

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

FOR NPS USE ONLY
RECEIVED JUL 10 1979
DATE ENTERED SEP 11 1979

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

1 NAME

HISTORIC
CENTRAL CHRISTIAN CHURCH
AND/OR COMMON

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER
207 East Short Street
CITY, TOWN
Lexington
STATE
Kentucky
VICINITY OF
CODE
021
COUNTY
Fayette
CODE
067
CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT
6
NOT FOR PUBLICATION

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE
<input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	PUBLIC ACQUISITION	ACCESSIBLE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL
			<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY
			<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER:
			<input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
			<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
			<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME
Central Christian Church
STREET & NUMBER
219 East Short Street
CITY, TOWN
Lexington,
STATE
Kentucky
VICINITY OF

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.
Fayette County Courthouse
STREET & NUMBER
West Main Street
CITY, TOWN
Lexington
STATE
Kentucky

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE
Kentucky Historic Resources Inventory
DATE
February 1979
DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS
Kentucky Heritage Commission
CITY, TOWN
Frankfort
STATE
Kentucky
FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION

EXCELLENT
 GOOD
 FAIR

DETERIORATED
 RUINS
 UNEXPOSED

CHECK ONE

UNALTERED
 ALTERED

CHECK ONE

ORIGINAL SITE
 MOVED DATE _____

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Central Christian Church plant is located at the northeast intersection of Short and Walnut Streets in the downtown commercial area of Lexington, with the city hall, jail, and the telephone company building occupying adjacent sites. A severe white concrete sheathed high-rise bank, parking and office tower is immediately across Walnut Street to the south (Photo #9).

The cornerstone was dedicated on August 7, 1893 and "contains contents of era" and "is the same piece of rock that came out of the old Masonic Temple".¹ The building was dedicated on July 22, 1894.

The auditorium and later, rather extensive facilities are combined in a single structure that descends from the dramatic corner tower in a series of polygonal forms united by their uniform setback and the textured polychrome surface (Photo #1). They are set on a raised matching stone terrace (of somewhat different form from the original)- Original, Photo #2). The newer brick cloister and education building are connected to the east and north, set back behind a garden from Short Street (Photo #1); the recently-acquired former Greyhound Bus Station is farther to the East.

"The tower, the commanding feature of the building, at the immediate corner, is twenty feet square, rises ninety-five feet above the pavement, and is of stone its entire height, excepting an elaborately carved terra-cotta freize at the top, three feet in width and exactly matching in color the brown stone trimmings".²

It has articulated square corner piers except for the projecting octagonal SW corner member. There are two main stories, serving as a stair-tower for the auditorium's balconies. Above a band of triple round-arched windows defined by horizontal bands of brown stone are the triple lancet openings of the bell-tower, about thirty feet high. Above their round arches between the corner piers are fields of polychrome stone diaper-work (in a lattice or checkerboard pattern, like those over the formerly recessed porches on the two main street-fronts). The roof is a low pyramid, with conical finials over the corner piers. The original upward extension (like a tourelle) of the SW corner octagonal "cylinder" was removed fairly early, (see original in Photo #3, existing in Photo #4).

"The two principal entrances, one on either street, are exactly alike, (Photo #2) and in point of beauty and dignity are but little inferior to the tower. They consist each of a triple arch of brown stone, supported by twelve polished granite columns, four in a cluster, with elaborately carved capitals. Immediately above the spandrel a freize course of diaper work, surmounted by a dentilated belt course, adds delicacy to the conception, above which rises the main gables of the church, each pierced by a rose window thirteen feet in diameter".³ These great gabled "transepts", originally gave the auditorium a cruciform effect superimposed on its basic octagon, 65 feet in diameter. Since the fire of

8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD		AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW				
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION		
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE		
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE		
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN		
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION		
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)		
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION				

SPECIFIC DATES 1894 Dedicated

BUILDER/ARCHITECT John H. Walker - Builder
Frank L. & Edwin W. Smith,
Architects

~~STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE~~

Fire Damage Repair: 1934
1952 Additions

Curtiss & Frankle, Architects
Hugh Meriwether, Architect

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Architecturally, the church complex (erected in 1893-94 on the site of the first Masonic lodge west of the Alleghenies, later the Grand Lodge of Kentucky) is the major surviving Richardsonian Romanesque structure in Lexington (the former Federal Building has been demolished and the existing Fayette County Courthouse, although impressive and original in concept, is relatively provincial stylistically). The architects, Edwin W. and Frank L. Smith, known as the Smith Brothers firm, were responsible for many other important institutional, public, and residential buildings in the area in the 1890s and early 1900s, although few of them have as yet been definitely identified. They seem to have been the purest exponents in the Bluegrass region of the free revival style developed by the great American architect H.H. Richardson (unlike many of his followers, in Lexington as elsewhere). Not only did they develop a convincing Richardsonian massing using the corner site near the main downtown commercial thoroughfare and incorporating the varied elements of the program in a functionally expressive yet unified composition, but they even went so far as to import some of the master's favored type of stone, Longmeadow puddingstone (or brownstone) from Massachusetts, to contract with the basic local rough-stone surfaces. The use of diaper-patterns, polished granite columns, and a terra-cotta frieze is based on Richardson's work, as is the stylized detail derived from Romanesque and Byzantine sources. The diverse geometric masses--octagons, squares, partial cylinders, and triangular gables--emphasized and harmonized by the high polygonal roofs, reflect the spaces, functions, and circulation patterns of the original interior. Although the main auditorium burned and was rebuilt in the mid-1930s on an enlarged and somewhat different plan, the reconstruction was remarkably well disguised. Moreover, the 1950 addition, although of brick and in a somewhat more archaeological version of Romanesque Revival style, is both intrinsically charming and well-adapted to the original complex.¹

