

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES NOMINATION

NPS Form 10-900

USDI/NPS NRHP Registration Form (Rev. 8-86)

OMB No. 1024-0018

Fourth Church of Christ, Scientist, New Orleans, Orleans Parish, LA

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United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

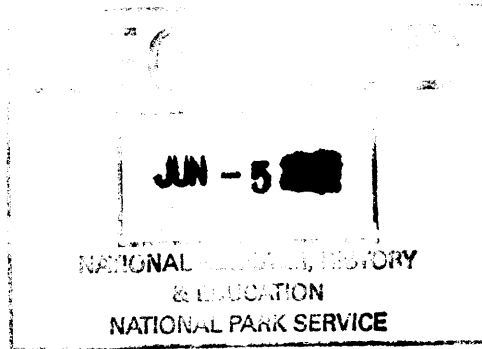
National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

1. NAME OF PROPERTY

1780 OK

Historic Name: Fourth Church of Christ, Scientist

Other Name/Site Number: Lakeview Presbyterian Church



2. LOCATION

Street & Number 134 Polk Ave.

Not for publication: NA

City/Town New Orleans

Vicinity: NA

State: Louisiana Code: LA County: Orleans Code: 071 Zip Code: 70124

3. STATE/FEDERAL AGENCY CERTIFICATION

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, 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.

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

Nationally: Statewide: Locally: X

Signature of Certifying Official/Title Jonathan Fricker, Deputy SHPO, Dept. of Culture, Recreation and Tourism

Date June 4, 2002

State or Federal Agency and Bureau

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

Signature of Commenting or Other Official/Title

Date

State or Federal Agency and Bureau

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4. NATIONAL PARK SERVICE CERTIFICATION

I hereby certify that this property is:

- Entered in the National Register
Determined eligible for the National Register
Determined not eligible for the National Register
Removed from the National Register
Other (explain):

Edson H. Beall
Signature of Keeper

7/19/02
Date of Action

5. CLASSIFICATION

Ownership of Property
Private: X
Public-Local:
Public-State:
Public-Federal:

Category of Property
Building(s): X
District:
Site:
Structure:
Object:

Number of Resources within Property
Contributing
1
1

Non contributing
buildings
sites
structures
objects
0 Total

Number of Contributing Resources Previously Listed in the National Register: 0

Name of Related Multiple Property Listing: NA

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6. FUNCTION OR USE

Historic: religion

Sub: religious facility

Current: religion

Sub: religious facility

7. DESCRIPTION

Architectural Classification: Gothic Revival, Craftsman

Materials:

Foundation: brick

Walls: weatherboards

Roof: asphalt

Other:

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Describe Present and Historic Physical Appearance.

The Fourth Church of Christ, Scientist (1925) is a two-story frame building combining elements of the Gothic Revival and Arts and Crafts movement. It is set on a tight but prominent corner lot in a large twentieth century New Orleans neighborhood known as Lakeview. Despite various alterations, the church easily retains its distinctive exterior styling.

Almost in the manner of a New Orleans "basement" house, the two story church consists of offices and Sunday School rooms below and the nave above, with the nave reached directly from the exterior via a three-part brick staircase on the façade. The nave is entered from the corner through a small vestibule set under a side bell tower with a steeple. The ground floor rooms are accessed via a side entrance.

The church partakes of the traditional ecclesiastical Gothic style, as can be seen in the great two-center pointed arch window in front, the simplified wood tracery therein, the other nave windows with lancet arches, the pronounced vergeboards with trefoil cutouts in the great front gable, the trefoil window set near the top of that gable, the simplified tracery in the bell tower and the massive wooden buttress-like elements setting off the bays of the nave and delineating the façade.

