

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES REGISTRATION FORM

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in "Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms" (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

1. Name of Property

historic name First Presbyterian Church of Augusta
other names/site number Christ Church

2. Location

street & number 642 Telfair Street
city, town Augusta (n/a) vicinity of
county Richmond code GA 245
state Georgia code GA zip code 30901

(n/a) not for publication

3. Classification

Ownership of Property:

- private
- public-local
- public-state
- public-federal

Category of Property

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

Number of Resources within Property:

	<u>Contributing</u>	<u>Noncontributing</u>
buildings	1	0
sites	1	0
structures	1	0
objects	1	0
total	4	0

Contributing resources previously listed in the National Register: 0

Name of related multiple property listing: n/a

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this nomination 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 the National Register criteria. () See continuation sheet.

Mark R. Edwards

Signature of certifying official

1-17-97

Date

Mark R. Edwards
State Historic Preservation Officer,
Georgia Department of Natural Resources

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

Signature of commenting or other official

Date

State or Federal agency or bureau

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

entered in the National Register

Elsen H. Beall

2-21-97

determined eligible for the National Register

determined not eligible for the National Register

removed from the National Register

other, explain:

see continuation sheet

for

Signature, Keeper of the National Register

Date

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions:

RELIGION/religious facility

Current Functions:

RELIGION/religious facility

7. Description

Architectural Classification:

MID-19TH CENTURY/Early Romanesque Revival

Materials:

foundation	brick, concrete
walls	brick, concrete
roof	asphalt
other	n/a

Description of present and historic physical appearance:

The First Presbyterian Church of Augusta is situated on a city block located in downtown Augusta, surrounded by institutional and residential properties. Across the street from the church is the Woodrow Wilson Boyhood Home which was originally the church manse when Wilson's father was pastor at the church, 1858 to 1870.

The church consists of a main sanctuary (c.1809-1812) and its four additions dating from 1951 to 1978. The main sanctuary, completed in 1812, was designed by Robert Mills (1781-1855) in the Classical style, but changes in 1847 gave it a Romanesque-style appearance. The pre-1847 sanctuary featured a center steeple with a square tower and round spire, louvered lanterns, fanlight window, and recessed front entrance (see Figure A). The current church is brick covered in smooth scored stucco, creating a stone-like effect. Architectural features include: a round-arched wood central door and two paired round-arched windows on the front facade; a rose window above the front door; castellated edges on the roof line; Gothic-inspired tracery in the windows and an English Gothic-inspired Chancel window at the rear of the sanctuary made of English glass by Owen Bonawit, Inc., of New York. The church is entered through a vestibule which opens into the sanctuary. There are two "winder" stairways leading to the balcony, which contains pews to provide seating for the congregation. The chancel, altar, and choir loft are located at the on the opposite end (south) of the sanctuary from the balcony. The interior materials include an arched groined ceiling with bosses, paired windows, and restored molding over the altar. The church sanctuary has had many changes and rearrangements since its construction including; the addition of the steeple and pews in 1818, the addition of a rose window, tracery windows, and wainscoting in the sanctuary in 1847, the removal of the side galleries, balcony extended, and addition of an organ and choir

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National Park Service

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loft behind the pulpit in 1892, replacement of organ with an Austin pipe organ and renovations to the sanctuary in 1927, and classically inspired wood molding added to the chancel in 1988. The only intact interior surviving feature from the Robert Mills design are the small anterooms that contain the winder staircases.

The church has had a number of auxiliary buildings attached to it from 1951 to 1978, all to the rear and sides. The Belle North Wing (1951) is a brick addition with little ornamentation. The Resse East Hall and Resse West Hall (1975-1976) additions are both brick covered with scored stucco. They contain small metal round arched windows on the upper stories and double-hung sash windows on the first story. St. Andrew's Hall (1977) is constructed of brick covered with scored stucco. The church is surrounded by a park-like setting characteristic of the Downingesque Landscape identified in the Georgia's Living Places: Historic Houses in Their Landscaped Settings context. The yard contains some annuals and perennials, but mostly shrubs and small trees, with several mature trees in the front yard. The trees are informally grouped together along curving brick paths extended out from the church. The original picket fence was replaced soon after the Civil War with the existing fence, which consists of a brick base, wooden spikes, and concrete turned posts. A statue of Rev. Robert Irvine, pastor of the church from 1870 to 1881 was erected in 1884 to mark his grave site near the sanctuary. The church has remained in continuous use for over 180 years and remains an important part of the city of Augusta.

