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United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

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National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form

NATIONAL
REGISTER

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in *Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms* (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

1. Name of Property

historic name First Presbyterian Church
other names/site number N/A

2. Location

street & number 300 E. Main not for publication N/A
city, town El Dorado vicinity N/A
state Arkansas code AR county Union code AR 139 zip code 71730

3. Classification

Ownership of Property	Category of Property	Number of Resources within Property	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	Contributing	Noncontributing
<input type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input type="checkbox"/> district	1	buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> public-State	<input type="checkbox"/> site		sites
<input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> structure		structures
	<input type="checkbox"/> object		objects
		1	0 Total

Name of related multiple property listing: N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register N/A

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this ☒ 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 ☒ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria. ☐ See continuation sheet.

Calvin A. Byrd
Signature of certifying official
Arkansas Historic Preservation Program
State or Federal agency and bureau

4-3-91
Date

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

Signature of commenting or other official

State or Federal agency and bureau

Date

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

☒ entered in the National Register.
☐ See continuation sheet.
☐ determined eligible for the National Register. ☐ See continuation sheet.
☐ determined not eligible for the National Register.
☐ removed from the National Register.
☐ other, (explain:)

Amy Lederman

Signature of the Keeper

5/14/91

Date of Action

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Religion/Church

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Religion/Church**7. Description**

Architectural Classification

(enter categories from instructions)

Late 19th and 20th Century Revivals/
Collegiate Gothic

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation Brickwalls Brickroof Asphaltother Terra Cotta

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

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National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

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Summary

The First Presbyterian Church is a single story brick masonry and terra cotta ecclesiastical building in the Collegiate Gothic style with an original two-story rear educational wing and a tall Gothic bell tower. Completed in 1926, it features typical Collegiate Gothic features such as large elaborate pointed arch windows and a tall Gothic bell tower which dominates the continuous brick foundation and the intersecting gable roof.

Elaboration

The First Presbyterian Church is a single story brick masonry and terra cotta ecclesiastical building in the Collegiate Gothic style with an original two-story rear educational wing. It features an irregular plan, consisting of the gable roof sanctuary, a rear intersecting gable roof educational and office wing, a bell tower placed at the western intersection of these two main building components, and a non-historic chapel with a gable roof paralleling that of the main sanctuary and connected to it by a flat roof "hyphen." A single brick chimney is attached to the northeast corner of the building. The roof is covered with asphalt shingle and asphalt roll, the walls are brick and the entire structure rests upon a continuous brick foundation.

The southern or front elevation consists of the principle component of the entire design, the pyramidal end gable with its monumental Gothic window above the flat roof, parapeted entrance porch and the recessed entry doors framed by the arched opening. The gable end is symmetrically composed, with the entrance porch placed directly beneath the monumental Gothic window and centrally in the facade, between the decorative, projecting brick buttresses. The monumental window is divided into three lancet windows by the terra cotta mullions, all of which are set behind decorative, terra cotta Gothic tracery. The outer bays are symmetrical also, with a single rectangular stained glass window fenestrating the vestibule and the stairway leading to the balcony above. The entrance porch, the windows, and the buttresses are accented with white terra cotta cast to form a variety of traditional Gothic details.

The eastern and western elevations of the sanctuary are virtually identical. A row of five, large Gothic windows are evenly spaced across each and glazed with stained glass set behind decorative, terra cotta Gothic tracery. The window bays are separated by stepped Gothic buttresses with terra cotta offsets (two narrow, rectangular stained glass windows are placed one above the other at the southern end of each elevation, for the purpose of lighting the balcony stairwells).

The tall, soaring bell tower is accessed via a central entrance and staircase on its southern elevation and fenestrated with a large Gothic window near the top on each of its four sides. It is capped with the typical Gothic spires - rendered in terra cotta - and is trimmed elsewhere

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with terra cotta also.

The rear, two-story section is fenestrated throughout with rectangular six-over-six and nine-over-nine wood sash windows. Its western elevation is composed of two flat roof sections flanking the end gable of the intersecting gable roof. The second floor of the gable end is lighted with rectangular windows set into a blind Gothic arch; otherwise all the windows are square-headed. The northern and eastern elevations of the rear section are the same way, with a row of multi-pane, rectangular windows on each floor. The flat roof section that connects the original church with the later chapel is attached to the eastern elevation opposite the intersecting walls of the sanctuary and the rear, two-story section of the original building. This connector, and the rear wall of the chapel building, create a small cul-de-sac next to the eastern wall of the two-story section; this area is filled with utility equipment.

