

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

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**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

received MAY 30 1985
date entered JUN 27 1985

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

1. Name

historic St. Paul Methodist Episcopal Church

and/or common St. Paul's United Methodist Church

2. Location

street & number 1340 Third Avenue Southeast not for publication

city, town Cedar Rapids vicinity of

state Iowa code 019 county Linn code 113

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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
	N/A	<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 St. Paul's United Methodist Church, Inc.

street & number 1340 Third Avenue Southeast

city, town Cedar Rapids vicinity of state Iowa 52403

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. County Recorder's Office

street & number Linn County Courthouse

city, town Cedar Rapids state Iowa 52401

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

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

St. Paul Methodist Episcopal Church is one of five Louis Sullivan designs in Iowa. The finished building, somewhat compromised by a later addition, is devoid of many of Sullivan's decorative frills, and a few of his structural components. It represents the serial involvement of three architects, Sullivan, William C. Jones, and George Elmslie, and design authorship can only be generally ascribed to Sullivan. The unusual church plan is a significant example of the changing role of the church in society, evidencing the incorporation of church education, physical education, and a broader church community concept in addition to the traditional worship function.

The basic plan description of St. Paul Church is that of a three story half circle or semi-circle which adjoins a rectangular classroom block; the whole of which is arranged around the base of a square six story bell tower. The semi-circular auditorium has a radius from the main altar of 65 feet and its eavesline is twenty-two feet above ground level. The tower measures 22 feet square and 108 feet tall. The classroom block measures 42 by 164 feet.

The auditorium area is the key to the overall plan. By virtue of its arrangement, excellent acoustics and an unobstructed view are provided for. Beneath the auditorium, a half raised basement houses within an identical plan. A large assembly room with stage is flanked by two triangular shaped side rooms, one being the kitchen. Two rows of steel columns (numbering 4 and 8 respectively) support the floors above. The basement of the main block houses a gymnasium and a chapel, and on its western end, boiler and coal room.

On the main floor, the auditorium has a bowled floor, with a descent of four feet in twenty four feet. An ten foot wide corridor encircles the perimeter of the auditorium beneath the gallery and connects the two stair tower entrances with side entrances. The main floor seats 700 persons in seven pie shaped seating sections. Another curved aisle separates seats from the altar, a curved altar rail encircles the altar front, leading to a curved stage, a central platform and the altar area. Ten square piers support the gallery, which provides for 400 seats in five rows of pews. The main block area to the north consists of a broad longitudinal corridor with end stairs, a central foyer, and a rank of classrooms. The second floor of the main block has a narrow central corridor with ranks of classrooms at each side and each end.

The auditorium is the key component within the overall plan. Skylights and bands of small windows provide natural light. The provision of a single auditorium for the entire congregation required an ability to quickly empty the chamber. This was accomplished by a design which provided broad aisles and corridors and the octagonal exterior stair towers which are linked to each level of the auditorium. The gallery continues on each side, where balconies continue along the "great wall" which separates the auditorium and the main block. This wall is, on either side of the pulpit, pierced by an arcade of six double round arched doorways. The ceiling is deeply ribbed, concealing rounded structural beams. The exterior material consists of varying shades of red tapestry brick.

Sullivan vs. Jones, The Original Plan and the Built Church:

The Sullivan design survives on paper in the forms of a water colored elevation drawing (presently on exhibit at the Cedar Rapids Museum of Art) and a plan for the main floor of the church. The Sullivan design envisioned load bearing walls, while Jones replaced these with a steel skeleton and brick curtain walls with a veneer. Sullivan envisioned in his plan an east facing curved facade with twin two story octagonal stair tower entrances. These had monumental entrances with a solid bank of thirteen narrow lights. Diagonal glass lamps projected from each entry corner, and from the end entrances on the main block as well. A key exterior feature was the broad sweeping eaves which surmounted a slightly recessed third floor window band, with a row of some thirty-six ornate columns with gilded capitals. A

