

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

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

For NPS use only  
received **NOV 7 1983**  
date entered

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

**1. Name**

historic ~~THE~~ MORMON CHURCH

and/or common

**2. Location**

street & number 126 North Marina St. N/A not for publication

city, town Prescott N/A vicinity of

state Arizona code 04 county Yavapai code 025

**3. Classification**

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" 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	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	N/A in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government	<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other: Vacant

**4. Owner of Property**

name Edwin W. Balder

street & number 4455 East Camelback Road, Building A, Suite 211

city, town Phoenix N/A vicinity of state Arizona 85018

**5. Location of Legal Description**

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Yavapai County Records Office

street & number 225 East Gurley

city, town Prescott state Arizona

**6. Representation in Existing Surveys**

title Prescott Cultural Resources Survey, Yavapai Heritage Foundation Survey Map #291  
has this property been determined eligible?  yes  no

date 1974-1983  federal  state  county  local

depository for survey records Sharlot Hall Museum Archives

city, town Prescott state Arizona

## 7. Description

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

### Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

#### SUMMARY/CONTEXT:

The Mormon Church\* in Prescott, Arizona, completed in 1928, is an excellent local example of construction using rusticated, native blue granite. The building faces east on North Marina Street and is flanked on the east and south by a Prescott Preservation District. The Hassayampa Hotel, located approximately 200 feet south, is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The building maintains its original exterior appearance, including some landscaping which was introduced to the site on completion of construction.

The town of Prescott was the first territorial capital of Arizona and has always been the seat of Yavapai County. Established under President Abraham Lincoln in 1863 to secure the mineral riches thought to be in the area for the Union forces, the community has retained its eastern and middle-western appearance with a neo-Classical 1916 Courthouse surrounded by a park in the central square and frame and brick residential and commercial buildings in the surrounding grid-patterned streets.

#### ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION:

##### General:

The Mormon Church in Prescott is a modest masonry structure of two stories in height over a partial basement. It is a hand-wrought manifestation of the controlled formality which influenced the town's architecture following the exuberance of the Victorian era and has a neo-Colonial appearance.

Intersecting gable roofs shelter a symmetrical T-shaped plan with the long axis in the east-west direction. Two entries on the main floor flank each side of the building's long axis. The structure faces east on North Marina Street while the site slopes west, allowing access into a finished basement from an entry on the west side.

##### Exterior:

The exterior walls are double; the inner wall being load-bearing, reinforced concrete, and the outer being massive, high quality locally quarried blue granite. The same quarry supplied the stone for the Chino Valley Mormon Church and the Yavapai County Courthouse (NR). The construction technique indicates that the stone was laid up first and became a form for the poured-in-place concrete. The stone was laid up with extra wide mortar joints. A narrow tooled bead affects the illusion of a thin joint. Exterior wall surfaces below the main floor level are rendered in portland cement stucco over massive cast concrete stem walls.

Window openings feature heavy masonry lintels and sills. The units above door entries are staggered to create a stepped arch. Noteworthy details associated with the roof include fish-scale asbestos roofing tiles fastened to metal clips nailed to solid sheathing, cast concrete boxed eaves, and simulated clay tile trim at the rake and ridge. The simulated clay tile may also be an asbestos product.

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Lead flashing is provided at valleys and chimney flues. Field built scissor trusses are used throughout the entire structure.

Foundations are massive, poured-in-place concrete, structurally sound, and more than adequate to support the vertical loads. The ground floor is slab on grade. The main floor is supported by 2-1/8" x 11" (net) wood joists with variable spacing at 12", 16", and 24" on center. Maple strip flooring is laid over 1" x 8" diagonal. To accommodate viewing, the sanctuary floor was designed with a 3% slope from west to east.

Windows are double hung with twelve lights over twelve lights on the main floor. Window lights are translucent, clear frosted glass. On the basement floor the windows are six lights over six lights double hung and the same glass is used.

Interior:

The main floor interior plan revolves around two major spaces: the Chapel and the Cultural Hall. Small ancillary rooms provide support functions for these two areas. A pair of interior stairs descend from the main entry foyer to the ground floor. The ground floor plan is asymmetric. Much of this level may have originally been unexcavated and expanded from time to time to meet the needs of a growing congregation.

Maple strip flooring was used throughout all the major spaces. High plaster ceilings over metal lath are rendered over the bottom chords of the trusses. In the Cultural Hall the ceiling is coved and walls and ceiling are plastered. The composition of the plaster varies indicating a break in the sequence of the work. Heavy "Spanish Lace" wall and ceiling texture has been applied throughout this space.

The seating in the Chapel is made of polished hardwood with a bronze frame. Moveable sliding wood panels separate the Chapel from the entry foyers and the Cultural Hall.

