

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 National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any 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.

1. Name of Property

Historic name: First Presbyterian Church of Groton

Other names/site number: n/a

Name of related multiple property listing:

n/a

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

2. Location

Street & number: 300 N Main St.

City or town: Groton State: SD County: Brown

Not For Publication: ☐

Vicinity: ☐

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,

I hereby certify that this x 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 x meets ___ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

___ national ___ statewide x local

Applicable National Register Criteria:

A

B

x C

D

Jay D. Vogt
Signature of certifying official/Title:

12-18-2018

Date

SD SHPO

State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of commenting official:

Date

Title:

State or Federal agency/bureau
or Tribal Government

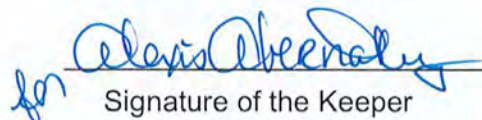
First Presbyterian Church of Groton
Name of Property

Brown County, SD
County and State

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

- ☒ entered in the National Register
☐ determined eligible for the National Register
☐ determined not eligible for the National Register
☐ removed from the National Register
☐ other (explain) _____


Signature of the Keeper

3/14/2019
Date of Action

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 ☐

First Presbyterian Church of Groton
Name of Property

Brown County, SD
County and State

Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

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

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

First Presbyterian Church of Groton
Name of Property

Brown County, SD
County and State

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Late Victorian/Gothic

Late 19th and 20th Century Revivals/Tudor Revival

Materials: (enter categories from instructions.)

Principal exterior materials of the property: Foundation: Concrete; Walls: Brick, Stone, Sandstone; Roof: Asphalt.

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance and condition of the property. Describe contributing and noncontributing resources if applicable. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, type, style, method of construction, setting, size, and significant features. Indicate whether the property has historic integrity.)

Summary Paragraph

First Presbyterian Church was designed by Pennsylvania architect J.C. Fulton and completed in 1912. The church is located at the center of Groton (population 1,509), approximately one block north of the main commercial district. Its address is 300 Main St. The church is located midblock and is surrounded primarily with residences, though a plain, wood Masonic Temple also sits directly to its north. The primary volume of the building is two stories in height, bi-chromatically clad in red and black brick laid in a stretcher bond and is built above a partially raised basement. The raised basement is covered in gray/black brickwork, while the rest of the building is red brick. The original footprint of the building remains intact.

Its significant features include: prominent stone steps on the façade (south elevation) leading to an arcade comprised of three Gothic/Tudor Revival arch entrances; a square corner tower with castellated parapet; multiple roof lines including a dominant hip roof; and parapeted, stone-capped gables. Gothic/Tudor Revival arch window openings on the primary volume include an array of stained, painted, and leaded glass windows produced by the Ford Brothers of Minneapolis; an ocular stained-glass window above the arcade; a large, tripartite Gothic window on the east elevation; and an interior stained-glass dome. Its scaling fits within the neighborhood, however, it is also a focal point due to its siting and Gothic Revival style architecture. Additional significant features include the modified Akron Plan layout and the use of partitions.

First Presbyterian Church of Groton
Name of Property

Brown County, SD
County and State

There have been several minimal changes to the exterior, including repainting of the exterior trim and doors and re-roofing the entry areas as they leaked. The interior has also had minimal alterations: the sanctuary ceiling was primed and painted, the dome was uncovered, and an elevator was installed. Overall the building retains excellent integrity of design, materials, setting, location, workmanship, feeling, and association.

Narrative Description

Location and Setting

The church began construction on this brick building in 1911. It replaced the original wood building constructed in 1884 about 2½ blocks northeast on what was known as "Piety Hill." The church building is sited on lots 7 and 8 of Block 9, Original Plat of Groton, with lots 5, 6, 9 and part of lot 10 of Block 9 providing open space around the building. The church owns all 6 lots and the building. S.J. and Mary Griffin sold the lots to the church in 1911. A single, mature, deciduous tree is in the boulevard; the remainder of the lots are treeless. Photos from 1981 show the church grounds once contained several mature and young deciduous trees. Currently, shrubs and bushes are located around the building.

The main façade faces south, and two walkways lead from the street, combining in front of the stairs. This façade does not face the street; instead it sits opposite a small green space and a one-story house. The reason for this orientation is unclear, perhaps it's connected to the light coming through the stained-glass windows. The east elevation with the large tripartite stained-glass window faces Main Street. A dirt alley accesses the rear of the church property. A small (non-original) sign capped with a gable faces the street by the tower.

Building Exterior

The First Presbyterian Church is a hybrid of different architectural styles, and while it can be broadly categorized as Gothic Revival, it also includes elements that belong to the Tudor Revival Style. This stylistic combination is evident especially in the windows. The church features twenty-eight hand-painted leaded glass windows with stone sill and lintel combinations. While the leaded stain glass and perpendicular tracery belong to the Gothic Revival, the brick arches above the windows laid in a triple or quadruple bond of header bricks are not pointed enough to be Gothic. Instead, they more closely resemble the slightly flattened arches of the Tudor Revival style. The same can be said of the three arches that lead to the portico on the main façade.

The massing is also not strictly in keeping with the Gothic revival style, which traditionally features a smaller, elongated footprint. This could be because of the Akron Plan inside rather than the traditional nave plan. The darker brickwork on the basement and the molding that surrounds the building emphasizes these horizontal lines. These could be purely decorative elements.

First Presbyterian Church of Groton
Name of Property

Brown County, SD
County and State

Other significant features include a stone water table separating the basement and upper levels, a tower with crenellated parapets and canted buttresses, the concrete foundation, and the roof with asphalt shingles. Windows on the basement level are wood one over one with semi-opaque glass or plexiglass screens. As the building is composed of different sub-volumes, the roof is articulated and dynamic with the tall truncated pyramidal hipped roof placed directly over the inner sanctuary. Parapeted gables are located on the southern and eastern façades. The different roof lines end in flared eaves, providing shade to the building's immediate surroundings.

South Elevation

The south elevation is the primary façade containing the main entrance. It faces a residence and a yard and is accessed by sidewalks from the street to the east. The asymmetrical south elevation is made up of multiple sub-volumes not entirely flush with each other, which creates an articulated and dynamic façade.

This side of the building contains the main entrance. Two sets of double-paneled doors face each other nestled on the eastern and western ends of a small, arcaded porch. The porch itself is accessible by way of sandstone steps, set in large, flat slabs. An iron railing is positioned on either side of the steps.

The porch is accessible through three slightly flattened Gothic/Tudor Revival style arches. The arches themselves are composed of four rows of short, gray/black brickwork. The rest of the short wall is composed of red brick, including the columns supporting the arches. The bases and the abaci of the columns are squared, minimally shaped, cream colored sandstone. Below the abaci, the capitols are beveled and squared.

The main wall under the porch, on the opposite side of the arcade, is made up of red brick and houses three Gothic Revival/Tudor style windows. Each window retains its original fixtures and is surmounted by three rows of black brick. The original sandstone sills are intact.

The ceiling of the porch is composed of wood paneling painted a light pink. As the gable overlooking the porch is set back in relation to the rest of the façade, the space above the porch gives way to a small terrace mirroring the dimensions of the porch below. The terrace is currently inaccessible to the public.

The crenellated parapet above the porch partially obscures the large round rose window positioned in the middle of the gable. Four rows of gray/black brick encircle the rose window. The steep pitch of the gable is highlighted by a simple light-colored molding replicated throughout the building.

Behind the gable, the shape of the hipped truncated pyramidal roof covered in asphalt shingles looms tall, almost at the height of the tower located to the right of the porch. The tower is in a simple, early English style common in churches designed by J.C. Fulton. The base is made up of solid gray/black bricks laid out in a common stretcher bond, the same as in the rest of the building. At the height of the adjoining elevated porch, sandstone molding separates the base

First Presbyterian Church of Groton
Name of Property

Brown County, SD
County and State

from the rest of the tower, constructed in red brick. Buttresses on each of the four corners of the tower emphasize its height as well as provide structural support. Below the molding, on the southeastern buttress, a large cornerstone is etched with the name and construction date of the church.

Three openings perforate the southern part of the tower. The lowest window replicates the ones present underneath the porch, complete with original fixtures, sill, and gray/black brick arch. Approximately halfway through the height of the tower appears a narrow window possessing both a sill and a thicker stone lintel. The tallest opening is a large, tripartite window composed of original perpendicular tracery and with wooden louvers. A large Gothic Revival/Tudor style arch rests above the window, made up of three rows of gray/black brick. A sandstone sill sits below the window. The same window is replicated exactly on the southern, eastern, western, and northern façade of the tower at the same height.

Above the window, the crenellated parapet recalls medieval architectural motifs. The lighter color of the mortar here suggests this parapet was repointed.

West of the porch, a smaller building volume juts out slightly. This smaller façade, like the tower, also presents a base made up of solid gray/black brick at the same height of the elevated porch. This base encircles the entire building, as does the molding immediately above it, separating the elevated basement base from the larger red-brick facades. On this smaller south façade, the molding accommodates a smaller door at ground level and a window by encircling both in a box-like fashion.

Above the molding there are three Gothic pointed windows complete with pointed gray/black brick arches and sandstone sills. Differently from other windows on the building volume, these are positioned close together to create a continuous arch pattern, rather than three distinct arches. These arches are pointed and could be classified as Gothic Revival. The central window is bigger and taller than the other two flanking its sides. The upper extremity of the parapet is also crenellated with a slight point in the middle and suggests the presence of a flat roof/terrace.

The final volume of the southern façade, located furthest west, is partially covered by low shrubbery. Above the usual gray/black brick base and sandstone molding, there are three rectangular windows. While these windows are the same height, the central one is slightly wider. A sandstone lintel surmounts all three openings. The wide eave above casts significant shade over the entire sub-volume.

East Elevation

Facing Main Street, the east elevation is the most publicly-viewed façade. While this elevation is not as articulated as the southern side, it is also composed of slightly different volumes.

On the left corner, the tower mirrors the openings and decorative elements found on its southern side. Adjacent to the tower, a large steeply pitched, parapeted gable surmounted by sandstone molding dominates the main volume. The gable volume is set slightly forward in relation to the rest of the façade and is demarked by parallel buttresses that run to the ground.

First Presbyterian Church of Groton
Name of Property

Brown County, SD
County and State

The gable creates an additional roof line jutting into the main truncated pyramidal hipped roof volume. A large tripartite window with perpendicular style tracery perforates the gable. This window is the largest opening in the entire building. Four rows of gray/black brick emphasize its Tudor Revival style arch. Right above the tripartite window there is a narrow opening.

The base of this volume is surrounded by shrubbery; however, it is possible to discern two square windows below the molding at ground level that allow light into the basement.

On both sides of the gabled volume, set slightly back, two smaller pointed Gothic windows are located at the same height as the large tripartite window. These pointed windows are decorated with gray/black brick arches and sandstone sills. The wide flared eave overhang casts shadows on this set back volume. Underneath the flared eaves it is possible to discern the scrolled rafter tails. As with all the other facades, the volume of the pyramidal roof is very prominent.

North Elevation

Between the east and north elevation, there is a negative square space. A small tree, growing below the two windows on both elevations, occupies this corner. Looking at the north-eastern corner of the building it is possible to see the configuration of roof lines as well as the flared eaves.

The rest of the north elevation retains the character of a secondary façade. While the same dual colored brickwork and sandstone molding decorate the façade, a variety of service equipment such as an air-conditioning unit, wiring, and tubing are also present. The volume on the easternmost side has a lower projecting section with a steep hip roof, complete with flared eaves. This sub-volume has a single rectangular window. The window retains both a sandstone sill and a thicker sandstone lintel above. Another simpler basement window is positioned right below the molding and directly below the first window.

