

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

For NPS use only

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

received OCT 16 1986
date entered

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic Mount Zion Baptist Church

and/or common

2. Location

street & number 900 Cross Street

N/A not for publication

city, town Little Rock vicinity of

state Arkansas code 05 county Pulaski code 119

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational	<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government	<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
	N/A	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name Mount Zion Baptist Church

street & number 900 Cross Street

city, town Little Rock vicinity of state AR

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Pulaski County Courthouse

street & number Markham and Spring Street

city, town Little Rock, state AR 72201

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title N/A has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date federal state county local

depository for survey records

city, town state

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved date _____
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

SUMMARY

Built to resemble the Prairie Style on the exterior, the Mount Zion Baptist Church is sited at 900 Cross Street and is exceptional for the elaborate interior where its members have worshipped since the building's completion in 1926. Although the exterior is handsomely defined by a tripartite composition and an exaggerated cornice, the interior surpasses expectation with a large sanctuary embellished with a U-shaped balcony and a pressed metal ceiling which is centered with an ornate copper-clad fixture suspended from an elliptically-shaped skylight of multi-paned frosted glass. Rhythmic patterns of arched, stained glass windows have not been interrupted on both side elevations by sensitively-constructed additions and visually the building maintains its original character.

ELABORATION

Mount Zion Baptist Church, located at 900 Cross Street in Little Rock, was built by contractor P. S. Jones and is a handsome buff brick structure whose massing and detailing is loosely reminiscent of Prairie styling.

The exterior masonry walls are load bearing and are topped with a flat roof surrounded by a parapet wall and an exaggerated cornice. The principal facade is a tripartite composition with a slightly recessed central bay defined by three arched openings adorned with decorative brickwork and surmounted by five arched stained glass windows. A flight of carpeted concrete steps, adjusted to the slope of the site, rises to the arched doorways and extends across the width of the middle bay. The staircase is anchored by iron fixtures with splayed bases and frosted globes typical of the 1920's.

The flanking bays are accentuated by stepped corners on both sides. The second story of these side bays has a pair of Art Glass windows, one mounted atop the other with a wood panel between the two. Previously, the first level of both end bays also had Art Glass windows, but the window on the south bay has been replaced by an aluminum awning and door which provides access to an elevator added ten years ago. Concrete defines the basement level of the structure while an exaggerated wooden overhang accents the base of the parapet wall which acts as the building's cornice. Three crosses, of a slightly darker brick than the walls but laid flush with the wall's surface, adorn the cornice.

The south and north elevations are similarly ordered, each with five bays. The former has a center bay which extends beyond the essentially rectangular body of the structure.

The north elevation has access to the basement through a door in the bay of the east end at grade and another entry below grade with a short stair on the opposite end. The window placement along these elevations provides a pleasing rhythmic pattern of a group of three windows, a pair of windows then single window. Varied window shapes include rectangular, square, arched and oculus. Pilasters for structural strength appear along both side elevations.

The present vestibule was formerly a protected but unenclosed entrance porch with three arched openings. The present exterior doors, three pairs of oak framed single-pane, are still in place in the lobby. The lobby was remodeled further in the mid

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Continuation sheet

Item number 7

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1970's to provide for the installation of an elevator in the southeast corner.

The church's raised first story houses a large sanctuary with a U-shaped balcony. Symmetrical in plan, the interior is defined by an aisle down the center of the gently sloping floor flanked by two side aisles. The former is emphasized further by the placement of three chandeliers down this central axis. Two of these fixtures are recent additions in 1965; the middle chandelier, however, is an ornate copper-clad fixture suspended from an elliptically shaped skylight of multi-paned frosted glass. Organ pipes placed on both sides of the baptistery niche and mounted on a trellis-like grill adorned with decorative bosses also accentuate the structure's symmetry.

The visual terminus of the entrance axis, the center aisle, is the baptistery niche with a colorful mural. The pulpit and choir seating is located in front of the baptistery. The panelling along the curved wall at the rear of the choir seating as well as the panelled handrail behind the pulpit were added in 1950. The choir seats, like those in the balcony, have molded plywood seatbacks, hardwood arm rests, and upholstered seats and are original to the structure. Similar seats were removed from the sanctuary about twenty years ago because they were heavily worn and were replaced by wooden pews.