The eastern, single story chapel addition was designed c. 1954 to fit in with the historic style and design of the original building. It is of the Collegiate Gothic style also, though of a more restrained variety. It features a projecting, parapeted entrance porch surmounted by an elaborately-traceried Gothic window and square-headed windows down each of the sides of the chapel.

The significant exterior details are the pointed arch openings that protect both entrances and monumental stained glass windows. Like much of the rest of the buildings, the pointed arches are highlighted with terra cotta to help the viewer clearly identify the essential Gothic details and hence clearly identify this building as a church. Most impressive among them, however, are the bell tower and the monumental window above the southern or front entrance.

The interior throughout the original building is largely as it was when it was constructed. The sanctuary, with its elaborate screen above the pulpit, its trussed ceiling and stained glass, is intact and original, the only exception being the carpeting. The rooms within the original wing were always simple and they remain so today. A recent restoration effort has resulted in the cleaning of even the original chandeliers.

The significant alterations to the First Presbyterian Church are limited to the addition of the new chapel in 1954. However, this is placed toward the rear of the church and is designed in a style that is sympathetic to and compatible with the architectural style of the original building.

8. Statement of Significance

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

☐ nationally ☐ statewide ☒ locally

Applicable National Register Criteria ☐ A ☐ B ☒ C ☐ D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions) ☒ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ E ☐ F ☐ G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)

Architecture

Period of Significance

1924-1940

Significant Dates

1926

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Significant Person

N/A

Architect/Builder

R. H. Hunt and Associates

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

☒ See continuation sheet

9. Major Bibliographical References

☒ See continuation sheet

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- ☐ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67)
has been requested
- ☐ previously listed in the National Register
- ☐ previously determined eligible by the National Register
- ☐ designated a National Historic Landmark
- ☐ recorded by Historic American Buildings
Survey # _____
- ☐ recorded by Historic American Engineering
Record # _____

Primary location of additional data:

- ☐ State historic preservation office
- ☐ Other State agency
- ☐ Federal agency
- ☐ Local government
- ☐ University
- ☐ Other

Specify repository: _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of property One Acre

UTM References

A

1	5
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5	3	1	5	4	5
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3	6	7	4	6	6	0
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Zone Easting Northing

C

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

B

--	--

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

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

Zone Easting Northing

D

--	--

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

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

☐ See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

All of Block 23 of Original City of El Dorado

☐ See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

This boundary includes all of the property historically associated with this resource.

☐ See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Patrick Zollner, National Register Historian

organization Arkansas Historic Preservation Program

date 3/13/91

street & number 225 East Markham, Suite 300

telephone (501) 324-9346

city or town Little Rock

state Arkansas zip code 72201

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service****National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

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Section number _____ Page _____

Summary

Criterion C, local significance

The First Presbyterian Church of El Dorado is being nominated under Criterion C with local significance as the best example of Collegiate Gothic architecture in the area. The church is a product of the oil boom which struck El Dorado in the early 1920's. Millions of dollars soon poured into El Dorado, and the congregations of the various denominations were easily able to raise the money necessary to build new churches. The First Presbyterian Church's impressive new structure was the only one of the new ecclesiastical buildings to feature Collegiate Gothic styling.

Elaboration

The First Presbyterian Church in El Dorado was organized in 1846 by Reverend W.S. Lacy. During the Civil War, the church was dissolved due to the depletion of male members and the general havoc and disruption caused by that conflict. Interestingly, the church bell was given to the Confederate Government to be melted down and molded into cannon balls. This practice was encouraged by the Presbytery. The church was reorganized in 1868, and a new church was built just west of the present site in 1872. This small frame structure was replaced in 1897 with a nice vernacular Gothic Revival building located on the block of the current church. This remained the house of worship for El Dorado Presbyterians until 1927.

According to local tradition, El Dorado was founded about 1830 by Matthew F. Rainey whose wagon broke down at this point. Unable to travel any further, Rainey was forced to sell his goods on the spot. It is said that Rainey was so impressed by the local farmers' eagerness to buy that he soon returned to El Dorado with more stock and set up a store. Apparently a Judge Davis was his partner in this venture for it is believed that Rainey and Judge Davis named El Dorado and christened it with whiskey, the best selling product of their store. In 1843-1844 El Dorado became the county seat when Union County officials accepted Rainey's donation of 160 acres for the new site. El Dorado remained a small rural trading center until the early 1900's when a timber-cutting boom hit the area. El Dorado's population was 4202 in 1910 as compared to 455 just twenty years earlier. The new-found prosperity was not to last, however, as the choice timberland was soon depleted.

