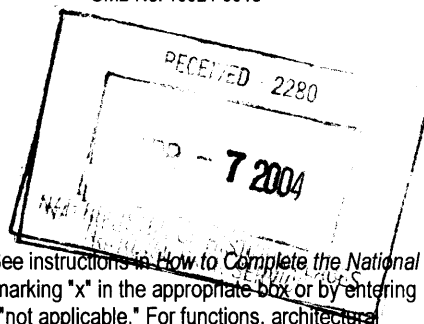


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United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

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 10-9000a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

Historic name Westminster Presbyterian Church  
Other name/site number 177-5400-1289

2. Location

Street & number 1275 Boswell Avenue  not for publication  
City or town Topeka  vicinity  
State Kansas Code KS County Shawnee Code 177 Zip code 67401

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.)

Richard D. Rankin DSHPO April 2, 2004  
Signature of certifying official/Title Date  
Kansas State Historical Society

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 commenting official /Title Date  
\_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is

- entered in the National Register.  See continuation sheet.
- determined eligible for the National Register  See continuation sheet.
- determined not eligible for the National Register
- removed from the National Register
- other, (explain:)

Edson W. Beall  
Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action  
5/19/04

Westminster Presbyterian Church  
Name of property

Shawnee County, KS  
County and State

**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**  
0

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**  
(Enter Categories from instructions)

Religion: religious facility

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**Current Functions**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

Religion: religious facility

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**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

Late 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> Century Revivals: Late Gothic Revival

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**Materials**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Stone: limestone  
walls Stone: limestone

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roof Other: Composition

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other

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**Narrative Description**

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

Name of Property Westminster Presbyterian Church County and State Shawnee County, Kansas

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

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

- 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 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.)

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

Architecture

Period of Significance

1926

Significant Dates

1926

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Cuthbert, Charles; Architect

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): Primary location of additional data:

- 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 #

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

Name of repository:



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Westminster Presbyterian Church  
Shawnee County, KS

**Narrative Description**

Westminster Presbyterian Church is located in the center of Topeka, Shawnee County, Kansas at the northwest corner of 13<sup>th</sup> & SW Boswell Avenue in the heart of the historic College Hill area. The name "College Hill" is derived from the proximity to Washburn University (4 blocks north of campus) and the gradual rise in land elevation which is 40 feet higher than downtown Topeka. Most homes surrounding the church in College Hill were built around the turn of the century when many architectural styles were being featured out of Chicago. A mix of Queen Anne, Colonial Revival, American FourSquare, Craftsman and Tudor are found throughout. The design of Westminster was intended to complement the style of many of the Washburn University structures.

The native stone Late Gothic Revival church had its groundbreaking November 2, 1924 and its dedication March 21, 1926. The church was designed by architect Charles Cuthbert, who also designed such notable structures as the Carnegie Library at Washburn University, Budig Hall (formerly Hoch Auditorium) and Snow Hall at the University of Kansas. Cuthbert served as Kansas State Architect from 1925 to 1930.

Following the secular Collegiate Gothic style Cuthbert was noted for, this ecclesiastical structure is characterized by monumental proportions, a tall central tower, gothic arched entrances and windows, leaded glass, distinctive stonework, and abundant window openings. The Late Gothic Revival style was popular in the period of 1885 to 1920 and was the basis for the Collegiate Gothic style which first appeared in the U.S. at Princeton University, a Presbyterian seminary.

True to the style, Westminster favors the English Perpendicular. Late Gothic Revival churches are substantially built of masonry, stone when practical, as is the case with Westminster. The craftsmanship is superior, and the design appears to be highly influenced by the work of Ralph Adams Cram, a pacesetter of the movement during the time Westminster was designed. Cram was the supervising architect at Princeton from 1909 to 1931.

Churches continued to be a mainstay of Late Gothic Revival, and since the style was so well suited for church design, the style lingered well into the twentieth century, long after it was no longer used for non-ecclesiastical construction. As with most Late Gothic Revival structures, Westminster's design is quieter, smoother, less ornate and "top heavy" than that of the high Victorian Gothic period. There is little tracery and ornamentation is kept to a minimum.