The baptistery was raised to its present height thirty-six years ago in order to allow the congregation an improved view of the baptismal ceremony. A cast metal spiral stair is located in the northeast corner of the church provides access to the raised baptistery and the adjacent dressing rooms.

Large stained glass windows dominate the interior of the sanctuary. Along the north and south elevations, these handsome, rectilinear compositions of gold with accents of blue, brown, and purple are executed in the rhythmic pattern.

The balcony, supported by steel columns, is accessible by two small staircases within the sanctuary and one larger staircase adjacent to the vestibule in the northeast corner of the building. The detailing of the larger staircase, particularly the newel posts, is simple yet suggestive of Prairie styling. Raised edge panels decorate the side of the stairs, while beaded boarding is used on the underside of the treads.

As noted earlier, the balcony seating dates to the church's construction. A brass railing follows the interior contours of the balcony. The ceiling of the sanctuary is an ornate composition of pressed-metal decoration installed between a network of structural beams. Less ornate, yet still decorative metal ceilings are used in the vestibule, the baptistery and the basement. The decorative treatment of the metal cornice is classically derived and includes a dentil course and egg and dart motif.

The basement, like the sanctuary, is essentially one large room punctuated with steel support columns noted previously. Adjacent to this large meeting hall is a kitchen added in 1976 and a utility room.

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date entered

Continuation sheet

Item number 7

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Later additions to the Mount Zion Baptist Church's facilities include an aforementioned L-shaped Education Building constructed in 1951. This addition is also buff brick. A new fellowship hall is under construction on the south side of the original church.

8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> social/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

Specific dates 1926

Builder/Architect P.S. Jones, contractor; architect unknown

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

SUMMARY

Built in 1926, Mount Zion Baptist Church is an architecturally significant structure with exterior references to Prairie styling and impressive interior detailing. As a Christian institution, it represents both religious and secular achievement for a key segment of Little Rock's black community.

ELABORATION

The Mount Zion congregation was formed in 1877 in an effort to provide an institution for blacks which would facilitate not only religious but educational and economic adjustment to their status as freedmen. A frame building served the membership from 1880 until the present brick edifice was completed in 1926. Those early years had seen increasing involvement in the black community of Little Rock on the part of the Mount Zion congregation. Arkansas Baptist College, which was to become a leading institution of higher learning for blacks in the state, was organized at the church in 1884 and its first classes were held there. In 1919 the People's Ice and Fuel Company was organized and incorporated at Mount Zion.

Since the erection of the present church building Mount Zion has maintained a place of leadership with Little Rock's blacks. The congregation has included many educators, business, and professional people, and has provided many ministers who have pastored other churches throughout the city, state, and country. Dr. Fred T. Guy, who was installed as pastor in 1931, was instrumental in the growth of Mount Zion's heightened community responsibility. Dr. Guy was particularly known for the calm guidance he gave to the black community during the Central High School integration crisis of 1957.

Mount Zion Baptist Church, then, in addition to its considerable architectural merit, is also significant for the place it holds in the history of Little Rock's black community.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Floyd, Gwendolyn. History of Mount Zion Baptist Church, 1961.

Souvenir Program, Mount Zion Baptist Church, April 19, 1926.

Souvenir Program, Mount Zion Baptist Church, September 20, 1942.

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property Less than one acre

Quadrangle name Little Rock, Arkansas

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UTM References

A

1	5	5	6	5	4	2	0	3	8	4	4	4	2	0
Zone			Easting					Northing						

B

Zone			Easting					Northing						

C

Zone			Easting					Northing						

D

Zone			Easting					Northing						

E

Zone			Easting					Northing						

F

Zone			Easting					Northing						

G

Zone			Easting					Northing						

H

Zone			Easting					Northing						

Verbal boundary description and justification

Lots 9, 10, and 11, Block 308, Original City. The SW $\frac{1}{4}$ of Section 3, Township 1 North, Range 12 West.

