

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service



NATIONAL  
REGISTER

National Register of Historic Places  
Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Simpsonville Baptist Church

other names/site number First Baptist Church of Simpsonville

2. Location

street & number 106 Church Street  not for publication

city or town Simpsonville  vicinity

state South Carolina code SC county Greenville code 045 zip code 29681

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, 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. I recommend that this property be considered significant  nationally  statewide  locally. ( See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Mary W. Edmonds 8/18/92  
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

Mary W. Edmonds, Deputy SHPO, S.C. Department of Archives & History, Columbia, SC  
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria. ( See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> entered in the National Register. <input type="checkbox"/> See continuation sheet.	for Signature of the Keeper	Date of Action
<input type="checkbox"/> determined eligible for the National Register <input type="checkbox"/> See continuation sheet.	<u>Mary W. Edmonds</u>	<u>10/13/92</u>
<input type="checkbox"/> determined not eligible for the National Register.	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> removed from the National Register.	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> other, (explain:)	_____	_____

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

Category of Property

(Check only one box)

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1		buildings
		sites
		structures
		objects
1		Total

Name of related multiple property listing

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

N/A

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

RELIGION/religious facility

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

RELIGION/religious facility

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

Romanesque Revival

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Brick

walls Brick

roof Asbestos

other

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

**8. Statement of Significance**

**Applicable National Register Criteria**

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

**Criteria Considerations**

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B** removed from its original location.
- C** a birthplace or grave.
- D** a cemetery.
- E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F** a commemorative property.
- G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

**Narrative Statement of Significance**

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

**9. Major Bibliographical References**

**Bibliography**

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

**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 # \_\_\_\_\_

**Areas of Significance**

(Enter categories from instructions)

Architecture

**Period of Significance**

1913-1914

**Significant Dates**

1913-1914

**Significant Person**

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

**Cultural Affiliation**

N/A

**Architect/Builder**

Proffit, Luther D.

Gibson, E.J.

**Primary location of additional data:**

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository:

SC Department of Archives & History,  
Columbia, SC

Simpsonville Baptist Church  
Name of Property

Greenville, South Carolina  
County and State

## 10. Geographical Data

**Acreage of Property** Less than one acre

### UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1 

1	7
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3	8	5	3	2	0
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3	8	4	4	6	4	0
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Zone

Easting

Northing

2 

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3 

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Zone

Easting

Northing

4 

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See continuation sheet

### Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

### Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

## 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Edward B. Tolson, Staff Arch. Hist./A.W. Chandler, NR Coord./Nancy Sloan, Simpsonville Baptist Church

organization S.C. Department of Archives & History date 4 March 1992

street & number P.O. Box 11669 telephone (803) 734-8610

city or town Columbia state S.C. zip code 29211

### Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

#### Continuation Sheets

#### Maps

A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

#### Photographs

Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

#### Additional items

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

### Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

name First Baptist Church of Simpsonville

street & number 106 Church Street telephone (803) 967-8591

city or town Simpsonville state S.C. zip code 29681

**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 *et seq.*).

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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Summary Description:

The Simpsonville Baptist Church, also known as the First Baptist Church of Simpsonville, is a less than one acre site located at 106 Church Street, in Simpsonville, Greenville County, South Carolina. Built in 1913, the Simpsonville Baptist Church is a two-story, five-bay, hip-roofed, Flemish-bond brick structure set on a brick foundation with an ashlar watertable. It is a Romanesque Revival building with twin towers on the west facade that exhibit a Moorish influence in the stepped, convex-shaped, sheet metal-covered hip roof atop each tower. All other roof areas of the church are covered with asphalt shingles. The original church building consists of a sanctuary and a Sunday school auditorium on the first floor, and Sunday school rooms on the first and second floor of the east end of the building. In addition to the twin towers, the most distinctive elements of the building are the numerous round-headed stained glass windows, each highlighted by a rubbed brick arch with an ashlar keystone. The two largest stained glass windows, each measuring seventeen feet in height and four-and-one-half feet in width, are centrally placed in two-story, parapet-walled, gable-roofed projecting pavilions; one centered in the west facade, and one located near the west corner of the south wall. The rubbed brick arches of the two large windows and the two entrances are slightly-pointed Tudor arches with the round-headed windows set inside them.

