgaard families. The decision to build the church was made at a meeting in the Norgaard home on December 3, 1888. "...We shall pay cash for everything as work progresses; and when out of funds we stop work, up to funds is collected [sic] again," it was recorded in the original minutes. On February 20, 1890, the land was purchased from Francis M. Skiff and Mary E. Skiff. The contract to build was awarded to Mr. S. Broughton.<sup>2</sup> The cornerstone was laid March 23, 1890 by Rev. M. J. Wagge, who spoke in "Scandinavian," and Rev. J. N. Lenker, who spoke in German and English.<sup>3</sup> The building was completed in that year. Much of the work was done by church members, who hauled the stones for the foundation and the lumber. The cost of construction was \$676.00 and when construction was completed, there was \$14.13 left in the building fund.<sup>4</sup>

From the time it was built, there has been a sense of community associated with the church. The founders opened the church to other denominations. It is noted in the original minutes that at a yearly meeting held January 8, 1891, "It was moved seconded and carried [sic] to give The catholics the same admission to the use of our church as the protest denominations now have."<sup>5</sup>

The church is a well known landmark and the spire can easily be seen from outside of town. Local people still tell about the Greek railroad workers who, upon seeing the gleaming gold cross atop the church, the only part of the church visible through the fog, abandoned their work and fled, believing the cross to be a vision. The railroad foreman was forced to travel to Leadville to hire new workers.

In addition to being the first church in town, the building is also the second oldest in Gypsum.



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## SIGNIFICANCE (continued)

## ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE

The First Evangelical Lutheran Church exemplifies the simplified Gothic Revival style that many pioneers chose when constructing their places of worship. While lacking in the ornate decorative expression often seen with this style, the building still simply and strongly reflects the emphasis on verticality so important in the expression of the Gothic Revival style. This emphasis on the vertical is seen in the building's steeply pitched roof, in its pointed arch window and door openings, and most notably, in its spire. The church is the only representative of the Gothic Revival style in the town of Gypsum and quite possibly, the only building of this style in the county. The only other church in town from this early period was constructed ten years later and has undergone numerous alterations and additions.

The Gothic Revival style was also popular with those settlers transplanted from Sweden. The mass immigration from Sweden started in the 1840s and culminated late in the century. The majority of Swedish immigrants moved directly into the rural areas of this country. By 1870, there were 180 Swedes in Colorado, up from only 27 in the previous decade. The number of Swedes in the state then increased rapidly. In 1890, the number rose to 9,659 and they held fourth place among the foreign born in Colorado.<sup>6</sup> These settlers brought with them the knowledge to continue Swedish rural building traditions. Wood was the traditional building material of vernacular architecture in Sweden and with wood came the emphasis on craftsmanship. The Gothic style wood churches with the tall spires built by these new immigrants bore similarities with some white painted frame churches in Sweden.<sup>7</sup> An interview with the great granddaughter of Charles Gustafson, one of the founders of the church, sheds some light on this building and its Swedish influences. According to the family's oral tradition, Gustafson was from a Swedish settlement in Finland who came to Colorado and built several homes in the Gypsum area as well as the steeple for this church.<sup>8</sup> The First Evangelical Lutheran Church also exhibits outstanding workmanship. The framing around the windows shows evidence of tiny saw marks that were made to ease the bending of the wood to form the pointed arch. In the attic, the rafter and joists are held together with wooden pegs. The church has remained substantially unaltered over the years, a tangible reminder of its craftsmanship.

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Eagle County, CO

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ENDNOTES

<sup>1</sup>MacDonald Knight and Leonard Hammock, Early Days on the Eagle (by the authors, 1965), p. 29.

<sup>2</sup>James N. Norgaard, secretary, "Original Minutes, First Evangelical Lutheran Church, Gypsum, Colorado" 1888, p. 1; 1889, pp. 7-8.

<sup>3</sup>Robert Bruce Wolf, The History of the Rocky Mountain Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church (Rocky Mountain Synod, 1941), p. 39.

<sup>4</sup>"Gypsum Lutherans Celebrate Golden Anniversary," The Eagle Valley Enterprise, 4 November 1938, p. 1.

<sup>5</sup>Norgaard, loc. cit., 1891, p. 8

<sup>6</sup>Colin B. Goodykoontz, "The People of Colorado," in Colorado and Its People, ed. LeRoy R. Hafen (New York: Lewis Historical Publishing Company, Inc., 1948), pp. 81 & 83.

<sup>7</sup>Lena A. Palmqvist, "Swedes," in America's Architectural Roots: Ethnic Groups That Built America, ed. Dell Upton (Washington, D.C.: The Preservation Press, 1986), p. 154 & 157.

<sup>8</sup>Telephone Interview with Betty Lou Albertson, 3 March 1993.

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First Evangelical Lutheran Church  
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**BIBLIOGRAPHY**

Albertson, Betty Lou. Telephone Interview, 3 March 1993.

Goodykoontz, Colin B. "The People of Colorado." In Colorado and Its People, pp. 81-83. Edited by LeRoy R. Hafen. New York: Lewis Historical Publishing Company, Inc., 1948.

"Gypsum Lutherans Celebrate Golden Anniversary." The Eagle Valley Enterprise, 4 November 1938, p. 1.

Knight, MacDonald and Hammock, Leonard. Early Days on the Eagle. By the Authors, 1965.

