

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

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Section number \_\_\_\_\_ Page \_\_\_\_\_

**SUPPLEMENTARY LISTING RECORD**

**NRIS Reference Number:** 92001581

**Date Listed:** 7/29/93

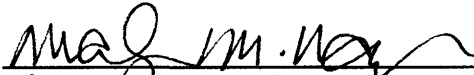
Beale Street H.D. (Boundary Increase)  
**Property Name**

Shelby  
**County**

TENNESSEE  
**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**

11/9/93  
\_\_\_\_\_  
**Date of Action**

=====  
**Amended Items in Nomination:**

Section No. 8

This nomination is amended to add Criteria Consideration G, since the period of significance extends into the period less than 50 years before the documentation was submitted.

**DISTRIBUTION:**

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

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

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Section number \_\_\_\_\_ Page \_\_\_\_\_

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Carol Ashwell  
Signature of the Keeper

7-29-93  
Date of Action

=====  
**Amended Items in Nomination:**

Section No. 8

This nomination is amended to add 1987 to the period of significance, reflecting the date of completion of the relandscaping of Church Park to commemorate the contribution of Robert R. Church and the Church family to the city of Memphis.

**DISTRIBUTION:**

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**United States Department of the Interior  
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Continuation Sheet**

Section number \_\_\_\_\_ Page \_\_\_\_\_

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Beale Street Historic District (Boundary Increase)

Shelby County, TENNESSEE

BOUNDARY INCREASE APPROVAL

Carol D. Shull 7-29-93

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

OCT 14 1988

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation SheetSection number     N/A     Page     1    Beale Street Historic District Extension  
Shelby County, TN

The proposed extension of the Beale Street Historic District would add one building, already listed in the National Register, and one site to the district. This would change the National Register district boundaries, not the National Historic Landmark boundaries. National Historic Landmarks are listed or changed directly by the History Division of the National Park Service.

The Beale Street Historic District was listed as a National Historic Landmark and, therefore, in the National Register of Historic Places on May 23, 1966. It was listed for its national significance to American music. Beale Street was an area where the "blues" were established and where W.C. Handy wrote "Memphis Blues". The boundaries of the district were originally set as being Beale Street from Main to Fourth streets. However, in 1987-1988 the National Park Service initiated a process to decertify the National Historic Landmark status of the district. As a result of this review, the district retained its Landmark status, but the boundaries were reduced to the part of Beale Street between Second and Fourth streets and one building at the northwest corner of Second and Beale streets (Lansky's Mens Fashions).

The First Baptist Church (Beale Street Baptist Church) was listed in the National Register on February 11, 1971. Constructed in 1869, the property was listed for its national significance in religion/philosophy and urban planning. The nomination mentions the adjacent Church Park as being a local landmark and, along with the church, as being the center of cultural activities for African-Americans in Memphis.

Church Park was a unique enterprise in that it was owned and operated by an African-American for the use of African-Americans at a time when there were no municipal parks for African-Americans in Memphis. Robert R. Church, Sr., the first African-American millionaire, founded the park in 1899. The park was situated on six acres and had landscaped grounds, an auditorium with a seating capacity of about 2200, picnic grounds, a bandstand, and a playground. President Theodore Roosevelt spoke here on November 19, 1902 and the first NAACP branch in Tennessee was organized here in 1917. The Lincoln Republican League was founded here in 1916. Some of W.C. Handy's early work was associated with Church Park (he served as an orchestra leader) and the Solvent Savings Bank and Trust Company (non-extant). Solvent Savings, of which Church was a founder and first president, was the first African-American owned bank in Memphis. In addition, African-American colleges and religious groups, and the Cotton Maker's Jubilee used

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

OCT 14 1992

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation SheetSection number       N/A       Page       2      Beale Street Historic District Extension  
Shelby County, TN

the park. After Church's death in 1912 the park was managed by his son. Robert Church, Jr. (1885-1952) was an influential leader in the Republican Party.

The City of Memphis purchased the park in the in 1921 and around 1930 constructed another auditorium. In 1941 the name of the park was changed to Beale Avenue Park. After years of protest, the Church name was restored to the park in 1956. The original fabric of the park was razed in the early 1970s as a result of an urban renewal project. Today the park contains approximately 7.6 acres. In 1987 the City of Memphis refurbished the park using U.S. Housing and Urban Development grants amounting to \$750,000.00. Today, a gate-like structure and columns are located on the approximate location of the auditorium. Benches and picnic tables are also included on the site. The park contains markers erected by the Tennessee Historical Commission, the West Tennessee Historical Society, and a bronze plaque, prepared by the Memphis Sesquicentennial Commission, commemorating Robert R. Church, Sr., and his son Robert R. Church, Jr.

The area proposed to be added to the district includes lots 7 and 8 as shown on the Shelby County tax map included with the nomination (1"=100').