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The church's exterior structure retains the architectural integrity and details of its original construction. There were external weatherproof doors and an accessibility ramp added in the 1960's to the tower entrance on the east side of the educational wing. The condition is exemplary with the structure remaining solid after nearly eight decades. The main sanctuary entrance is oriented to the east of the "L" shaped building. The cornerstone of the church was laid on May 10, 1925 at the southeast corner of the sanctuary wing.

The church consists of four different levels and sits on concrete footings resting on bedrock encountered during the construction. In addition there are three small foyer ground level entrances in the sanctuary wing (one on the south side and one on the rear south side of the building in the alley) and educational wing between Levels 2 and 3 that for purposes of clarification are not designated as true "levels". These ground level entrances lead immediately up or down at both locations and serve as entryways only. The sanctuary wing includes the sanctuary auditorium (Level 3); a small foyer ground level entry way (not designated here as a "level"); and a basement level (Level 1) which includes a gymnasium/fellowship hall, kitchen, and mechanical room. In the education wing, there are three levels: a basement level (Level 2) of classrooms and restrooms; a small foyer ground level entry way (not designated here as a "level"); the middle level (Level 3) that matches the sanctuary level and includes offices, library, parlor, chapel and kitchenette; and the upper level (Level 4) of the education wing that includes classrooms, youth room, restrooms, and access to the tower.

#### **East Elevation**

The east elevation is dominated by the grand entrance to the sanctuary wing. The symmetric gable entrance façade rises approximately 60 feet from street level to the top of the gable. It is entirely constructed of split-faced native stone, in random Ashlar setting courses resting on several courses of smooth-cut stone foundation. Twenty-two steps lead up to the sanctuary entrance from street level, with two landings in between. The stairway is flanked on both sides with native stone parapets accentuated by mortared stone coping caps. Assist railings divide the steps matching the doorway configuration. A double center doorway is flanked by a single door entrance on either side. Each of these doors feature a transom window above. The entire entryway is trimmed in stone block.

Directly above the doorway entrance is a huge, three paneled stained glass gothic arch, segmented to match the doorway openings below. This window is trimmed in stone block, and framed with concrete casement. The entryway is flanked by two stone buttresses, each approximately 25 feet high from the doorway level and 5 feet wide, capped with stone set at an angle. High in the gable is a rectangular louvered vent opening, with a cut stone sill. On either side of the doorway buttresses is a smaller rectangular stained glass window. Another buttress flanks the north and south ends of the east entrance façade.

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The original cornerstone is encased in the southernmost buttress. The gable is capped in smooth-cut stone. To the south and west of the east entrance is the eastern façade of the education wing, and the inset tower entry. This eastern façade rises two and one half stories above grade level (the lower level, Level 2, is half under grade). There are seven lower level windows that are wood framed, double-hung sashes, set into the cut-stone foundation. On the second level (Level 3), there are six large arched windows, each with a stone segmented arch lintel and keystone, and cut stone sills. On the third level (Level 4), there are six rectangular double-hung windows, in wooden frames. Each of these are the original 6 over 6 pane. Each of these window openings has an angular cut rough stone jack arch lintel with center keystone.

A decorative belt course of smooth-cut stone encircles the education wing on three sides, just above the third floor windows. There is a cresting of smooth-cut stone around the entire roofline, which also features a raised pediment feature on the education wing. The education wing has a flat roof. The sanctuary has its original red tile roof. The tower section is at the intersection of the sanctuary and education wings. The east elevation is inset, with a double door entry and arched transom window. Currently, a handicapped accessible ramp leads to this doorway, but plans are to eliminate this ramp and add an elevator that would restore the look of this entrance closer to its original construction, including a half flight of stairs and a ground level entrance.

The tower soars to a height equal to about four stories. There are basement level windows in the tower section, and above the entry way are three double hung wooden framed windows on the third floor of the education wing. The eastern façade of the tower is dominated by the two large gothic arched openings in the belfry. These are not glassed-in, but replicate the design of the sanctuary stained glass window frames. Buttresses on all four elevations of the tower meet at each corner. These buttresses are also capped with smooth-cut stone laid at an angle. The tower roofline features cresting of smooth cut stone, gothic battlements, and a center keystone.