But the design is also heavily influenced by the Arts and Crafts movement. The building has an overall crisp, squarely made look. For instance, the vergeboards are deep, boldly formed and are kept free of the sinuous jigsaw ornament an earlier phase of the Gothic Revival would have applied. In addition, the lower front gable is marked by a pronounced horizontal band on squarish brackets suggesting a medieval tie-beam. Anchoring the gable at each end is a bungalow style bracket. Much of the gable makes use of a half-timbered effect using rough stucco (a treatment the traditional Gothic Revival ethos would have considered insufficiently dignified for a church). The buttress-like elements are formed of clapboards mitered at the corners, much in the manner of a piece of furniture, instead of the standard clapboard/cornerboard treatment. The buttress-like elements that form the corner entrance rise above the bell tower to ensconce the base of the faceted spire in a squarish, axial configuration almost reminiscent of the Prairie Style. Bungalow style skirting roofs descend from each side of the spire base, between the buttresses, to complete the composition.

Another aspect of the church that should be viewed within the context of the Arts and Crafts tradition is the glazing. Windows are in a pale blue and pale yellow combination with either diamond panes or simplified wooden tracery, not the elaborate stained glass pictorial windows one would normally find in a church of the era. Then there is the nave ceiling which rises to a gable peak and features a complex openwork truss structure of double rafters, tie-beams and queen posts. (The design makes no attempt to incorporate a pointed arch or hammerbeam effect, as one might expect in a mainstream Gothic Revival ceiling truss.) The nave is also characterized by lancet windows, a chair rail, and applied bands that form panels beneath the windows.

Behind the nave is a small room under a separate roof with a side gable whose vergeboards mimic those on the great front gable. Originally this room had a square head window. This was changed to a lancet as part of a major 1981 renovation of the church. It was at this time that an elevator tower was added immediately behind the bell tower. Most interestingly, the nave was enhanced with Gothic features. As detailed in old photos, the plain chancel, with a square opening, was replaced with a somewhat larger Gothic paneled chancel framed by a paneled lancet opening perfectly crafted to match the original woodwork. Two lancet doors were installed flanking the chancel (one of which is false), and the old square head door from the entrance vestibule to the nave was replaced by a lancet opening. Finally, an HVAC unit with ducts was

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installed on the secondary side elevation.

Other changes not connected with the 1981 renovation include the loss of four ornamental balls (material unknown) that once capped the buttress-like elements of the tower and the loss of a small Bungalow style shed roof that once protected the front door. Also, the present front brick staircase appears to be a replacement, although it mimics the configuration and overall look of the original, which is shown indistinctly in a c.1950 photograph.

Assessment of Integrity:

Although the alterations may be numerous, the church's distinctive architectural character remains strong and compelling. The ornamental balls on the steeple and the shed roof over the entrance were minor visual elements. The elevator tower is admittedly a major addition, but at least it is sheathed to match the church's historic siding and is painted the same color. The HVAC unit is of minimal intrusion because it is on a secondary elevation and is "painted out." The Gothic elements added to the nave, while not something a preservation purist would do, have not negatively impacted the space. In short, no significant features were removed to make room for them.

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8. STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Applicable National Register Criteria: A__ B__ C_X D__

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions): A_X B__ C__ D__ E__ F__ G__

Areas of Significance: architecture

Period(s) of Significance: 1925

Significant Dates: 1925

Significant Person(s): NA

Cultural Affiliation: NA

Architect/Builder: unknown

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State Significance of Property, and Justify Criteria, Criteria Considerations, and Areas and Periods of Significance Noted Above.

The Fourth Church of Christ, Scientist is locally significant as a distinctive architectural statement in a large New Orleans neighborhood whose buildings date mainly from the 1950s and later.

The section of New Orleans known as Lakeview extends about two miles back from Lake Pontchartrain and is about one-and-a-half miles wide. Until the first decade of the twentieth century the so-called "back" of town was a vast expanse of low-lying swamp. Mid-City, for example, which is closer to "old New Orleans" than Lakeview, was not successfully drained until 1899, when a pumping station was built. (The New Orleans Drainage Commission had been created in 1896.) The portion of Lakeview north of today's I-610 (by far the largest portion) was just beginning to be developed in 1908-09 by the New Orleans Land Company (organized in 1887 as the New Orleans Swamp Land Reclamation Company). In 1902 company administrators determined that "it was useless to wait longer on the city drainage authorities to make even a beginning of work on their lands," so dredging began at the company's expense late in that year. The company drained the area, cleared the land, platted streets, etc. In 1912, a small tract south of the original development (south of today's I-610) known as Homedale was opened, with Homedale Park Annex following soon.