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state N/A code county code

state code county code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Mrs. Gwendolyn M. Floyd/Thomas Baskins, Edited by AHPP staff

organization date July 16, 1986

street & number 3717 West 16th Street telephone (501) 663-3974 / (501) 378-5463

city or town Little Rock, AR state 72204

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national state local

As the designated State Historic Preservation 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.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature 

title State Historic Preservation Officer date 10-6-86

For NPS use only

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

date

Keeper of the National Register

Attest: date

Chief of Registration

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

Mount Zion Baptist Church
Pulaski County
ARKANSAS

Substantive Review

OCT 16 1986

Working No. _____
Fed. Reg. Date: OCT 16 1986
Date Due: 11/16/86 — 11/30/86
Action: ACCEPT
 RETURN 11/28/86
REJECT

- resubmission
- nomination by person or local government
- owner objection
- appeal

Federal Agency: _____

Substantive Review: sample request appeal NR decision

Reviewer's comments:

see attached

Recom./Criteria Return
Reviewer ASch
Discipline 11/28/86
Date _____
 see continuation sheet

Nomination returned for: technical corrections cited below
 substantive reasons discussed below

1. Name

2. Location

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
	Public Acquisition	Accessible	

4. Owner of Property

5. Location of Legal Description

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

Has this property been determined eligible? yes no

7. Description

<p>Condition</p> <input type="checkbox"/> excellent <input type="checkbox"/> good <input type="checkbox"/> fair	<p>Check one</p> <input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated <input type="checkbox"/> ruins <input type="checkbox"/> unexposed	<p>Check one</p> <input type="checkbox"/> unaltered <input type="checkbox"/> altered	<p>Check one</p> <input type="checkbox"/> original site <input type="checkbox"/> moved date _____
---	--	---	--

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

- summary paragraph
- completeness
- clarity
- alterations/integrity
- dates
- boundary selection

8. Significance

Period Areas of Significance—Check and justify below

Specific dates Builder/Architect

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

- summary paragraph
- completeness
- clarity
- applicable criteria
- justification of areas checked
- relating significance to the resource
- context
- relationship of integrity to significance
- justification of exception
- other

9. Major Bibliographical References

10. Geographical Data

Acreege of nominated property _____

Quadrangle name _____

UTM References _____

Verbal boundary description and justification _____

11. Form Prepared By

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

____ national ____ state ____ local

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

title date

13. Other

- Maps
- Photographs
- Other

Questions concerning this nomination may be directed to _____

Signed *Mary Surlago* Date 11/28/86 Phone: _____

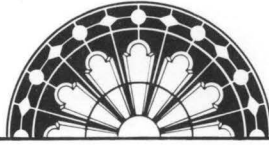
Reviewer's Comments

The Mount Zion Baptist Church was nominated to the National Register under three of the areas of significance. The case for nomination of the property as part of the religious history or social humanitarian history is not made in the documentation, however. Therefore, the nomination is being returned. We note that the case for the architectural significance of the property is somewhat weak, for there is very little context given for importance of Prairie Style architecture in Little Rock. The property's interior is noted as exceptional, and is described within the context of that style. Please note that this property is considered as a criteria exception and the case for its eligibility must be clear under both Bulletin #19 and the requirements for criteria exceptions.

How you choose to document the case for significance in the history of religion and social history is at your discretion. The religious significance of the property could be claimed under either Criterion A or Criterion B. If religious significance under Criterion A is claimed, the nomination should include an analysis of the role of this church in the history of religious thought and development in Little Rock in the 1920's. Why, for example, compared to other religious institutions of this era, is this building important? What are the specifics of the training activities of this church in the 1920's that clearly illustrate the significance of this building as the "mother" training church for ministers across the state? If the religious significance of the property is related to Dr. Guy and his contribution (Criterion B), there should be some additional information given on Dr. Guy and his role during a chosen period of significance. It should be clear that Dr. Guy is no longer living (please note that National Register policy dictates that properties associated with living individuals are not included in the National Register). Secondly, since the period of Dr. Guy's contribution spans into the period less than 50 years ago, the discussion of the exceptional significance of his contribution should also be included (it certainly may be that his contribution was exceptionally significant within the local context, this must, however, be documented).

If the case for the significance of the property under Criterion A is claimed for the area of social/humanitarian, the nomination must include an analysis of why this property, when compared to other institutions in the city, maintained a place of leadership with Little Rock's blacks. What constitutes the place of leadership, for example, what social events, congregating, other organized or unorganized activities took place at the church to signal its place of leadership?

Please review these comments, as well as the earlier comment concerning the case for the architectural significance (it may be appropriate to clarify that case if possible) and contact our staff for additional questions.