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brilliantly ornamented frieze underscored the soffit. On the steeply pitched auditorium roof, a semi-circular skylight was filled in with multi-colored glass, and a gilded metal cresting encircled the upper edge of the light, connecting with a stepped parapet wall which separated the two main blocks. Two square corner flues rose on either side of the auditorium and featured rich Sullivan-esque terra cotta infill panels on each upper face. The central tower had diagonally set corner buttresses, and a final story which featured massive angels with trumpets on each face, corner piers with bands of windows, and rich decorative panels above. A broadly projecting eaves line underscored the roof, which was surmounted by a twelve foot cross. A lavish usage of terra cotta, and probably stuccoed ornamentation utilized gilding, creams and a rich blue coloration which contrasted with the light brown brick. A roof top garden above the main block featured a decorated pergola above the north entrance.

A comparison of the Sullivan and Jones floorplans indicates that while an identical floor plan was used, substantial differences are apparent in terms of wall types and dimension. The central foyer in Sullivan's plan utilized corner piers and incorporated the area just behind the altar. Jones replaced this with a solid square tower base, and allocated the area behind the altar to the auditorium. Jones' plan substituted numerous supportive columns into Sullivan's main block and eliminated some of Sullivan's solid walls, which separated classrooms. Sullivan's landscaping plan envisioned a grassed terrace around the auditorium, perhaps designed to lower the effect of the raised basement. The church was actually built without this feature.

Jones' major contribution visually was of course the elimination of Sullivan's rich array of specially crafted ornamentation, including glasswork, terra cotta panels, columns, friezes, etc. The auditorium retained the acoustical qualities and the indirect lighting planned by Sullivan. The organ was hidden from view being housed in a recessed stage area behind and above the altar. While Jones substituted piers for Sullivan's elaborate third floor columned balcony, he also reversed the skylight plan above the auditorium. His scheme resulted in a vertical break in the roof pitch with the skylight above the roof pitch line, with a flatish shaped canopy. Sullivan had envisioned one continuous roof pitch with a ring of colored glass which terminated in a flatter roof cap, the breakpoint being demarcated by a gilded crest or railing. Jones' stair towers, in their simplicity, failed to do what Sullivan had envisioned. The second floor windows are separated by piers and are again broken vertically by a series of metal panels. This has the effect of dwarfing the entrance below.

Alterations:

The auditorium retains its seating plan, color scheme, pews and finish. Alterations in this area in 1954 eliminated the organ loft, the arcades on either side above the altar, and reduced the "great wall" to a single flat plain with simplified double door side entrances. A backdrop of 50 cloth reredos behind the altar were replaced in 1977 by a modern organ screen and a new organ was placed within what had been the organ and choir loft. A new scarlet carpet and a new pulpit were added. The building exterior was tuckpointed in 1953 and new sidewalks were laid.

The major change was the addition in 1963 of an educational building which transformed the overall plan to that of an ell. While an attempt was made to blend the brick colors of both old and new, the addition offers a jarring vertical thrust with its projecting broad pilasters and the exposed structural supports which run counter to the intervening bands of windows. The addition consists of a two story building of concrete block with brick veneer. It has a

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basic ell plan with stair halls on the east and west ends. The thrust of the new wing projects alongside the semi-circular thrust of the original building, making a comparison of the two designs inevitable.

Context:

When the plans were first announced, the local paper announced "This is one of the finest possible sites for a church in Cedar Rapids, in the very center of the residence portion of the city where the membership of this church lives." Its location is indicative of the general movement of established protestant churches away from the downtown area to the outlying residential areas. Another nearby church, Westminister, was gothic in its design and traditional, yet represented this same tendency to relocate. The St. Paul building committee sent photos of it to their prospective architects as an example of what they didn't want in a design. The original church filled the four lots, yet left enough land on the southeast corner for a two story frame parsonage. The addition eliminated this and filled the rest of the parcel. Two additional lots were acquired on the south for parking. Sanborn Insurance maps indicate a gradual transition in the immediate area from small two story dwellings to larger apartments and flats.

