

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

For NPS use only
received JAN 13 1984
date entered

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

1. Name

historic Wesley United Methodist Church

and/or common Wesley Church

2. Location

street & number 101 East Grant Street

N/A not for publication

city, town Minneapolis

N/A vicinity of

state Minnesota

code 27

county Hennepin

code 053

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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> commercial
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> educational
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	N/A 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
		<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 Wesley United Methodist Church

street & number 101 East Grant Street

city, town Minneapolis

N/A vicinity of

state Minnesota

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Hennepin County Government Center - Registrar of Titles

street & number 300 South Sixth Street

city, town Minneapolis

state Minnesota

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Historical Building Survey has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date for the Minneapolis Model City - 1971 federal state county local

depository for survey records Minneapolis Public Library

city, town Minneapolis

state Minnesota

7. Description

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

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

Wesley United Methodist Church, a massive stone edifice of Richardsonian Romanesque design, is located on the southeast corner of Marquette Avenue and Grant Street in downtown Minneapolis. "Wesley Church," as it is known, is rectangular in plan, measuring 100' by 140' with a square corner tower 120' high. The principle facade is composed of two broad gabled sections recessed between three towers of increasing height and varied plan and profile. The exterior is of pink-red Luverne jasper in alternating wide and narrow courses, with the exception of portions of the rear facades, which are brick of the same hue. Decorative details, including sills, lintels, voussoirs, and belt and parapet courses, are of brownstone. Stone surfaces are rusticated except where decorative details are smoothed, or carved in foliated Byzantine motifs. Windows of geometric and floral-patterned stained glass are round arched at the main entrance and nave, and rectangular elsewhere. Roof shapes are varied, and give the building an active profile. The foundation is of pink granite.

Decorative motifs on the exterior are of two types: they either reflect structure by emphasizing lintels and arches, or recall Byzantine architecture with foliated flourishes at the tops of arches, columns, and towers. Wide belt courses of brownstone above window openings unify the varied planes and profiles of the principle facade, and organize the interplay of arches, towers, and gables. Intricate brownstone friezes highlight the two smaller towers and the projecting entrance hall. Columns and mullions with ornate capitals separate arched openings above the main entrance and on the large tower.

The interior of the church, a unique adaptation of the "Akron plan," contains three noteworthy spaces: the entrance hall, nave, and Sunday School auditorium, now known as Lillibridge Hall. A wall of stained glass separates the entrance hall from the nave. The remainder of the hall is paneled in sienna maple of warm hue and delicate detail, including a deeply coffered ceiling with multiple rows of beaded molding. A single hanging fixture lights the space, which leads by steps to the left and right of the entrance to the back of the nave.

The nave of Wesley Church is one of the great interiors of Minneapolis. Warmed by colored light from surrounding windows and a graceful dome of stained glass, and cradled in a gentle curve of sweeping balcony, the interior of the nave is at once awesome and intimate. Actually nearly square in plan, the curved lines of the balcony and pews, the circular dome overhead, and the diagonal orientation of the altar and main aisle give the impression that the space is more nearly circular. Eight round pilasters divide the wall area, each one supporting three ribs that meet at the outer ring of the central dome, which rises in a gentle cove to a stained-glass skylight of sixteen panels with a carved pendant at its center. Eighteen stained-glass windows, in groups of three, light the walls of the nave. A foliated frieze, like those of the exterior, encircles the nave at the top of the pilasters. The simple altar is centered beneath a rank of organ pipes at the southeast corner of the nave. It is flanked on the left by large paneled doors two stories in height that open into Lillibridge Hall, and on the right by matching stationary paneling. The undulating balcony springs from a bridal staircase to the right of the altar, sweeps around the entire nave, and continues through a paneled doorway into Lillibridge Hall. It is supported in the nave by eight slender columns with foliated capitals and brackets. The pews of the main floor and balcony are curved to follow its line.

Lillibridge Hall was designed for use separately as a meeting hall and Sunday School, or, by opening the large doors mentioned above, as an extension of the nave. The balcony of the nave continues around three sides of the Hall, where thirteen tambour doors could be opened to include the surrounding offices and classrooms. A large rectangular skylight in the center is fitted with stained glass.

(Please see continuation sheet #1.)