### **South Elevation**

From the south, you see the south side of the sanctuary, south face of the tower, and the south end of the education wing. Both wings are constructed of split-faced native stone, resting on a foundation of smooth-cut stone courses with concrete footings. The south sanctuary wing is dominated by four large leaded stained glass windows. Each equilateral Gothic arch stained glass window has stone mullions dividing it into two main lights with four smaller arched lights above. Each of these windows soar approximately 14 feet high and are about 7 feet wide. Below these are corresponding window openings at grade level to light the basement fellowship hall/gymnasium.

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There is a cresting of smooth-cut stone around the entire roofline of the sanctuary, which is the southern pitch of the gable, in red tile. A double doorway to the narthex is encased in a gothic arch with a glassed arch transom above. A split-faced stone border is cut in a segmented arch lintel over the doorway. Five stone buttresses divide each window and doorway, each capped with smooth cut stone placed at an angle. The south face of the education wing features a similar double doorway, encased in a gothic arch with a glassed arch transom above. A split-faced stone border is cut in a segmented arch lintel over the doorway.

Two and a half stories above grade are seen from this elevation, with the basement being a half story under grade. Six basement windows are set into the smooth-cut stone foundation. The second floor (Level 3) includes four stained glass gothic arch windows for the chapel, and two more corresponding gothic arch windows for the office without stained glass. Each of these also feature a split-faced stone border cut in a segmented arch lintel over them. The third floor (Level 4) consists of seven rectangular double-hung windows, in wooden frames. Each of these are the original 6 over 6 pane, and each has an angular cut rough stone decorative lintel in a jack arch configuration. The roofline features embattlements, with a cresting of smooth cut stone. A pentagon-shaped smooth cut keystone is centered above the doorway at the top of the roofline and is inscribed "1925." The south face of the tower is identical to the other faces, with the two large gothic arch windows, embattlements, capped buttresses, keystone and stone cresting.

**West Elevation**

The west elevation is on the alley side. It is not seen from the street, but still includes similar features of the more visible elevations including split-faced stone with smooth-cut stone cresting. This face includes 12 basement level windows, two of which are used for venting the mechanical room. A basement entry door to the mechanical room is six steps down from grade. The second and third levels (Levels 3 and 4) include 13 windows each on this face.

Two of these are gothic arch stained glass for the west end of the chapel. Each of the remaining window openings has an angular cut rough stone jack arch lintel with center keystone. Electrical and other services are discreetly brought into the building on the far northwest corner of the building, in the alleyway and out of sight from the street. The roofline features embattlements, with a cresting of smooth cut stone. The roof over the education wing is flat, leading to a hip and gable where it intersects with the sanctuary wing.



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**North Elevation**

The north elevation abuts residential housing. From this face, the north side of the sanctuary is visible. This includes six large stained glass windows, identical to those on the south elevation. These sit above window openings at grade level to light the basement fellowship hall/gymnasium, also similar to the south elevation. This face features nine stone buttresses dividing each window, each capped with smooth cut stone placed at an angle. There are also two small rectangular wood cased windows to the narthex at the east end of the north elevation, and a doorway leading to a back stairway at the west end of the north elevation. All other features echo the south elevation of the sanctuary wing. On the west end of the north elevation, a large split faced stone chimney rises approximately 16 feet above the uppermost part of the west wall.

**Interior Sanctuary (Level 3)**

The sanctuary auditorium is oriented east to west, with the narthex and balcony at the east end, and the chancel and choir loft at the west end. It features a soaring peaked ceiling, approximately 35 feet high at the peak. Six bracketed walnut beams are spaced evenly and run north and south, creating a gothic arch. The brackets are minimal in their ornateness, in keeping with the Calvinistic school of church design. The ceiling mimics the hip and gable of the roof at the west end, and the gable at the east end.

The pews are configured with a center aisle and side aisles, double pews on both sides of the center. The chancel area is a raised stage, with a choir loft behind. The choir loft is in a recessed apse approximately 29 feet wide with a gothic archway that is approximately 20 feet above stage level at its peak. This arch is clad in walnut beam with brackets on both ends. The choir loft is on three levels with 3" oak flooring. The Moller pipe organ is centered in the choir loft, with symmetrical pipes and pipe closets on the north and south ends. A recessed paneled railing divides the choir loft from the chancel area.

