

MULTIPLE RESOURCES OF GREENVILLE

BUTLER COUNTY, ALABAMA

Historic name: First Presbyterian Church Owner: First Presbyterian Church
Common name: First Presbyterian Church 215 E. Commerce St.
Address: 215 E. Commerce St. Greenville, AL 36037
Acreage: less than one acre UTM: 16/535/810-3521/470
Verbal Boundary: Lot 14, Block 53, 105' x 215'
Architectural Design: Romanesque Revival
Date of Construction: 1886
Architect, Builder: Unknown

Statement of Significance:Criterion C - Architecture:

The First Presbyterian Church (1886), one of Greenville's oldest church buildings, is one of the city's rare examples of Romanesque Revival influenced architecture. Only one other example of this style exists in the city (see Methodist Church South Greenville District inventory #34). Features typical of the Romanesque Revival style exhibited by the church are the monochromatic brickwork, semicircular arched windows, a square side bell tower divided horizontally by corbeled brick belt coursing and a very steep pitched gable roof with exposed timber eaves.

Description:

The First Presbyterian Church is a T-shaped, one story brick structure with a very steep pitched gable roof over the original main block and a similarly steep pitched cross gable over a rear (1945) addition which runs perpendicular to the main block. A square bell tower flanks the right side of the gabled end facade. The tower is divided horizontally by corbeled brick belt coursing and has, in addition to the main church entry in its base, a number of round arched windows and louvered vents in its upper sections. The top section of the tower is decorated with corbeled pilasters and capped with a pyramidal roof.

The center of the facade has a tripartite round arched stained glass window. Above each section of this window is an elaborate corbeled arched hood each of which is topped with a small corbeled pediment. To the left of the main facade is another entry. The steep gable roof has exposed timbers in the eaves adding yet another decorative feature to the facade.

The rear addition was sensitively designed to blend with the original Romanesque Revival treatment. Like its earlier counterpart, the addition has exposed timber eaves and stained glass windows with corbeled brick, round arches above.

Historical Summary:

The congregation of the First Presbyterian Church of Greenville was organized in June 1825 and is considered the oldest continual meeting congregation in the city. The first church building was located on the site now occupied by the present church building and was on a lot donated by William Kirkpatrick in 1825. This building served the congregation until the 1880's when it was proposed that the old building should be replaced. Before the building could be removed it was destroyed by fire on October 16, 1883. The present church building was erected on the site during 1885 and 1886 with the new building being officially dedicated on October 20, 1886. The church bell which had been purchased in 1869 and was the only surviving item from the original church, was placed in the tower of the present church where it remains today. The present church building has remained basically unchanged except for the addition of a Sunday School building to the rear in 1945 and a renovation to the interior of the sanctuary in 1969 during which the ceiling was raised and the original pulpit replaced.