

# HISTORIC RESOURCES OF GREENSBORO, GREENE COUNTY, GEORGIA

## INDIVIDUAL PROPERTY #3

### I. IDENTIFICATION

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NAME OF PROPERTY: **Springfield Baptist Church**

LOCATION: Canaan Circle

CITY: Greensboro

COUNTY: Greene (code 133)

STATE: Georgia (code 013)

ZIP CODE: 30642

OWNER: Springfield Baptist Church

OWNER ADDRESS: Greensboro, Georgia

CLASSIFICATION: Building

CURRENT USE: Religious (church)

ACREAGE: 1 acre approximately

U.S.G.S. QUADRANGLE: Greensboro, Ga.

U.T.M. REFERENCE: Z17 E297840 N3717260

V.B.D. OR TAX MAP NUMBER: G-18-28

### II. DESCRIPTION

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#### ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION:

Rectangular brick church structure detailed with brick pilasters and dripstone molding around pointed-arched windows and entrance doors; symmetrical arrangement; rectangular towers at each corner of front facade contain entrance doors and lead to entry foyers; towers feature metal roofs, attic vents, and contemporary siding material on second-floor level; stuccoed foundation; new brick entrance steps; gabled roof, sheathed with asphalt shingles, with gable oriented to front facade covers entire historic structure; interior of historic building includes sanctuary and foyer areas, pointed-arch entrance feature; alterations to the sanctuary include sheetrocked walls, wood-paneled wainscoting, and lowered acoustical-tile ceiling; original tongue-and-groove wood ceiling is still visible in foyer areas and at back of church; 1963 brick one-story annex added to rear of church building; 1983 two-story wood multi-purpose building added to annex. Church is situated on an approximately one-acre tract with little landscaping; Canaan Circle passes diagonally through one edge of this rectangular tract. Good condition.

PHOTOGRAPH NUMBERS: 100-101

### III. HISTORY

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ORIGINAL OWNER: Springfield Baptist Church

ORIGINAL USE: Religious (church)

ARCHITECT/BUILDER: unknown

HISTORIC ACREAGE: approximately same as present

DATE OF CONSTRUCTION: ca. 1907

DATE(S) OF MAJOR ALTERATIONS: 1963, 1983 (additions)

HISTORICAL NARRATIVE:

Springfield Baptist Church, similar to other black churches in the period following the Civil War, split off from a white church, the First Baptist Church of Greensboro. The first book of conference minutes from the First Baptist Church of Greensboro (1821-1834) includes membership lists for white females, white males, "coloured" (sic) females, and "coloured (sic) males." For many years the black membership exceeded the white membership. For example, in 1845 there were 38 white members compared to 56 black members. According to the church history, there was a mass dismissal of black members following the Civil War. With a \$200 donation from the white church, many of the former black members founded Springfield Baptist Church in 1864. According to a booklet, "History of Springfield Baptist Church: 1864-1984," Springfield Baptist Church began with the purchase of a 1.25-acre tract of land from Mrs. Nancy Bickers on January 27, 1864, by church organizers, Henry Porter, Frank Massey, Umply Stocks, and Jack Terrell. Following the land purchase, a second purchase was made to acquire the old Georgia Railroad depot building. The former train station was converted into the first house of worship. In the early years of the church's history, services were held once a month on the third Sunday. The church was located in the "Canaan" section, one of two black neighborhoods that have developed in Greensboro. The other area is known as "Railroad."

The first pastor at Springfield Baptist Church was Reverend Levi Thornton of Penfield, Georgia, who guided the church to an early enrollment of 500 members. In the early 1900's the wooden structure was replaced with the present brick church building; according to local sources, this building was constructed using the bricks from the old white Methodist Church which was demolished about 1907. The new structure was constructed under the leadership of Reverend L. P. Pickney (Pinckney?), who served until his death in 1924. In that same year, the church split with the creation of Mt. Enon Baptist Church. From 1924 to 1947, Reverend W. M. Jackson from Madison, Georgia, served as the pastor for Springfield. He was also pastor for several other black Baptist churches in Greene County; these included Siloam Baptist Church in Union Point, Spring Creek Baptist Church in Greshamville, and Second Baptist Church in White Plains. Reverend L. H. Stinson was the minister from 1947 to 1977. Improvements during his administration included the construction of the first annex and renovation of the sanctuary. Reverend William E. Flippin, Sr., is the present pastor. The current congregation has approximately 250 members and services are held weekly. Distinguished guests who have delivered messages in the sanctuary include Julian Bond, Horace Tait, Dr. Martin Luther King, Sr., Professor C. Harper, C. D. Hubert (President of Morehouse College), and Dr. Samuel Archer.