In terms of architectural context, St. Paul is one of two "Sullivan" commissions in the city, and one of five in Iowa. The other local example is The People's Savings Bank (1909-11), which is not generally highly rated as an example of Sullivan's work and which has been greatly altered. Of the five design efforts, St. Paul is the only church effort. Sullivan used revived historical themes for his Cedar Rapids bank commission. The Merchant's National Bank (1913-5), Grinnell, and the Henry C. Adams Building in Algona (1913-14) are considered to be superior in design and state of preservation that the Cedar Rapids bank. His other commission, the Van Allen Store, in Clinton (1912-15), is a four story commercial block with very dominant window bands, and has Sullivan's elaborate ornamentation.

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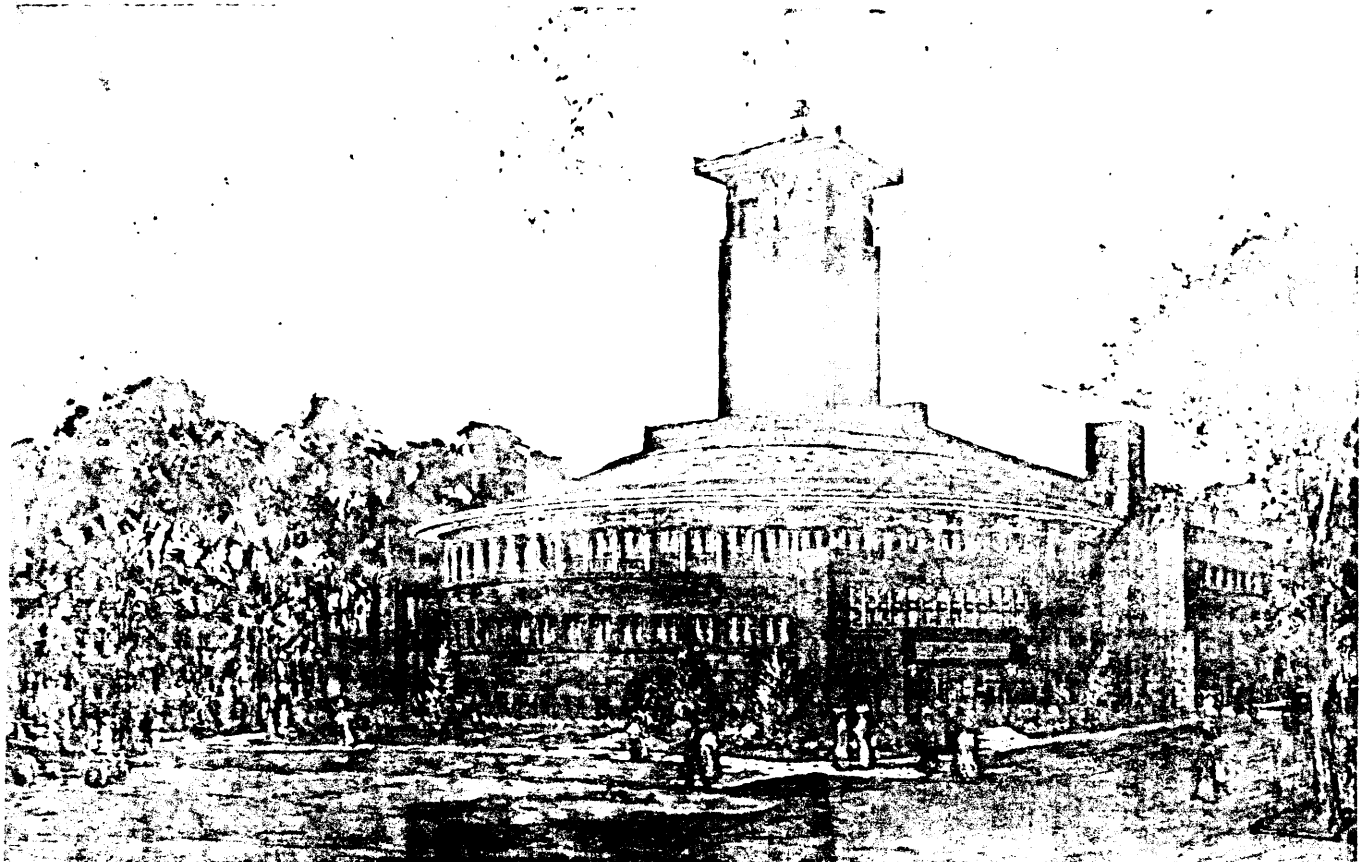
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Architect's Perspective Rendering, St. Paul's Church, Cedar Rapids
Reproduced courtesy Cedar Rapids Museum of Art.

