

**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

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

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

1. Name

historic Springfield Baptist Church

and/or common Same

2. Location

street & number 112 Twelfth Street, rear N/A not for publication

city, town Augusta N/A vicinity of congressional district 10th - D. Barnard

state Georgia code 013 county Richmond code 245

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

4. Owner of Property

name E.T. Martin, pastor; Springfield Baptist Church

street & number 112 Twelfth Street

city, town Augusta N/A vicinity of state Georgia

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Augusta-Richmond County Municipal Building

street & number 564 Greene Street

city, town Augusta state Georgia

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Historic Augusta Survey has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date 1977 federal state county local

depository for survey records Historic Augusta, Inc.

city, town Augusta state Georgia

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input type="checkbox"/> original site
<input type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> moved
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		date <u>1844, 1910</u>

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

Current Description of Building

The Springfield Baptist Church is a two-story-high, rectangular-shaped, gable-roofed building. It is constructed with a heavy timber frame resting on brick piers. The spaces between these piers have been filled in with concrete block. Exterior walls are sheathed with tapered weatherboards covered by asbestos shingles. The roof is surfaced with sheet metal. The north (Reynolds Street) end of the church features two horizontally paneled doors at the first-floor level, two round-arched windows at the second-floor level, and a smaller round-arched attic window in the gable; the south end of the church features a rectangular apse and a side doorway at the first-floor level and two double-hung sash windows at the second-floor level. East and west sides of the church feature first- and second-floor ranges of seven double-hung sash windows, several of which have been blinded. Cornices are boxed and have narrow returns on the gable ends.

The interior of the church consists of a shallow vestibule on the north (Reynolds Street) end, a long, narrow auditorium with balconies along two sides and across the vestibule end, and a one-story apse at the south end. Winder stairs, arranged around central wooden posts, are located on either side of the vestibule in the front corners of the building; these stairs provide access to the balconies. Sturdy wood posts support the side balconies at each floor level; these posts are simply detailed with chamfered corners and a lamb's-tongue motif. The end balcony, which is curved and projects out over the auditorium below, appears to be self-supporting. The fronts of the side balconies are paneled; the curved end balcony sports an elaborate railing of turned balusters. Interior walls are plastered over hand-split lath and carry a low wainscoting of two or three hand-planed, horizontally laid boards with beaded edges. The south (rear) wall carries a semi-circular molding above and around the apse. The original plaster ceiling has been replaced by sheetrock. Pine plank floors are found throughout the church. A contemporary suspended ceiling separates the auditorium and balcony-floor levels, and contemporary paneled and sheet-rocked partitions subdivide the space under the balconies into offices, meeting rooms, and activity centers.

Historical Description of the Building

The church, built in 1801, was originally only five bays long. The ceiling was boarded rather than plastered, and the end balcony featured only a simple balustrade. Rectangular boxed stairs, rather than the winders, provided access to the balcony. The plastered walls with boarded wainscoting and most of the balcony columns date from this period. In the early 1820s, the church was enlarged by adding two bays to the front. The side balconies were simply extended, and a new end balcony was built. A new vestibule and

[continued]

**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

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

For HCERS use only

received

date entered

Continuation sheet

Description

Item number 7

Page 2

the winder stairs were constructed in the new front end of the church. Sash and exterior blinds were installed. A two-story, square-sectioned tower was erected on the front gable end of the church, and the one-story apse was added to the rear. At about the middle of the nineteenth century, the church was cosmetically remodeled. New early-Victorian doors and doorways were installed, the semi-circular enframing around the apse was built, and the curved, cantilevered end balcony with turned balustrade was constructed. The front tower was extended by adding a belfry and spire. At this time, or later in the nineteenth century, the exterior was resheathed with tapered weatherboards. Early in the twentieth century, the bell tower was removed (apparently for structural reasons). Some time later, asbestos shingles were applied over the nineteenth-century weatherboards, and the roof was replaced with metal sheathing. More recently, a suspended ceiling was installed to separate the two floors of the building, and the space under the balconies was subdivided with sheet-rocked or paneled partitions. The foundation has been strengthened by filling in the spaces between the brick piers with concrete block.

Locational Description of Building

When built in 1801 by Augusta's first Methodist Society, the church was located at 734 Greene Street, about a half-mile southwest of its present location. In 1844, the Methodist congregation built a new brick church on Greene Street; the old wooden church was then sold to the Springfield Baptist Church and moved to its present lot at the corner of Twelfth and Reynolds streets, where it fronted on Twelfth Street. In 1910, when the Springfield Baptist Church built a new brick church on this location, the old wooden church was moved to the rear of the property and realigned to face Reynolds Street. This is the current situation of the building.