The ten large leaded stained glass windows dominate the sanctuary with four on the south and six on the north. Each of these are approximately 6-1/2 feet wide by 13 feet high and begin approximately five feet above floor level. Each are equilateral Gothic arch windows with stone mullions dividing it into two main lights with four smaller arched lights above. The leaded stained glass windows were produced by Kansas City Stained Glass Company in 1924.

A walnut chair rail encircles the sanctuary, with a wainscot of a heavy wallcovering which resembles brown leather. The walnut wainscot is capped with an angled moulding which extends upward into the window recesses and encases all door openings. The walls above the wainscot are plaster, and with a rounded radius into the window openings. Light is provided by seven multiple light hanging chandeliers

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and matching bracketed wall sconces between each window, original to the church construction. The fixtures were furnished by Bailey-Reynolds Company of Kansas City and installed by the Turner Electric Company of Topeka. The sanctuary is on the same level of the building as the second level of the education wing (Level 3).

**Balcony**

The balcony is situated at the upper east end of the sanctuary and is accessed by two sets of stairs from the narthex. The balcony spans the entire width of the sanctuary, with no visible support posts. The plastered railing is capped with 10" wide walnut. The floors are 3" oak planks, with ten levels of pew seating. The pews are situated with a double center row flanked by aisles and a single row on both ends. The balcony is dominated by a large Gothic arched leaded stained glass window at the east end. This window is approximately 17 feet wide and 12 feet high at its peak. It is in three segments to match the doorway openings below. This window is divided with stone mullions and minimal tracery. To either side of the larger window is a 24" x 30" rectangular stained glass wooden casement window with side hinges.

**Narthex (Level 3)**

The narthex is accessed from the main entrance triple doorway on the east, or up a short flight of steps from the south double door (ground level entry). Each stairway begins with an oak balustrade and newel post at the foot of the stairs. The narthex has symmetrical stairways on the north and south that rise 12 steps to a landing, then turn 90 degrees and up 9 more steps to the balcony. A double French door with 10 panes leads to the sanctuary, flanked on either side by a single French door. These echo the outside entry from the east. The 1889 cornerstone from the original Westminster Presbyterian Church is encapsulated into the east wall of the narthex at the foot of the south stairs leading to the balcony.

**Education Wing Lower Level (Level 2)**

The lower level is entered from the South through a ground level double doorway encased in a gothic arch with a glassed arch transom above. Down 10 steps is the main hallway of the lower level. A steel balustrade and newel post is capped with a wooden handrail. Under stair storage is accessed through a custom fitted wooden door. The lower level hallway runs north to south, with a 9 foot ceiling. Wall surfaces are plastered. The concrete floor of the hallway has the original floor tile. Classrooms are arranged on both sides of the main hall.

At the north end, a double door leads to the mezzanine level of the fellowship hall/gymnasium. Restrooms are also located at the north end, as well as a stairway leading down to the fellowship hall

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and another stairway leading up to the second level. Under stair storage under this stairway is also accessed through a custom fitted wooden door. The fellowship hall stairway is 4-1/2 feet wide, with 15 steps down. The open stairway leading up is 4 feet wide, with steel balustrade and newel, capped by a wooden handrail. There are seven steps up this stairway to a landing, 90-degree turn and two more steps, then another landing. Another 90-degree turn and nine steps leads to the next level of the education wing.

**Education Wing Second Level (Level 3)**

The second level of the education wing (Level 3) is entered from the South through a ground level double doorway encased in a gothic arch with a glassed arch transom above. It may also be entered from the east through an identical double doorway currently with a ramp. From the south entrance, there are 10 steps up to the main hallway of the second level of the education wing. This level includes the chapel, office, parlor, library, associate pastor's office, choir room, and also opens to the sanctuary through double wooden French doors with 10 glass panes in each door.

This level was extensively remodeled in 1988-89 for the church's centennial. The remodeling was mostly cosmetic, tastefully done and carefully orchestrated to preserve the integrity of the original church structure. It included floor coverings, paint, addition of storage areas, kitchenette, lighting improvements, etc. Many of the original paneled doors on this level were replaced with magnetic flush solid wood fire.