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 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 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 1913-4 **Builder/Architect** Louis Sullivan, W. C. Jones, George Elmslie

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

St. Paul Methodist Episcopal Church is one of five Louis Sullivan designs in Iowa. The finished building, somewhat compromised by a later addition, is devoid of many of Sullivan's decorative frills, and a few of his structural components. It represents the serial involvement of three architects, Sullivan, William C. Jones, and George Elmslie, and design authorship can only be generally ascribed to Sullivan. The unusual church plan is a significant example of the changing role of the church in society, evidencing the incorporation of church education, physical education, and a broader church community concept in addition to the traditional worship function.

St. Paul Methodist Episcopal Church dates its origins to the early 1840's when an informal church circuit was established in Cedar Rapids. Its first church building was raised in the early 1850's. A second building was built at Fourth Ave. and Fifth Street in 1872-3. The movement for a third (the present) building began in 1909 and culminated in construction during the years 1913-4.

Origin of Design:

The actual process of planning and constructing a new church was to take St. Paul fully five years. A building committee, headed by T. H. Simmons was formed in mid February 1909, lots were acquired the next month and an active search for a model plan began mid-year. An exhaustive search for an ideal plan took the committee throughout the Midwest, and brought various specialists in church design to Cedar Rapids. Cost ceilings were originally set at \$60,000 (25 June 1909) but eventually escalated to twice that amount (\$110,000 in March 1911).

The search for a plan coincided with the development of a new model of church building. The committee produced a lengthy formal request for a design which they forwarded to prospective bidders on 6 June 1910. It stated the following about its perceived needs;

"...a new, distinct and permanent architectural requirement has arisen in church architecture, which many excellent architects probably would not a first draft be able to completely solve...This invitation is confined to a few architects of proven ability.

Our church building centers on the need of better caring for our young people, both in the Bible School arrangement and in the social features designed to hold them to the church. Our ambition is first of all, to provide an ideal arrangement of the rooms for our Bible School. We believe a transition era has come in church architecture. Protestant churches are awakening to the fact tht 80 percent of their accessions is from the Sunday School, and that of their Sunday School enrollment they are losing 60 per cent to 70 per cent who do not become church members. Conviction has come that the department yielding so large a percentage of loss must in the future have the very best equipment and care the church can furnish.....

There is admittedly no church edifice built at the present time thoroughly adapted to this system of Bible School work that, admittedly, will soon be in universal operation. So that we believe the problem here presented is a general one and not special to our congregation, and that if successfully solved the church building

9. Major Bibliographical References

Refer to Continuation Sheet 9-2

10. Geographical Data

Acree of nominated property less than one acre

Quadrangle name Cedar Rapids South

Quadrangle scale 1/24,000

UTM References

A

1	5	6	1	1	6	0	0	4	6	4	8	8	3	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

Block 5, Beber Park Addition to Linn County, Iowa; also Lots 9, 10, 11 and 12, Fractional Block 17, Green & College Addition to Linn County, Iowa. Includes only original church and addition, excludes adjoining parking area to 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 James E. Jacobsen, National Register Coordinator

Office of Historic Preservation

organization Iowa State Historical Department

date 30 April 1985

street & number E. 12th & Grand Ave.

telephone 515-281-4137

city or town Des Moines

state Iowa 50319

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

Towell J. Soite

title Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer

date May 9, 1985

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

Entered in the National Register

date 6-27-85

for Allous Byer
Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

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will be visited from far and near by building committees, just as we have hunted the country over for such a church..."²

Two perspectives need to be considered when the process of plan development and selection is reviewed, those of the committee and the architects. Architects in New York, Pennsylvania, Ohio, Illinois, Minnesota, Iowa and California submitted a total of twelve initial plan sets and according to the published committee history, Louis Sullivan, Chicago architect "...came nearest to the solution sought." Unfortunately, reaching this point in the design process had not been quite that simple.