On the adjoining volume to the west, set slightly back from the first volume, are four windows. The third window from the right is placed lower than the other three and rests directly above a small service door, separated by a thick sandstone sill. Unlike the south façade, here the molding that separated the red brick volume from the gray/black brick basement is interrupted by the door opening. Below the remaining three windows are three simpler windows set at ground level. The fourth set of windows from the right are placed at a further interval from the rest. All windows found on the upper floor are leaded stained-glass complete with the original tracery and storm windows.

West Elevation

The western elevation is perhaps the most symmetrical of the facades that compose the First Presbyterian Church. This elevation is also composed of two volumes, one set slightly ahead of the other. The front volume hosts four rectangular stained-glass windows on the upper portion and four corresponding simpler windows on the basement area. Two gutters stretched on the grass out from the building frame the volume. The secondary volume also houses rectangular

First Presbyterian Church of Groton
Name of Property

Brown County, SD
County and State

windows: on the northernmost section, a rectangular window and its basement window mirror the pattern of the primary volume. On the southernmost section, a narrower window stands on its own.

Interior

Beyond the small, secondary door located on ground floor of the south elevation, a narrow landing leads to a staircase. Going up, the flight of steps leads to the sanctuary/auditorium, while downwards provides access to the basement and to the elevator. The steps are carpeted, and a banister with spindle balustrade runs from the basement all the way to the upper floor allowing visibility to the staircase.

This upper atrium has a dark wooden baseboard that spans its entire periphery. The atrium provides four different access points: facing away from the stairs, the double doors on the left are the main access to the church and open onto the porch. At a slight angle to the left, double doors enter the sanctuary. Both sets of double doors are decorated with a wooden relief that mirrors the perpendicular tracery in the windows. The next set of doors give way into the Sunday school room and have a glass pane that allows insight into the space. Finally, a single door, also decorated with perpendicular tracery, closest to the ascending staircase opens into what are now offices. At the end of this irregular office room is the original brick fireplace with a simple wood mantle. Positioned in the fireplace is an iron gas furnace. While the rest of the room and the atrium are carpeted, the area surrounding the furnace is red/brown tile. The north wall of this room is made up of five wood partitions with six panels each that open into the Sunday school room by sliding them to the side.

Sanctuary

The sanctuary's interior is organized according to the diagonal plan, a derivative of the Akron plan. The diagonal plan integrates sanctuary and Akron Plan Sunday school.¹ The pulpit is in the northwest corner of the sanctuary, and the adjacent wall is a movable partition that can be lifted to provide additional space or closed to use as classroom space. This partition, when closed, mimics the rest of the wall by adopting the same white color, and only a wood frame that spans its length sets it apart. As the floor of the sanctuary slopes towards the pulpit, there is an unusually large step between the sanctuary and the adjoining Sunday school room separated by the movable partition. Behind the pulpit there three elaborately carved chairs with red velvet upholstery, placed in front of a red velvet curtain. A small series of rooms, the vestry, open behind the pulpit, stretching behind the organ. These rooms are used for storage.

The volume of the sanctuary is squared, however the vaulted ceiling and arches positioned at each corner create the illusion of a rounded plan. The curved pews facing the pulpit enhance this illusion. The ceiling has a stained-glass dome positioned in the center of the sanctuary. The dome is currently covered on the exterior, but lights allow the visitor to distinguish its warm

¹ Jeanne Halgren Kilde, *When Church Became Theater. The Transformation of Evangelical Architecture and Worship in Nineteenth-Century America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 179.

First Presbyterian Church of Groton
Name of Property

Brown County, SD
County and State

colors and its vaguely floral and geometric patterns. A wood drum painted light green encircles the drum. From the drum, ribs support the ceiling curving towards the corners. These are studded with white lightbulbs, unusual for church décor. The ribs curl in ornate green and gold corbels at the ends. They subdivide the space into eight sections: the four smaller sections frame the corners and create low, slightly-vaulted ceilings. The northwest corner is occupied by the pulpit, the northeastern corner houses a well-designed climate control system, the southeastern corner gives way to an adjoining room located in the tower, and the southwestern corner provides the main entrance to the sanctuary.

The larger sections demarked by the buttresses are vaulted and dent the otherwise smooth ceiling, creating a flat surface for large windows. The organ and seating for choir members occupy the north wall. The east wall houses the large tripartite stained-glass window, the largest window in the building. The southern side has the round rose window and three smaller Gothic Revival/Tudor style windows. The western wall houses the sliding partition, which opens into the Sunday School room.

The southeastern corner opens into a small room located inside the base of the tower. This room is accessible from the sanctuary and from the porch by two sets of double doors decorated with perpendicular tracery. On the south and east walls of the tower are two leaded stained-glass windows.

All the leaded stained-glass windows, including the tripartite perpendicular style window and the rose window are original. In the lower level windows, it is possible to see a particular style of stained glass. The glass was hand painted with a veneer instead of being tinted at the moment of creation so as to create three dimensional figures by using shadows and color shading. In certain panes, the glass appears to be textured and then painted. All windows present a combination of geometric patterns that recall stylized floral designs and figurative elements such as human figures or landscapes. The larger windows, such as the ones found on the eastern wall and the rose window, represent biblical stories and characters. The average size windows, such as the ones below the rose windows, represent landscapes. Some of the smaller windows are decorated with symbols, geometric or floral patterns.

Akron Plan Sunday School

A defining characteristic of the Akron Plan Sunday School is the arrangement of classrooms around the sanctuary. The First Presbyterian Church has a modified version of the Akron Plan as the sanctuary is adjacent to the Sunday school room located in the western part of the building. These two spaces, the sanctuary and the Sunday school room, can be separated by a vertical sliding partition and can be accessed separately from the atrium.

The Sunday school room also contains several pews curved towards the pulpit and a piano on the northern wall, next to a secondary entrance (which leads down to the service door and the basement). The piano blocks the original five-panel foldable door that allows entrance to what is now a classroom/storage area. The southern wall also has a paneled door shared by the office on the other side. The western wall of the Sunday school room opens into two irregularly shaped classrooms, with two openings each separated by a column, and demarked by curtains

First Presbyterian Church of Groton
Name of Property

Brown County, SD
County and State

from the rest of the space. There is a possibility that the curtain rods may be original. Each classroom has two leaded stained-glass windows.

Centered of the ceiling of the Sunday school room there is a twelve-light flat skylight. Mirroring the design of the sanctuary drum, this skylight is encircled by lightbulbs, but it is not stained-glass.

Beyond the northern wall of the Sunday school room, a door opens into a secondary service area. Here there is another access to the irregularly-shaped classroom/storage space which contains furniture and has stained-glass windows. The service area has a flight of wooden steps that lead down to a service door that provides exterior access and continues down to the kitchen in the basement. This staircase is smaller, and the banister has a simple, straight balustrade.

Basement

Two staircases access the basement, one positioned on the south entrance and the other at the north service door entrance. The north entrance leads directly to the basement kitchen.

The layout of the basement generally mirrors the layout of the sanctuary and fellowship rooms on the upper floor. The staircase to the south leads to a large L-shaped common room. At the north side of the room, a ribbon window allows visibility into the kitchen. On the east side, there is an intricately decorated stained glass window. The room opens east, where the restrooms are located. This secondary room is separated from the main common area by a movable partition. The flooring is red and yellow asbestos tile, while the ceiling is white tile.

The kitchen presents all new furnishings and appliances. The spaces behind the kitchen are used primarily for storage and utilities. Here it is possible to see original brickwork and woodwork.

Historic Integrity

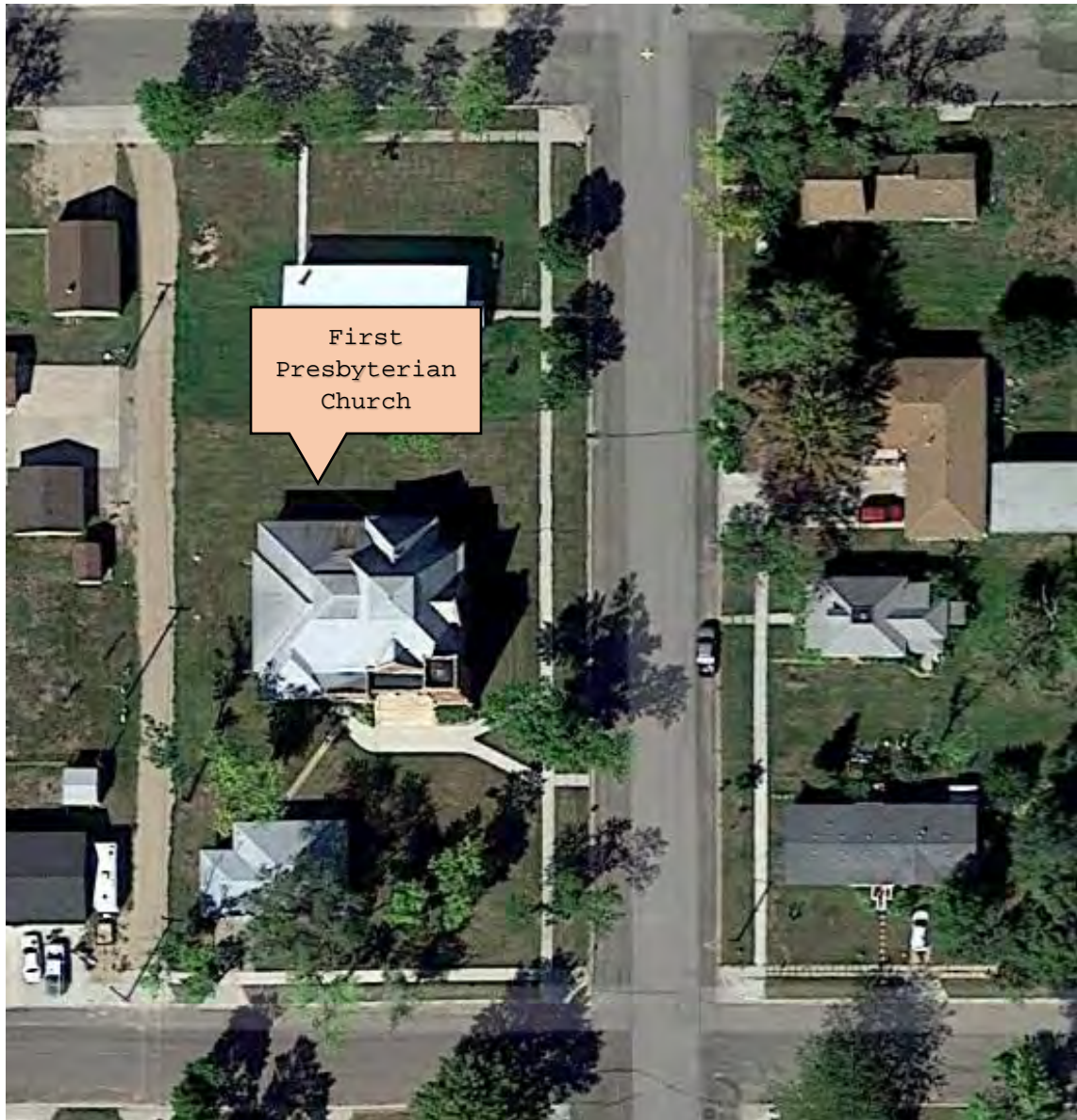
By comparing historical documentation, building plans, and photographs of the First Presbyterian Church in Groton to today's structure it's clear the structure retains overall excellent integrity. The exterior has had minor repairs, including repainting of the trim and doors and re-roofing the entry areas. The interior has also had minimal alterations: the sanctuary ceiling was primed and painted, the dome was covered, and an elevator was installed.

