

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM**

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

STATE: Tennessee	
COUNTY: Davidson	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER 70-241-0014	DATE 7/8/70

1. NAME

COMMON:
Downtown Presbyterian Church

AND/OR HISTORIC:
 First Presbyterian Church

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER:
154 Fifth Avenue, North

CITY OR TOWN:
Nashville

STATE: Tennessee CODE: 41 COUNTY: Davidson CODE: 037

3. CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
<input type="checkbox"/> District <input type="checkbox"/> Site <input type="checkbox"/> Object <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Building <input type="checkbox"/> Structure 	<input type="checkbox"/> Public <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Private <input type="checkbox"/> Both 	<input type="checkbox"/> Occupied <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress 	Yes: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Restricted <input type="checkbox"/> Unrestricted <input type="checkbox"/> No
PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)			
<input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural <input type="checkbox"/> Commercial <input type="checkbox"/> Educational <input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment 	<input type="checkbox"/> Government <input type="checkbox"/> Industrial <input type="checkbox"/> Military <input type="checkbox"/> Museum 	<input type="checkbox"/> Park <input type="checkbox"/> Private Residence <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Religious <input type="checkbox"/> Scientific 	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify)

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY

OWNER'S NAME:
Downtown Presbyterian Church

STREET AND NUMBER:
154 Fifth Avenue, North

CITY OR TOWN:
Nashville

STATE: Tennessee CODE: 41

5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.:
Davidson County Register's Office

STREET AND NUMBER:
Court House

CITY OR TOWN:
Nashville

STATE: Tennessee CODE: 41

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE OF SURVEY:

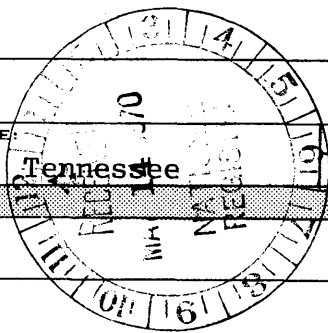
DATE OF SURVEY: Federal State County Local

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN: STATE: CODE:

SEE INSTRUCTIONS



STATE: Tennessee

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DATE

7. DESCRIPTION

CONDITION	(Check One)					
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> Good	<input type="checkbox"/> Fair	<input type="checkbox"/> Deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> Ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> Unexposed
	(Check One)			(Check One)		
	<input type="checkbox"/> Altered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unaltered		<input type="checkbox"/> Moved	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Original Site	

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The architectural style of the Downtown Presbyterian Church is Egyptian Revival. The front was left incomplete and still has an unfinished appearance. Each of the two front towers is 104 feet in height, rising from the front corners. The two front corners are 22 square feet at the base, diminishing as they rise. The steps to the main floor of the church are between two lotus-topped columns. The three entrance doors at the vestibule are Egyptian style. The vestibule is 70 1/2 feet long, 16 1/2 feet deep at the center and 9 1/2 feet deep at the ends. The audience room behind the vestibule is 101 1/4 feet long and 70 1/2 feet wide.

The pre-Civil War church also includes a gallery for slaves. The interior represents an Egyptian temple. When the building was completed in 1851, the interior was painted a quiet gray, with undecorated windows and a smooth ceiling. The columns had not yet been installed on the front portico. Completion of the building had been slowed by a cholera epidemic and a lack of available funds.

The present patterns and redecorating were done in 1881-1882. Box pews with doors were replaced with open pews. The ceiling was painted with sky and cloud formations and sectioned by divider moldings. The hollow reeded columns at the front of the audience room are topped with lotus-styled capitals. They were painted to represent marble.

The classic winged orb and twin serpents appear over the front interior doors and the pediment at the front entrance. The colors and decorations of the church interior were chosen for Egyptian authenticity and mystical symbolism.

The triangle shapes represent the Trinity; the lilies, innocence and purity; golden yellow, the mercy of God; blue, divine intelligence; red, divine love. The beaded designs on the ceiling symbolize the unity of the Congregation. The winged sphere and orb over the entrance doors are also symbolic. The wings represent the soul; the serpents, wisdom; the globe, eternity. This design depicts the supreme ancient Egyptian deity, the Sun-god, borne on falcon wings.