Despite being billed as "the most valuable residential property in the southern states," Lakeview did not develop as quickly as its founders would have hoped. While the small section south of I-610 has a respectable number of homes from c.1915-c.1930, the bulk of the neighborhood (the large expanse north of I-610) is mid-twentieth century, with perhaps 50-60% of the houses (middle and upper middle class) dating from the 1950s and later. In short, while Lakeview is one of the city's most attractive and desirable neighborhoods, it does not have a strong enough historic character to qualify for the Register as a historic district (with the exception of a recently nominated small area south of I-610). Historic buildings in Lakeview are almost entirely residences, most notably New Orleans basement houses from the c.1915-1930 period. And while the historic houses in Lakeview are good to very good examples of their period, almost all are fairly typical for the city - i.e., houses of similar quality exist by the hundreds. The major exceptions to the foregoing are two institutional buildings: the former Lakeview Presbyterian Church and the Lakeview School. Both are compelling landmarks within the context of this relatively new Crescent City neighborhood - the Lakeview School as a large, shingled Craftsman masterpiece and the candidate church, whose architect combined the Gothic Revival with the Craftsman to create a most distinctive building.

Historical Note:

The candidate served as the home of Lakeview Presbyterian Church until 1950, when it was purchased by the Christian Scientists. (The Presbyterians built a new church elsewhere in the neighborhood.) According to information provided by the original occupants, a Presbyterian church was first built in Lakeview in 1912. This is confirmed by a building permit for that year (for a one story building). According to Lakeview Presbyterian Church history, the old church was raised a full story to create the present building in 1925. However, there is no architectural evidence to support this interpretation. Surely a new church was built in 1925, rather than a reworking of an older building.

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9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

New Orleans Land Company, *Lakeview: The Most Valuable Residential Property in the Southern States*.
c.1910.

New Orleans Land Company, *A Study in Investments*, 1909.

Circa 1950 photos of exterior and pre-1981 renovation photos of interior. Copies in National Register file,
Louisiana Division of Historic Preservation.

Previous documentation on file (NPS): NA

- Preliminary Determination of Individual Listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.
- Previously Listed in the National Register. (partially)
- 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):

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10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

Acreeage of Property: less than an acre

UTM References: **Zone Easting Northing**
 15 778380 3322280

Verbal Boundary Description:

Legal Property Description: That portion of ground, together with all the buildings and improvements thereon, and all of the rights, ways, privileges, servitudes, appurtenances and advantages thereunto belonging or in anywise appertaining, situated in the Second District of the City of New Orleans in Lakeview, in Square No. 334, bounded by Julia (now West End Blvd.), Polk, Harney and Catina Streets, and measuring sixty feet front on Polk Street, by a depth and front on Cantina Street of 150.096 feet. Which said piece or portion of ground forms the corner of Polk and Catina Streets and is composed of the front half of lots designated by the Nos. 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, and 32, according to map of the New Orleans Land Company's land on file in the City Engineer's Office.

Boundary Justification:

Boundaries follow the property lines of the parcel of land historically associated with the church.

11. FORM PREPARED BY

Name/Title: National Register staff

Address: Division of Historic Preservation, P. O. Box 44247, Baton Rouge, Louisiana 70804

Telephone: (225) 342-8160

Date: May 2002

PROPERTY OWNERS

Fourth Church of Christ, Scientist
134 Polk Ave.
New Orleans, LA 70124



Circa 1950 view
Fourth Church of Christ, Scientist
Orleans Parish, LA