#### IV. SIGNIFICANCE

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NATIONAL REGISTER CRITERIA: A, C

AREA(S) OF SIGNIFICANCE: Architecture, Religion/Social

SIGNIFICANT DATE(S): 1907

LEVEL OF SIGNIFICANCE: Local

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE:

Religion/Social History. Springfield Baptist Church is significant in religious history for its association with the first black Baptist Church in Greensboro. Its creation after the Civil War as an outgrowth from a white church, the First Baptist Church of Greensboro, typifies how many black churches in both urban and rural situations were created following Emancipation. Springfield Baptist Church is also the mother church of Mt. Enon Baptist Church, again showing how independent black churches multiplied and grew during the late 19th and early 20th centuries. In terms of social history, Springfield Baptist Church is important for the way it illustrates typical cultural patterns of blacks during Reconstruction. Once freed, blacks organized into various groups, independent of their white former counterparts, including educational institutions, fraternal lodges, and churches. Black churches in Georgia traditionally have served as centers for social, cultural, and political as well as religious life in the black community because they remained relatively free from white interference. According to the history of Springfield Baptist Church, its large membership (approximately 500) immediately after Reconstruction brought with it an important measure of local political and social power. This was especially true at the turn of the century when the present church building was built, a landmark to the relative wealth and influence of this congregation in Greensboro's black community. The church also was associated with leading individuals in the black community, primarily through its ministers who traditionally served as community spokesmen: Levi Thornton, L. P. Pinkney (Pinckney?), and W. M. Jackson. Thornton served as the first minister of the church. Pinkney was the pastor in the early 1900's and also served as the pastor for Thankful Baptist Church in Atlanta and a moderator of the Shiloh Association. In addition to simultaneously being the pastor of four Baptist Churches in Greene County, Reverend Jackson was a pastor at the Bethlehem Baptist Church in Atlanta for over 35 years, editor of the Georgia Baptist newspaper, auditor for the General Missionary Baptist Convention of Georgia, co-chairman of the Atlanta Negro Voters League, and served on the Finance Committee of the National Baptist Convention. Springfield Baptist Church remains a leading voice in the community.

Architecture. Springfield Baptist Church is architecturally significant for its historic architectural qualities and for its

status as a historic landmark in one of Greensboro's black neighborhoods. In its pilastered brick construction and Gothic Revival architectural details, the church building reflects prevailing church design principles and construction techniques in Georgia during the late 19th and early 20th centuries. With its simple, rectangular, gable-roofed form highlighted by twin front towers, it reflects design characteristics traditionally associated with both urban and rural black churches from the same period. Such church structures have been identified as important landmarks in Georgia's black neighborhoods in a recent study of historic black resources in Georgia.

**CONTRIBUTING/NONCONTRIBUTING RESOURCES:**

1 contributing building

**VII. SOURCES OF INFORMATION**

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**REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS:** Historic Structures Field Survey: Greene County, Georgia (state-level survey)