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

OCT 14 1992

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number N/A Page 3

Beale Street Historic District Extension  
Shelby County, TN

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Beale Street Historic District Extension  
Beale Street

Memphis, Shelby County, Tennessee

Photos by: Claudette Stager

Date: June 1992

Neg: Tennessee Historical Commission  
Nashville, Tennessee

First Baptist Church (Beale Street Baptist Church), north facade and east elevation, facing southwest

#1 of 10

West elevation of First Baptist Church (Beale Street Baptist Church) and Church Park, facing east

#2 of 10

East elevation of First Baptist Church (Beale Street Baptist Church) and Church Park, facing west

#3 of 10

Church Park entrance, showing outline of where building once stood, facing south

#4 of 10

Church Park, facing south

#5 of 10

Church Park overview near building site, facing south

#6 of 10

Church Park and First Baptist Church (Beale Street Baptist Church), facing northwest

#7 of 10

Church Park overview

#8 of 10

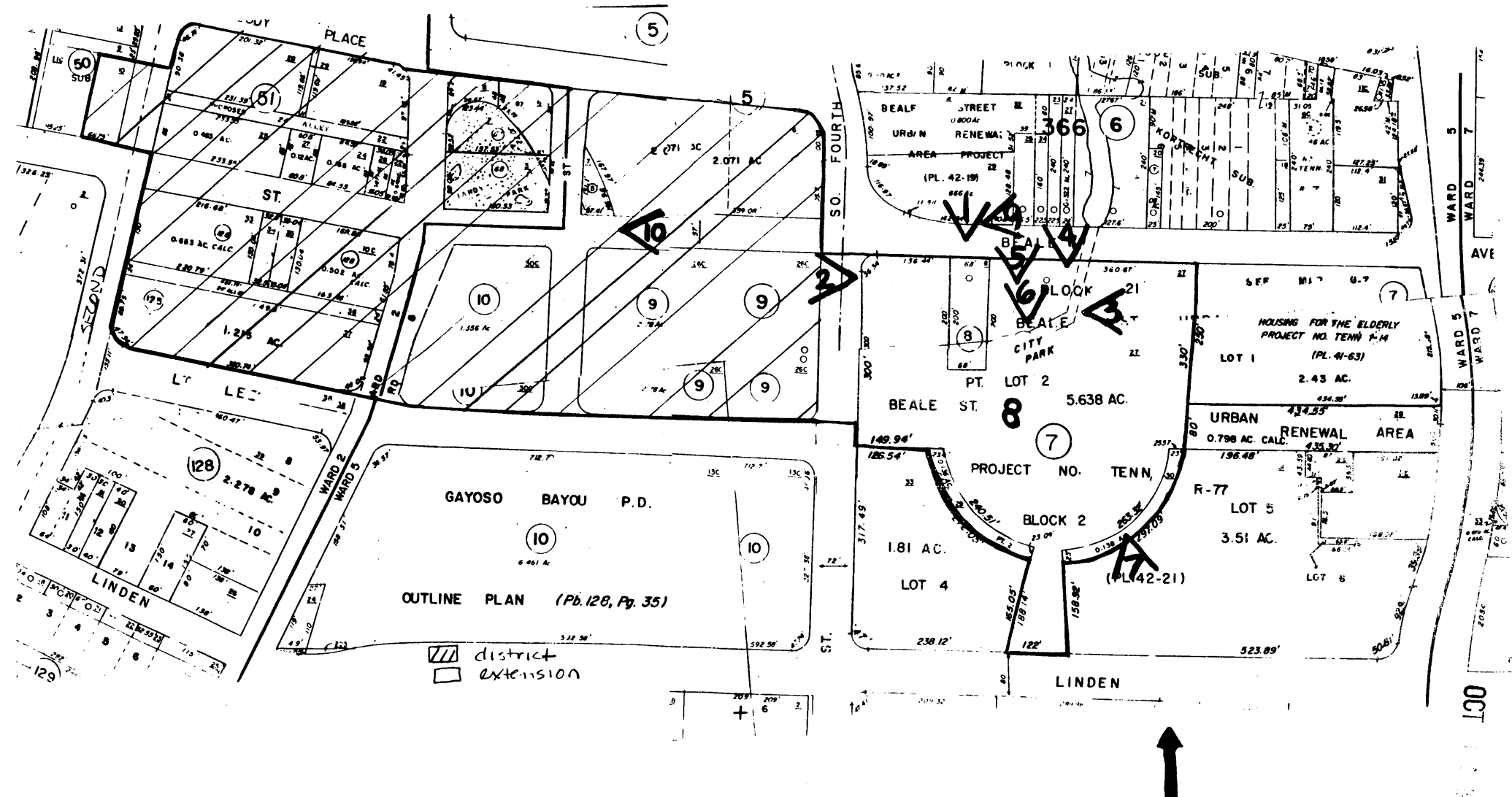
First Baptist Church (Beale Street Baptist Church) at left of photo, facing west looking into the Beale Street Historic District

#9 of 10

Beale Street Historic District overview, facing west

#10 of 10

Beale Street Historic District  
 Shelby County TN  
 no scale - photo key (1992)



OCT 1992