Stained glass windows replaced the clear glass panels in 1887. The sun appears in some, against a blue sky, with the falcon as a tiny profile figure in the four middle windows. The larger pictures of the palm and desert along the Nile supposedly represent immortality.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- Pre-Columbian; 16th Century 18th Century 20th Century
 15th Century 17th Century 19th Century

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known) 1849-1851

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- | | | | |
|--|---|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal | <input type="checkbox"/> Education | <input type="checkbox"/> Political | <input type="checkbox"/> Urban Planning |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Prehistoric | <input type="checkbox"/> Engineering | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Religion/Philosophy | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Historic | <input type="checkbox"/> Industry | <input type="checkbox"/> Science | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture | <input type="checkbox"/> Invention | <input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture | _____ |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Landscape Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Social/Humanitarian | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Art | <input type="checkbox"/> Literature | <input type="checkbox"/> Theater | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Commerce | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Military | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Communications | <input type="checkbox"/> Music | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Conservation | | | |

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Downtown Presbyterian Church is architecturally significant as an example of William Strickland's work in the Egyptian Revival style. William Strickland was a leading nineteenth century American architect. He studied under Benjamin Latrobe, architect for the United States Capitol. Strickland designed such pieces as the Tennessee State Capitol, the Second Bank of the United States in Philadelphia, the Philadelphia Exchange, and the Naval Asylum, also in Philadelphia.

The original Presbyterian Church burned in September, 1848. A committee was formed to raise money for the new structure and to commission an architect. Strickland received the Commission December 15, 1848. The corner-stone was laid April 28, 1849, and work completed April 20, 1851.

The architectural style is Egyptian Revival. Being built in 1850, the Church represents the height of a period romantically influenced by Napoleon's forays into Egypt. The architecture strongly reflects the Egyptian slanted symmetry, triangles and pyramids, stylized lotus and winged orbs and serpents, and other symbol-laden aspects of Egyptian decorative art.

Cavetto moldings, globe and wings motif, batter jambs of doors and windows, papyrus, and palm capitals and a painted front wall are used. The building is a rectangular two-story one with two front towers rising from the front corners. Materials used in the construction included gray painted brick, stone and metal on the exterior; painted plaster walls, wood and metal half columns were used in the interior. The building is a fine example of Egyptian Revival architecture with heavy solidity of construction and Egyptian ornaments featured throughout.

During the Civil War, the Church was used as a hospital by the Federal Army from December 31, 1862, through June, 1863. Pews were removed and the main auditorium was filled with beds for the wounded. Federal horses were stabled below in what is presently the fellowship hall.

During World War II, the fellowship hall lodged and fed more than 20,000 servicemen. The bell presently in the tower was acquired

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Gilchrist, Agnes A. William Strickland, University of Pennsylvania (Philadelphia, 1950).

Hieronymus, Clara, "Winged Sun Shines for this Church," in the Nashville Tennessean, Sunday, March 29, 1970, pp. 1E, 3E.

Whiffen, Marcus, American Architecture Since 1780 (Cambridge, 1969).

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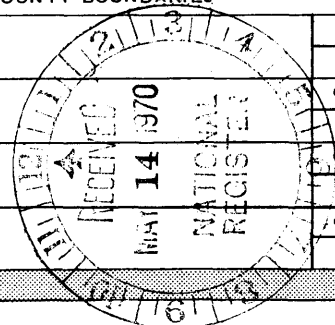
10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY			OR	LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES		
CORNER	LATITUDE	LONGITUDE		LATITUDE	LONGITUDE	
	Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds		Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds	
NW	° ' "	° ' "		36 ° 09 ' 48 "	86 ° 46 ' 45 "	
NE	° ' "	° ' "				
SE	° ' "	° ' "				
SW	° ' "	° ' "				

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: Less than 10.

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY	CODE



SEE INSTRUCTIONS

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE: Linda M. Bauch, Assistant Director of History

ORGANIZATION: Tennessee Historical Commission DATE: 4-20-70

STREET AND NUMBER: 403 Seventh Avenue, North

CITY OR TOWN: Nashville STATE: Tennessee CODE: 41

12 STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION

As the designated State Liaison 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 National Park Service. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:

National State Local

Name: Stephen S. Lawrence
 Title: Executive Director Tennessee Historical Commission
 Date: 4-20-70

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

Eugene Allen Conroy
 Chief, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation
 Date: JUL 8 1970

ATTEST: William J. Mustang
 Keeper of The National Register
 Date: MAY 27 1970

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM**

(Continuation Sheet)

STATE	
Tennessee	
COUNTY	
Davidson	
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70-7-41-0014	7/8/70

(Number all entries)

8. Significance (cont.)

after the Civil War. It was used as the city's fire alarm until 1897 and still is used as a daily noon hour signal in downtown Nashville.