The chapel is in the southwest corner of this level, and retains its original stained glass Gothic arch windows, four on the south side and two on the west. These beautiful windows include leaded stained glass and glass painting techniques. They are recessed into the thick stone wall. The office area and library also retain beautiful Gothic arch windows in wood frames. The library, formerly the parlor, also retains the original fireplace. Stairways at the south and north end of this level correspond to those mentioned earlier. The north open stairway leads up to the third level of the education wing (Level 4) with ten steps up to a landing, then a 180-degree turn and eight steps to the upstairs level. The stairway continues with a steel balustrade and newel post capped by a wooden handrail.

**Education Wing Third Level (Level 4)**

The third level of the education wing (Level 4) is accessed from the open stairway mentioned previously. This level includes junior high and senior high youth classrooms and the Wendy Harris Memorial Youth Center. It also includes men's and women's restrooms. One of these large classrooms contains 5 anterooms around the south and west perimeter. All windows on this level are 6 over 6 double hung wooden sash. Other than the youth center and the remodeled restrooms, original paneled

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wood doors are found on all other rooms on this floor. Tower access is gained from a mechanical room on this floor, with a rung ladder leading to the belfry, through a roof hatch. The classroom in the northwest corner of this level includes an original fireplace and doors to the organ pipe closet. It also leads to a seldom used "back" enclosed stairway that is the only continuous stairway to reach all levels of the building.

**Fellowship Hall below Sanctuary (Level 1)**

The fellowship hall/gymnasium level (Level 1) measures 47 feet wide and the length is oriented east to west. Approximately two-thirds of this level is below grade. The fellowship hall is entered from a 4-1/2 foot wide stairwell with 15 concrete steps. It is configured with a stage at the east end, a steel cable suspended mezzanine on the west and south perimeter, and a kitchen and mechanical room on the west end. The main hall has an approximately 20 feet high ceiling. Natural light enters from eight glass block windows measuring 6-1/2 feet by 4-1/2 feet that rest just above grade level. The "L" shaped mezzanine is 7 feet wide with 3" oak flooring. It has a 14-riser stairway at the north end of the west side and at the east end of the south side leading to the gym floor.

The raised stage area was reconfigured in 1988 to include more storage on the sides, and storage rooms are also available behind the stage. Adjoining the kitchen at the west end is the main mechanical room, which has an outside entrance to the alley on the west. Other stairways also lead out of the fellowship hall. From the mezzanine level, stairs lead eastward up to the south narthex entrance. From the northwest corner of the mezzanine, the "back" stairway mentioned earlier leads thirty-six risers up to the third level (Level 4) of the education wing.

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**Westminster Presbyterian Church  
Topeka, Kansas**

### Statement of Significance

Westminster Presbyterian Church (WPC) (c. 1926) is historically significant under Criterion C as an example of a Late Gothic Revival religious structure. Ralph Adams Cram, a proponent of the Late Gothic Revival style for ecclesiastic and academic structures, was devoutly religious and his writings and buildings helped spark the Late Gothic Revival throughout America in the first decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century (Gelernter, 204-205). The Westminster Presbyterian Church, designed by Charles D. Cuthbert, exemplifies the Late Gothic Revival style in its stone construction, significant horizontal massing, low tower with battlements, and its use of pointed arch windows and window tracery.

#### Historical background and significance:

The congregation of the Westminster Presbyterian Church, which was organized on April 28, 1889, was located in the College Hill neighborhood of Topeka. Its first church building was erected in 1890, and significantly remodeled in 1912. In January of 1921, Elder George H. Fair presented a resolution calling for the appointment of a committee “to study the advisability of erecting a new house of worship.” In June of 1921, this committee reported to the congregation its recommendation that, rather than purchasing more land adjacent to the existing church, the lots on the northwest corner of Thirteenth and Boswell Streets should become the site of the new building.

Those involved in planning for the new church building believed that the physical structure of the church was not incidental to the spiritual construction of the congregation. A May 11, 1924, WPC Bulletin observed that:

Water assumes the shape of a vessel it is poured into. A congregation is influenced by the building it occupies. Its spacious dimensions may challenge to large service; its true lines and noble proportions may inspire sentiments of truth and nobility; its thoughtful and appropriate facilities may set forward the efforts of earnest teachers and loyal workers; its

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impressive dignity is a material aid to worship; and its noble and imposing exterior may appeal to multitudes of passersby.