8. Statement of Significance

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

nationally statewide locally

Applicable National Register Criteria:

A B C D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions): N/A

A B C D E F G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions):

ARCHITECTURE
SOCIAL HISTORY
RELIGION

Period of Significance:

1809-1946

Significant Dates:

1809-1812 Construction of the church.
1847 Major renovation altering the original design by Robert
 Mills.

Significant Person(s):

n/a

Cultural Affiliation:

n/a

Architect(s)/Builder(s):

Robert Mills

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Significance of property, justification of criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above:

Narrative statement of significance (areas of significance)

The First Presbyterian Church of Augusta is significant in architecture as an excellent example of a church building, that throughout its 180 years of continuous use, has changed to reflect the prevailing popularity of church styles. While constructed in 1809 in the Classical style by Robert Mills (1781-1855), nationally known architect of such notable works as the Washington Monument and the Fireproof Building in Charleston, it was drastically changed in 1847 to reflect Romanesque features, including the round-arched windows and doors, the groined and bossed ceiling, and addition of the crenelation. The church, as remodeled in 1847, is a good example of the Romanesque style of architecture as applied to religious buildings in Georgia. The original plans by Mills, dated 1807, survive and are perhaps the oldest surviving for any Georgia building. These plans are located at the Smithsonian Institute. The only intact surviving features from the Robert Mills design, other than the overall form and size of the building, are the small anterooms that contain the winder staircases (see photo 10 of 10). Four halls were added to the building from 1951 to 1978 and are located to the sides and rear of the sanctuary. The additions do not detract from the architectural significance of the sanctuary since the original form of the sanctuary is still discernible.

The church is significant in social history and religion for being the oldest Presbyterian church building in this major Georgia city in a state where Presbyterians were always in the minority, the state being heavily Baptist and Methodist. This church was pastored from 1858 to 1870 by Rev. Joseph Wilson, father of President Woodrow Wilson. Rev. Wilson was a distinguished minister of his era. In 1861, the church was the site of the founding of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church for the Confederate States of America, a national organization formed in response to the Civil War, with Rev. Wilson as clerk. The church building has remained in continuous use and associated with the same congregation since it was dedicated in 1812.

National Register Criteria

The First Presbyterian Church of Augusta meets National Register Criterion A for its association with the founding of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church for the Confederate States of America (1861) and as the oldest Presbyterian church building in a state dominated by Baptist and Methodist denominations. The church meets National Register Criterion C as an excellent example of a

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center steeple-type church building, constructed 1809-1812, reflecting the prevailing popularity of church styles over time.

Criteria Considerations (if applicable)

The First Presbyterian Church of Augusta meets Criteria Consideration A as a religious property deriving significance from its architectural distinction and association with the founding of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church for the Confederate States of America.

Period of significance (justification)

The period of significance for the First Presbyterian Church of Augusta begins with the construction of the church in 1809 and ends in 1946, the end of the historic period in which the church continued to be significant.

Contributing/Noncontributing Resources (explanation, if necessary)

The contributing resources include: the church building; a historic fence surrounding the property; and a grave and associated statue of Rev. Robert Irvine located on the grounds.

Developmental history/historic context (if applicable)

In December 1808, the Georgia State Legislature passed "an act authorizing and requiring the conveyance of a lot on the common of Augusta, to certain trustees and their successors, for the purpose of building a new church, and to incorporate the trustees of said church." At a meeting of the subscribers to the new church held on May 23, 1809, a building committee was organized to oversee the construction of a new church. With a few modification, the plans submitted in 1807 by Robert Mills, a Philadelphia architect, were adopted by the building committee and board of trustees. Robert Mills (1781-1855) was born in Charleston, S.C. and is considered to be one of America's most revered architects. Those original plans are currently located at the Smithsonian Institute.