The church retains good integrity of location and setting. It has not been moved and it remains in its historic residential neighborhood. The exterior and interior retain superb integrity of design as demonstrated by the intact Akron Plan and lack of additions. The well-preserved features and decorative elements display integrity of workmanship and materials. Examples of this craftsmanship include the original twenty-eight leaded stained-glass windows, the square tower with castellated parapet, the stained-glass dome and its supporting ribs, and the Gothic arcade on the southern façade.

First Presbyterian Church of Groton
Name of Property

Brown County, SD
County and State

Section 7_Figure 1: Closeup of the First Presbyterian Church of Groton. Taken from Google Maps.



First Presbyterian Church of Groton
Name of Property

Brown County, SD
County and State

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.)

- ☒ 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 old or achieving significance within the past 50 years

First Presbyterian Church of Groton

Name of Property

Brown County, SD

County and State

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Architecture

Period of Significance

1912

Significant Dates

1912

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

n/a

Cultural Affiliation

n/a

Architect/Builder

J.C. Fulton (architect)

Carlson and Hasslen (builder)

First Presbyterian Church of Groton
Name of Property

Brown County, SD
County and State

Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance, applicable criteria, justification for the period of significance, and any applicable criteria considerations.)

The First Presbyterian Church is eligible under **Criterion C** for architectural significance as an excellent example of a modified Akron plan: the sanctuary has a diagonal plan, a derivative of the Akron Plan, and an adjacent Akron Plan Sunday School complete with classrooms on the western wall. It is also an excellent example of Gothic Revival architecture adapted to fit changes in protestant worship practices. Some of these new practices were reflected in architecture by rendering the pulpit a focal point, ensuring the minister could be heard and seen, and placing emphasis on education. The Gothic style can be seen primarily in the building's exterior elements such as the tower, the crenellations, the arcaded porch, the pointed arch windows and the tripartite window on the eastern elevation. The stained-glass windows and the stained-glass dome are also significant Gothic architectural features. These features retain excellent integrity of design and workmanship.

The church is significant at a local level, and the period of significance is 1912, the date of its completion. It's a second-generation church building and still has an active congregation of about one hundred people. It is the only remaining brick church from the early 20th century in Groton and one of the most intact examples of J.C. Fulton's architectural design in South Dakota.

Although religious buildings are generally not eligible for the National Register of Historic Places, the First Presbyterian Church of Groton meets **Criteria Consideration A** because of its significant architectural value. Historic significance of a religious property cannot be established on the merits of a religious doctrine. Its significance under Criterion A, B, C or D must be judged in purely secular terms. This is to avoid any appearance of judgement by government about the validity of any religion or belief. The first Presbyterian Church of Groton demonstrates excellent architectural value and integrity and it is eligible for this reason.

Narrative Statement of Significance (Provide at least **one** paragraph for each area of significance.)

Gothic Revival

The Gothic Revival movement significantly impacted church architecture in the United States as well as Great Britain. The style was part of the mid-nineteenth century picturesque and romantic movements, which departed from popular Classical architecture. Prominent architects such as A.J. Davis and Andrew Jackson Downing promoted the style for residences and public buildings, but it also enjoyed ecclesiastical popularity.

The dissemination of Gothic Revival architecture began in England at the end of the 18th century and spread to America primarily through literature such as pattern-books. A key source, the Ecclesiological movement was a reform movement within the Anglican church which "called for

First Presbyterian Church of Groton
Name of Property

Brown County, SD
County and State

a return to traditional medieval forms both in ritual and in church building.”² For the Ecclesiologists, Gothic revival architecture was a functional style created for the church, and a response to the rationalism of the 18th century church.³ In the *Ecclesiologist* (a monthly magazine of the Camden Society) intellectuals and writers detailed the layout, ornamentation and furnishings that should be present in Gothic Revival churches.

Augustus Welby Pugin was another key figure in the development of Gothic Revival architecture. Pugin was the architect of Gothic Revival buildings such as the House of Parliament in London. He was also a prolific writer and architectural critic. For Pugin, Gothic architecture had the qualities of a living organism.⁴ He completed *Examples of Gothic Architecture* in 1832. Together with his father’s *Specimens of Gothic Architecture*, it would become an important source for American Gothic Revival architects.⁵

While Pugin was a source of inspiration for the Ecclesiologists, they also fundamentally mistrusted him due to his affiliation with the Roman Catholic church. In fact, the rise of Gothic Revival architecture paralleled growing anti-Catholic sentiment.⁶ The paradox lies within the fact that Gothic architecture was seen as inherently Catholic. In the United States, the adoption of Gothic Revival architecture by Protestant congregations was a response to the growing numbers of Catholics arriving in the United States.⁷ Protestants recognized the appeal of Catholic art and architecture and appropriated both to provide a more vibrant worship experience.⁸ As congregations competed for members, a fashionable building, it was believed, would attract new people. It would also redefine the history of Christianity in the evolving social, religious and architectural context of the nineteenth century.⁹

Even though Gothic Revival architecture was the architectural legacy of the Roman Catholic church, Protestants tried to “reclassify the style under a more generic identity as ‘Christian’.”¹⁰ They emphasized the English artistry and referred to Gothic buildings in England, rather than the rest of Europe.¹¹ They stressed the connection between Gothic architecture and nature and defended the style as one that grew from natural models.¹² Also, Protestants utilized a whole different naming tradition in an attempt to differentiate their parishes from their Catholic counterparts.¹³ For example, rather than using the name of saints to denote the church’s name, many Protestant churches are referred to by their location or simply as “First” or “Second”.

² William H. Pierson Jr., *American Buildings and Their Architects. Technology and the picturesque, the corporate and the Early Gothic Styles* (Garden City: Doubleday & Company Inc., 1978,), 152.

³ Pierson, *American Buildings and Their Architects*, 152-153.

⁴ Ibid., 151.

⁵ Ibid., 150.

⁶ Ryan K. Smith, *Gothic Arches, Latin Crosses. Anti-Catholicism and American Church Designs in the Nineteenth Century* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2006), 9.

⁷ Ibid., 9.

⁸ Ibid., 10.

⁹ Kilde, *When Church Became Theater*, 58.

¹⁰ Ibid., 108.

¹¹ Ibid., 106-110.

¹² Ibid., 108.

¹³ Ibid., 109.

First Presbyterian Church of Groton
Name of Property

Brown County, SD
County and State

As a more concrete strategy, Protestants congregations maintained architectural distinctions in their use of the Gothic aesthetic.¹⁴ Generally, identifying features associated with the style pertaining to churches include lancet arches, steeply-pitched rooflines (typically gable), cross-gables (cruciform plan), decorative spires and towers that emphasize vertical lines and may be placed on the side, center, or as flanking pairs, decorative buttresses, and contrasting exterior cladding. Nave and basilica plans were adapted to the protestant congregation as the “cruciform Gothic church plan, with its nave, chancel choir, and transepts, was ideal for establishing and maintaining the mystery of the Mass and the power of the clergy in the eucharistic sacrament. It was inimical, however, to Protestant worship that focused on the sermon, because it widely separated the congregation from the minister.”¹⁵ Modifications depended on the congregation’s individual needs, usually with an emphasis on utility and Protestant theology which emphasized the hearing and interpretations of the scriptures.¹⁶ Some denominations even added specific elements to their buildings – Methodists, for example, “arranged meeting rooms around the sanctuary for classes and group activities.”¹⁷

Gothic Revival architecture, or elements of it, found fertile ground in America. It provided a break from Classical architecture and appealed to an American romanticism satisfied by the atmosphere of Gothic ruins. The style was popular from 1830 to about 1860, yet it continued to influence American church architecture into the twentieth century. Gothic-arched entries and windows, castle-like towers, and parapets were architectural details that proved compatible with American tastes in church architecture. While very few American architects had seen a Gothic building, their curiosity was being cultivated by a stream of literature from abroad.¹⁸ Books were essential in developing American architecture and were heavily relied upon for information on building modes. They lacked, however, accurate information regarding historical styles.¹⁹ Archaeological discoveries of the late 18th century brought to light a range of historical styles that American architects enthusiastically adopted as their own. Having no prior distinctly American architectural style of their own, Eclecticism became a viable method of design.²⁰ Eclecticism is the combination of different stylistic sources, Classic, Gothic, Italianate and so on to create something new and original, and entirely dependent on readily available literary sources. It could be made to fulfill functional and symbolic as well as romantic ends and became very popular in the United States.²¹

American Gothic Revival is a hybrid of elements and designs, adjusted to meet specific needs, but evocative of spiritual feelings and romantic ideals. The style provided a concrete link between a new, restless, and ambitious American culture and its European past. It was in this climate of religious tension between Christian denominations, and architectural experimentation that the First Presbyterian Church of Groton was built.

¹⁴ Smith, *Gothic Arches, Latin Crosses*, 110.

¹⁵ Kilde, *When Church Became Theater*, 57.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 112.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 114.

¹⁸ Pierson, *American Buildings and Their Architects*, 168.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 126.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 126-127.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 126.

First Presbyterian Church of Groton
Name of Property

Brown County, SD
County and State

Ecclesiastical Architecture in South Dakota

Ecclesiastical architecture followed identifiable trends in South Dakota. *First-generation* church buildings were typically small frame, log, or sod structures similar to the early homes that settlement communities were able to build. These were primarily built during the late 19th century, particularly during the First Dakota Boom from 1878 to 1893.²² As communities became more established, frame churches became wide spread. These were *transitional* buildings, meant to temporarily meet the needs of the congregation. These churches epitomized the style known as the “Prairie Gothic”. They were small, easy to build churches that enjoyed widespread popularity regardless of region, budget, ethnicity or denomination.²³

As congregations and town continued growing, *second-generation* churches were built. These were larger buildings with more stylistic features like Gothic arches or stained-glass windows, steeples or bell towers, more elaborate altarpieces and other furnishings, and taller sanctuary ceilings.²⁴ *Second-generation* churches were built primarily during the Second Dakota Boom, from 1900 to 1917.²⁵ Sometimes log or stone was used depending on available materials and the choices of church members. The simple nave plan layout was most common with a central entrance leading into a narthex room, which in turn led directly into the sanctuary nave, a rectangular room with a central aisle and the altar positioned at the far end.²⁶ Many smaller and rural churches continued to use their frame buildings, adding space with exterior additions, basements, or adjoining buildings as resources permitted.

A major phase of *second-generation* church building, particularly for town churches, was marked by the use of architect-designed brick or stone buildings. These buildings were often “high style” designs which incorporated more stained-glass windows in elaborate designs and interior ornamentation - they made more use of carved wood and dressed stone than their predecessors.²⁷

These later, architect-designed church buildings were commonly executed in Classical Revival, Colonial Revival, Gothic Revival, and Romanesque Revival styles. Most *second-generation* churches in South Dakota are Gothic Revival or Romanesque Revival (Richardsonian Revival).²⁸ Historically, these two styles have been well suited to ecclesiastical architecture.²⁹

A survey through the photographs in the South Dakota Archives Digital Collections (2018) and Dr. Donald Dean Parker’s *Founding Presbyterianism in South Dakota* show that Presbyterian churches often used Gothic Revival architecture with square corner towers for both frame and brick structures, although a significant quantity of smaller frame churches had steeples centered

²² Megan Eades, *Churches in South Dakota* (Pierre: South Dakota State Historic Preservation Office, 2002), 17.

²³ Ibid., 18-19.