"Little White Church Weathers 100 Years." The Eagle Valley Enterprise, 6 October 1988, p. 5.

Norgaard, James N., secretary. "Original Minutes, First Evangelical Lutheran Church, Gypsum, Colorado." 1888, 1889, 1891.

Palmqvist, Lena A. "Swedes." In America's Architectural Roots: Ethnic Groups That Built America. Edited by Dell Upton. Washington, D.C.: The Preservation Press, 1986.

Wolf, Robert Bruce. The History of the Rocky Mountain Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church. Rocky Mountain Synod, 1941.

**VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION**

In the Village of Gypsum Colorado being fifty (50) feet north and south by one hundred and twenty five feet (125) east and west and more fully described by metes and bounds as follows: beginning at the south west corner, whence one quarter section corner stone between sections five and six Township five South, Range eighty-five west of sixth P.M. bears S. 81 degrees West one hundred and ninety seven and 5/10 (197.5) feet distant. Thence east one hundred and twenty five feet, thence north fifty feet, thence west one hundred and twenty five, thence south fifty feet to place of beginning.

**BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION**

The nominated property includes the entire parcel historically associated with the church.

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Photographs

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First Evangelical Lutheran Church  
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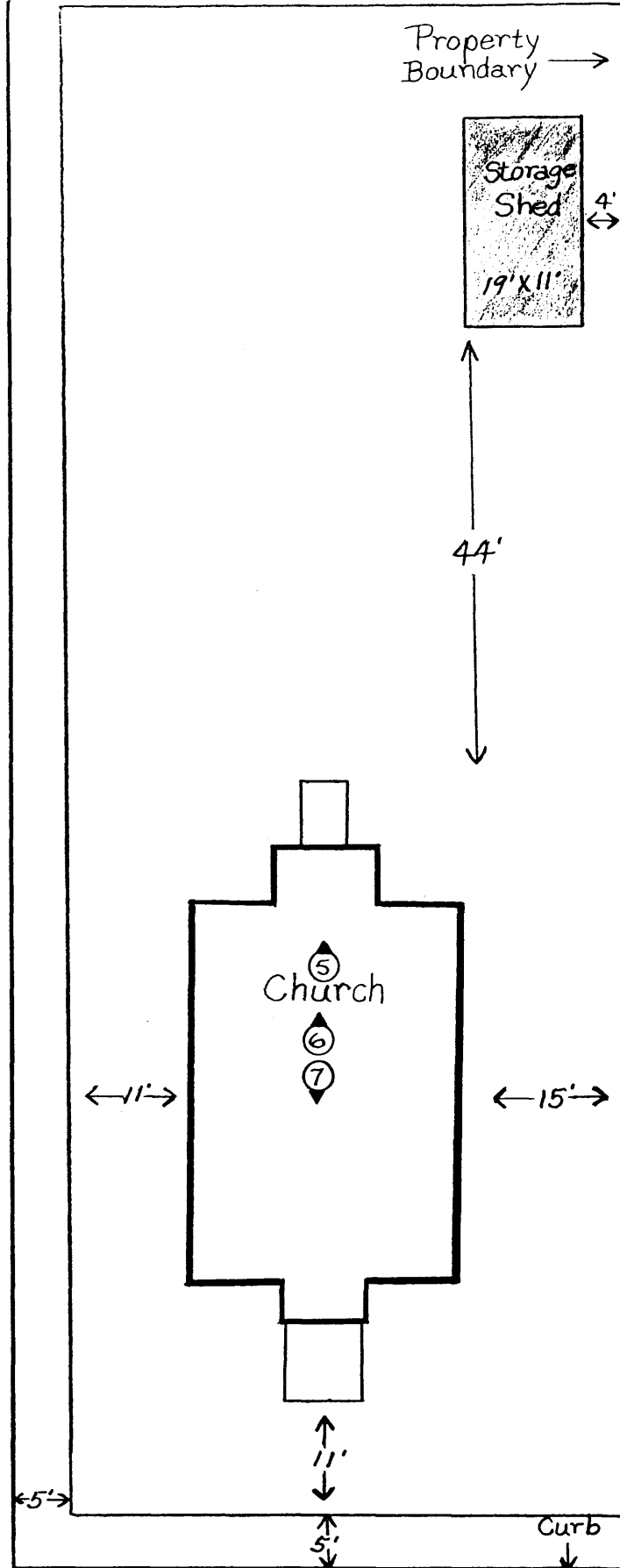
ITEMS 3, 4 AND 5 APPLY TO ALL PHOTOGRAPHS.

3. Peggy L. Burr
4. January 12, 1993
5. Peggy L. Burr, 770 Castle Drive, Post Office Box 193, Eagle, Colorado 81631
6. East facade, looking west
7. #1
  
6. East facade, south side and (noncontributing) storage shed, looking northwest
7. #2
  
6. Rear, south side and (noncontributing) storage shed, looking northeast
7. #3
  
6. Rear and north side, looking southeast
7. #4
  
6. Chancel/ceiling pitch and rear door, looking west (interior)
7. #5
  
6. Chancel, rear door and side windows, looking west (interior)
7. #6
  
6. Front entrance, looking east (interior)
7. #7

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SKETCH MAP OF FIRST EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH  
Gypsum, Eagle County, CO  
1" = 16' ±

EAGLE STREET



- = contributing
- = noncontributing
- ⊙ = photograph

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①