ARKANSAS
HISTORIC
PRESERVATION
PROGRAM

October 6, 1986

Carol D. Shull
Chief of Registration
United States Department of the Interior
National Register of Historic Places
National Park Service
1100 "L" Street, N. W.
Washington, D. C. 20240

Re: Mount Zion Baptist Church
Little Rock, Pulaski County

Dear Carol:

We are enclosing for your review the nomination for the Mount Zion Baptist Church. The Arkansas Historic Preservation Program has complied with all applicable nominating procedures and notification requirements in the nomination process.

Thank you for your consideration in this matter.

Sincerely,

Wilson Stiles
State Historic Preservation Officer

WS/TJ/do

Enclosure/s



OCT 16 1986

CODING PROBLEM SHEET

State Name AR County Name Polk Resource Name Mount Zion Baptist Church
 Reference No. 86003130 Multiple Name _____
 Certification Date _____

Problem Field:

- | | | |
|--|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Owner | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Applicable Criteria | <input type="checkbox"/> Cultural Affiliation |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Resource Type | <input type="checkbox"/> Criteria Considerations | <input type="checkbox"/> Architectural Style |
| <input type="checkbox"/> No. Contrib./Non-Contrib. Resources | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Area of Significance | <input type="checkbox"/> Construction Materials |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Historic Function/Historic Sub-function | <input type="checkbox"/> Period of Significance | <input type="checkbox"/> Acreage |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Current Function/Current Sub-function | <input type="checkbox"/> Architect/Builder/Engineer | <input type="checkbox"/> UTM Coordinates |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Level of Significance | <input type="checkbox"/> FR Level Information | <input type="checkbox"/> Other |

Solution:

Coding Problem Team: _____ Date: _____ NR Staff: _____ Date: _____

Data Collector's Explanation of Problem:

Religious significance pre-dates historic resource -- I have not entered it.

I do not think soc/hum significance is adequately justified

How extensive is the new addition? the addition to the R is fairly large, but is, at least, set back; will the one on the L, combined with other alterations/additions jeopardize integrity?

Data Collector: MW Today's Date 23 Oct 86 D.B. Corrected _____ Date _____

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N/A not for publication

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<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
	<u>N/A</u>	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<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:

4. Owner of Property

name Mount Zion Baptist Church

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has this property been determined eligible? yes no

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<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		date _____

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

SUMMARY

Exhibiting a subtle Prairie School influence on the exterior, the Mount Zion Baptist Church is sited at 900 Cross street and is exceptional for the elaborate interior where its members have worshipped since the building's completion in 1926. Although the exterior is handsomely defined by a tripartite composition and an exaggerated cornice, the interior surpasses expectation with a large sanctuary embellished with a U-shaped balcony and a pressed metal ceiling which is centered with an ornate copper-clad fixture suspended from an elliptically-shaped skylight of multi-paned frosted glass. Rhythmic patterns of arched, stained glass windows have not been interrupted on both side elevations by sensitively-constructed additions and visually the building maintains its original character.

ELABORATION

Mount Zion Baptist Church, located at 900 Cross Street in Little Rock, was built by contractor P. S. Jones and is a handsome buff brick structure whose massing and detailing is loosely reminiscent of Prairie styling.

The exterior masonry walls are load bearing and are topped with a flat roof surrounded by a parapet wall and an exaggerated cornice. The principal facade is a tripartite composition with a slightly recessed central bay defined by three arched openings adorned with decorative brickwork and surmounted by five arched stained glass windows. A flight of carpeted concrete steps, adjusted to the slope of the site, rises to the arched doorways and extends across the width of the middle bay. The staircase is anchored by iron fixtures with splayed bases and frosted globes typical of the 1920's.

The flanking bays are accentuated by stepped corners on both sides. The second story of these side bays has a pair of Art Glass windows, one mounted atop the other with a wood panel between the two. Previously, the first level of both end bays also had Art Glass windows, but the window on the south bay has been replaced by an aluminum awning and door which provides access to an elevator added ten years ago. Concrete defines the basement level of the structure while an exaggerated wooden overhang accents the base of the parapet wall which acts as the building's cornice. Three crosses, of a slightly darker brick than the walls but laid flush with the wall's surface, adorn the cornice.

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The north elevation has access to the basement through a door in the bay of the east end at grade and another entry below grade with a short stair on the opposite end. The window placement along these elevations provides a pleasing rhythmic pattern of a group of three windows, a pair of windows then single window. Varied window shapes include rectangular, square, arched and oculus. Pilasters for structural strength appear along both side elevations.

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1970's to provide for the installation of an elevator in the southeast corner.

