

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
REGISTRATION FORM

1. Name of Property

historic name: Ruth Cross Memorial Chapel

other name/site number: Forrest Cemetery Chapel and Comfort Station (preferred name)

2. Location

street & number: 1100 S. 15th Street

not for publication: N/A

city/town: Gadsden

vicinity: N/A

state: AL county: Etowah

code: 055

zip code: 35901

3. Classification

Ownership of Property: public-local

Category of Property: district

Number of Resources within Property:

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>2</u>	<u>0</u>	buildings
<u>0</u>	<u>1</u>	sites
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	structures
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	objects
<u>3</u>	<u>1</u>	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register: 0

Name of related multiple property listing: N/A

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this X 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 X meets does not meet the National Register Criteria. See continuation sheet.

[Handwritten Signature]

7/14/92

Signature of certifying official

Date

Alabama Historical Commission (State Historic Preservation Office)
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria.
 See continuation sheet.

Signature of commenting or other official

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby certify that this property is:

X entered in the National Register
 See continuation sheet.

[Handwritten Signature] 9/3/92

 determined eligible for the
National Register

 See continuation sheet.

 determined not eligible for the
National Register

 removed from the National Register

 other (explain):

for Signature of Keeper

Date of Action

6. Function or Use

Historic: RELIGION

Sub: religious structure

Current : RELIGION

Sub: religious structure

7. Description

Architectural Classification:

Gothic Revival

Other Description: _____

Materials: foundation stone roof slate
walls stone other _____

Describe present and historic physical appearance. X See continuation sheet.

8. Statement of Significance

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties: locally

Applicable National Register Criteria: C

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions) : A

Areas of Significance: ARCHITECTURE

Period(s) of Significance: 1935 1936

Significant Dates: 1935 1936 _____

Significant Person(s): N/A

Cultural Affiliation: N/A

Architect/Builder: Paul W. Hofferbert, architect
Jimmy Christopher, contractor

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.
X See continuation sheet.

9. Major Bibliographical References

See continuation sheet.

Previous documentation on file (NPS): N/A

- 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 -- Specify Repository: _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of Property: less than one acre

UTM References: Zone Easting Northing Zone Easting Northing

A	<u>16</u>	<u>589940</u>	<u>3763660</u>	B	_____	_____
C	_____	_____	_____	D	_____	_____

___ See continuation sheet.

Verbal Boundary Description: ___ See continuation sheet.

An imaginary line was drawn approximately 100 feet north, south, east and west of the Forrest Cemetery Chapel. This parcel of land is located in the southeast corner of the Forrest Cemetery, Section 5, Township 12, Range 6. The legal description of the cemetery is recorded in the Etowah County Tax Assessor's Office, Gadsden, Alabama. The parcel number of the cemetery is 31-15-03-05-3-130. For more precise boundary lines, see map.

Boundary Justification: ___ See continuation sheet.

The boundaries were delineated to include the chapel, comfort station and gate.

11. Form Prepared By

Name/Title: Jennifer Bryant/National Register Intern; Melanie Betz/AHC Reviewer

Organization: Alabama Historical Commission Date: July 1991

Street & Number: 725 Monroe Street Telephone: 205/242-3184

City or Town: Montgomery State: AL ZIP: 36130

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section number 7 Description Forrest Cemetery Chapel Page #1

Forrest Cemetery Chapel, an L-shaped, stone, Gothic Revival funerary chapel built by WPA workers in 1935, is located on the grounds of Forrest Cemetery in Gadsden. The structure is in a primarily residential area except on the west side which adjoins the industrial Gulf States Steel property.

The Chapel is constructed of hand-cut and polished sandstone quarried by the WPA workers from nearby Lookout Mountain. This L-shaped building has a steeply pitched cross-gable slate roof. A square, central tower with a Gothic arch at its base is located on the east or main facade. The arch leads to a deep 12 x 12 foot recessed porch which shelters the main entrance double wooden doors. The tower has two small casement windows with nine lights each and a round ventilation opening above the arch, and it is capped with battlements. Directly adjacent to the tower is a front oriented gable with three large Gothic windows of clear glass. There are four other Gothic windows of similar proportions on the south side. Various other casement windows are located throughout the chapel.

The north elevation contains a three-bay arcade covered with a shed roof.

There is an exterior end stone chimney on the north elevation and another interior chimney near the west elevation.

The interior of the chapel contains an entrance foyer, offices, and the sanctuary. The two offices located adjacent to the entrance hall have back-to-back corner fireplaces and marble mantels. All of the floors in the interior are sandstone.

The sanctuary contains pews from the demolished Etowah County Courthouse. The wooden buttresses and ceiling supports remain visible. The pulpit, located on the western end of the chapel, is made of large panels of polished sandstone set in the center of an elevated Gothic arched stage area. There are three handcrafted chandeliers made from iron wagon wheel rims, harnesses, and scrap from farm plows and other pieces of equipment.