George Elmslie (1871- ?) served as Louis Sullivan's chief of staff in Chicago for some twenty years between 1888 and 1906. He joined with William Purcell, another former Sullivan staffer with the firm of Purcell, Feick and Elmslie in Minneapolis in 1909. T. H. Simmons, representing his building committee, was visited by William Purcell. In this meeting, involving Elmslie, Purcell and Simmons, the latter stressed the need for a "great deal of room for the social side of the congregation, and the architects apparently convinced Simmons that the ideas of Louis Sullivan, their mentor were well worth considering. Purcell concisely summarized Simon's project as being "...a Y.M.C.A. with a chapel."³ Their firm completed a set of plans and were led to believe that upon their presentation that they had been selected for the job. Their submission envisioned (refer to Continuation Sheet 8-2) a "...a bold cruciform design that had a square clerestory rising up through the center. Brick with terra cotta ornament were the intended materials; a separate bell tower was to stand at the side."⁴ The clerestory at least would survive in the final plan, perhaps merely reflecting its common acceptance by Prairie School architects, or perhaps its attractiveness to Simmons. Simmons however was off to Chicago to consult Sullivan and the latter was selected as architect c. October 1910. Louis Sullivan (1856-1924) had by this time been forced to turn to smaller, more remote commissions, his years of glory and dominance having waned, cut short by the depressed years of the early 1890's. Sullivan's plan "...proposed a semi-circular church with a rectangular block of Sunday-school rooms behind and altar end. The solution was eminently practical and appropriate-almost like a Roman Theater. The curve was expressed on the exterior, with twin stair towers as entry ways."⁵ The design incorporated a fairly secular tower and a "dome of many-coloured glass."⁶ The plan met every fundamental requirement. Sullivan's first plan was altered in response to new requests, a gymnasium for the Sunday School. Sullivan's first plan was apparently twice the allocated \$60,000 cost ceiling determined by the building committee in 1909. The increase to \$110,000 came in March of 1911 probably in response to Sullivan's pressure. Simmons pushed for cost cuts and the second plan was determined to be unacceptable due to its extreme cost. Sullivan however "...was averse to sacrificing his distinctive ornamentation for cheap stencils and mass produced "art-glass," and in March (1912), after an angry rebuttal, he dismissed the penurious churchman altogether."⁷ Six months passed, a time during which the building committee argued costs. In mid-June the committee attempted without success to increase allowable expenditures to a level of \$125,000. That same month, plans drawn by Chicago architect William C. Jones, for a Waterloo church with two auditorium areas was reviewed, and a hybrid resolution passed. The committee would "consult an experienced architect, and secure, if possible, plans for a compact, church building with masonry walls, faced with ornamental brick, simple in architecture, but with as many of the utilities contemplated in the Sullivan plan." Allowable cost was \$105,000.⁸ Architect Jones apparently had a reputation for church design, and perhaps he was an original bidder for the design. He had recently designed churches in Muscatine, two in Waterloo, two in Cedar Falls, and one in Des Moines. By the time the contract for this church was let, Jones was described as "an expert

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church builder" of some 360 churches.⁹ At any rate he now emerged as the great hope for the church committee. Simmons took Sullivan's plans to Chicago architect William C. Jones in November 1912 and requested him to redraw them, cutting expense, yet retaining the favored Sullivan basic concept. The committee had determined on 9 September to abandon all previous church plans and named a three person sub-committee that was authorized to "enter into a contract with architect W. C. Jones to prepare plans for our new church building."¹⁰ Jones went to work "with a vengeance...He ruined the grand curve of the roof by supporting it with piers as diverse as stalagmites. Even Simmons perceived that he revision was frightful."¹¹ Simmons curiously returned to George Elmslie, the original architect, for help. "Elmslie, who, with the gentleman from Cedar Rapids at his elbow, spent two days tracing illustrations to show him not only where Jones had run to absurdity, but how to retain the general outline which Sullivan had originated. Simmons scurried back to Jones, bullied him into drawing the design as now recommended, then returned to Cedar Rapids to report upon his conquest of the architects. When at last the mutilated scheme emerged from surgery, in 1913, Simmons broke ground, and built what he loudly proclaimed as his "Sullivan church."¹² The building committee debated their options, apparently still considering the alternative Jones "Waterloo Plan" in addition to the Jones/Sullivan plan. The latter, "the Sullivan floor plans intact" was accepted 9 December 1912¹³.