Development of oil fields in adjacent Louisiana had brought about prospecting and the leasing of lands in Union County. The first oil leases were sold in 1914-1915 at ten cents per acre, but it was not until May 17, 1920 that the first "wild gasser" blew in. El Dorado attained national prominence on January 10, 1921 when the first oil began to gush from the Busey well. Pandemonium swept over the normally quiet southern town. Almost overnight the town exploded from a population of less than 4000 to 15,000 as the army of drillers, mechanics, speculators, contractors, engineers, merchants, mule-skinners, and the darker shades of society

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National Park Service

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invaded El Dorado. In a few weeks the population passed 20,000, and it is estimated that the temporary population hit 50,000 at one point, although at the end of the first year the population had stabilized at 16,000. Housing and feeding the newcomers became a major problem as El Dorado staggered under the onslaught. By the end of October 1921 some 10,000,000 barrels of oil had been produced from 460 wells on 5,000 acres. At the end of the first five years of the oil boom, over 600 million dollars were invested in the development of petroleum production, and the entire economy of El Dorado profited as a result.

Due to the influx of residents, the First Presbyterian Church, like many of the other churches in town, soon outgrew their old church. A building fund campaign was initiated in January of 1924, and \$104,000 were pledged within four days. The old church was dismantled, and the new brick sanctuary and Sunday School rooms were completed in October, 1926. The Women's Auxiliary raised the money for a pipe organ, a four manual Moller which was installed at a cost of \$20,000. Designed by the architectural firm of R. H. Hunt and Associates, the impressive new Collegiate Gothic styled building was constructed of structural brick trimmed with white terra cotta and was covered by a green tile roof. As recognition of the new building's prominence, the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States held their annual meeting in El Dorado in 1927. The church was also listed in *The WPA Guide to 1930's Arkansas* as a point of interest in El Dorado.

The First Presbyterian Church of El Dorado is being nominated under Criterion C with local significance as the best and most noteworthy example of Collegiate Gothic style architecture in the area. Despite distinct additions and the replacement of the green tile roof with composition shingles, the church has retained its original integrity and is a fine representative of its period and style.

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National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

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1

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Bibliography

Federal Writers' Project, *The W.P.A. Guide to 1930's Arkansas*, with new introduction by Elliott West, (Lawrence, Kansas, 1987), pp. 136-141.

Green, Juanita Whitaker, *The History of Union County, Arkansas*, (1954).

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National Park Service

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Section number _____ Page _____

SUPPLEMENTARY LISTING RECORD

NRIS Reference Number: 91000579 Date Listed: 050/14/91


First Presbyterian Church
Property Name

Union
County

ARK
State

N/A
Multiple Name

This property is listed in the National Register of Historic Places in accordance with the attached nomination documentation subject to the following exceptions, exclusions, or amendments, notwithstanding the National Park Service certification included in the nomination documentation.


Signature of the Keeper

05/14/91
Date of Action

=====

Amended Items in Nomination:

The period of significance for this property should be limited to 1926, its date of construction.

Discussed with Ken Story, ARK SHPO, on May 14, 1991.

DISTRIBUTION:
National Register property file

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION

PROPERTY First Presbyterian Church
NAME:

MULTIPLE
NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: ARKANSAS, Union

DATE RECEIVED: 4/09/91 DATE OF PENDING LIST: 4/24/91
DATE OF 16TH DAY: 5/10/91 DATE OF 45TH DAY: 5/24/91
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 91000579

NOMINATOR: STATE

REASONS FOR REVIEW:

APPEAL: N DATA PROBLEM: N LANDSCAPE: N LESS THAN 50 YEARS: N
OTHER: N PDIL: N PERIOD: N PROGRAM UNAPPROVED: N
REQUEST: N SAMPLE: N SLR DRAFT: Y NATIONAL: N

COMMENT WAIVER: N

☒ ACCEPT ☐ RETURN ☐ REJECT 5/14/91 DATE

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

RECOM./CRITERIA Accept C
REVIEWER A. Federman
DISCIPLINE Arch Hist
DATE 5/14/91

DOCUMENTATION see attached comments Y/N see attached SLR Y/N

CLASSIFICATION

___count ___resource type

STATE/FEDERAL AGENCY CERTIFICATION

FUNCTION

___historic ___current

DESCRIPTION

___architectural classification

___materials

___descriptive text

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

BIBLIOGRAPHY

GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

___acreage

___verbal boundary description

___UTMs

___boundary justification

ACCOMPANYING DOCUMENTATION/PRESENTATION

___sketch maps ___USGS maps ___photographs ___presentation

OTHER COMMENTS

Questions concerning this nomination may be directed to

Phone _____

Signed _____

Date _____



First Presbyterian Church

El Dorado, Arkansas

Union Co.