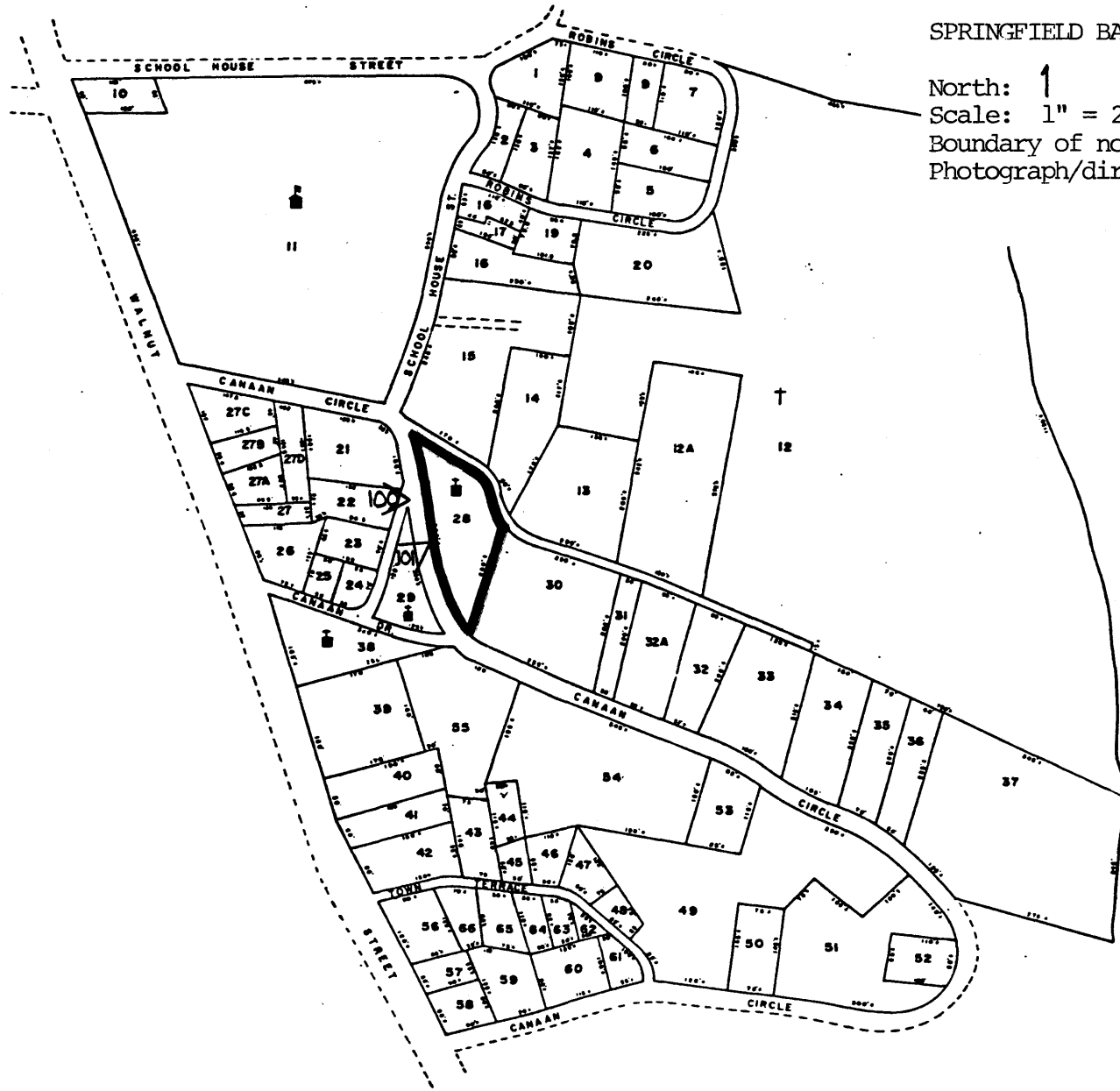
**BIBLIOGRAPHY:** SEE Bibliography, Section 9, National Register Nomination Form

**FORM PREPARED BY:** SEE Form Prepared By, Section 11, National Register Nomination Form

Historic Resources of Greensboro,  
Greene County, Georgia

SPRINGFIELD BAPTIST CHURCH

North: ↑  
Scale: 1" = 275' 0' ----- 275'  
Boundary of nominated property: **\_\_\_\_\_**  
Photograph/direction of view: >



MAP 120  
SCALE 1" = 400'

<b>HUNNICUTT &amp; ASSOCIATES, INC.</b> VALUATION ENGINEERS & CONSULTANTS ST. PETERSBURG, FLORIDA	THE VALUATION MAP <b>GREENE COUNTY</b> <b>GEORGIA</b>		SHEET NO. <b>G</b> <b>18</b>
	LAND LOT DISTRICT C.M.D. 148 PHOTO NO. B4-1-49	CALL 813-922-1100 SCALE 1" = 100'	