Property Description and Boundary

The nominated property consists of approximately the rear one-third of the lot at 112 Twelfth Street. The dimensions of the nominated property are approximately fifty-five feet by 145 feet. This property contains the historic wooden church building and its frontage on Reynolds Street. It does not contain the 1910 brick church building to the west. In the absence of intact historic boundaries, these boundaries simply circumscribe the historic structure at its current location. Immediately west is the early-twentieth-century brick church of the Springfield Baptist congregation. Further west and to the north, east, and south, is a mix of residential and commercial development, mostly of a contemporary nature.

[continued]

**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

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

For HCRS use only
received
date entered

Continuation sheet Description

Item number 7

Page 3

Photographs

The Historic Preservation Section has determined that the photographs taken in August, 1980 still provide an accurate view of the property. No significant changes have been made since this date.

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/ humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700–1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800–1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
<input 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 1801, 1844 **Builder/Architect** Unknown

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Springfield Baptist Church is significant in terms of the architectural, religious, and social/humanitarian history of Augusta and Georgia. Built in 1801 (although subsequently remodeled and moved), it is the oldest extant church building in Augusta and one of the oldest in the state. Originally built to house Augusta's first Methodist Society, since 1844 it has been the home of the Springfield Baptist Church, one of the oldest black congregations in the country.

Architecturally, the Springfield Baptist Church is a relatively rare example of the late-eighteenth/early-nineteenth-century non-liturgical or "New England meetinghouse" type of church in Georgia. It is similar in many respects to the well-known Midway Congregational Church (1792) in Liberty County, south of Savannah (listed on the National Register as part of the Midway Historic District in 1973). With regard to its design, materials, construction techniques, and craftsmanship, the church represents principles and practices of early-nineteenth-century American religious architecture. Its simple overall design and sparse detailing reflect a self-conscious denial of ornate Anglican-inspired church architecture characteristic of early-nineteenth-century Methodist (and Congregationalist) doctrine. Its basic assembly-hall plan, with balconies, was likewise a direct response to non-liturgical church services. Its heavy timber frame, hand-planed wainscoting boards, and plastered walls with hand-split lath represent early-nineteenth-century building materials and methods; the balustraded balcony, doorways, other moldings and the vestibule with its winding stairs, on the other hand, represent a more mid-nineteenth-century approach to architecture. The only major structural loss to the building is the early-nineteenth-century front tower; its appearance, in its original form and as extended later in the nineteenth century, is documented in several historic views of the church. Although the overall appearance of the church is currently compromised somewhat by the exterior sheathing and the partitions and lowered ceilings on the interior, these twentieth-century alterations are insubstantial in nature or are removable, and they do not seriously compromise the design or structural integrity of the church.

In terms of religion, the Springfield Baptist Church has a dual historical significance. It was originally a Methodist church, built in 1801 by Augusta's first Methodist Society during the period of pronounced dissatisfaction with the Anglican-derived church in Georgia. Stith Mead, a radical

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9. Major Bibliographical References

UIM NOT VERIFIED

ACREAGE NOT VERIFIED

See continuation sheet.

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property 0.2 acre

Quadrangle name Augusta East, S.C.,-Ga.

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

UMT References

A

1	7	4	0	9	7	1	0	3	7	0	4	5	8	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

Boundary is described by a heavy black line on the attached "property/sketch" map and is justified in Section 7 of this form.

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 Richard Cloues, Architectural Historian
Historic Preservation Section

organization Georgia Department of Natural Resources date December 9, 1980

street & number 270 Washington Street, S.W. telephone (404) 656-2840

city or town Atlanta state Georgia

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 Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature Elizabeth A. Lyon
Elizabeth A. Lyon

title State Historic Preservation Officer date 4/21/82

For HCRS use only	
I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register	
<u>for</u> <u>Elizabeth Lyons</u> Keeper of the National Register	Entered in the National Register date <u>6/17/82</u>
Attest:	date
Chief of Registration	

**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

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

For HCRS use only

received

date entered

Continuation sheet

Significance

Item number 8

Page 2

non-liturgicalist who had been denied preaching privileges in Augusta's St. Paul's Anglican Church in 1798, spearheaded the formation of a pious Methodist Society and the construction of this church. In 1803 and 1804, Bishops Asbury and Coke visited Augusta as part of a Methodist effort to organize in the South, and their presence helped stabilize the new congregation. Two decades later, the church, now successful, expanded its building commensurate with its local religious role. Two decades after that, the congregation outgrew this facility entirely and built a new brick church.