The church's raised first story houses a large sanctuary with a U-shaped balcony. Symmetrical in plan, the interior is defined by an aisle down the center of the gently sloping floor flanked by two side aisles. The former is emphasized further by the placement of three chandeliers down this central axis. Two of these fixtures are recent additions in 1965; the middle chandelier, however, is an ornate copper-clad fixture suspended from an elliptically shaped skylight of multi-paned frosted glass. Organ pipes placed on both sides of the baptistry niche and mounted on a trellis-like grill adorned with decorative bosses also accentuate the structure's symmetry.

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The balcony, supported by steel columns, is accessible by two staircase within the sanctuary and one larger staircase adjacent to the vestibule in the northeast corner of the building. The detailing of the larger staircase, particularly the newel posts, is simple yet suggestive of Prairie styling. Raised edge panels decorate the side of the stairs, while beaded boarding is used on the underside of the treads.

As noted earlier, the balcony seating dates to the church's construction. A brass railing follows the interior contours of the balcony. The ceiling of the sanctuary is an ornate composition of pressed-metal decoration installed between a network of structural beams. Less ornate, yet still decorative metal ceilings are used in the vestibule, the baptistry and the basement. The decorative treatment of the metal cornice is classically derived and includes a dentil course and egg and dart motif.

The basement, like the sanctuary, is essentially one large room punctuated with steel support columns noted previously. Adjacent to this large meeting hall is a kitchen added in 1976 and a utility room.

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Later additions to the Mount Zion Baptist Church's facilities include an aforementioned L-shaped Education Building constructed in 1951. This is also buff brick. A new fellowship hall is under construction on the south side of the original church.

8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
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<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/ humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		

Specific dates 1926 **Builder/Architect** P.S. Jones, contractor; architect unknown

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

SUMMARY

Built in 1926, Mount Zion Baptist Church in Little Rock is an architecturally significant structure with exterior references to Prairie styling and impressive interior detailing. It was a very modern church at the time of its construction, breaking from the more traditional style of black ecclesiastical architecture.

ELABORATION

The Mount Zion congregation was formed in 1877 in an effort to provide an institution for blacks which would facilitate not only religious but educational and economic adjustment to their status as freedmen. The early years of the congregation saw increasing involvement in the black community of Little Rock on the part of its members. Arkansas Baptist College, which was to become a leading institution of higher learning for blacks in the state, was organized at the church in 1884 and its first classes were held there. In 1919 the People's Ice and Fuel Company was incorporated at Mount Zion. A frame building served the membership from 1880 until the present brick edifice was completed in 1926.

Mount Zion Baptist Church is loosely reminiscent of Prairie styling. Prairie Style architecture is not at all common in Little Rock. Although the church is by no means a pure example of the Prairie Style, its influences on the exterior can not be denied. These are best seen in the over-all massing of the structure as well as the horizontal emphasis which is produced by the coping around the parapet and the exaggerated cornice. This horizontality is continued on the interior. The curvilinear U-shaped balcony creates a continuous band around three sides of the of the sanctuary. The ceiling is pressed metal and is decorated with an elliptically-shaped skylight, rather than being vaulted. Both the balcony and the ceiling are supported by steel columns, a reminder of the modern design of the church. Mount Zion Baptist Church was the first substantial black church in Little Rock built in a modern style, breaking from the traditional two-towered Gothic Revival Style structure.

Since the erection of the present church building, Mount Zion has maintained a place of leadership with Little Rock's blacks. The congregation has included many educators, business, and professional people. Ministers who have pastored other churches throughout the city and state (such as Marine W. Williams, O. J. Wilson, Lloyd Meyers, and Tennyson Barnes) and nation (such as Dr. Earl Moore, who is now in New York) were ordained at Mount Zion. The late Dr. Fred T. Guy, installed as pastor in 1931, was instrumental in the growth of Mount Zions's heightened community responsibility. He was a member and ardent supporter of the NAACP, which met at Mount Zion during his tenure. Dr. Guy was particularly known for the calm guidance that he gave to the black community during the Central High School intergration crisis of 1957.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Floyd, Gwendolyn. History of Mount Zion Baptist Church, 1961.

Souvenir Program, Mount Zion Baptist Church, April 19, 1926.

Souvenir Program, Mount Zion Baptist Church, September 20, 1942.