²⁴ Ibid., 18-19.

²⁵ Ibid., 17.

²⁶ Ibid., 20.

²⁷ Ibid., 19-20.

²⁸ Ibid., 22.

²⁹ Ibid., 22.

First Presbyterian Church of Groton
Name of Property

Brown County, SD
County and State

on the primary façade.³⁰ A few of the later churches were L-shaped with towers on the interior corner like First Presbyterian in Kadoka. A few churches featured unique styles, like the Neoclassical and Spanish Eclectic Presbyterian churches in Huron and Sioux Falls.³¹ A few modernist churches, like Ebenezer Presbyterian in Lennox and Spencer Memorial Presbyterian in Lemmon, continued to draw from corner-tower and L-shaped precedents.³² Others, like First Presbyterian Church in Bridgewater, were built in the Prairie style.³³ However, as the pictorial history in *Founding Presbyterianism in South Dakota* demonstrates, Gothic Revival style was featured prominently in *transitional* and *second-generation* Presbyterian church construction in South Dakota.

A Brief History of Presbyterianism in South Dakota

The Presbyterian Church has a long history in South Dakota. Missionaries first came into South Dakota in the spring of 1839, from the Synod of Minnesota to the area around Big Stone Lake.³⁴ The Dakota (Indian) Presbytery was started in 1844 to serve churches at Fort Snelling and Lac Qui Parle in what would become Minnesota Territory with support from the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, a joint effort of the Presbyterian and Congregational churches.³⁵ They considered their jurisdiction to stretch from the Wisconsin border to the Pacific Ocean, and the Canadian border to the border of Iowa and Missouri.³⁶ The Dakota Presbytery joined the Presbytery of Southern Dakota in 1881, and all were under the Synod of Minnesota until the Synod of Dakota was established in 1884.³⁷ The Synod of Dakota included four presbyteries: the Southern Dakota, Central Dakota, Aberdeen and Dakota (Indian). The First Presbyterian Church of Groton was part of the Aberdeen Presbytery, organized in 1884. Reportedly, the Aberdeen Presbytery held its first meetings in the church itself.³⁸

The first Presbyterian buildings were constructed in the southeastern part of Dakota Territory, one of the earliest being Father Martin's Church, a log structure built in Vermillion in the summer of 1860 shortly after the territory was legally available to Euro-American settlement.³⁹ In the 1870s, there was a concerted effort from the synod in Iowa to form Presbyterian churches in

³⁰ Parker, *Founding Presbyterianism in South Dakota*, (Brookings: 1963), 7, 17, 27, 37, 47, 57, 67.

³¹ Parker, 17; "Sioux Falls - Presbyterian Church," South Dakota State Historical Society. Donor: H.B. Gilbert, Mound, Minn. 2010-06-23-004.

³² Parker, *Founding Presbyterianism in South Dakota* 27.

³³ Liz Almlie "First Presbyterian Church, Bridgewater" National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form. Washington, DC: National Park Service, 2013, National Register Reference #13000917

³⁴ Parker, *Founding Presbyterianism in South Dakota*, 1, 5-6.

³⁵ Bruce David Forbes, "Presbyterian Beginnings in South Dakota, 1840-1990" *South Dakota History* 07, no. 2 (1977), 117.

³⁶ *The First 50 Years: Dakota Presbytery to 1890* (Freeman: Pine Hill Press, 1984), 5.

³⁷ Forbes, "Presbyterian Beginnings in South Dakota, 1840-1990" 132; Parker, *Founding Presbyterianism in South Dakota* 35, 77.

³⁸ Jack Chilton et al, *The History of the First Presbyterian Church: Groton, South Dakota* (Self-published, 2008), 1.

³⁹ Parker, *Founding Presbyterianism in South Dakota*, 15.

First Presbyterian Church of Groton
Name of Property

Brown County, SD
County and State

Dakota Territory, but growth was slower than other denominations. The Presbyterian Church favored installed clergy instead of more flexible itinerant or circuit postings and focused on starting churches where there were existing communities of Presbyterians rather than converting those outside the denomination.⁴⁰ By the 1890 census, Presbyterians made up about 6.4% of those South Dakotans claiming one of the major Christian denominations, still a relative minority in comparison to 34.2% who were Catholic or 31% who were Lutheran.⁴¹

History of Groton and the First Presbyterian Church

Groton was platted and deeded to the public on 30 June 1881.⁴² Groton existed because of the railroad, which laid out towns every seven to ten miles along its track. When the planned location of Groton became public, settlers from the surrounding hamlets and villages like Yorktown moved to Groton, buying lots and building businesses. Two months after its founding, a dozen established businesses were listed in the newspaper along with requests for other businesses to fill local needs-such as a lack of sign painters.⁴³ Groton was booming.

Groton's development can only be understood within the larger development of the Dakota Territory (encompassing present-day South and North Dakota) during this period. Groton's founding in 1881 coincides with the Great Dakota Boom, a period of immense settlement and development in the Territory. Most historians of the Dakotas agree the boom years started in 1878 and lasted until 1887, though some shift these numbers forward and backward a few years. Several factors contributed to the boom, but none were more important than the railroads.

As the economy improved after the depression of 1873 and armed conflict with Native Americans subsided, railroads once again saw opportunity and began building into Dakota Territory. Railroad promotions targeting immigrant groups in the United States and Europe drew hundreds of thousands of people into the plains states where one had the chance to claim 160 acres of free land under the Homestead Act of 1862. Land seekers and entrepreneurs from the eastern United States came too, transforming the eastern half of the Dakota Territory from unsettled prairie to a checkerboard of farms and small towns within a few short years. Activity was so great that the Huron land office, southwest of Groton, recorded 26,000 acres of land filed on for settlement in one day.⁴⁴

Along with railroad expansion, excellent growing conditions for staple crops such as wheat prevailed during the boom. Rain was adequate, insect infestations did not occur, and weather did not hit extreme periods of cold or hot which could be hard on livestock and crops. Under these conditions, farmer-dependent towns like Groton prospered and sprung up all over eastern Dakota Territory.

⁴⁰ Forbes, "Presbyterian Beginnings in South Dakota, 1840-1990", 129, 134-138.

⁴¹ Forbes, "Presbyterian Beginnings in South Dakota, 1840-1990", 133.

⁴² Groton Centennial Committee, *Groton Centennial History, 1881-1981* (Aberdeen: Northern Plains Press, 1981), 20.

⁴³ Ibid., 20.

⁴⁴ Parker, *Founding Presbyterianism in South Dakota*, 72-73.

First Presbyterian Church of Groton
Name of Property

Brown County, SD
County and State

By 1887, the boom was over. The best land in the eastern part of the territory was settled and hardships of drought, insects, and failed crops returned. However, Groton was well established by then and developing all the institutions of a respectable town, including its churches. The first Presbyterian activity in Groton occurred on 28 August 1881 when George Lindsey, a Yale divinity student, organized the first Sunday school.⁴⁵ Some accounts say this school was non-denominational, but most students were Presbyterian.⁴⁶ Classes were held in the Chicago, Milwaukee, and St. Paul railroad depot.⁴⁷



Fig 1. First Presbyterian Church on Piety Hill, 1906.

Little is known of that first Sunday school that met in the depot, but by 1883 a Presbyterian church was organized.⁴⁸ A church building was constructed on April 14, 1884 on a slight hill in an otherwise flat landscape that became known as "Piety Hill" (the northwestern corner of the intersection of 4th St. and 4th Ave.) probably because of the church.⁴⁹ The total cost was

\$4,000.⁵⁰ It was L-shaped with a vestibule, belfry, and spire placed in the corner of the "L".⁵¹ Soon after the church building was constructed, its internal organizations became active and visible in the community.

According to *The History of the First Presbyterian Church, Groton, South Dakota*, the church's women's groups were particularly active. This is somewhat characteristic, though, as many early Presbyterian churches in Dakota Territory shared an emphasis in promoting women's groups and education. At this time, many Presbyterian churches depended on aid from national Presbyterian organizations to survive. These national organizations tended to focus on educational opportunities and the proliferation of women's groups which could support the

⁴⁵ Jack Chilton et al, *The History of the First Presbyterian Church: Groton, South Dakota* (Self-published, 2008), 1.

⁴⁶ Ibid., 1.

⁴⁷ Ibid., 1.

⁴⁸ Ibid., 1.

⁴⁹ United Presbyterian Women's organizations. *Presbytery of South Dakota*. Martin, SD: self-published by Rev. Roberts Reynolds, 1976, 45.

⁵⁰ Chilton, *The History of the First Presbyterian Church*, 1.

⁵¹ Ibid., 1.

First Presbyterian Church of Groton
Name of Property

Brown County, SD
County and State

church. With these organizations having so much influence, financial and otherwise, it is easy to see why Dakota Territory church activities mirrored national causes.⁵²

The first recorded society formed at First Presbyterian Church occurred in 1884 with the establishment of the Women's Missionary Society Auxiliary. It was noted as a "prayerful and studious group."⁵³ The group hosted lawn socials and chicken pie suppers to raise funds for activities such as missionary work in India and Mexico.⁵⁴ Another contemporary committee was the Presbyterian Ladies Aid Society. The society put on events such as a "New England Supper and Fair," the "Corn Festival," and the "Strawberry Festival" to raise funds to help retire church debt and to aid the church in general.⁵⁵ Between 1884 and 1889 the society took in \$1,271.33, of which \$500 went to debt, \$259 to church repairs, and the rest to various improvements.⁵⁶ Membership in the society was taken seriously, with fines of 5 to 10 cents levied for missed meetings.⁵⁷

Women's organizations continued to be active in the church supporting many of the same missionary and domestic causes. The Auxiliary's name was changed in 1898 to "A Thimble Bee," and then renamed in 1954 as the "Presbyterian Women's Organization". While the names have changed, their impact has remained constant in the life of the church. In closing his history of women's groups in *The History of the First Presbyterian Church, Groton, South Dakota*, Chilton commented, "As we look back over the years, one wonders if the church could have survived this past century with its many trials, hardships, and burdens without the untiring work and devotion of the women; probably not."⁵⁸

Following national Presbyterian educational platforms of the time, First Presbyterian also founded the short-lived Groton Collegiate Institute in 1885. Presbyterians had always put a strong emphasis on education. The Groton Collegiate Institute was part of an educational revival in South Dakota.⁵⁹ The campus comprised forty acres located northwest across Main Street from the northwest corner of the city park, and included classrooms buildings, a dormitory, and a chapel.⁶⁰ It offered preparatory courses for a Bachelor of Arts degree and a one-year normal course for teachers.⁶¹ It closed due to debt in 1889 and moved to Huron.

As Groton grew, so did its churches. In 1911, both the Presbyterians and the Methodists began construction on significant brick structures to replace their original wooden churches. The Presbyterian minister at the time, Reverend J. Scott Butt, suggested a design based on a church he admired in Pennsylvania.⁶² With this recommendation, Pennsylvania architect J.C. Fulton was selected to design the new church.

⁵² Forbes, "Presbyterian Beginnings in South Dakota, 1840-1990", 153.

⁵³ Chilton, *The History of the First Presbyterian Church*, 2.

⁵⁴ Ibid., 2.

⁵⁵ Ibid., 3.

⁵⁶ Ibid., 3.

⁵⁷ Ibid., 3.

⁵⁸ Ibid., 5.

⁵⁹ Forbes "Presbyterian Beginnings in South Dakota, 1840-1990", 144.

⁶⁰ Groton Centennial Committee, *Groton Centennial History*, 275.

⁶¹ Ibid., 275.

⁶² Chilton, *The History of the First Presbyterian Church*, 30.