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 type="checkbox"/> social/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input 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 1891 **Builder/Architect** Warren Howard Hayes

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

Wesley United Methodist Church was constructed in 1890-91 at the culmination of a decade of church expansion in Minneapolis that produced a number of the city's finest churches. Of seventeen major churches constructed during this period, eight were designed by Warren Howard Hayes, the architect of Wesley Church. Of these eight, Wesley Church is probably the finest, most elaborate, and best preserved example. It was, in its day, the premier Methodist church in the city, and was attended by many notable Minneapolitans. Architecturally, the church is significant for both its interior and exterior designs, as well as a number of mechanical and structural innovations. The nave of Wesley Church, designed along the lines of the "Akron plan," is one of the finest interiors in the city of Minneapolis. The church has been maintained conscientiously, and has survived largely unaltered since its construction. Those changes that have occurred are well documented, and do not seriously diminish the architectural merit of the building.

During the 1880s the city of Minneapolis enjoyed a building boom that saw the construction of hundreds of new commercial, residential, and ecclesiastical buildings. As the growing city spread south and west, downtown churches sought to build in the new residential neighborhoods. The rising value of downtown property often made it possible to finance new construction with the sale of the sites of the overcrowded downtown churches. When the membership of Centenary Methodist Episcopal Church (later Wesley Church) outgrew its building at First Avenue South and Seventh Street, it began to look for a new site farther out. The gift of a new site at Grant Street and Marquette Avenue permitted the group to use all of the funds from the sale of the old church for the construction of the new one. Prominent site and large budget in hand, the members of Wesley Church commissioned the finest ecclesiastical architect in the region to design their new home: Warren Hayes.

Hayes came to Minneapolis from Ohio, where he had worked with Jacob Snyder and Lewis Miller, developers of the "Akron plan" for church design. Hayes's own "diagonal plan," derived from the Akron plan, became very popular in Minneapolis, and across the country. The basic elements of the diagonal plan are demonstrated clearly at Wesley Church: the broad, rectangular nave has a diagonal main aisle leading to a corner pulpit that is easily viewed from all parts of the nave, as well as from the adjoining Sunday School rooms, which radiate from the focus of the pulpit around a central auditorium space. Especially successful at Wesley Church were the two-story dividing doors, which afforded a clear view from both levels of the Sunday School area when open. The most elaborate of Hayes's diagonal-plan churches in Minneapolis, Wesley church is an exceptional example of this major architect's contribution, and an outstanding architectural landmark in its own right.

The quality of its design and the opulence of its construction set Wesley Church apart from other churches of its time. The exterior design demonstrates Hayes's preference during this period for massive, rather than lofty, overall proportions, and represents a clear departure from his earlier church designs. The complex exterior demonstrates his skill at combining a variety of forms in a composition that is both energetic and sedate. The bold use of brownstone belt courses successfully unifies the dissimilar tower, roof, and window shapes that make up the building's exterior. Close inspection reveals a

(Please see continuation sheet #2.)

9. Major Bibliographical References (all unpublished manuscripts)

Jursik, Peter. Warren Howard Hayes: Minneapolis Architect. Minneapolis Public Library, 1980.
 Nelson, Charles W. Historical Building Survey for the Minneapolis Model City. MPL, 1971.
 Torbert, Donald R. A Study of Style Trends in Architecture in a Midwestern City. U of MN, 1951.
 Wangen, Daryl, et al. The Mother Church of Minneapolis Methodism. Wesley U. M. Church, 1982.

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property approx. 0.5

Quadrangle name Minneapolis South

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

UTM References

A	<u>15</u> Zone	<u>478245</u> Easting	<u>4979400</u> Northing	B	<u> </u> Zone	<u> </u> Easting	<u> </u> Northing
C	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	D	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
E	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	F	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
G	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	H	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>

Verbal boundary description and justification

The property includes all of lot 6 and small portions of lots 7 and 8 comprising the northwest corner of block 1 of Penniman's Addition to the city of Minneapolis and measuring approximately 160' by 140'.

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

state	N/A	code	N/A	county	N/A	code	N/A
state	N/A	code	N/A	county	N/A	code	N/A

11. Form Prepared By

name/title	David A. Fey, Research Associate; Robert C. Mack, Partner		
organization	MacDonald and Mack Partnership	date	9/30/82
street & number	215 Grain Exchange Building	telephone	(612) 341-4051
city or town	Minneapolis	state	Minnesota

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

Russell W. Fridley

title

State Historic Preservation Officer

date

1/9/84

For NPS use only

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

[Signature]
Keeper of the National Register

Entered in the
National Register

date

2/9/84

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

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

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Wesley United Methodist Church, Minneapolis, MN; Hennepin County

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Several unique mechanical and structural systems were employed at Wesley Church. In addition to the tambour panels mentioned above, the two-story doors in the nave were operable by cranks that raised the top and lowered the bottom portions out of sight. Large ducts with electric blowers served to heat and cool the church by means of a furnace in winter and an ice room in summer. The structural system that supports the dome includes an innovative laminated construction with steel supports.