INTEGRITY:

The Mormon Church in 1983 appears to the neighborhood as it did when it first opened its doors in 1928, except for some minor changes at exterior openings. This includes replacement of the entrance doors. The existing door frames are original, although infested by termites. Also, at the rear of the building in the lower northwest corner, a coal chute into the furnace room has been converted into a passage door, and a window opening into this space has been in-filled with concrete block.

After the building changed hands in 1959, various modifications were introduced. Ceilings were "dropped" in the Chapel and adjoining foyers; "T" bar construction holds panels of acoustic tile and fluorescent lights. A few windows and several walls have been covered with "photo-finished" 4'x8' wood paneling. The maple strip flooring is in excellent condition, although carpet and linoleum floor coverings have been added to several areas. Many of the original wood paneled

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doors in the building are extant, but door replacements that occurred did not match with original work, most being flush, hollow-core units. A proscenium stage in the Cultural Hall has been modified to enclose its opening. Space backstage has been partitioned for a kitchen and nursery.

The changes introduced to this building are all easily reversible and do not affect the integrity and spirit of purpose for which the church was originally constructed.

\* This structure, herein called "The Mormon Church", is in reality a Mormon ward chapel, a multiple use structure serving worship, educational, and recreational needs of Mormons (members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints) in a ward (a geographical division usually consisting of several hundred church members). Although normally called a "chapel", we have retained the use of the term "Mormon Church" because Mormons in Prescott refer to it thusly.

## 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 checked="" 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** 1927-1928 **Builder/Architect** Joseph Scott

### Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

#### SUMMARY:

The Mormon Church, the only structure of its kind in the City of Prescott, Arizona, is architecturally significant as an outstanding local example of dressed blue granite masonry and historically significant for its association with the spread of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints in northern Arizona.

#### ARCHITECTURAL CONTEXT/SIGNIFICANCE:

The 1928 Mormon Church is significant primarily as an outstanding local example of dressed blue granite ashlar masonry. No other structure in the City of Prescott compares in masonry application. The granite is part of a double-wall system. The inner wall is load bearing, poured-in-place concrete supporting floors and interior loads. The outer wall is massive granite masonry which contributes to the support of the roof system.

The stone masons finished the granite with a pitch-face, and care was taken that no tool marks show on the finished stone. Great effort was employed in laying up the stone. Joints and beds were carefully laid for accurate fitting into the walls, although made difficult by the massiveness of the masonry units. The general appearance of the finished product is one of great strength, durability, and permanence.

An uncommon feature, a cast-concrete crown mold at the eave, embellishes the blue granite. The crown mold, poured in long portions, resembles carved stone work.

There are only two other examples in Prescott of buildings with exterior walls fully featured in blue granite. One is the 1916 Yavapai County Courthouse, the other is the Lone Star Baptist Church built in 1924. Both buildings exhibit a different masonry technique from the Mormon Church. They are veneer construction and the material is non-load bearing. The Courthouse is smooth faced with brushed hammered work. The Lone Star Church has rubble coursing with poorly rendered mortar joints.

#### HISTORIC CONTEXT/SIGNIFICANCE:

The Mormon settlement of Arizona Territory began in 1870 with the establishment of a community at Pipe Springs, north of the Grand Canyon. During the next two decades colonization efforts were concentrated in the drainage of the Little Colorado River; along the Gila River east of the confluence with the San Pedro; on the San Pedro midway between the Gila and the Mexican border; and along the Salt River north of the confluence with the Gila. This period of immigration not only spread Mormon social and religious institutions, but also resulted in the founding of many communities which are still in existence.

(Continued)

# 9. Major Bibliographical References

See Continuation Sheet, Item Number 9

# 10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property Less/Acre

Quadrangle name Prescott

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

UTM References

A 

1	2	3	6	5	4	0	0	3	8	2	3	1	5	8
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

City of Prescott, Block 9, S. 2'6" of Lot 9, Lot 11, and the north 10'8" of Lot 13

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 William Otwell in association with Consultants Elizabeth F. Ruffner and Billy G. Garrett

organization WILLIAM OTWELL & ASSOCIATES

date July 5, 1983

street & number 125 East Gurley

telephone 602/445-4951

city or town Prescott

state Arizona 86301

# 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 Anna J. Schuber

title State Historic Preservation Officer date October 31, 1983

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

date

Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

Cur Duke

date

12/22/83

Chief of Registration

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Diffusion of Mormon influence into North-Central Arizona began in earnest during the first decade of the twentieth century and was generally characterized by the relocation of small groups of families into already established agricultural areas or towns. Chino Valley, north of Prescott, was composed of scattered ranches and not identified as a town until the arrival of the Bates family in 1915, followed by a few other families in 1916 and 1917. The Chino Valley LDS Branch was organized in 1918.