Additional Descriptive Information:

The Simpsonville Baptist Church is situated on a level lot on a small knoll and faces west onto Church Street. The ground plan of the church building is basically rectangular, measuring one-hundred-and-ten feet by seventy feet, with numerous projections and insets along three of the four walls. Most of the projections and insets contain round-headed stained glass windows of various sizes, each having a rubbed brick arch with an ashlar keystone and an ashlar sill. The exceptions are the rubbed brick surrounds of the two large stained glass windows, the rubbed brick surrounds of the entrance door in each tower, and the plain entrances of the inset porch on the south elevation and an attached porch on the north elevation.

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The Church Street facade features a three-story tower on the south corner which still serves as the bell tower, a two-story tower on the north corner which adds symmetry to the facade, and a two-story, parapet-walled, gable-roofed, projecting pavilion centered between the towers. The central projecting pavilion houses one of the two large, leaded, stained glass windows, this one depicting the biblical scene of "Our Savior Knocking On The Door." This window is highlighted by a full surround of rubbed brick with an ashlar keystone in the Tudor arch and an ashlar sill. The gable roof of the projection is covered with asphalt shingles and has low parapet walls. This central projection is flanked by two symmetrically placed, round-headed stained glass windows that have an ashlar keystone in the rubbed brick arch and an ashlar sill.

The twin towers of the west facade are identical except that the tower on the south corner is a full-story higher than the tower on the north corner. The only other difference between the towers is that the top-story of the south tower has full-length wood louvers on all four sides, and the top-story of the north tower has half-round, stained glass windows on three of the four sides. The window openings of the top-story of both towers have rubbed brick arches with ashlar keystones and sills. The west facade of the first story of each of the towers has a pair of two-panel doors, with the top panel made of leaded, stained glass. Each entrance is topped by a slightly-pointed, stained glass fanlight transom. Each doorway has a full surround of rubbed brick with an ashlar keystone in the arch. Each entrance also features an rounded-arch hood covered with flat-locked metal roofing. The door hoods end in a label-stop, and are supported by pairs of wood console brackets. Each tower has a stepped, convex-shaped hip roof covered with flat-locked metal and a weather vane. The cornice line of each tower also features pairs of metal-covered wooden corbel blocks at each corner. The west facade measures sixty-four feet in length, and presents an elaborately decorated and ordered composition.

The symmetrical arrangement of the west facade elements gives way to a less ordered series of projections and insets on the south elevation. At the west end of the south elevation is the taller tower which has a round-headed stained glass window with an ashlar keystone in the rubbed brick arch and an ashlar sill. Directly east of the tower, the south elevation features a two-story, gable-roofed, projecting pavilion that houses the other large, leaded, stained glass window, this one depicting the biblical scene of "The Lost Sheep." This window is highlighted by a full surround of rubbed brick with an ashlar keystone in the two-centered arch and an ashlar sill. The gable roof of the projection is covered with asphalt shingles and has low parapet walls. The projection is flanked by two round-headed stained glass windows that are inset two feet from the projecting pavilion. These flanking windows also have an ashlar keystone in the rubbed brick arch and an ashlar sill.

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The midpoint of the south elevation is the end of the original church sanctuary and the beginning of the original Sunday school auditorium. There is an entrance porch here that is highlighted by a rubbed brick, two-centered arch without a keystone. This entrance porch has an inset doorway with a pair of two-panel doors, with the top panel made of stained glass. The doors are topped by a single-panel stained glass transom. Directly east of the inset doors is a two-panel door, the top panel is stained glass, that enters into the original pastor's study. The next projection of the south elevation is a two-story, three-sided, hip-roofed canted bay with an interior end chimney, with fireplaces on both floors. The two angled walls feature single-pane, stained glass, double-hung sash windows on each of the two floors. These windows have a flat steel lintel and an ashlar sill. The first floor of the east end of the south elevation has paired windows with single-pane, stained glass, double-hung sash, a flat steel lintel, and an ashlar sill. The second floor of the east end of the south elevation has paired windows with two-pane, stained glass, fixed-sash and an ashlar sill; the top panes of the fixed-sash are trapezoidal in shape. This second-floor paired window penetrates the eave line and is actually a wall dormer with a hip roof. The south elevation is one-hundred-and-ten feet in length, displaying an elaborately decorated west end and a plain east end.