The front gate columns connected to a three foot high wall (contributing) of Forrest Cemetery were built of the same sandstone during the original construction of the chapel. The wrought iron gate is twenty feet wide. The north wall extends fifty feet and the south wall extends forty feet to a sandstone utility building (contributing), called a "comfort station," which was also built during the original construction period. It has a hip, slate roof and was originally used as restrooms, but it now serves as a storeroom and utility area.

A small section of the cemetery has been included within the nominated property in order to include the chapel, comfort station, and gate. Since most of the gravesites are less than 50 years old, the cemetery has been deemed a noncontributing structure.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section number 8 Significance Forrest Cemetery Chapel Page #1

Criterion C (Architecture):

The Ruth Cross Memorial Chapel, more commonly known as the Forrest Cemetery Chapel, Gadsden, is a unique, local example of Gothic Revival architecture executed in native stone. Designed by architect Paul W. Hofferbert and constructed by WPA workers, the building was based on the design of a 12th-century English church. It has suffered few alterations and still retains its overall shape and form, fenestration, original building materials, interior plan, and setting.

Criterion Exception A:

The Forrest Cemetery Chapel derives its primary significance from its architectural distinction.

Historical Summary:

During the Great Depression of the 1930s, the federal government created the Works Progress Administration to dispense emergency and short-term governmental aid and to provide temporary jobs for the unemployed. In eight years, the WPA built or improved thousands of hospitals, schools, playgrounds, and other public buildings in Alabama and throughout the country. It also provided funds for theater, arts and writers projects. Most of the money, however, went to short-term, make-work projects. (1) Jobs ranged from artist to writer to day laborer. (2)

At peak periods, the WPA employed more than 3 million people. (3) Projects in Alabama included the State Highway Building in Montgomery and Vulcan Park in Birmingham. Other federal work programs, including the Civil Works Administration (CWA) and the Public Works Administration (PWA), offered additional assistance. Structures such as the Legion Park Bowl (Gadsden Amphitheater) was the result of this program. In all, the federally assisted programs accounted for 20,990 miles of road, 304 new schools, 32 parks, 282 playgrounds and athletic fields, 23 swimming pools, and 867 public buildings. (4)

Forrest Cemetery Chapel is an example of the WPA work program. Many unskilled men were trained in stone cutting, masonry, and other professions. Handicapped workers also found employment at this site. The door hinges and metal door plates were hand forged by physically disabled people. The WPA program gave unemployed citizens not only an income, but it also provided them with valuable skills to enhance their future careers. (5)

Touted by the Gadsden Times as "an architectural gem..." that had been deemed "one of the top WPA projects..." (6) the Chapel was constructed in 1935-36 as a funerary chapel for Forrest Cemetery, Gadsden's earliest burial ground established in the mid 19th century. It was used extensively until funeral homes became prominent. It fell into a state of disrepair and served only as storage area until 1980 when restoration work began. This was initiated by the original architect, Hofferbert, and contractor, Jimmy Christopher. Today it functions as a funerary chapel and an office for Forrest Cemetery. (7)

Paul W. Hofferbert received his architectural engineering degree from Ohio State University. He served on the Alabama State Board of Architectural Registration and as Executive Director for the Gadsden Planning Board. During the Great Depression, Hofferbert was the WPA director for Etowah County. (8) His work included the Legion Park Bowl (NRHP 9/28/88) in Gadsden. Constructed in 1934 of native sandstone, this amphitheater is based on English designs like the Forrest Cemetery Chapel.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section number 8 Significance Forrest Cemetery Chapel Page #2

1. "New Deal," Encyclopedia Americana, (Danbury, Connecticut: Grolier Inc., 1988), p. 163.
2. Jim Jones, "Tennessee`s First State Parks," Tennessee Historical Commission.
3. "New Deal."
4. U.S. Federal Works Agency. Final Report on the WPA Program: 1935-43. Washington, D.C., pg. 135.
5. Paul W. Hofferbert, "Narrative of my Fifty Years as Architect in Gadsden," vertical file Gadsden Public Library.
6. "Drive to Restore Forrest Cemetery Chapel," Gadsden Times, June 29, 1980.
7. Sybil McCluskey, Interview with author, 6 August 1991.
8. Hofferbert.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section number 9 Bibliographical References

Forrest Cemetery Chapel

Page #1

"Drive to Restore Forrest Cemetery Chapel," Gadsden Times, 29 June 1980.

Hofferbert, Paul W. "Narrative of My 50 Years as Architect in Gadsden."

"If Memory Serves," Gadsden Times, 14 March 1948.

Jones, Jim. "Tennessee`s First State Parks." Tennessee Historical Commission.

McCluskey, Sybil. Interview with author. 6 August 1991.

"New Deal," Encyclopedia Americana. Danbury, Connecticut: Grolier Incorporated, 1988.