First Presbyterian Church of Groton
Name of Property

Brown County, SD
County and State

Construction of First Presbyterian Church in Groton began in the summer of 1911. Carlson & Hasslen were selected as general contractors for \$15,503.87 and Ford Brothers Art Glass Co. was awarded the window bid for \$962.35.⁶³ Carlson & Hasslen was a construction firm founded in 1893 in Ortonville, Minnesota.⁶⁴ The firm built several structures in northeast South Dakota including libraries, residences, commercial buildings, and hospitals.⁶⁵ The company is still in operation (2018) in Ortonville as Hasslen Construction. Ford Brothers Art Glass Co. was based out of Minneapolis, Minnesota. Brothers William and Roger Ford got into the glass business in 1892 or 1893 and by 1896 they were a prominent Minneapolis-based stained-glass company.⁶⁶ Around 1920, J.G. McNutt was named a partner and the company became Ford-McNutt Glass Co.⁶⁷ In 1924, a large fire occurred at the Ford-McNutt Glass Company. An employee, Thomas Gaytee, purchased the company's surviving materials.⁶⁸ At this time Ford-McNutt left the stained-glass business, and Gaytee established Gaytee-Palmer Stained Glass, which is still in business in Minneapolis and restores many original Ford Brothers Art Glass Co. windows.⁶⁹

First Presbyterian Church's cornerstone was laid in August of 1911 and the church was opened on 17 March 1912.⁷⁰ Around 500 people attended the dedication as services were in the morning, afternoon, and evening.⁷¹ Minister Dr. Kearns, field secretary for the Home Mission Board, was the central figure and delivered the sermons. Dr. Kearns also ensured the pledges were secured at the event to cover the remaining \$10,610 construction debt.⁷² Dr. Kearns would write a number on the blackboard and then call out for pledges until the number was erased. For example, if he wrote \$500 on the board, he'd subtract from that number as \$5, \$20, \$100, etc. pledges came in to retire that amount. Once that amount was gone, he'd write another number and begin the process over. By one o'clock, over 150 people had made pledges to cover the \$10,610 debt, along with "a good margin to take care of any shrinkage which may occur on the part of those who fail to pay."⁷³

There are currently seven churches in Groton including the First Presbyterian Church.⁷⁴ The Groton United Methodist Church, the St. John's Lutheran Church, and the Emmanuel Lutheran Church were rebuilt in the 1960s and 1970s. The St. Elisabeth Ann Seton Catholic Church was built after 1981. The St. John's Catholic Church (now the Christian and Missionary Alliance Church) retains some of its original design features, such as the Gothic pointed windows and its wood siding, but it was moved from its original location in 1909. It also underwent various

⁶³ Ibid., 10.

⁶⁴ "Hasslen Construction." Accessed April 17, 2018.

<http://hasslenconstruction.com/about/history>

⁶⁵ SD SHPO Architects file.

⁶⁶ Tammy Lindberg "Lake Harriet Methodist Episcopal Church". National Register of Historic Places. Nomination Form. Washington, DC: National Park Service, 2014. National Register Reference #14000217, 8-26.

⁶⁷ Ibid., 8-26.

⁶⁸ Ibid., 8-26.

⁶⁹ Ibid., 8-26.

⁷⁰ Chilton, *The History of the First Presbyterian Church*, 10.

⁷¹ "Presbyterians Dedicate Church", *Groton Independent* (19 March 1912), 1.

⁷² Ibid., 1.

⁷³ Chilton, *The History of the First Presbyterian Church*, 10-11.

⁷⁴ "Churches of Groton, South Dakota." Accessed June 27, 2018.

<http://www.grotonsdchurches.com/>

First Presbyterian Church of Groton
Name of Property

Brown County, SD
County and State

renovations and additions were made to it. A significant church in Groton, the small Trinity Episcopal Church is currently listed on the National Register of Historic Places. It's a wonderful example of Carpenter Gothic architecture, a method of designing Gothic elements in wooden structures. The most expressive of these methods was the board-and-batten siding. The Trinity Episcopal Church is the single remaining example of rural board-and-batten design in South Dakota.⁷⁵ The Trinity church is located about a block east from the First Presbyterian Church. The First Presbyterian Church is the only surviving example of an early 20th century brick church in Groton, and the only structure in town to retain its original Akron Plan design.

Architect

J.C. Fulton, the architect of the First Presbyterian Church, was born in Alleghany County, Pennsylvania in 1856.⁷⁶ He was educated in public school and graduated from Irwin Academy in Irwin, Pennsylvania. Upon graduation, he went to work for his uncles (his father's brothers) who were engaged in contracting; one uncle was also an architect.⁷⁷ J.C. had a natural aptitude for mechanics, which ran in his family tree. His grandfather was a successful man who was known regionally as a "mechanical genius" and J.C. was also a descendant of Robert Fulton (1765-1815), the inventor of the steamboat.⁷⁸ With this lineage and his uncles' encouragement, he excelled at the carpentry trade.⁷⁹

In 1884, J.C. quit working for his uncle Humphry Fulton and took a three-year hiatus to study architecture, though it is not known which school he attended.⁸⁰ In the fall of 1887, he started his architectural practice in southern Pennsylvania and northern West Virginia.⁸¹ At that time he was billed as one of the only formally trained architects in southern Pennsylvania and northern West Virginia.⁸² He designed several courthouses within this region (Butler and Somerset, PA; Morgantown, Philippi, Elkins, West Union, WV), but also achieved great success designing churches.⁸³ According to family recollections, J.C. was a lover of Gothic, Classical, and Romanesque architecture.⁸⁴ These styles were easily adaptable to ecclesiastical preferences and he soon began designing churches across the country, travelling by railroad to oversee projects.⁸⁵ He traveled the country and built churches coast to coast, including the First United Presbyterian Church in Sterling, Colorado (NR 1982), First Presbyterian Church in Idaho Falls,

⁷⁵ Geisler, Terry J. "Trinity Episcopal Church" National Register of Historic Places. Nomination Form. Washington, DC: National Park Service, 1983. National Register Reference #83003003

⁷⁶ Alexander Moore ed., *The Book of Prominent Pennsylvanians: A Standard Reference* (Pittsburg: Leader Publishing Co., 1913) 32.

⁷⁷ Charles Blanchard ed., "John Charles Fulton." *The Progressive Men of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania 1* (1900): 426 - 430. Accessed June 27, 2018 https://books.google.com/books?id=kFZKAAAYAAJ&source=gbs_navlinks_s, 429.

⁷⁸ Ibid., 426.

⁷⁹ Ibid., 429.

⁸⁰ Lindberg, "Lake Harriet Methodist Episcopal Church", 8-25.

⁸¹ Ibid., 8-25.

⁸² Ibid., 8-25.

⁸³ Ibid., 8-25.

⁸⁴ Ibid., 8-25.

⁸⁵ Ibid., 8-25.

First Presbyterian Church of Groton
Name of Property

Brown County, SD
County and State

ID (NR 1978), Second Presbyterian Church at Portsmouth, OH (NR 1996), First Lutheran Church at Johnstown, PA, and First Baptist Church at Clearwater, FL.⁸⁶

J.C. married Miss Mary E. Ray and they had two children, a son T. Ray Fulton and a daughter Helen Marie. In 1915, T. Ray joined his father as a draftsman and became his partner in 1918 to form "J.C. Fulton & Son".⁸⁷ The firm continued designing all types of structures including residences, schools, business blocks, courthouses, opera houses, and churches.⁸⁸ Yet, J.C. alone and later the partnership J.C. Fulton & Son were particularly well-known for designing churches, with over 600 commissions to their credit.⁸⁹ Don Heath joined the firm in 1950 and stated that at the time they only designed churches.⁹⁰ Heath also recalled that Mr. Fulton (T. Ray) always insisted that the firm was "church specialists," further commenting that "this was his first love."⁹¹

J.C. died in 1924, yet the firm name J.C. Fulton & Son was used until 1972, at which time it was changed to Fulton Heath.⁹² T. Ray died in 1979 and the firm dissolved in 1989.⁹³ As of 2018, there are two structures in South Dakota attributed to these men. First Presbyterian Church (1912) in Groton is attributed to J.C. Fulton while the Methodist Episcopal Church (1920) in Mount Vernon is attributed to J.C. Fulton & Son.⁹⁴

Akron Plan

Jacob Snyder, an architect in Akron, Ohio, greatly influenced J.C.'s work.⁹⁵ Between 1864 and 1868 Snyder and school superintendent Lewis Miller designed a church sanctuary that varied from the traditional sanctuary layout, and that would later be known as the Akron Plan.⁹⁶ The fundamental spatial layout of the Akron Plan Sunday school, like that of the auditorium sanctuary, was that of the theater.⁹⁷ Already decades before, church architecture had begun to assimilate some of the characteristics of the theater space.

For example, while religious and secular authority has been elevated in opposition to the crowd, the amphitheater lowered the authority figure and placed the crowd above it in circles. Since sound naturally travels up this made speaking to the crowd more effective.⁹⁸ Other advantages

⁸⁶ Ibid., 8-25.

⁸⁷ Girnius, Rima M. and Emily T. Cooperman. "Fulton, Thomas Ray (1892-1979)" Philadelphia Architects and Buildings. Accessed April 17, 2018.
https://www.philadelphiabuildings.org/pab/app/ar_display.cfm/23856

⁸⁸ Blanchard, "John Charles Fulton", 429.

⁸⁹ "Fulton Architecture Firm Is Jobmaker of Month" *The Morning Herald* (Uniontown, 6 September 1968), 11.

⁹⁰ Lindberg, "Lake Harriet Methodist Episcopal Church", 8-25.

⁹¹ Ibid., 8-25.

⁹² Ibid., 8-25.

⁹³ Ibid., 8-25.

⁹⁴ SD SHPO Architects file

⁹⁵ Lindberg, "Lake Harriet Methodist Episcopal Church", 8-25.

⁹⁶ Kilde, *When Church Became Theater*, 176.

⁹⁷ Kilde, *When Church Became Theater*, 177.

⁹⁸ Ibid., 18.

First Presbyterian Church of Groton
Name of Property

Brown County, SD
County and State

of adapting the theater to evangelical use were large meeting rooms, good sightlines, strong visual focus, more physical freedom for preachers and greater intimacy between the preacher and congregation.⁹⁹

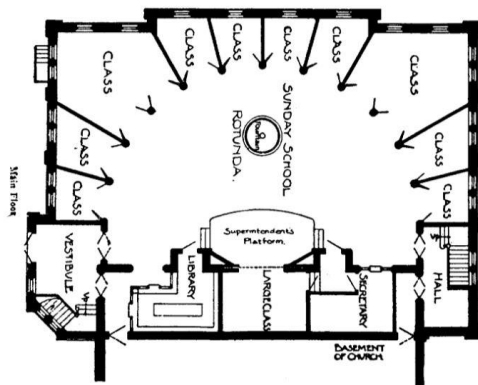


Fig 2. The Original Akron Plan. Main Floor.

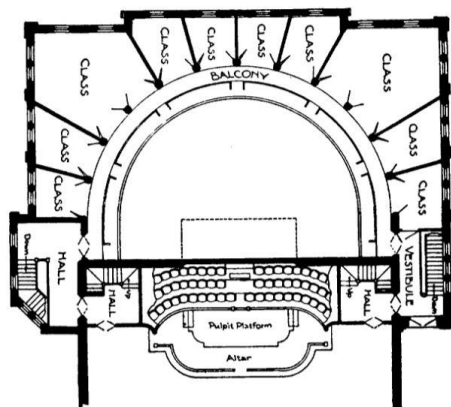


Fig 3. The Original Akron Plan. Balcony Floor.