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property less than one acre

Quadrangle name Little Rock, Arkansas

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UTM References

A

1	5	5	6	5	4	2	0	3	8	4	4	4	2	0
Zone			Easting				Northing							

B

Zone			Easting				Northing							

C

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

D

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E

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F

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G

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H

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

Verbal boundary description and justification

Lots 9, 10, and 11, Block 308, Original City. The SW $\frac{1}{4}$ of Section 3, Township 1 North, Range 12 West.

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state	code	county	code
N/A			

state	code	county	code
-------	------	--------	------

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Mrs. Gwendolyn M. Floyd/Thomas Baskins, Edited by AHPP staff

organization _____ date July 16, 1986

street & number 3717 West 16th Street telephone (501) 663-3974 / (501) 378-5463

city or town Little Rock, AR state 72204

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national state local

As the designated State Historic Preservation 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.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature *Wilson Spills*

title State Historic Preservation Officer date 2-4-87

For NPS use only

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

Beth Crovenc date 3/27/87
Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

Mount Zion Baptist Church
Pulaski County
ARKANSAS

Substantive Review

Working No. 10-16-86
Fed. Reg. Date: 2/22/88
Date Due: 2-29-87
Action: ACCEPT 2-27-87
 RETURN
 REJECT

- resubmission
- nomination by person or local government
- owner objection
- appeal

Federal Agency: _____

Substantive Review: sample request appeal

NR decision

Reviewer's comments: *Original return comments focused on the need to clarify which criteria were applicable to the resource and on justifying religion and social/humanitarian as areas of significance. They avoided the problem by dropping religion and social/humanitarian as significant areas, and proving only architectural significance. Indicative of frequent difficulty justifying areas of significance in Arkansas nominations.*

Recom./Criteria Accept, C
Reviewer Noble
Discipline Historian
Date 2/27/87
_____ see continuation sheet

Nomination returned for: _____ technical corrections cited below
_____ substantive reasons discussed below

1. Name

2. Location

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
	Public Acquisition	Accessible	

4. Owner of Property

5. Location of Legal Description

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

Has this property been determined eligible? yes no

7. Description

Condition

- excellent
- good
- fair
- deteriorated
- ruins
- unexposed

Check one

- unaltered
- altered

Check one

- original site
- moved date _____

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

- summary paragraph
- completeness
- clarity
- alterations/integrity
- dates
- boundary selection

8. Significance

Period _____ Areas of Significance—Check and justify below

Specific dates _____ Builder/Architect _____

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

- summary paragraph
- completeness
- clarity
- applicable criteria
- justification of areas checked
- relating significance to the resource
- context
- relationship of integrity to significance
- justification of exception
- other

9. Major Bibliographical References

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property _____

Quadrangle name _____

UTM References _____

Verbal boundary description and justification

11. Form Prepared By

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

_____ national _____ state _____ local

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

title _____ date _____

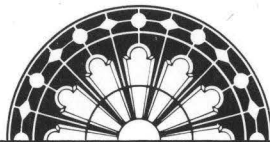
13. Other

- Maps
- Photographs
- Other

Questions concerning this nomination may be directed to _____

Signed _____ Date _____ Phone: _____

Resubm.



ARKANSAS
HISTORIC
PRESERVATION
PROGRAM

February 3, 1987

Carol Shull
Chief of Registration
United States Department of the Interior
National Register of Historic Places
National Park Service
1100 "L" Street, N.W.
Washington, DC 20240

RE: Mount Zion Baptist Church
Little Rock, Pulaski Co.

Dear Carol:

Enclosed is the nomination for Mount Zion Baptist Church, which was returned for substantive reasons. As requested, we have clarified the justification for the designated areas of significance.

Should you have any additional questions or concerns regarding this nomination, please contact Julie Vosmik of my staff.

Sincerely,

Wilson Stiles
State Historic Preservation Officer

WS/jv

Enclosures



FEB 12 1987



Mt. Zion Baptist Church
Little Rock, Pulaski Co.
East front elevation
Photographed by Mike Swanda
August 1986

10/10/86



Mt. Zion Baptist Church
Little Rock, Pulaski Co.
North side elevation
Photographed by Robert Gunnels
August 1986

col/col/16



Mt. Zion Baptist Church
Little Rock, Pulaski Co.
Interior of sanctuary
Photographed by Mike Swanda
August 1986

10/16/86



Mount Zion Baptist Church
Little Rock, Pulaski County
Photographed by Mike Swanda
August 1986