The north elevation of the church building also has a series of insets and projections that are in contrast to the highly ordered west facade. At the west end of the north elevation is the smaller tower which has a round-headed stained glass window with an ashlar keystone in the rubbed brick arch and an ashlar sill. Directly east of the tower, there is a round-headed stained glass window with an ashlar keystone in the rubbed brick arch and an ashlar sill. The next element of the north elevation is a two-story, gable-roofed, projecting pavilion that is the choir loft. The gable roof of the projection is covered with asphalt shingles and has low parapet walls. Attached to this projection is a one-story, brick addition with flat-lock metal covering a hip roof. This brick addition is flanked by two round-headed stained glass windows that have an ashlar keystone in the rubbed brick arch and an ashlar sill. This point along the north wall, forty feet of the one-hundred-and-ten foot wall length, is the end of the architectural elaboration that characterizes the west half of the church building.

Continuing east along the north wall is a two-panel door (the top panel is stained glass) protected by a one-story porch. The porch has square wood columns and balusters and a hip roof covered with flat-lock metal. The porch is inset between the brick addition of the choir loft to the west and the projecting wall of the east half of the north elevation. Directly above the porch is a single-pane, stained glass, double-hung sash window with a flat steel lintel and an ashlar sill.

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To the east of the porch, each floor has a single-pane, stained glass, double-hung sash window with a flat steel lintel and an ashlar sill. Adjacent to these windows is an interior end chimney. Although the remaining portion of the north wall has no projections or insets, it is clearly divided into two separate architecturally defined sections. The second floor of the west section has a centrally placed single-pane, stained glass, double-hung sash window with an ashlar sill. Atop this window is a single-pane, stained glass, pentoid-shaped, fixed-sash window that makes this centrally placed window appear to have triple-hung sashes. This window spans both floors because it is on a stairway. The window penetrates the eave line of the roof and is a wall dormer covered with a gable roof. Flanking this window on the second floor are two two-pane, stained glass, fixed-sash windows with an ashlar sill; the top pane of the fixed-sash is pentoid in shape. These two windows also penetrate the eave line and are wall dormers covered with a gable roof. Under each of these windows on the first floor are two single-pane, stained glass, double-hung sash windows with a flat steel lintel and an ashlar sill. Between these two first floor windows is a ground level door which is an exterior entrance to the basement.

The east end of the north elevation is another portion that appears to be separate by its architectural elaboration. This portion has two paired windows on the first floor with single-pane, stained glass, double-hung sash, a flat steel lintel, and an ashlar sill. The second floor of this section has two paired windows with two-pane, stained glass, fixed-sash and an ashlar sill; the top panes of the fixed-sash are trapezoidal in shape. These two second floor windows penetrate the eave line and are wall dormers covered with a hip roof. The north elevation is one-hundred-and-ten feet in length, displaying an elaborately decorated west end and a plain east end.

The east elevation of the church building presents a balanced five-bay facade, much like the west facade. The difference is that while the west facade has a central projecting pavilion, two projecting towers, and a high degree of architectural elaboration, the east elevation has no projections or insets and no architectural elaboration. There are three single windows arranged symmetrically in the center of the wall, and paired windows near the corners of this five-bay elevation. The exception to this is the first floor of the north corner of the east elevation. Instead of a paired window, there is a single window with a single-pane, stained glass, double-hung sash on the corner, and a door just south of the window. This door was protected by a covered walkway and provided access to the Sunday school building which was directly east of the church building. The covered walkway and the Sunday school building have been removed, and a new building is under construction to the east of the church building. There are no plans to replace the covered walkway when the new construction is completed.