In 1844, when the Methodists outgrew their original building, they sold it to the Springfield Baptist Church, which moved it to its current location in what was then the predominantly black section of Augusta. The Springfield Baptist Church is one of the oldest independent black congregations in the United States; at the time it acquired this building, it was already more than fifty years old. This congregation, which became independent under the Springfield Baptist Church name in 1787, traces its origins to the 1750 Silver Bluff Baptist Church in South Carolina. In Augusta, the Springfield Baptist Church has always been an independent congregation, although in 1829 it was associated temporarily with the white First Baptist Church after a period of racial unrest involving the burning of black churches. Throughout the nineteenth century, the Springfield Baptist Church played an important role in Augusta's religious history, spanning the change in mid-century from black slavery to free citizenship. In 1910, the congregation outgrew its wood-framed building and moved it to the rear of the lot to make way for a new brick structure. Since then, the old wooden church has served as an auxiliary building housing offices, meeting rooms, and activity centers.

In terms of the social/humanitarian history of Augusta and Georgia, the Springfield Baptist Church has served as a principal black cultural institution for nearly 200 years, a remarkable record considering that Georgia was founded less than 250 years ago. For almost three-quarters of this time, the Springfield Baptist Church has been associated with this church building. The historic role of black churches as major social and cultural institutions is well known, as is the role of the black church building as an important community landmark. The Springfield Baptist Church is no exception. In addition to serving local black religious, social, and cultural needs, the church helped bridge the transition between slavery and free citizenship in Augusta and stood as a focus of black community life. The church also helped establish other important black institutions in the nineteenth century; these include several churches in and around Augusta, Cedar Grove Cemetery in Augusta, the Georgia Equal Rights Association, and Morehouse College (originally the Augusta Baptist Institute).

The fact that the Springfield Baptist Church was moved in 1844 does not diminish its architectural or historical significance. In fact, the move

[continued]

**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

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

For HCRS use only
received
date entered

Continuation sheet

Significance

Item number 8

Page 3

documents a key moment in the history of the church. Furthermore, this kind of property transaction is common in Georgia's religious and racial history and accounts for the acquisition and relocation of numerous originally white churches by black congregations. This particular instance seems to have been a relatively early and possibly precedent-setting example.

Preservation interest in the historic Springfield Baptist Church is high. The congregation and the local preservation organization are working together to preserve the building. Documentation and evaluation of the church constituted the first major effort by Historic Augusta, Inc., to involve itself in the minority history of the city (this involvement has recently expanded through a Secretary of Interior's Discretionary Grant for the Laney-Walker neighborhood). On behalf of the congregation, Historic Augusta applied for and received a matching consulting grant from the National Trust for Historic Preservation; a preservation plan and adaptive-use study of the building has been completed recently. This nomination will confirm the architectural and historical significance of the church and enhance its preservation potential.

United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

For HCERS use only

received

date entered

Continuation sheet Bibliography

Item number 9

Page 2

Askins, Norman D. Research Study: Springfield Baptist Church, Augusta, Georgia, April, 1980. (Report of consulting grant awarded by the National Trust for Historic Preservation.)

Cashin, Edward J. An Informal History of Augusta, Richmond County Board of Education, 1978.

Clarke, Potts, et al. (eds.). The Journal and Letters of Frances Asbury, Vol. II.

Historic Augusta, Inc. Draft of National Register Nomination Form, October, 1979.

St. John's Methodist Church. A Chronicle of Christian Stewardship. Augusta, 1948.

Springfield Baptist Church. Minutes.

Waring, Nellie C. History Book of Springfield Baptist Church. Augusta, 1979.

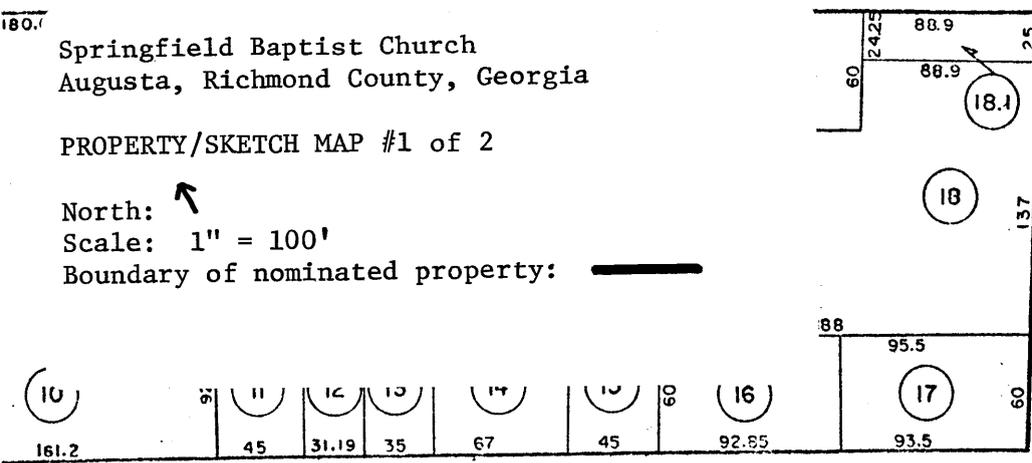
Springfield Baptist Church
Augusta, Richmond County, Georgia