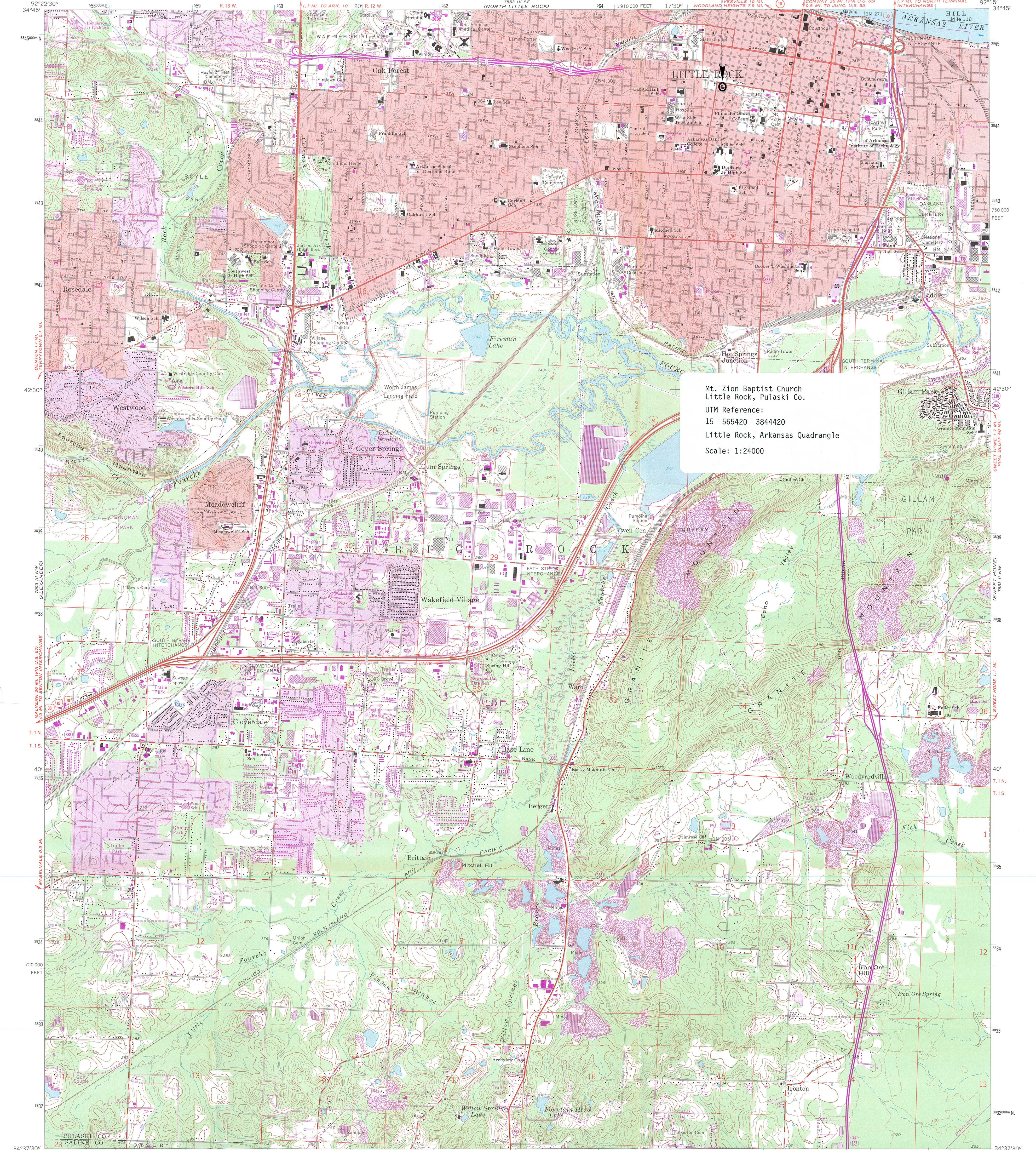
8/14/86

MT. ZION BAPTIST CHURCH
LITTLE ROCK, PULASKI



Mt. Zion Baptist Church
Little Rock, Pulaski Co.
Interior of sanctuary
Photographed by Mike Swanda
August 1986

8/10/86



Mt. Zion Baptist Church
 Little Rock, Pulaski Co.
 UTM Reference:
 15 565420 3844420
 Little Rock, Arkansas Quadrangle
 Scale: 1:24000