The Akron Plan incorporated the form of the semicircular, auditorium-like sanctuary with the function of a Sunday school building.¹⁰⁰ Classrooms would ring the sanctuary, allowing students to view the superintendent placed at the center, without being able to see other classes. The movable partitions could be closed off so that spaces could be used as classrooms or opened to allow extra seating space during larger services.¹⁰¹

The Akron Plan was a response to the increasing importance placed on children's education within the church. Despite Presbyterian emphasis on education, the Methodist church was the first congregation to implement the Akron plan to encourage church education. As professionalization started affecting the teachings of the Sunday school, so was this reflected in the built environment. The most important development of Sunday school education was the introduction of the International Uniform Lesson in 1872.¹⁰² These were essentially the consolidation of the same course lessons through the year for every class. The superintendent was responsible for catechizing the students on the previous lesson and introducing the new one. In this way the superintendent could address one large group at once.¹⁰³ This teaching method, however, highlighted the deficiencies of traditional Sunday school space. Reorganizing chairs and desks for various sized groups was time consuming, and children, separated into small groups within a large space, would inevitably fall prey to distraction.¹⁰⁴

Thus, the Akron Plan was developed. One of the features that allowed for the Akron Plan's popularity was its use of the "Panopticon qualities of the amphitheater."¹⁰⁵ This allowed the superintendent to monitor students and teachers. "This

⁹⁹ Ibid., 41.

¹⁰⁰ Lindberg, "Lake Harriet Methodist Episcopal Church", 8-25.

¹⁰¹ Ibid., 8-25.

¹⁰² Kilde, *When Church Became Theater*, 176.

¹⁰³ Ibid., 176.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., 176.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., 183.

First Presbyterian Church of Groton
Name of Property

Brown County, SD
County and State

visual capability greatly assisted in maintaining order and discipline during large-group sessions."¹⁰⁶

Another greatly appreciated feature of the Akron Plan was its use of movable partitions. Partitions were adopted in many other types of church design, not necessarily exclusive to plans that had classrooms placed around the sanctuary. Because the cost of the Akron Plan was significant, many modified versions of it were developed using movable partitions. The diagonal plan, popularized by architect Warren H. Hayes, is an example of this flexibility.¹⁰⁷

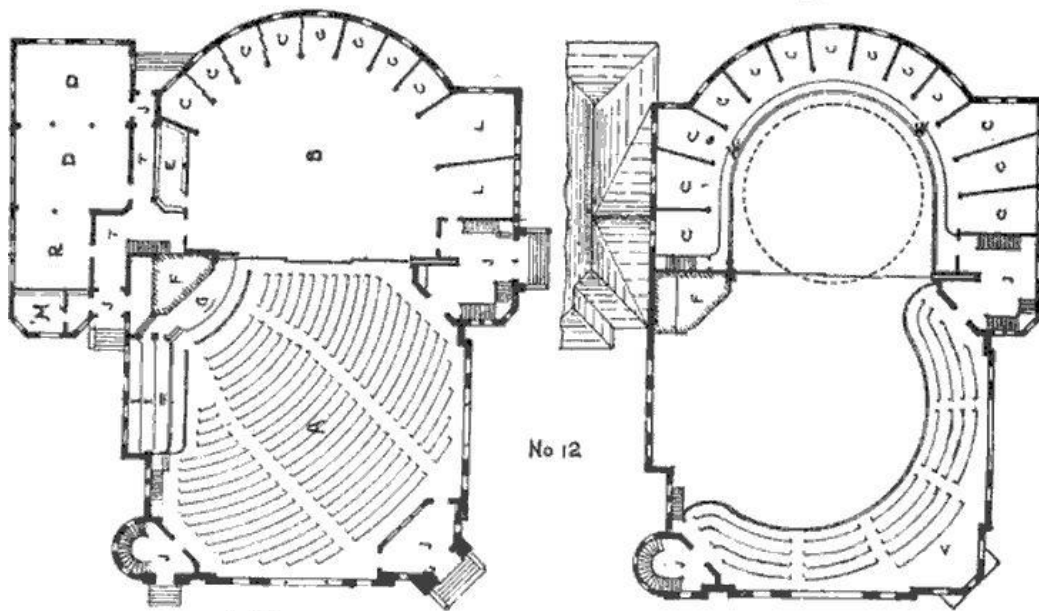


Fig 4. Examples of the Diagonal Plan combined with an adaptation of the Akron Plan Sunday School.

Despite its popularity, the Akron Plan proved to have faults. According to Dr. Herbert Francis Evans, professor of religious education in 1914, the Akron Plan "broke the Sunday-school congregation into segments and prevented the helpful worship possible in the open room of churchly architecture."¹⁰⁸ Furthermore, the Akron Plan was specifically effective for teaching the Unified Lesson. As better ways of teaching children came about, different age groups required separate spaces. For example, the use of music to aid with the instruction of younger children disturbed the rest of the school.¹⁰⁹ Additionally, these small classrooms were often poorly lighted, ill ventilated, and had inadequate partitions for isolating noise.¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., 184.

¹⁰⁷ Kilde, *When Church Became Theater*, 179.

¹⁰⁸ Herbert Francis Evans, "The Sunday-School Building and Its Equipment." *The Biblical World* 44, no. 3 (1914): 151-224. Accessed June 27, 2018, 157
<http://www.jstor.org/stable/3142689>.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., 157.

¹¹⁰ Ibid., 157.

First Presbyterian Church of Groton
Name of Property

Brown County, SD
County and State

As the Akron Plan became unpopular, many congregations gutted their Sunday School spaces. These served such a specific function that it was difficult to adapt them to anything else. The Akron Plan spaces that survive today are probably a consequence of the congregation's lack of funding to replace them.¹¹¹ Since the First Presbyterian Church in Groton is slightly modified, and the Sunday school is located adjacent to the sanctuary rather than around it, it is possible that a modification to the plan wasn't essential. Despite being strangely shaped, evidently the congregation was able to make use of these rooms. Another point to its favor, while the sanctuary and Akron Plan Sunday school are adjacent to each other in the First Presbyterian Church, they have distinct entrances from the atrium space. This could have been perceived as more welcoming to children, as they didn't have to enter the main church and disrupt services in progress.¹¹²

While Akron plan churches are rare in South Dakota, the First United Methodist Church in Aberdeen, listed in the National Register of Historic Places, displays similar design features as the First Presbyterian Church in Groton. The sanctuary is surrounded by three openings on the lower level that can be closed off by vertical partitions. Of these spaces beyond the sanctuary, only one room can effectively be utilized as a classroom, as the others provide multiple access points. It's not clear to what extent this layout is original or a consequence of later modifications. The partitions seem to be in place primarily to provide additional seating to the sanctuary.

Another known South Dakota church that retains the Akron Plan is the Florence Methodist Church in Codington County. This church was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1991.

Summary

The First Presbyterian Church in Groton is significant under **Criterion C** for architectural significance as it is a rare example of a Gothic Revival style church with a modified Akron Plan Sunday School layout in South Dakota. The church exemplifies the Gothic Revival aesthetic with design elements such as the arcaded porch, the pointed arch windows, the crenellated tower and the stained-glass windows. It is an excellent example of a *second-generation* church designed in high-style by well-known architect J.C. Fulton. The church displays through its visual characteristics a historical connection to the development of a distinctly American Gothic style at the beginning of the 20th century.

¹¹¹ Chambers, Murphy & Burge, Restoration Architect, Ltd. "First Congregational Church" National Register of Historic Places. Nomination Form. Washington, DC: National Park Service, 2004. National Register Reference #04000061.

¹¹² Kilde, *When Church Became Theater*, 185.

First Presbyterian Church of Groton
Name of Property

Brown County, SD
County and State

9. Major Bibliographical References

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Name of Property

Brown County, SD
County and State

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First Presbyterian Church of Groton
Name of Property

Brown County, SD
County and State

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"The Easter Covenant" 28 March 1908, advertisement.

Images

Fig 1. Groton Centennial Committee. *The First Presbyterian Church as it stood on "Piety Hill" in 1906*. Groton Centennial History, 1881-1981. Aberdeen: Northern Plains Press, 1981, 274.

Fig 2. Evans, Herbert Francis. *The Original Akron Plan. Main Floor*. "The Sunday-School Building and Its Equipment." *The Biblical World* 44, no. 3, 1914, 155.
<http://www.jstor.org/stable/3142689>.

Fig 3. Evans, Herbert Francis. *The Original Akron Plan. Balcony Floor*. "The Sunday-School Building and Its Equipment." *The Biblical World* 44, no. 3, 1914, 155.
<http://www.jstor.org/stable/3142689>.

Fig 4. Kramer, George W. *The what, how, and why of church building*. New York, 1897, 229.
https://books.google.com/books?id=MDIAAAAYAAJ&printsec=frontcover&source=gbs_ge_summary_r&cad=0#v=onepage&q=akron%20plan&f=false

First Presbyterian Church of Groton
Name of Property

Brown County, SD
County and State

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 # _____
☐ recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # _____

Primary location of additional data:

- ☒ State Historic Preservation Office
☐ Other State agency
☐ Federal agency
☐ Local government
☐ University
☐ Other
Name of repository: _____

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): BN00000366

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property

Approximately one acre

Use either the UTM system or latitude/longitude coordinates

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates (decimal degrees)

Datum if other than WGS84: _____

(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

- | | |
|--------------|------------|
| 1. Latitude: | Longitude: |
| 2. Latitude: | Longitude: |
| 3. Latitude: | Longitude: |
| 4. Latitude: | Longitude: |

First Presbyterian Church of Groton

Name of Property

Brown County, SD

County and State

Or

UTM References

Datum (indicated on USGS map):

☐ NAD 1927 or ☒ NAD 1983

1. Zone: 14	Easting: 570423.1584	Northing: 5033217.1433
2. Zone: 14	Easting: 570463.2226	Northing: 5033217.2786
3. Zone: 14	Easting: 570463.7333	Northing: 5033171.7060
4. Zone: 14	Easting: 570423.7726	Northing: 5033171.6764