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On the first floor of the east elevation, the three center windows have single-pane, stained glass, double-hung sash, a flat steel lintel, and an ashlar sill. The three central second floor windows are aligned over the first floor windows, and have two-pane, stained glass, fixed-sash and an ashlar sill, the top pane of the fixed-sash is pentoid in shape. The second floor windows penetrate the eave line and are wall dormers covered with a gable roof. On either end of the east wall are paired windows on both floors. The first floor windows have single-pane, stained glass, double-hung sash, a flat steel lintel, and an ashlar sill. The second floor paired windows are aligned over the first floor paired windows and have two-pane, stained glass, fixed-sash and an ashlar sill; the top panes of the fixed-sash are trapezoidal in shape. The two paired windows penetrate the eave line and are wall dormers covered with a hip roof. The east wall of the church building measures seventy feet in length and presents a balanced composition.

The interior of the church building is largely intact, and has an unusual floor plan. The west half of the interior is the original sanctuary, and the east half is the original Sunday school auditorium and classrooms. These areas were historically separated by wooden, roll-down doors which were pulled down from overhead pockets in a partition wall between the two areas. Several years ago, the roll-down doors, and the operating mechanisms, were removed and the pocket openings sealed over with a simple wood frame. The main sanctuary basically forms a square, measuring approximately fifty feet along each wall. In the northeast corner of the sanctuary is the pulpit, which sets upon a raised platform, and a marble baptismal pool. West of the pulpit is the choir loft which is recessed into the north transept. The original oak elements of the sanctuary are the pulpit, four pulpit chairs, the pews, and the floor, which is inclined toward the pulpit. The ceiling of the sanctuary features a round, wood medallion stained a dark brown color. Attached to this medallion is a ring of incandescent light bulbs.

The east half of the interior is the historic Sunday school auditorium and Sunday school classrooms. This area has oak pews which are not original, but are historic and resemble those in the sanctuary. The ceiling of the Sunday school auditorium features a rectangular skylight/ventilator panel with incandescent light bulbs around the outside of the panel. This panel operates by a set of pulleys and counterweights which are concealed from view in the attic. Directly behind the pews in the Sunday school auditorium are two floors of Sunday school classrooms, most of which were originally open to a balcony overlooking the auditorium. The classrooms were later enclosed, but the outline of the enclosures is still evident from the slight recess in the infill. The balcony runs along the east wall of the church building, turns and runs partially along the south wall, and is accessed by stairs on the north and south walls.

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All of the woodwork throughout the interior of the church building is stained a dark brown color, which contrasts with the off-white color of the walls and ceiling. The trim of the exterior doors is shouldered at the top corners, then returns horizontally to form a slightly triangular head casing.

The church building has been freestanding from any of the other, newer buildings on the site. A new, larger sanctuary has already been built south of the historic church building, but the congregation plans to preserve the old sanctuary and use it as a chapel.

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The Simpsonville Baptist Church, constructed in 1913-1914 on Church Street in Simpsonville, South Carolina, a Greenville County textile mill town, is significant as an excellent example of early twentieth century church architecture, and of the stylistic interpretations of Luther D. Proffitt, architect of Spartanburg, South Carolina. Designed chiefly in the Romanesque Revival style, the church also contains elements of both Moorish and Gothic Revival architecture, all of which were period revivals in popular usage from 1900-1940, especially in religious buildings. This church's eligibility for the National Register rests with its architectural significance, and qualifies under Criteria Consideration A.

Additional Information

The Simpsonville Baptist Church had its beginnings with a Sunday School class organized by B. M. Moore in a small frame school building on April 1, 1887, but was incorporated as a church on November 11, 1888, with twenty-four members. Prior to the construction of the 1913-1914 church building, the congregation worshiped in a ca. 1890 frame building located immediately south of the present church building on the same lot of land. Plans were made for the erection of a new building for the Simpsonville Baptist Church during the pastorate of the Rev. E. C. Watson (1912-1916). A building committee, composed of W. D. Fowler, B. W. Burdett, S. T. Moore, F. M. Todd, F. D. Hunter, and J. M. Richardson, was elected in 1912. The church commissioned Luther D. Proffitt, a noted architect who had been practicing in Spartanburg since about 1904, to prepare plans, and awarded the building contract to E. J. Gibson of Greenville. Ground was broken on April 15, 1913, and the cornerstone was laid with ceremony on September 10, 1913, led by Drs. Lee Davis Lodge and Z. T. Cody, editor of the Baptist Courier. (1) Completed on May 2, 1914, at a cost, including furnishings, of \$19,207.79, the first regular service was held in the new sanctuary on Sunday, May 15, 1914. (2) It was the first brick church built in the town of Simpsonville.