The final plan, representing the input of three architects, can only be properly credited to all three. Sullivan was apparently paid for his original design, implying minimally that he was willing to allow the plan to go forward. There are claims that Sullivan actually came to Cedar Rapids, occupying a house adjacent to the site, and indeed that a number of prototype colored glass windows were produced for the church, and that these were found in the attic of that house in recent years. These connections, if documented, like Sullivan more directly with the commission. Considerable public interest was generated when Sullivan became the project architect, and in fact, a second Sullivan commission, the Peoples Savings Bank, was constructed just prior to St. Paul, also in Cedar Rapids. It apparently was planned and constructed without difficulty, probably in response to the St. Paul project. George Elmslie's intervention to save the Sullivan plan was done out of loyalty to a former employer. Elmslie naturally had worked closely with Sullivan to such an extent that he was much influenced in his own work. Elmslie's contribution in this instance was to recapture Sullivan's basic principles. Probably, Jones' contributions overall are minimal, amounting to eliminating all of Sullivan's ornamentation. The major exterior structural alteration consisted of replacing the exterior third floor columns with an array of brick piers. An editorial in Western Architect entitled "A Sullivan Design That Is Not Sullivan's" had challenged the misuse of one architect's plans by another. On one hand it lauded Sullivan's basic design contribution, but it separated the original architect from the end result. "That Mr. Sullivan may not have even an apparent interest in this article, that gentleman has not been asked to allow the publication of the original sketches and working drawings. These are said by competent critics who have seen them to (be) representative of the best and most important work produced by that architect...Of course this church, no matter how faithfully his plan and outline may have been adhered to is not Sullivan's Design. What might have been a treasured example of that genius that has been watched with more interest, and founded a more revolutionary departure in architecture than has been known to the profession in modern times, is but the first grade pupils tracing of the master's hand, and a cheap imitation at that. This is however thoroughly in its architectural sense; for the plan, judging from the expressions of lay church authorities as expressed at its dedication, has struck a new and satisfying note in church architecture." The journal in that same issue a full page treatment of the church, complete with Sullivan's perspective drawing. According to Hugh

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Morrison "the church itself is the chief loser, as anyone may see in observing the cheap "art-glass" of the main skylight, or the banal stenciled ornament in the Sunday school classrooms. But the church as built is fundamentally Sullivan's conception."¹⁴ The church has always been straight forward when recounting the difficult process of obtaining a church design. Indeed, the dedication booklets credited both Sullivan and Jones as project architects.

Design parentage aside, the plans as finally adopted, met the expectations of the congregation and impressed those who were knowledgeable of church design trends. Dr. Henry F. Cope, executive secretary of the Religious Education Association said "It seems to me tht St. Paul's M. E. Church of Cedar Rapids has taken a place of leadership in making adequate provisions for the Sunday school in church architecture for which churches in the future will render it grateful thanks."¹⁵ The local paper echoed this sentiment. "It is a new departure both in architectural design and in the arrangement of the interior. The membership of St. Paul's church believe they have correctly interpreted the needs of the churches of today, and that they have planned a "religious workshop" which will be followed by many another building committee that is planning a house for worship and work. The new features in this building are not the result merely of a desire for something new but of a desire for a building better adapted than anything in existence for a modern graded Sunday school, and for the other work of an active, aggressive, up-to-date church at work for the young and old."¹⁶

The Construction:

St. Paul M. E. Church was constructed without the incurring of any debt, which is quite remarkable. The first member subscription, completed 5 June 1910, netted pledges for \$64,000. No further solicitation took place prior to the day of dedication and provided the necessary additional \$37,000. which allowed the congregation to be debt free when it first used the new church. The contract was let in mid April 1913 and Theodore White & Co. of Cedar Rapids received the major contract. The groundbreaking took place on 21 April. The cornerstone was dedicated on 14 August of that year with a ceremony that invited all area church members and promised no solicitation of funds.¹⁷

Naturally the construction of the building aroused much local interest. The Cedar Rapids Gazette termed it "one of the splendid improvements Cedar Rapids for 1913 is a new church to be erected by St. Paul's Methodist Episcopal Church..it will be one of the most magnificent church houses in the city." As such, it was part of a building boom. Even as work began on St. Paul, Immaculate Conception Parish and First Christian Church were raising new and expensive buildings.¹⁸ Local comments also lacked a stylistic term to link with the new building. The Cedar Rapids Evening Gazette noted "The architecture is not patterned after any of the different forms...but is of a new style new and as yet unnamed."¹⁹

The Legacy of the "Cedar Rapids Plan":

The third St. Paul church proved to be a resounding success, and the 1913-4 building played no small part in that. St. Paul was the largest Methodist congregation in the state as of January 1955, and at that time, its pastor thought that its 3,658 membership made it the largest protestant church statewide. What was called "The Cedar Rapids Plan", referring to the Sullivan-Elmslie-Jones plan (as opposed to the earlier commonplace Akron Plan which favored separate auditoriums for Sunday school and worship) was considered "epoch-making" in its own time. The Cedar Rapids Gazette summarized its importance some forty years following construction. "The form itself was part of the beginning of a religious school of thought concentrating on the importance of religious education facilities in a church building...The

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principal concern at the time was to provide adequate facilities for religious education...²⁰ By 1955 the church had a staff of thirteen, a record membership, a weekly paper, and the satisfaction of having parented four other congregations over time. This success is also represented in the 1961 new addition.

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Footnotes:

¹"Cedar Rapids To Have the Most Unique Church In The West," Cedar Rapids Republican, 19 October 1913 (citation apparently incorrect, not found as indicated).

²"The Cedar Rapids Plan." Dedication Booklet, St. Paul's Methodist Episcopal Church, Cedar Rapids, Dedicated May 31, 1914. p. 7.

³Willard Connely, Louis Sullivan As He Lived, The Shaping of American Architecture. (New York: Horizon Press Inc., 1960), pp. 250-2, 258.

⁴H. Allen Brooks, The Prairie School; Frank Lloyd Wright and His Midwest Contemporaries, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1972), p. 189.

⁵Brooks, p. 189.

⁶Brooks, pp. 252, 258.

⁷Brooks, p. 258.

⁸St. Paul Methodist Episcopal Church Board of Trustees Minutes Excerpts, p. 3.

⁹"Contract For New Methodist Church Is Let," Cedar Rapids Evening Gazette, 15 April 1913.

¹⁰Trustees Minutes, p. 4.

¹¹Connely, p. 259.

¹²Conelly, p. 259.

¹³Trustees Minutes, p. 5.

¹⁴"A Sullivan Design That Is Not Sullivan's," Western Architect, 20:8 (August, 1914), Also Hugh Morrison, Louis Sullivan; Prophet of Modern Architecture, (New York; W. W. Norton & Company, 1935), p. 214.

¹⁵Cedar Rapids Republican, 19 October 1913.

¹⁶Cedar Rapids Republican, 19 October 1913.

¹⁷"To Lay Corner Stone Of New Church Friday," Cedar Rapids Gazette, 2 August 1913.

¹⁸Cedar Rapids Gazette, 13 January 1913.

¹⁹Mabel Chadband, "New St. Paul's Church Is Most Unique Religious Edifice In The Country," Cedar Rapids Evening Gazette, 23 May 1914.

²⁰Laurie Van Dyke, "'Church in Round' May Have Iowa's Largest Protestant Congregation," Cedar Rapids Gazette, 23 January 1955, p. 8.

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