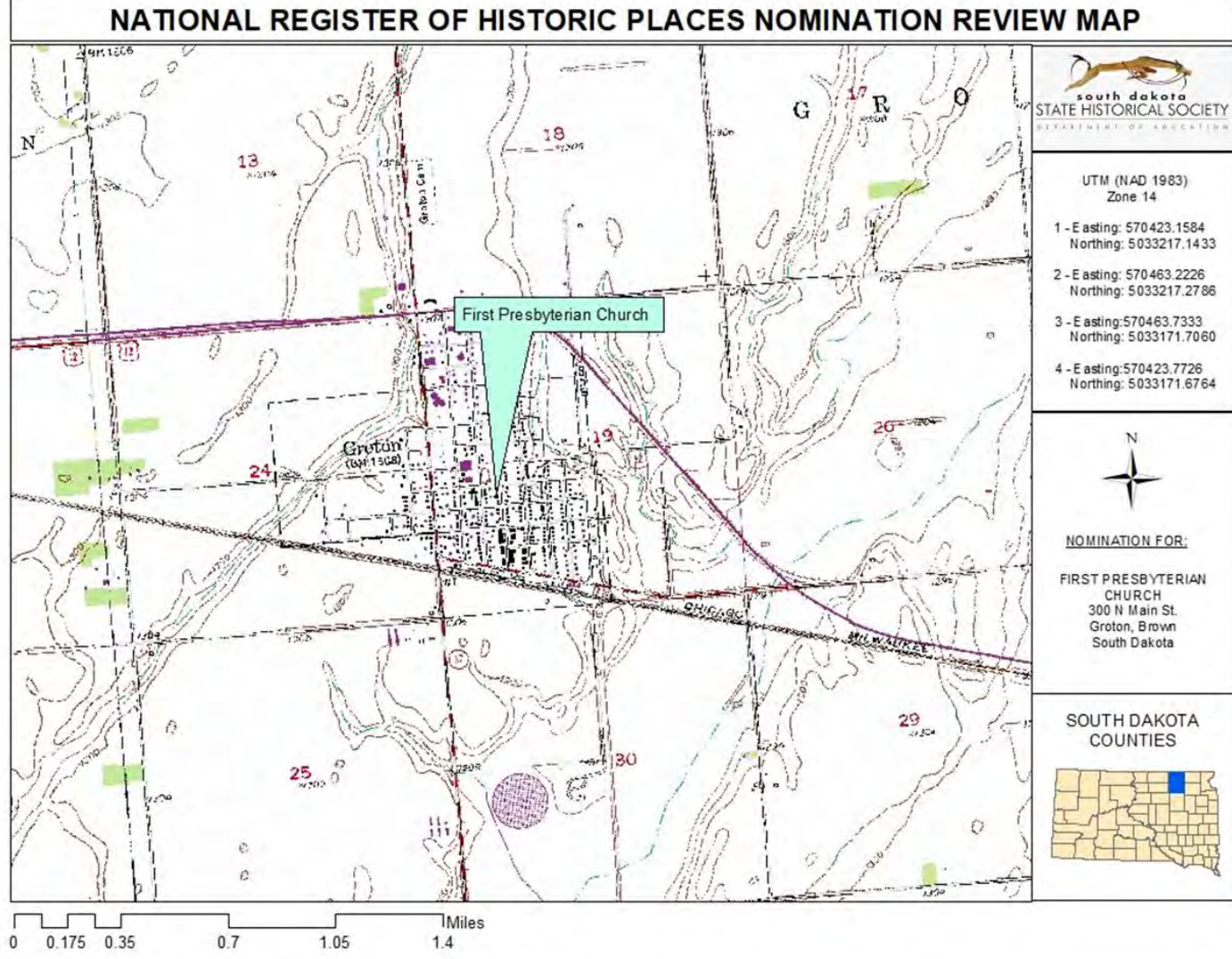
Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

Lots 5-9 & N 15' Lot 10 Block 9 Original Plat Groton (Church Only)

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The boundary includes the lots historically associated with the First Presbyterian Church constructed in 1912.

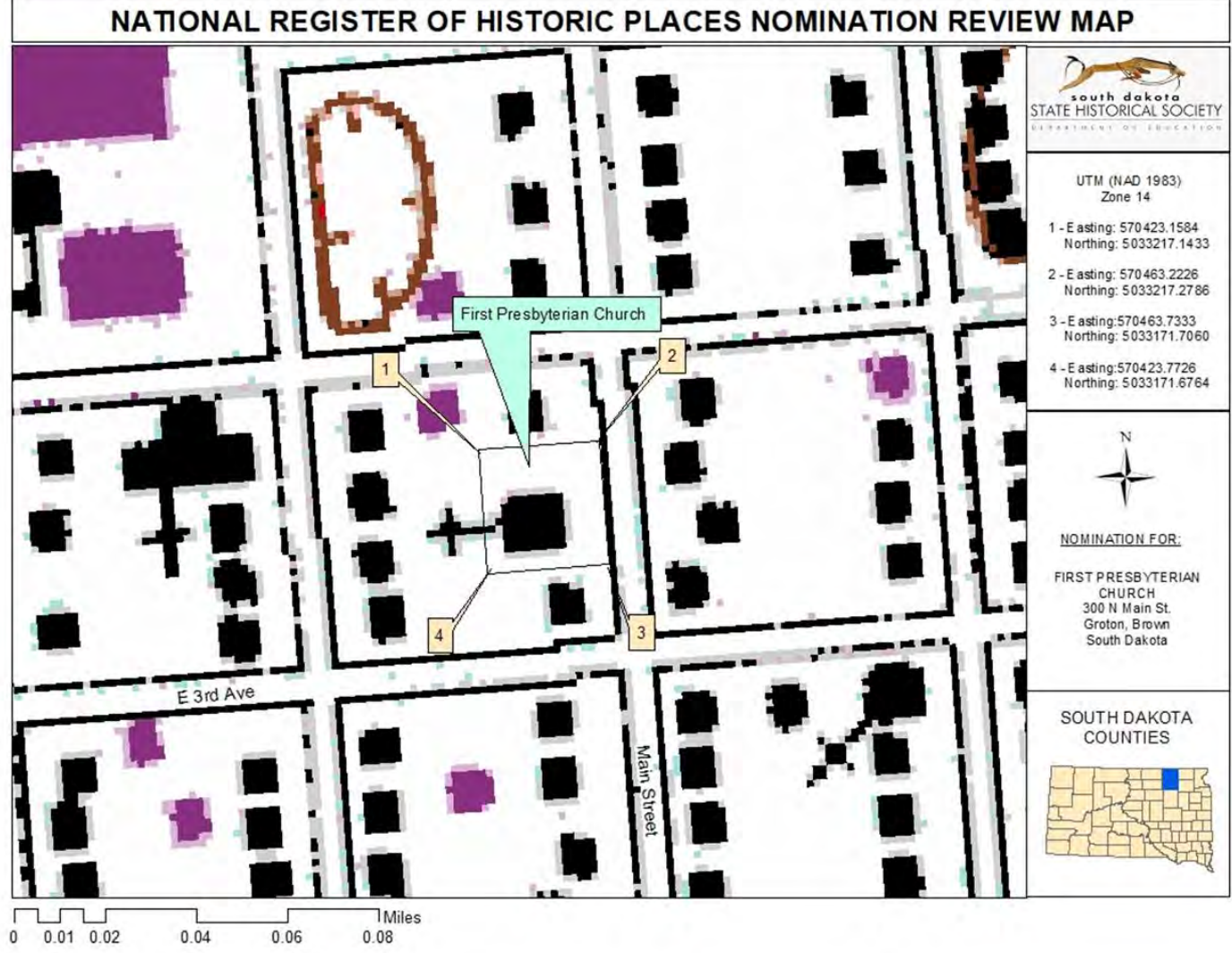
Section 10 Fig 1: First Presbyterian Church of Groton: location in proximity to surrounding area. Produced in ArchMap 10.1 by Sofia Mattesini, 11.13.2018.



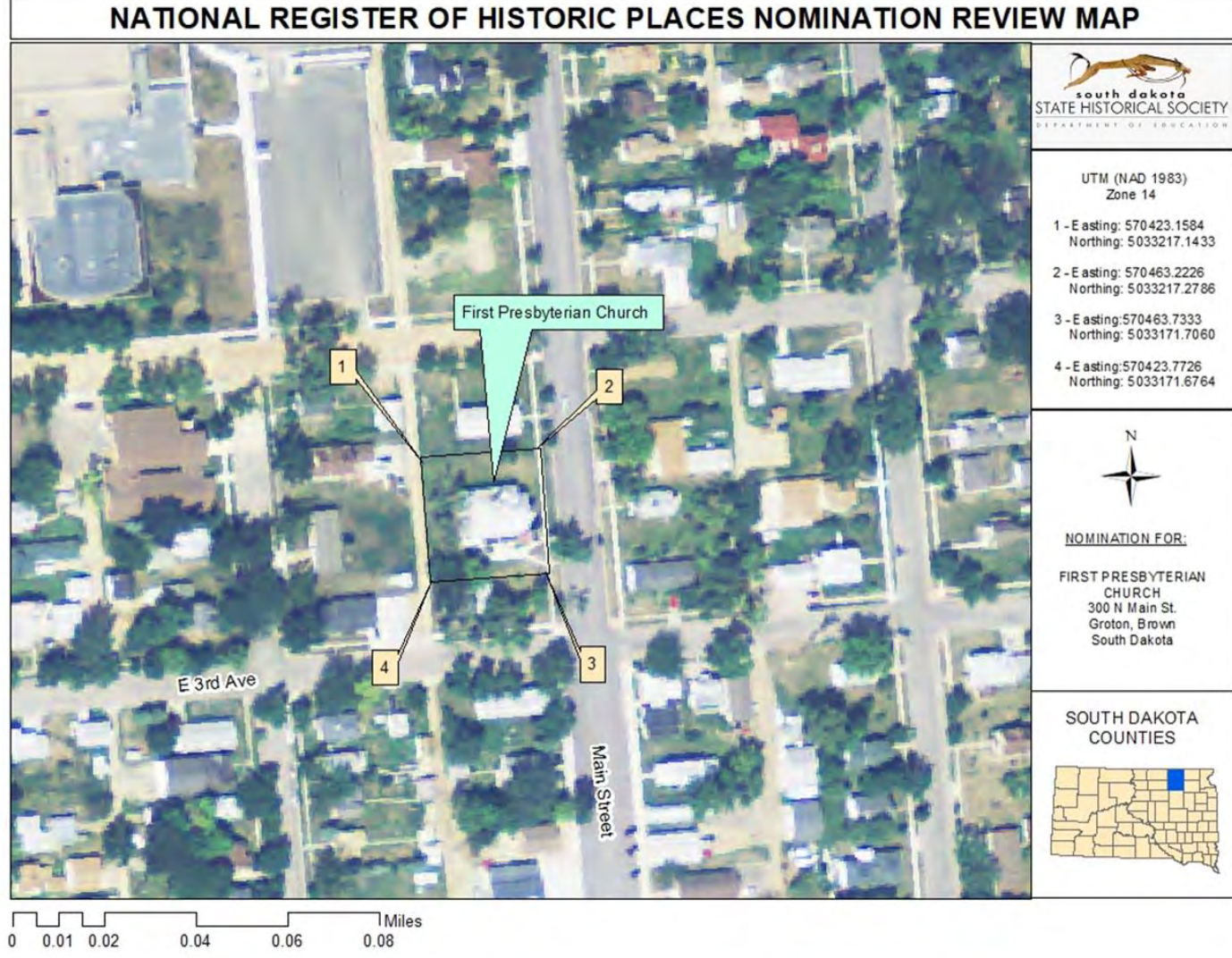
First Presbyterian Church of Groton
Name of Property

Brown County, SD
County and State

Section 10_Fig 2: First Presbyterian Church of Groton: Closeup view of corner between E 3rd Ave and Main Ave. Produced in ArchMap 10.1 by Sofia Mattesini, 11.13.2018.



Section 10 Fig 2: First Presbyterian Church of Groton: Closeup view of corner between E 3rd Ave and Main Ave. Produced in ArchMap 10.1 by Sofia Mattesini, 11.13.2018.



First Presbyterian Church of Groton
Name of Property

Brown County, SD
County and State

11. Form Prepared By

name/title: C.B. Nelson and Sofia Mattesini
organization: South Dakota State Historic Preservation Office
street & number: 900 Governors Drive
city or town: Pierre state: SD zip code: 57501
e-mail: chrisb.nelson@state.sd.us or sofia.mattesini@state.sd.us
telephone: 605-773-3428 or 605-773-2906
date: 16 April 2018

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A **USGS map** or equivalent (7.5 or 15-minute series) indicating the property's location.
- **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO, TPO, or FPO for any additional items.)

Photographs

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels (minimum), 3000x2000 preferred, at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map. Each photograph must be numbered and that number must correspond to the photograph number on the photo log. For simplicity, the name of the photographer, photo date, etc. may be listed once on the photograph log and doesn't need to be labeled on every photograph.