The exterior and major interior areas of the building have remained largely unaltered since its construction. Significant changes are limited and well documented. The altar area was rebuilt in the 1940s, replacing the simple circular platform of the original design with a rectangular arrangement of choir pews and pulpits that is in keeping with and does not detract from the original interior. The wooden dome of the large tower was damaged by high winds in 1949, and subsequently removed. The conical portion of the porte-cochaise roof was removed in the 1960s and was replaced recently with a gabled roof. A one-story shed roofed addition of concrete block was recently constructed at the rear of the building to permit wheelchair access. With the exception of minor spalling of some of the brownstone trim, the exterior is in excellent condition, only limited areas of gutter and downspout, brickwork, and roofing having been replaced from time to time. Inside, office and utility areas have been altered by the addition of partitions and suspended ceilings, but no major structural alteration has taken place. Interior finishes in significant areas have been maintained and are currently undergoing additional restoration.

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richness of detail including alternating bands of wide and narrow masonry that diminish in width with the height of the facade, ending in random-range ashlar at the gable ends. Brownstone details, though generally smooth faced, are worked in selected areas with intricate foliations of Byzantine design. The stained glass that fills each of the original windows is of superior quality.

Inside, the entrance hall, nave, and Sunday School area display Hayes's diagonal plan fully developed and finished in a manner that creates an effect of uncommon grandeur and serenity. This is an interior in which specific details are less striking than the ambience that infuses the space. And yet the details are worthy of note. The encircling balcony, slung low over the main floor, and curving gracefully with the contours of the room, produces a cosy, sheltered effect below, and a sweeping, expansive one above. The stained-glass dome, composed of sixteen delicate petals in warm hues of yellow and orange, floats calmly at the center of the nave, surrounded by eighteen large windows of subtly mottled color and delicate design. The woodwork of the pews, altar, and flanking doors is restrained in detail and softly finished. But again, it is the combined effect, and no particular detail, that makes this interior an architectural (rather than a decorative) success.

A number of mechanical and structural innovations are also of note. In order to facilitate the use of the nave and Sunday School area for a variety of functions, Hayes designed a variety of sliding and rolling doors operated by cranks and counterweights. The massive two-story doors of the nave split at the center and slide into the ceiling above and floor below. The tambour panels at the balcony level of the Sunday School area roll into the ceiling. The ventilation system was similarly inventive, including an ice room and a system of ducts and blowers to cool the church in summer. The compression ring at the base of the large central dome is the building's most innovative structural detail. Composed of fifteen layers of half-inch boards, it is an unusual and early application of lamination.

Wesley Church has survived largely unaltered since its completion nearly a century ago. Exterior changes are few, well documented, and reversible, and although the original plans have been lost, sufficient photographic documentation exists to permit the faithful restoration of the exterior areas that have changed. Inside, the entrance hall is virtually intact, and has been restored recently. The altar area redone in the 1940s blends in design and finish with the original woodwork, and does not significantly alter the mood or appearance of the interior. The rooms around Lillibridge Hall, on the other hand, have been altered. Lowered ceilings, new floor coverings, and intermediate partitions in certain offices and classrooms alter the appearance and function of these spaces, but are reversible, and haven't harmed the fabric of the building.

Wesley Church continues to be used as a house of worship and community center for a variety of both church- and non-church-related activities. In addition to weekly services, the church presently houses a number of educational programs and a co-operative grocery store.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

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**Note: These changes apply to
Wesley United Methodist Church in
Hennepin County, Minnesota.**

REFERENCE NUMBER: 84001469

STATE: MINNESOTA

COUNTY: Hennepin

RESOURCE NAME (HISTORIC): Wesley Methodist Episcopal Church

CITY:

VICINITY OF:

ADDRESS:

CERTIFICATION DATE:

REMOVED DATE:

COMMENTS:

Nina M. Archabal

Nina M. Archabal
State Historic Preservation Officer

JUN 17 1988

Date