Photographed by Patrick Zollner

September 1990

Negatives on file at AHPP

View of bell tower from the west



First Presbyterian Church

El Dorado, Arkansas

Union Co.

Photographed by Patrick Zollner

September 1990

Negatives on file at AHPP

View from the south



First Presbyterian Church
El Dorado, Arkansas
Union Co.

Photographed by Patrick Zollner
September 1990

Negatives on file at AHPP

View from the south



First Presbyterian Church

El Dorado, Arkansas

Union Co.

Photographed by Patrick Zollner

September 1990

Negatives on file at AHPP

View from the northwest



First Presbyterian Church

El Dorado, Arkansas

Union Co.

Photographed by Patrick Zolher

September 1990

Negatives on file at AHPP

View from the west



First Presbyterian Church
El Dorado, Arkansas
Union Co.
Photographed by Patrick Zollner
September 1990
Negatives on file at AHPP
View from the southwest



First Presbyterian Church

El Dorado, Arkansas

Union Co.

Photographed by Patrick Zollner

September 1996

Negatives on file at AHPP

View from southeast



First Presbyterian Church
El Dorado, Arkansas
Union Co.
Photographed by Patrick Zollner
September 1990
Negatives on file at AHPP
View of sanctuary



First Presbyterian Church

El Dorado, Arkansas

Union Co.

Photographed by Patrick Zollner

September 1990

Negatives on file at AHPP

View of sanctuary

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(Top Sheet)

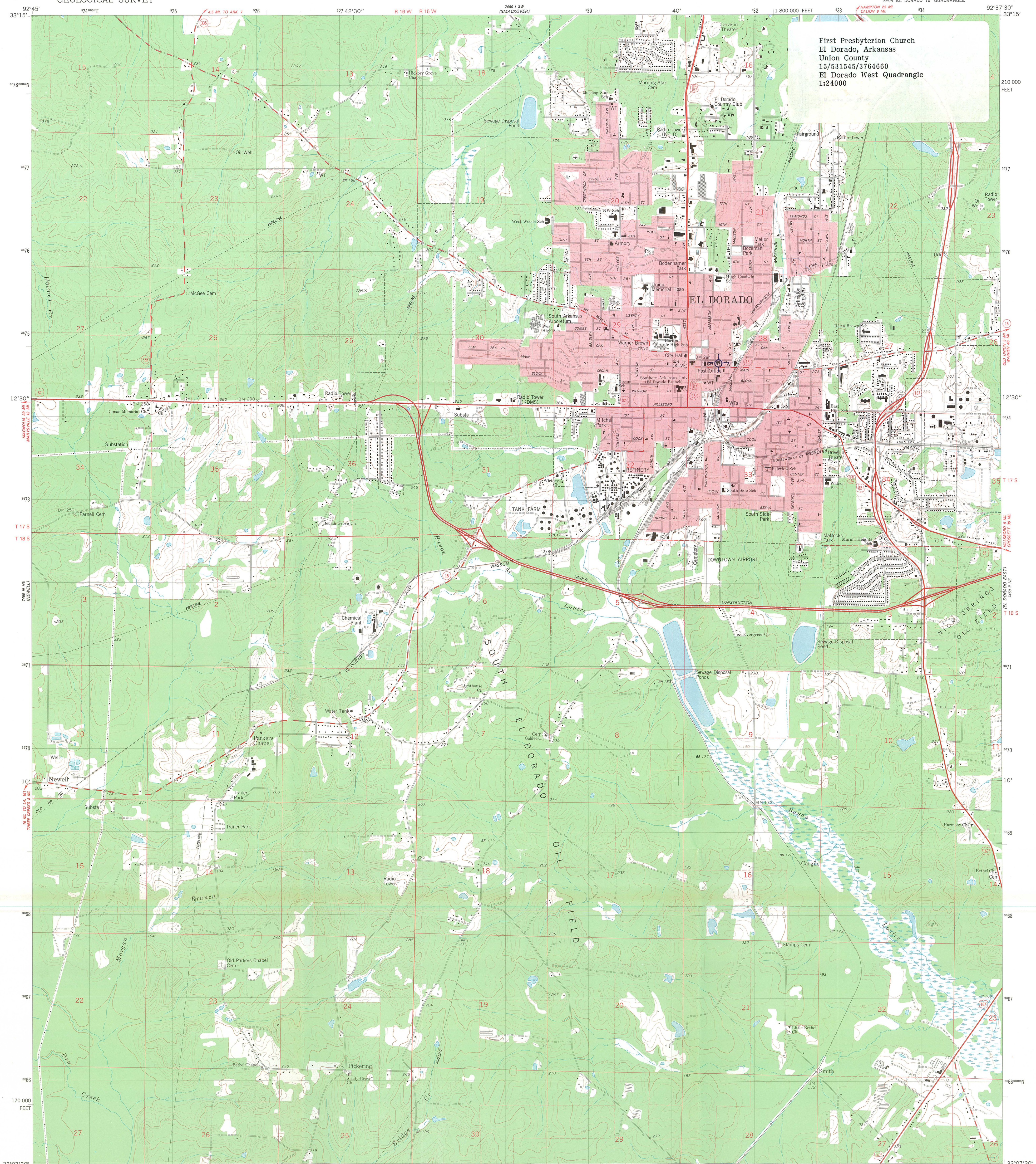
UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
GEOLOGICAL SURVEY