The Late Gothic Revival style was an appropriate choice for the new WPC building, as it was inspired by the congruent belief that art and morality are linked. Ralph Adams Cram, a leading proponent of the Late Gothic Revival style, built upon the ideas of the English architect A.W. Pugin, who had championed the first revival of Gothic design principles for ecclesiastical architecture in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century. Cram combined Pugin's philosophy, which considered religious structures of the 12<sup>th</sup> through the 15<sup>th</sup> centuries to be the architectural embodiment of Christian virtues and ideals, with the contemporary principles of Academic Eclecticism, which dominated American architecture from the turn of the twentieth century to the 1930s.

This school of thought, inspired by French Beaux-Arts theory, advocated that architects base their work on the principles of design gleaned from an intense study of historical precedent. These principles were considered not to be the exclusive property of any one architectural style, but rather were inherent to good architecture of any style. Academic Eclecticism recognized that modern building materials and uses called for new solutions to new problems. This meant that while architects should draw upon the design principles articulated in historical structures, their work should appropriately modify historic styles to reflect these modern materials and uses.

While other prominent architects of the time believed that Classical architecture provided the best example of good design principles, Cram felt that Gothic architecture most effectively executed the principles of good design. Cram also believed that Gothic, rather than being a defunct style, had merely been interrupted in its development by the Renaissance and the Protestant Reformation. He advanced the notion that that which had been left off at the end of the medieval era should be picked up again and explored further. His writings and buildings inspired the widespread use of Late Gothic Revival design throughout America; that the style is also referred to as Collegiate Gothic is a reflection of its popularity for use in academic buildings.

The fusion of Pugin's vision of the Gothic as the architectural expression of Christian ideals with the principles of Academic Eclecticism resulted in the features which differentiate the Late Gothic Revival from the Early Gothic Revival and High Victorian Gothic periods that preceded it. Late Gothic Revival buildings are built of masonry and have stone tracery, while Early Gothic Revival structures in America were often built of wood imitating stone. Also, churches of the Late Gothic Revival period do not seek the archaeological accuracy pursued by their Early Gothic Revival forebears. Unlike structures built during the prominence of High Victorian Gothic, churches of the Late Gothic Revival period exhibit a greater emphasis on form than

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ornament. While structures of the High Victorian Gothic period are an exuberant display of spires, gables, dormers, polychrome, and contrasts of scale, buildings of the Late Gothic Revival exhibit ornament that is used to enhance the form rather than to serve as the focal point of the structure.

The Westminster Presbyterian Church clearly exhibits its Late Gothic Revival lineage in its limestone construction, significant horizontal massing, low tower with battlements, and pointed arch windows. The building's spare ornamentation, limited almost exclusively to its window tracery, serves to highlight the form and mass of the structure. The irregular courses of rough-faced ashlar stone likewise emphasize the church's horizontality. This formal heaviness is lightened and uplifted by the tall arched windows along the sides of the sanctuary and in the tower's upper level, as well as by the arched triptych of windows which surmounts the main entrance to the sanctuary. The Westminster Presbyterian Church stands as a metaphor, as both Ralph Adams Cram and the WPC planning committee had hoped, for an ideal Christian congregation—one that is both grounded and solid in its principles, and uplifted by higher aspirations.

Charles D. Cuthbert, who served as the Kansas State Architect from 1925 to 1930, was the architect for the new Westminster Presbyterian Church. Cuthbert also designed such notable structures as the Carnegie Library at Washburn University, Budig Hall (formerly Hoch Auditorium) and Snow Hall at the University of Kansas, and Boswell Junior High School, which stood directly south of WPC. The *Topeka Daily Capital* (July 28, 1924) reported that "The architect plans to harmonize the two structural designs [WPC and the Boswell Junior High School] so as to add to the beauty of the structure." Cuthbert, who lived at 1415 Jewell, was a resident of the College Hill neighborhood in which the WPC stands. Likewise, A.R. Stimson and Howard Stimson, who headed the construction company which built the WPC, were members of the Westminster Presbyterian Church congregation.