The First Presbyterian Church of Augusta, originally known as Christ Church until 1836, consisted of a congregation of only 50 members when the cornerstone and foundation were laid for the church on July 4, 1809. The classically inspired sanctuary designed by Mills was completed on May 17, 1812 and 700 people gathered for the first service. At the time of its dedication, the church had no steeple or pews in the gallery. In 1818, the pews, existing steeple, two large

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heating stoves, and a pulpit set high above the congregation were added.

In the summer of 1847, the church was significantly renovated: a new pulpit was constructed and the original classical design was changed to a Romanesque style, featuring a recessed doorway under a Norman-round arch with a rose window. Also in 1847, a house and lot across from the church were purchased to be used as a manse. In 1860, the present manse, located on the corner of McIntosh Street at Telfair Street was purchased from A.H. Jones in exchange for the old manse and \$4,000.

One of the most distinguished pastors of the church was the Rev. Joseph R. Wilson, father of Woodrow Wilson, the twenty-eighth President of the United States. Rev. Wilson served as Permanent Clerk of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the Confederate States, an organization formed at the church in response to the Civil War. During the war, Union soldiers were held as prisoners in a temporary detention camp established in the yard around the church. The prisoners would be held at the church while waiting to board a train at the depot on Watkins Street.

In 1883, the estate of Miss Mary Telfair left \$36,509 to the church trustees to be used to construct a Sunday school located on the church grounds. The Telfair Building, built 1884, was a Romanesque Revival-style building located on the west section of the church lot. The building was demolished in 1976 to provide space for a wing addition to the church building. In 1884, a marble statue of Rev. Robert Irvine, pastor from 1870 until his death in 1881, was erected near the Telfair Building marking his grave. The statue and grave remain in their original location.

Numerous minor and major renovations have been completed on the building from the 1890s to the present. Recently, the church has completed a major renovation of the sanctuary to enlarge the choir loft and rear balcony. The church is also planning to construct a new Sunday school building on the property.

9. Major Bibliographic References

Casey, Susan E. "First Presbyterian Church of Augusta," Historic Property Information Form, December 1988. On file at the Historic Preservation Division of the Georgia Department of Natural Resources, Atlanta, Georgia, with supplemental information.

Previous documentation on file (NPS): (x) N/A

- () 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 #

Primary location of additional data:

- (x) State historic preservation office
- () Other State Agency
- () Federal agency
- () Local government
- () University
- () Other, Specify Repository:

Georgia Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned):

n/a

10. Geographical Data

Acreege of Property Approximately 3 acres.

UTM References

A) Zone 17 Easting 410320 Northing 3703660

Verbal Boundary Description

The National Register boundary for the First Presbyterian Church of Augusta is drawn to scale with a heavy black line on the attached tax map.

Boundary Justification

The National Register boundary for the First Presbyterian Church of Augusta includes the church and remaining 3 acres historically associated with the church.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Susan Casey and Dale Jaeger/Preservation Planner
organization The Jaeger Company
street & number 119 Washington Street
city or town Gainesville **state** Georgia **zip code** 30501
telephone (770) 534-0506 **date** December 1988

name/title Amy Pallante/National Register Specialist
organization Historic Preservation Division, Georgia Department of Natural Resources
street & number 500 The Healey Building, 57 Forysth Street
city or town Atlanta **state** Georgia **zip code** 30303
telephone (404) 651-6033 **date** January 2, 1997

(HPS form version 10-29-91)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

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Photographs

Name of Property: First Presbyterian Church of Augusta
City or Vicinity: Augusta
County: Richmond
State: Georgia
Photographer: James R. Lockhart
Negative Filed: Georgia Department of Natural Resources
Date Photographed: March 1996