First Presbyterian Church
Union Co. Ark.

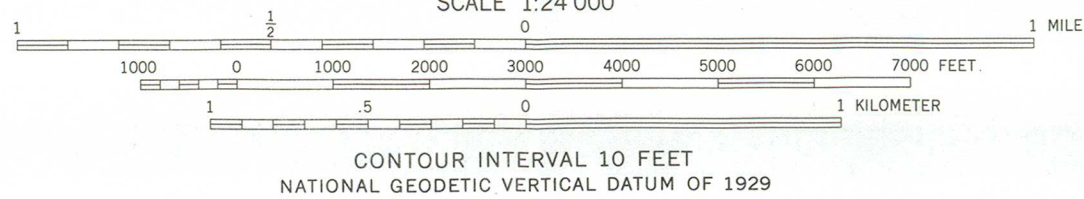
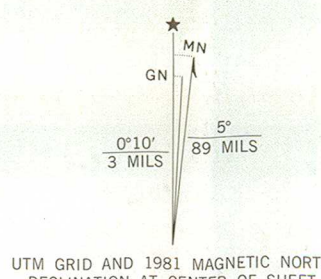
EL DORADO WEST QUADRANGLE
ARKANSAS-UNION CO.
7.5 MINUTE SERIES (TOPOGRAPHIC)
NW 1/4 EL DORADO 15' QUADRANGLE

7.5
MINUTE
SERIES

First Presbyterian Church
El Dorado, Arkansas
Union County
15/531545/3764660
El Dorado West Quadrangle
1:24000



Mapped, edited, and published by the Geological Survey
Control by USGS and NOS/NOAA
Topography by photogrammetric methods from aerial photographs
taken 1976. Field checked 1978. Map edited 1981
Projection and 10,000-foot grid ticks: Arkansas coordinate
system, south zone (Lambert conformal conic)
1000-meter Universal Transverse Mercator grid, zone 15
1927 North American Datum
To place on the predicted North American Datum 1983
move the projection lines 11 meters south and
15 meters east as shown by dashed corner ticks
Red tint indicates areas in which only landmark buildings are shown
Fine red dashed lines indicate selected fence and field lines where
generally visible on aerial photographs. This information is unchecked



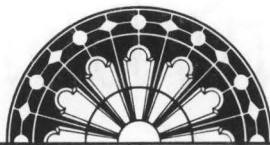
ROAD CLASSIFICATION
Primary highway, hard surface
Secondary highway, hard surface
Light-duty road, hard or improved surface
Unimproved road
Interstate Route
U. S. Route
State Route

EL DORADO WEST, ARK.
NW 1/4 EL DORADO 15' QUADRANGLE
N3307.5-W9237.5/7.5

1981

DMA 7450 II NW-SERIES V884

THIS MAP COMPLIES WITH NATIONAL MAP ACCURACY STANDARDS
FOR SALE BY U. S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, DENVER, COLORADO 80225, OR RESTON, VIRGINIA 22092
AND ARKANSAS GEOLOGICAL COMMISSION, LITTLE ROCK, ARKANSAS 72204
A FOLDER DESCRIBING TOPOGRAPHIC MAPS AND SYMBOLS IS AVAILABLE ON REQUEST



ARKANSAS
HISTORIC
PRESERVATION
PROGRAM

RECEIVED

APR 09 1991

NATIONAL
REGISTER



April 2, 1991

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

RE: First Presbyterian Church
El Dorado - Union County, Arkansas

Dear Carol:

We are enclosing for your review the nomination of the above referenced property. 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,

Cathy Buford
State Historic Preservation Officer

CB:kg

Enclosures