PROPERTY/SKETCH MAP #1 of 2

North: ↑

Scale: 1" = 100'

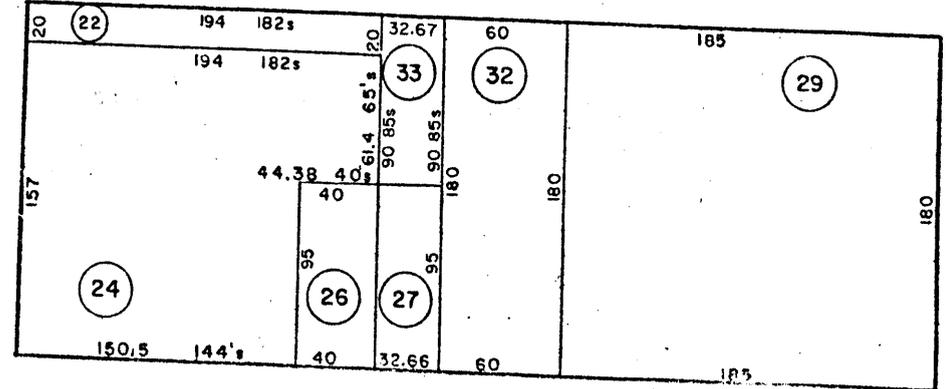
Boundary of nominated property: **—**



ST.

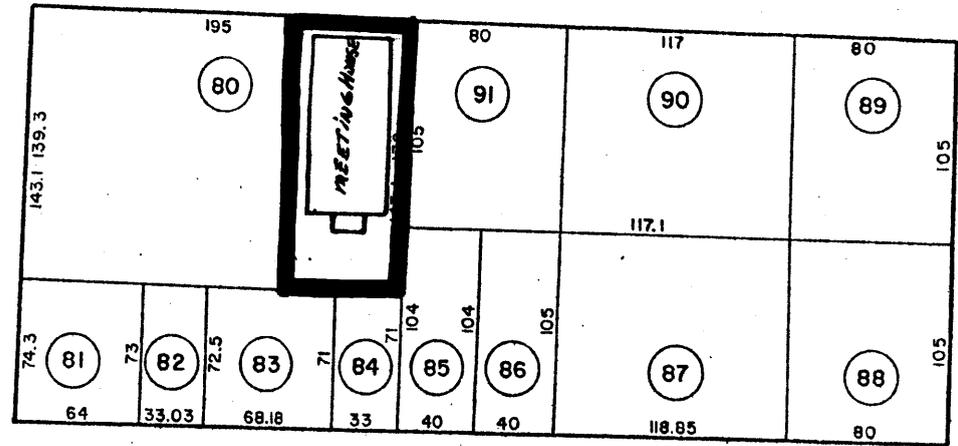
TATNALL

↑ North ST.



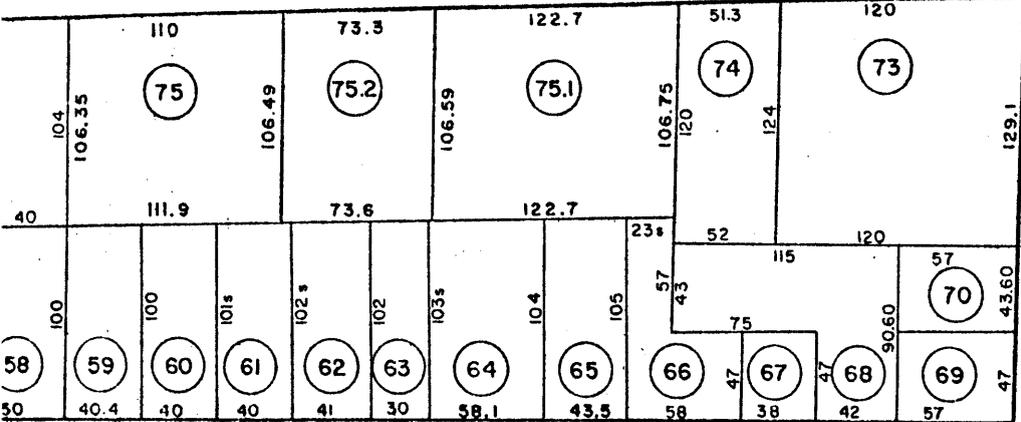
REYNOLDS

ST.



12TH

ST.



(MARBURY)