First Presbyterian Church of Groton
Name of Property

Brown County, SD
County and State

Photo Log

Name of Property: First Presbyterian Church

City or Vicinity: Groton

County: Brown

State: SD

Photographer: Liz Almlie, Sofia Mattesini

Date Photographed: 06.05.2017 and 07.06.2018

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera:

SD_Brown County_First Presbyterian Church_0001:
South elevation (main façade), camera looking north.

SD_Brown County_First Presbyterian Church_0002:
East elevation, camera looking west.

SD_Brown County_First Presbyterian Church_0003:
Northeastern corner, camera looking southwest.

SD_Brown County_First Presbyterian Church_0004:
North elevation, camera looking south.

SD_Brown County_First Presbyterian Church_0005:
West elevation, camera looking east.

SD_Brown County_First Presbyterian Church_0006:
Interior staircase on the southern façade, camera looking north.

SD_Brown County_First Presbyterian Church_0007:
Interior atrium and entry to the sanctuary, camera looking southeast

SD_Brown County_First Presbyterian Church_0008:
Office located on the southwestern corner of the building, camera looking west.

SD_Brown County_First Presbyterian Church_0009:
Sanctuary, camera looking northeast

SD_Brown County_First Presbyterian Church_0010:
Sanctuary, camera looking southwest.

SD_Brown County_First Presbyterian Church_0011:
Interior stained-glass dome, camera looking straight up.

First Presbyterian Church of Groton
Name of Property

Brown County, SD
County and State

SD_Brown County_First Presbyterian Church_0012:
Interior stained-glass rose window, camera looking south.

SD_Brown County_First Presbyterian Church_0013:
Interior stained glass tripartite window, camera looking east

SD_Brown County_First Presbyterian Church_0014:
Akron Plan Sunday School with classroom, camera looking northwest

SD_Brown County_First Presbyterian Church_0015:
Akron Plan Sunday School with classrooms, camera looking southwest

SD_Brown County_First Presbyterian Church_0016:
Classroom and storage area, camera facing east

SD_Brown County_First Presbyterian Church_0017:
Basement, camera looking north.

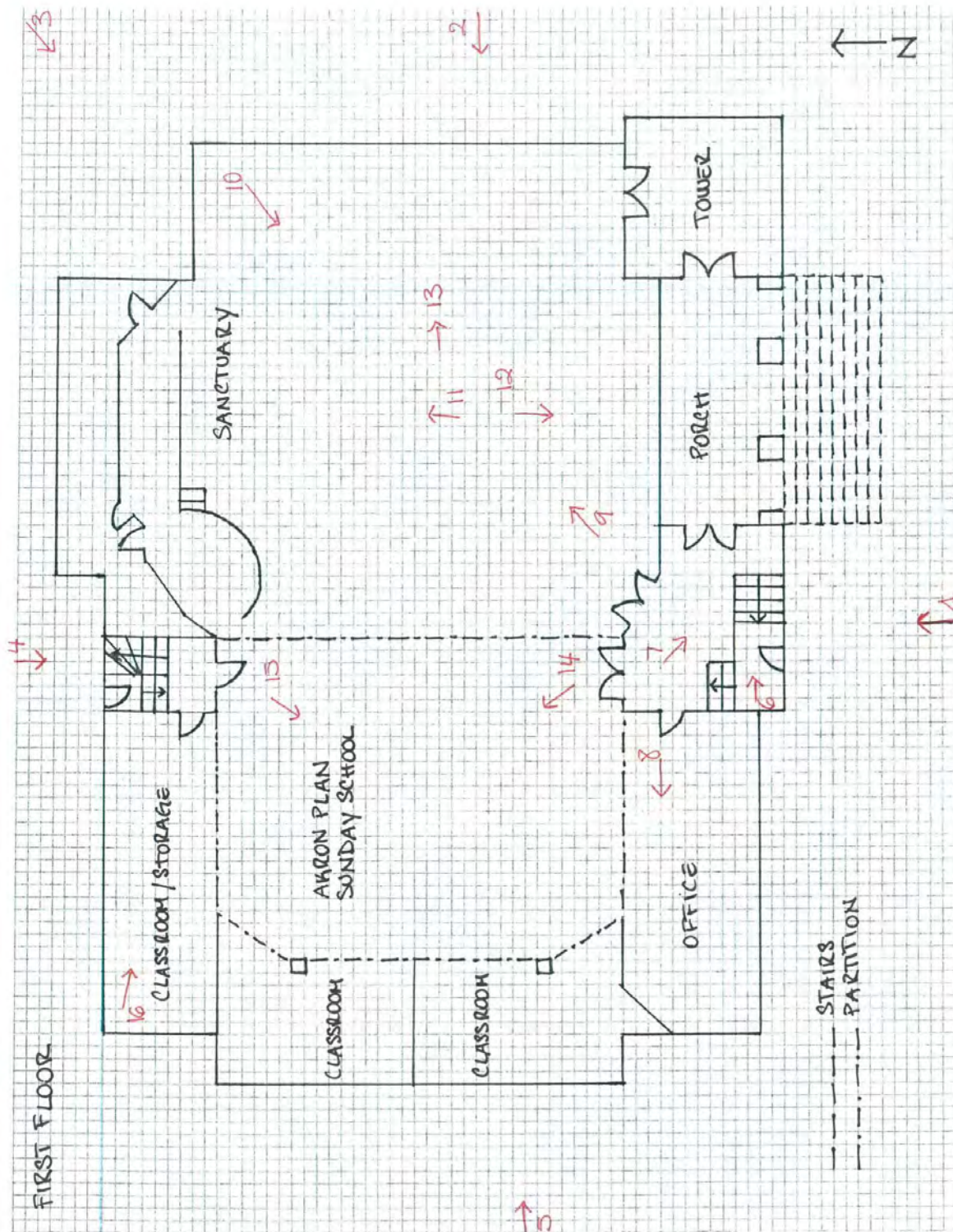
SD_Brown County_First Presbyterian Church_0018:
Basement, camera looking east.

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.460 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 100 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 Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.

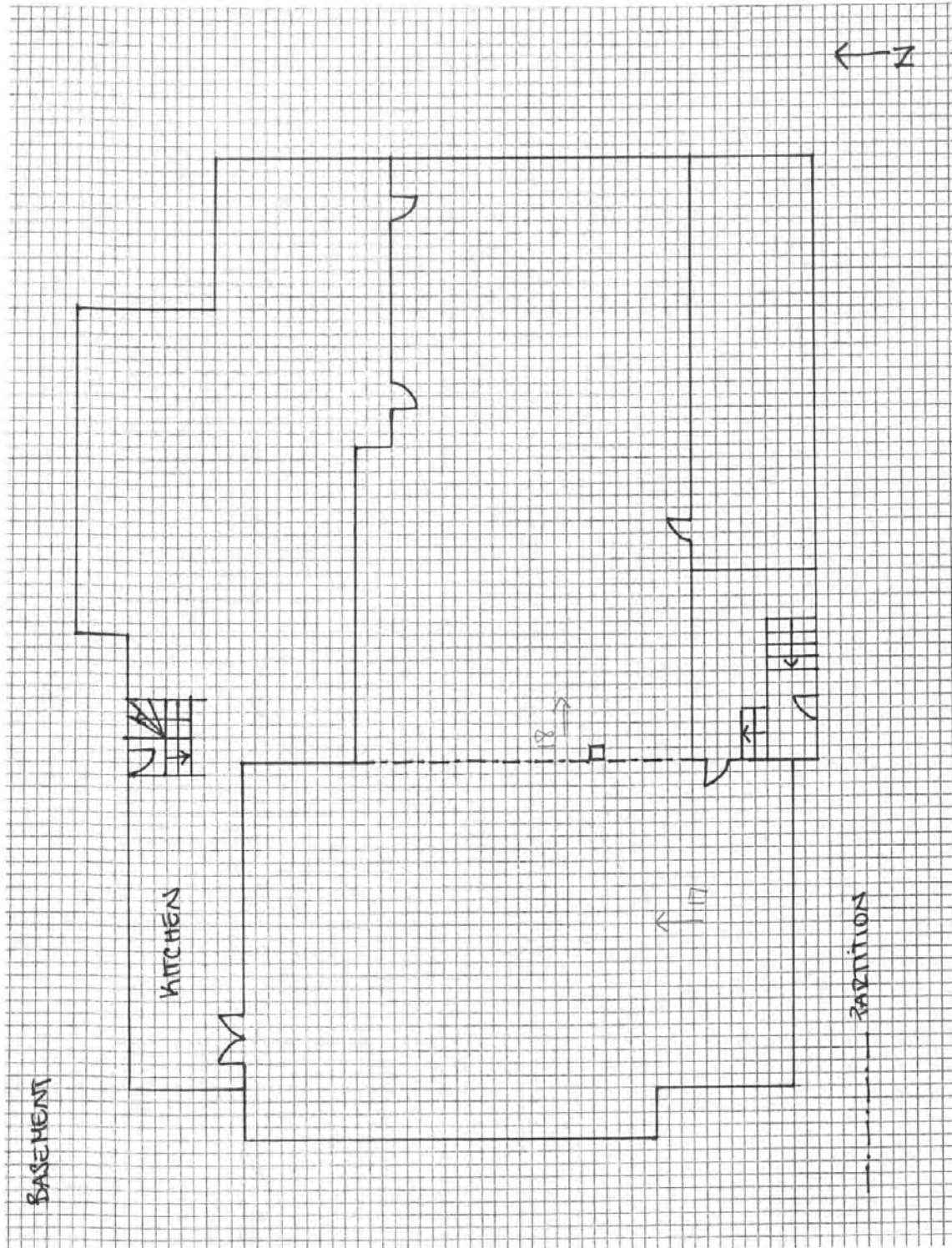
First Presbyterian Church of Groton
Name of Property

Brown County, SD
County and State



First Presbyterian Church of Groton
Name of Property

Brown County, SD
County and State







300
FIRST
PRESBYTERIAN
CHURCH
SUNDAY SERVICE
11:00
BIBLE STUDY 9:30
PASTOR
TERRY KENNY

































NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

Date Received: 1/28/2019 Date of Pending List: 2/12/2019 Date of 16th Day: 2/27/2019 Date of 45th Day: 3/14/2019 Date of Weekly List:

 X Accept Return Reject 3/14/2019 Date

Recommendation/ Criteria	Criterion C, architecture
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Telephone _____ Date 3/14/19

If a nomination is returned to the nomination authority, the nomination is no longer under consideration by the National Park Service.



19 December 2018

Keeper of National Register
National Park Service
National Register of Historic Places
1849 C Street, NW, Mail Stop 7228
Washington DC 20240



To Whom It May Concern:

The enclosed disks contain the true and correct copies of the following nominations to the National Register of Historic Places.

Dickens Round Barn, Worthing vicinity, Lincoln County, SD
Perkins Congregational Church, Springfield vicinity, Bon Homme County, SD
Roosevelt School, Belle Fourche, Butte County, SD
Chambers Dugout, Belle Fourche vicinity, Butte County, SD
First Presbyterian Church of Groton, Groton, Brown County, SD
Haakon County Courthouse, Philip, Haakon County, SD
Solomon and Martha Hann Homestead, Nemo vicinity, Lawrence County, SD
Rapid City Commercial Historic District Amendment, Rapid City, Pennington County, SD
Jackson Boulevard Historic District, Spearfish, Lawrence County, SD.

Number of property owners: 55 Number of objections: 5

Please contact Sofia.Mattesini@state.sd.us with any questions.

Sincerely,

Sofia Mattesini
Historic Preservation Specialist