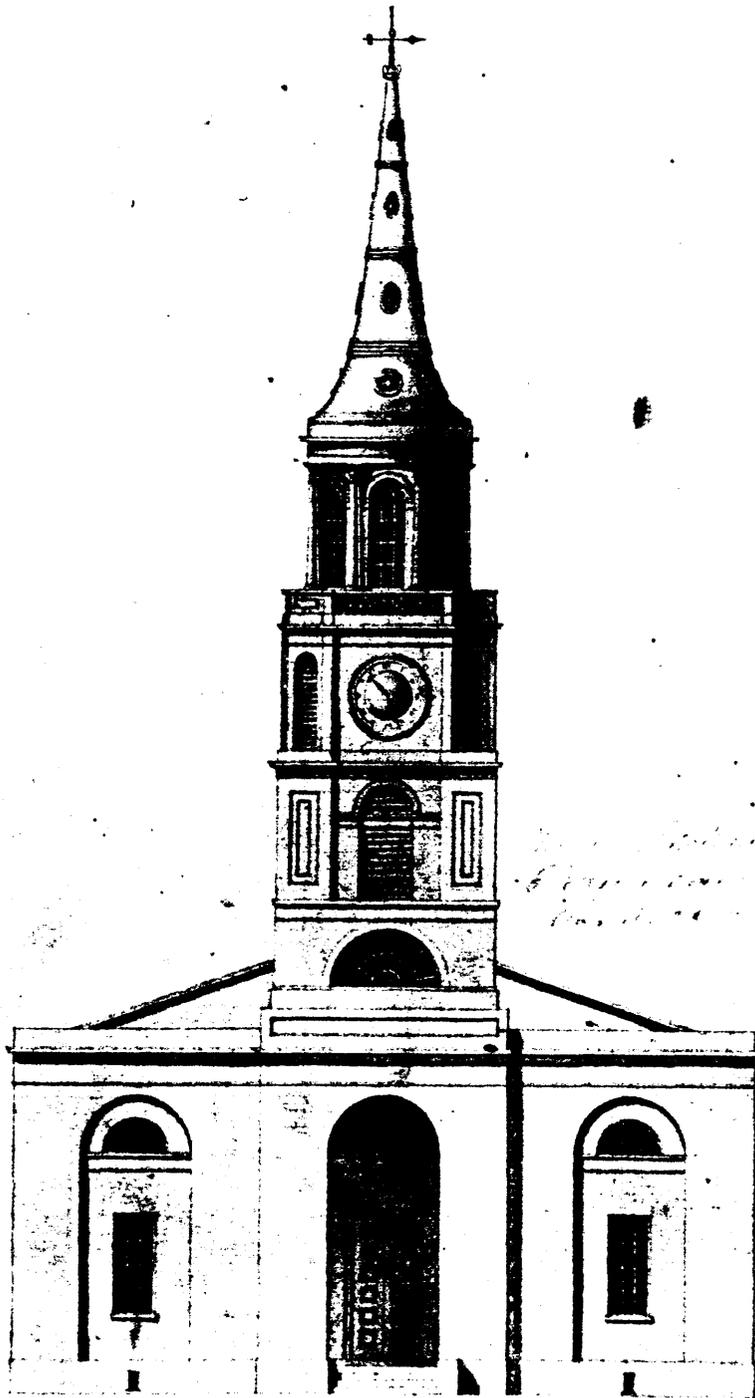
Description of Photograph(s):

- 1 of 10 View of First Presbyterian Church of Augusta; photographer facing southwest.
- 2 of 10 View of church; photographer facing southeast.
- 3 of 10 View of church and yard; photographer facing northeast.
- 4 of 10 View of the rear of the church; photographer facing north.
- 5 of 10 View of Reese East Hall (1976); photographer facing northeast.
- 6 of 10 View of statue of Rev. Irvine and sanctuary (1809-1812); photographer facing west.
- 7 of 10 View of main entrance to the sanctuary; photographer facing south.
- 8 of 10 View of pulpit; photographer facing south.
- 9 of 10 View of gallery; photographer facing north.
- 10 of 10 View of winder stairway near main entrance to the sanctuary.

Figure A

First Presbyterian Church of Augusta
Augusta, Richmond County, GA.

Source: Copy of 1807 construction plans by Robert Mills.