The groundbreaking for the WPC was held on November 2, 1924, and the cornerstone was laid May 10, 1925. Contained in the cornerstone were the signatures of the Sunday School scholars and a historical statement about Westminster Presbyterian Church. The building was dedicated on March 21, 1926. The church retains many of the original fittings which helped to make the building a source of pride for its congregation. The stained glass windows on the east side of the sanctuary in the rear of the balcony area were a gift from the Sunday School as a memorial to longtime Sunday School Superintendent H. W. Bomgardner. These art glass windows were made by the Kansas City Stained Glass Company. The electric light fixtures in the sanctuary are stalactite chandeliers and sconces furnished by Bailey-Reynolds Company of Kansas City and

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installed by the Turner Electric Company of Topeka. Hardware was furnished by S.L. Reid of the College Hill Hardware Company. The pews were furnished by the Peabody School Furniture Company of Topeka. An Austin pipe organ, which was replaced in the 1960s, was installed and dedicated in a concert recital on March 25, 1926, by Henry Stearns, Washburn College Dean of the School of Music.

Although the congregation had agreed that the new church would not be built until they had raised at least half of the estimated cost of the building, and that that cost would be capped at \$50,000, the ultimate price of the structure was \$158,000. The high cost of building coupled with the ease of borrowing money during the boom time of the 1920s led the congregation off the path of frugality and into debt. During the Depression, the congregation employed a variety of means to pay the mortgage, including dinners, rummage sales, bazaars, and parish picnics. These efforts, together with hefty financial gifts from the First Presbyterian Church of Topeka and a member of the WPC congregation, culminated in a Mortgage Burning Service on May 5, 1946, to celebrate the church's emancipation from debt.

The Westminster Presbyterian Church has been an integral part of the College Hill neighborhood since its completion. By 1929, membership in the congregation had grown to 776. A list of new members received into the church on March 29, 1929, showed that 25 of 38 families lived within close proximity of the College Hill neighborhood. A number of prominent Topekans have been members of the congregation. Dr. Karl A. Menninger was a cofounder of the Menninger Foundation and a recipient of the Humanitarian Medal of Freedom. Dr. Charles H. Lerrigo founded the Society for the Study and Prevention of Tuberculosis which later became the American Lung Association. In 1956, Margaret Cummings was chosen as Topeka's "Woman of the Year" in the category of church and religion. Gladys Phinney, a lifelong member of WPC, was registrar of Washburn College. Margaret Hill McCarter, an English teacher at Topeka High School, wrote best-selling novels about pioneer life. A well-known public speaker, in 1920 she became the first woman to speak at the national Republican convention. Helen Hodge was a nationally exhibited artist, illustrator, photographer, and a charter member of the Topeka Art Guild. Thomas Wilson Williamson was a prominent architect.

The church's facilities have allowed the building to play a vital role in the life of the congregation and the community. The gymnasium has been the scene of dramatic performances as well as sporting events. The kitchen adjacent to the gymnasium continues to provide convenient service for congregational dinners. During World War II, the gymnasium and other church rooms were made available to servicemen for recreation and other uses. In the 1950s, between 50 and 100 children participated in the children's choir each week. From 1947 until the



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1970s, members of the WPC performed an annual production of “The Twelve Soliloquize,” a dramatic presentation of the Last Supper with Leonardo da Vinci’s painting as its setting.

After over seventy years of service to its congregation, the Westminster Presbyterian Church is minimally altered from its original appearance. In 1939, six art glass windows were installed in the chapel in memory of each of the church’s ministers. In the 1940s, the furnace was converted from coal to gas, and the kitchen was remodeled with the addition of a dishwasher. In the 1960s, the tower was lighted and the heating and air conditioning systems were updated. The pews in the sanctuary were rearranged from their original configuration of three sections of pews with two inner and two outer aisles to the current arrangement of two sections of pews with one central and two outer aisles. Also in the 1960s, an accessibility ramp was added to the tower entrance on the east side of the educational wing, and the exterior doors were replaced with storm doors; these two changes represent the only exterior alterations to the building. The Westminster Presbyterian Church continues to play a vital role in the life of its community, and its purity as an example of Late Gothic Revival ecclesiastical architecture is untarnished.

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**VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION:**

The nominated property is located on Lots 305-307-309-311-313 and South 6 ft. 3 ins. Of Lot 303 Boswell Avenue, College Place Addition. This property is bounded on the south by 13<sup>th</sup> Street, on the east by Boswell Avenue, on the west by an alley, and on the north by adjacent property lines.

**BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION;**

The boundary contains all property historically associated with the nominated building.