U.S. Federal Works Agency. Final Report on the WPA Program: 1935-43. Washington, D.C.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section number photographs Forrest Cemetery Chapel Page #1

NAME: Ruth Cross Memorial Chapel, commonly known as Forrest Cemetery Chapel

LOCATION: Gadsden, Alabama (Etowah County)

PHOTOGRAPHER: Sybil McCluskey

DATE: 1991; June 1992

LOCATION OF NEGATIVES: Alabama Historical Commission, Montgomery

Photo #1: Front (east) facade, looking west

Photo #2: Side facades, looking southwest

Photo #3: Rear and side facades, looking northeast

Photo #4: Interior

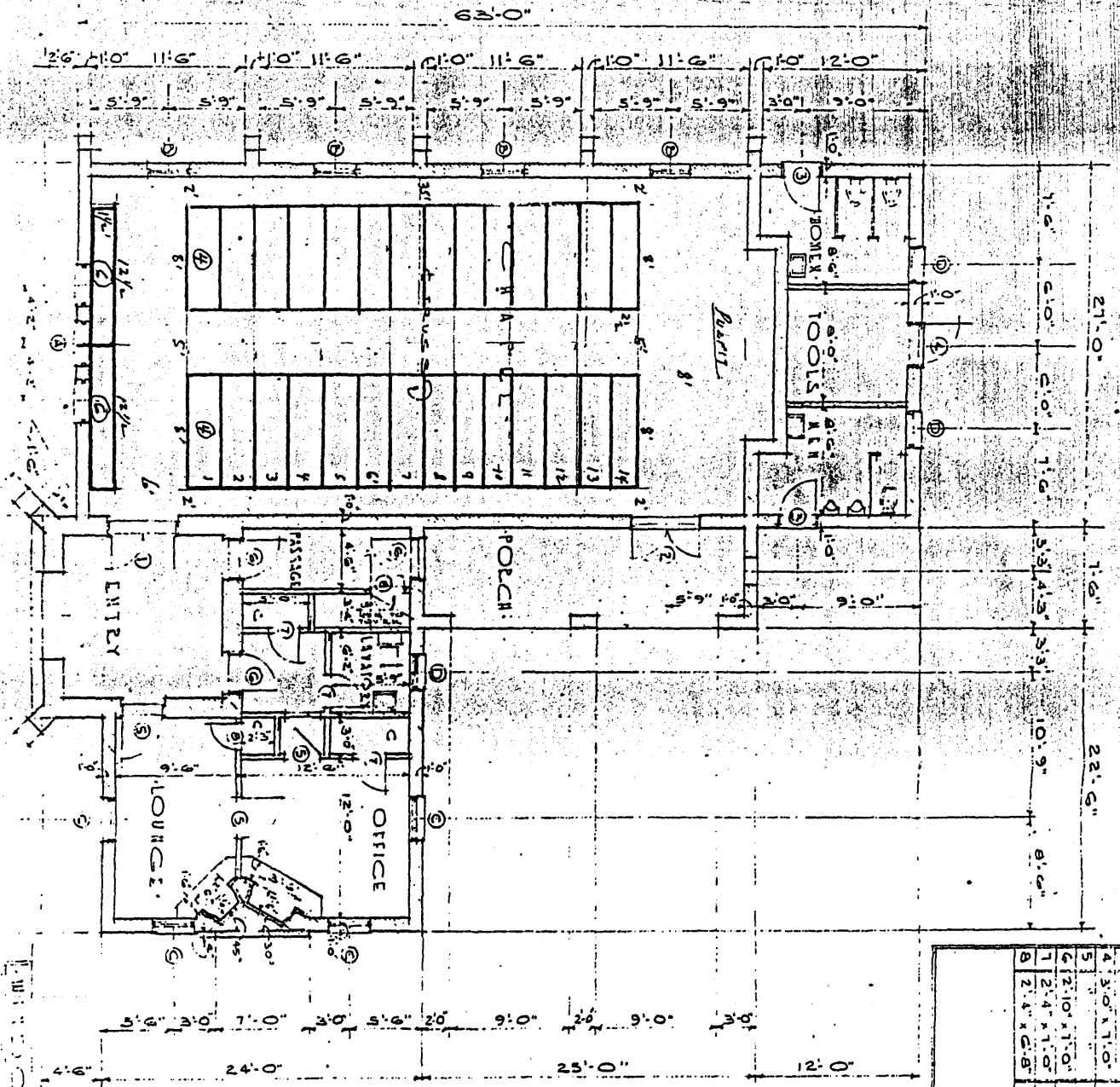
Photo #5: Interior

Photo #6: Comfort station, looking east

Photo #7: Comfort station, looking southwest

Photo #8: Gate and comfort station, looking northwest

FORREST CEMETERY CHAPEL
 CADSDEN, ALABAMA



1	14'-0" x 10'-0"
2	22'-6" x 10'-0"
3	12'-0" x 10'-0"
4	3'-0" x 10'-0"
5	7'-0" x 10'-0"
6	2'-4" x 10'-0"
7	2'-4" x 10'-0"
8	2'-4" x 10'-0"

FORREST CEMETERY



130
27 Ac (c)

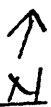
CHAPEL

COMFORT
STATION

GATE

Forrest Cemetery Chapel
Gadsden, AL

Scale
1" = 100'



15th STREET 60' ROW

STREET

50' R.O.W.