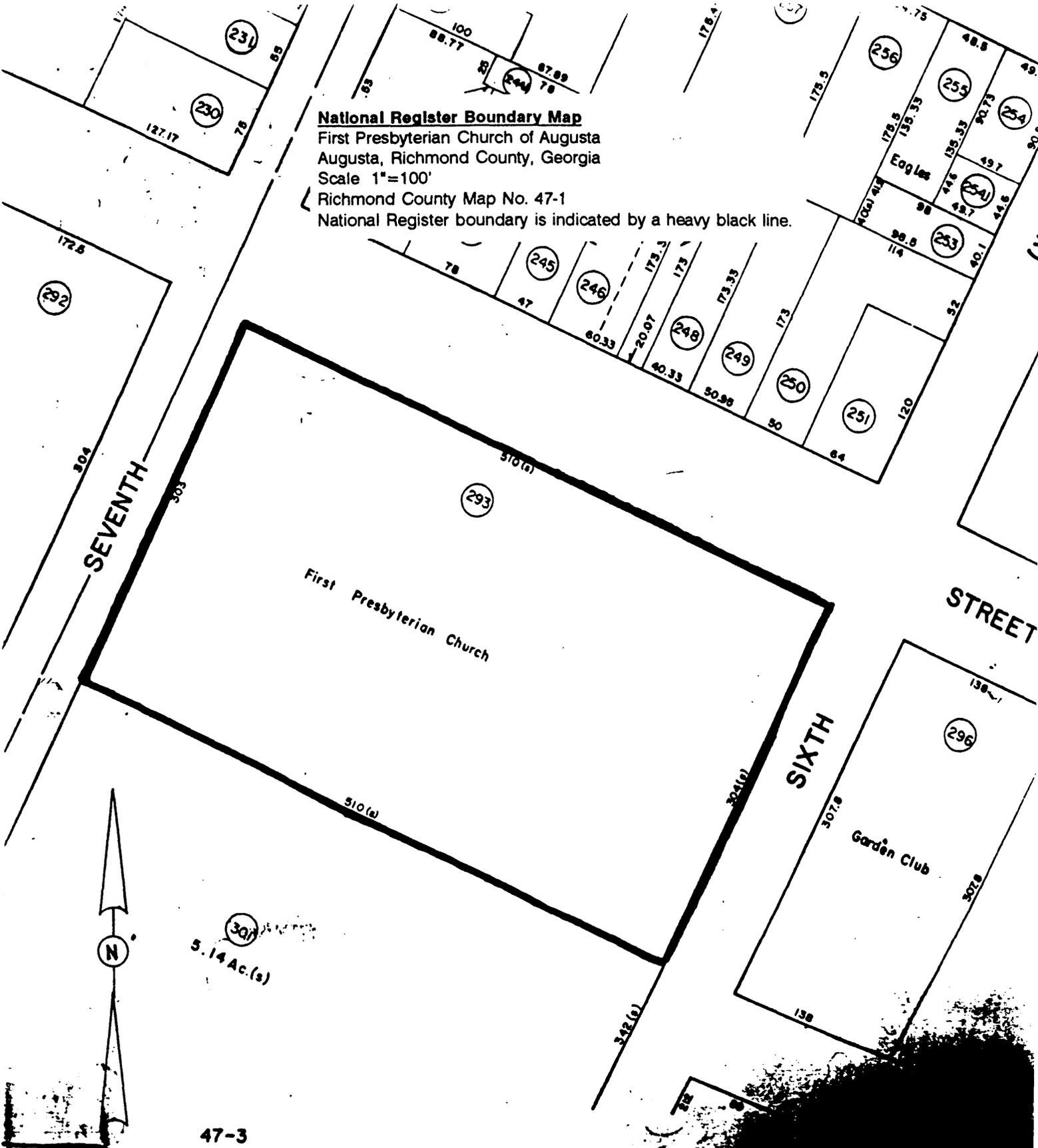


*Facade
or
Principal Front of the Church.*

National Register Boundary Map

First Presbyterian Church of Augusta
Augusta, Richmond County, Georgia
Scale 1"=100'

Richmond County Map No. 47-1
National Register boundary is indicated by a heavy black line.



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AND RECORDS SYSTEM

RICHMOND COUNTY, GEORGIA

1 INCH=100 FEET

Site Plan and Photo Key

First Presbyterian Church of Augusta

Augusta, Richmond County, Georgia

Not to Scale

○▶ = Photo Number and Direction