On March 5, 1922, the church changed its name officially to the First Baptist Church of Simpsonville, and has continued since under that name. By 1929, after a number of years with a leaking roof and a significant amount of damage incurred on the interior, the church realized that costly repairs were necessary. During the summer of 1930, these repairs were made, but at an unexpectedly high cost of approximately \$5,000. (3)

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Architecture:

Apart from the significance of the architect's employment of an unusual combination of elements from Romanesque Revival, Gothic Revival and Moorish architectural styles in this church, its most celebrated physical features are the two large pictorial stained glass windows on the west and south elevations. The church, in fact, has been known for many years throughout the upstate as "The Friendly Church With Beautiful Windows." (4) The subjects depicted in these windows are believed to be taken from the work of Holman Hunt (1827-1910), an English artist known for painting biblical scenes. They are entitled "Our Savior Knocking On The Door" and "The Lost Sheep." (5)

NOTES

(1) Rev. L. K. Simpson, Pastor, "History of The First Baptist Church, Simpsonville, S. C., 1888-1938 (an unpublished manuscript prepared in 1938), p. 3; Greenville News, 14 April 1913.

(2) Rev. L. K. Simpson, Pastor, "History of The First Baptist Church, Simpsonville, S. C., 1888-1938, p. 3.

(3) Ibid., p. 6.

(4) Bulletin, First Baptist Church, Simpsonville, South Carolina, 7 February 1943.

(5) "History of First Baptist Church" (a 1988 privately printed compilation in commemoration of the centennial of Simpsonville First Baptist Church, 1888-1988), p. 24.

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# **National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet**

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The boundary of the nomination is shown as the black line on the accompanying plat "First Baptist Church, Simpsonville, S. Carolina, Greenville County," drawn at a scale of 1"=20'.

The nominated property includes the historic building and its immediate surroundings.

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The following information is the same for each of the photographs:

Name of Property: Simpsonville Baptist Church

Location: 106 Church Street  
Simpsonville, South Carolina

County: Greenville

Date: January/February 1992

1. Sanctuary, west facade  
Photographer: Ed Tolson, SHPO, S. C. Dept of Archives & History  
Location of Original Negative: S. C. Dept. of Archives & History,  
Columbia, S. C.
2. Sanctuary, west facade  
Photographer: Bill Hegler/Nancy Sloan, Simpsonville, S. C.  
Location of Original Negative: Nancy Sloan, Simpsonville, S. C.
3. Sanctuary, southwest oblique  
Photographer: Ed Tolson
4. Sanctuary, north elevation  
Photographer: Ed Tolson
5. Sanctuary and Sunday School Building, south elevation  
Photographer: Ed Tolson
6. Sanctuary and Sunday School Building, south elevation (detail)  
Photographer: Bill Hegler/Nancy Sloan
7. Sunday School Building, northwest oblique view of north elevation  
Photographer: Bill Hegler/Nancy Sloan
8. Sanctuary, interior from pulpit, looking southwest  
Photographer: Ed Tolson
9. Sunday School Auditorium, interior view looking southeast  
Photographer: Ed Tolson
10. Sanctuary, interior doorway (northwest corner)  
Photographer: Ed Tolson

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SUPPLEMENTARY LISTING RECORD

NRIS Reference Number: 92001309

Date Listed: 10/13/92

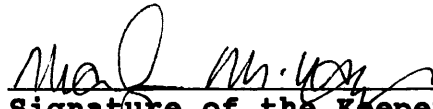
Simpsonville Baptist Church  
Property Name

Greenville  
County

SOUTH CAROLINA  
State

Multiple Name

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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

10/13/92  
Date of Action

=====  
Amended Items in Nomination:

Section No. 7

This nomination is amended to show the roofing material as asphalt, as is stated in the narrative description.

This change was confirmed by phone with the South Carolina SHPO (10/13/92).

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DISTRIBUTION:

- National Register property file
- Nominating Authority (without nomination attachment)