The first Mormon family known to have moved into Prescott was that of Leola and Thomas Harris, who arrived in 1916. They were joined shortly thereafter by a few other families. Until the Prescott Church was built, these families belonged to the Chino Valley Branch and made the 15 mile trip over terrible roads to attend services and other activities.

By the mid-1920s conditions were judged suitable for the establishment of a separate ward in Prescott. On September 13, 1925, an organizational meeting was held in the Knights of Pythias Hall and the new ward of 45 members was duly constituted. Authorization came from Salt Lake headquarters in October, 1926 with construction beginning in April, 1927. Most of the labor was contributed by the members. The total value of the finished building was \$27,545.78, of which \$10,000.00 was donated. Dedication services were held on October 20, 1928.

Joseph Scott, member of the Prescott Branch of the California Mission of the LDS Church, was in full charge of the work of the building the new church in Prescott in 1927, 1928. He was the architect and also worked at all the other trades such as carpenter, plasterer, plumber, electrician, and painter.

Oscar Despain, another member of the Prescott Branch, with his sons, supervised the cutting of the granite in various quarries. The work of this master mason is evident in a block incised with his name at the Taylor Cabin in Sycamore Canyon, fifty miles to the north of Prescott, and in the earlier Mormon Church, also built of local granite, eleven miles to the north of Prescott in Chino Valley.

Up to the time the Prescott Branch was established, the pre-eminent religious groups in the community had been Catholic, Episcopal, Congregational, Methodist, and Baptist. Yet the Latter Day Saints found a receptive population for their missionary efforts and the congregation grew quickly. This compatibility may have been due to changes in demographics in Prescott over the years, but it was certainly encouraged by a traditional local value system which held hard work and family ties in high esteem. Thus, the major social contribution of the Mormon Church in Prescott has been to foster responsible individual behavior, to facilitate close family relationships, and to create a sense of group identity for part of the larger community.

Prescott, established more than sixty years earlier, was founded by federal action under President Abraham Lincoln to secure the mineral wealth thought to

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be in this part of the territory. The lack of an individual religious persuasion in the ecumenical group of appointed officials required to set up the government of the Territory of Arizona, and the military sent along to protect miner and official alike, offered to the Mormon colonists the same acceptance an unsettled area might have provided.

Contemplating expansion of the facilities to house the growing congregation of Mormon families, the property was sold in 1959 to another religious denomination which recently vacated the building and moved to another location, also to meet the needs for a larger facility. The intentions are now to use the building for commercial office space.

The Mormon Church in Prescott also illustrates the restrained, conservative use of architectural details typical of earlier Mormon Churches in the east. The vernacular, utilitarian appearance reflects the meetinghouses of earlier nineteenth century New England, where the Mormon religion was first established, and represents a design institutionalized by the LDS church nationwide by about 1915. The presence of a building of this style in Prescott provides architectural evidence of the eastern origins of the Mormon religion, as well as the architectural migration of characteristic building types. Like other Mormon ward chapels, the Prescott building is of masonry construction, is devoid of religious iconography, and displays attributes of vernacular Greek Revival architecture through the interrupted pediments and heavy cornices.<sup>1</sup>

The building also emphasizes horizontal space utilization and enclosure of multiple activities under one roof. It was built at the end of a critical period in Mormon chapel design (1915-1930) when the LDS Church architect's office in Salt Lake City assumed the role of designer for virtually all ward chapels and their style became standardized; local initiative and expertise in design decisions were de-emphasized or overridden; and vernacular influences and local materials became the exception rather than the rule. This structure appears to incorporate elements of standard Mormon chapel design with local modifications (e.g., window detailing), all executed using a regionally distinctive building material.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Francaviglia, Richard V., The Mormon Landscape: Existence, Creation, and Perception of a Unique Image in the American West.



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REFERENCES:

Richards, Leonard H., The First 60 Years of Mormonism in North Central Arizona 1918 - 1978, published in 1982, Prescott, Arizona.

Interviews with various individuals and families of the LDS Church.

Interview with Franklyn E. Brown, son of quarry owner.

Prescott Journal Miner, 1927.

"Eighty Years with Christ", booklet published by First Baptist Church, Prescott.

Sharlot Hall Museum files.

Yavapai Magazine, 1917, 1918, 1922, 1923.

Hassayampa Townscape Conservation Overlay District Nomination.

Interview, inspection visit with National Park Service Historical Architect David W. Look and Arizona State Historic Preservation Office Historical Architect Andrea Urbas.

Yavapai Heritage Foundation Cultural Resource Survey files.

Yavapai County Courthouse -- National Register of Historic Places Nomination -- 1976, Marjorie H. Wilson, Historian, Arizona State Parks Historic Preservation Office.

Francaviglia, Richard V., The Mormon Landscape: Existence, Creation, and Perception of a Unique Image in the American West, New York, AMS Press, 1978.