Historically, Central Christian Church is the oldest of those churches that later became known as Christian Churches (Disciples of Christ). It is considered a direct descendant of the Cane Ridge Christian Church founded by Robert W. Finley in 1790. The actual founding date, however, is 1816, when two separate groups were organized. One was established by Barton W. Stone (1772-1844), a former Presbyterian minister

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES William Clayton Bower, Central

Christian Church, Lexington, Kentucky: A History (St. Louis, Mo.: The Bethany Press, 1962).
 Clay Lancaster, Vestiges of the Venerable City (Lexington, 1978), p. 138.
 J. Winston Coleman, Jr., The Squire's Sketches of Lexington (Lexington, 1972); J. Soule Smith,
Art Work of the Blue Grass Region (Oshkosh, Wisc. 1898); Kentucky Historic Resources Inventory,
 Feb. 1979, prepared by Walter E. Langsam; Register E, 1890-1897 of the original Church Records;
Kentucky Leader, Aug. 8, 1893; July 23, 1894; and other newspaper sources; as well as Sanborn

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA Insurance maps & other views, and church pamphlets.

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY .58 acres
 UTM REFERENCES

A	1 6	7 1 9 8 1 0	4 2 1 3 6 0 0	B			
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
C				D			

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

City Lot

At the corner of Short Street and Walnut Street, Lexington, Kentucky; Short Street to the south, Walnut Street to the west, City Building to the north, Church owned property to the East.

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	None	CODE	COUNTY	None	CODE
STATE		CODE	COUNTY		CODE

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE: James A. Ross
 ORGANIZATION: James A. Ross, Architect & Associates
 DATE: April 23, 1979
 STREET & NUMBER: 257 Lexington Avenue
 TELEPHONE: (606) 254-4018
 CITY OR TOWN: Lexington
 STATE: Kentucky

12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL STATE LOCAL

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE: *Donna C. Hopkins*
 TITLE: Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer
 DATE: July 5, 1979

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

Chad Skull
 DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION
 ATTEST: *Beth Grosvenor*
 KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE: *9-11-79*
 KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER
 DATE: *9/4/79*

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Central Christian Church

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January 9, 1934, the southern rose window has been crossed by the rebuilt gallery and the west window is now enclosed in an air-conditioning compartment and is visible only from outside at night. Beyond the W gable rises the portion of the octagon extended after the fire, with an enclosed one-story link to a rebuilt gabled vestibule (the original NW entrance pavilion was octagonal with a picturesque tall roof). The skill with which these newer portions was matched to the old is remarkable, even for Depression-era construction. The eastern portions of the main structure are original, although the interiors have been considerably altered; originally there was an "Akron Plan" Sunday School auditorium with sliding doors opening onto both the main auditorium and smaller school-rooms, as well as dining rooms and a kitchen, library, pastor's study, and the like, as described fully by the architects in a front-page article in the Lexington Leader the day after the dedication on July 22, 1894. A square stair tower embedded within the major wall-plane gave visual separation between the main auditorium and the other facilities (Photo #5). East of it a gable rises above a pair of round-arched windows without breaking the smooth continuity of the surface, which bends around the apse-like projection of the SE corner. There is a massive chimney at its easternmost point. A subsidiary entrance in the eastern portico of the S wall has stone trim with a High Victorian Gothic flavor like the more retardataire details of H.H. Richardson's Trinity Church, Boston. Originally, octagonal cupolas over the high, octagonal roofs of the two auditoria further enlivened the skyline (the only known view of the original roof composition not completely blocked by the tower is a bird's-eye view from the west about 1930, shortly before the fire). The curved roof of the apse is particularly effective.

The interior of the main auditorium as rebuilt in 1934, and somewhat simplified since then, consists of an elongated N-S octagon with a large gallery around the three southernmost sides and a recessed, round-arched sanctuary on the North (Photo #6). The attenuated clustered colonnettes, frames of the large round-arched panels, and generous curves of the ceiling are all Richardsonian in effect, although lacking the original rich polychromy. There are some fine geometric windows in the lower part of the "transepts", vestibules, and stair-tower, as well as the remnants of figurative rose windows (whose tracery, however, does not conform to that in the 1898 photograph #3). The remainder of the interior has been modernized.

The 1950's education complex was effectively harmonized with the original edifice, although of brick and in a more archaeological Romanesque Revival style. A covered passage treated like a cloister leads from the street E of the main build-

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ing to a wing across the back (N) side of the property (Photo #7), with a small gabled memorial chapel projecting forward at the E side of the lot, in front of which the cloister serves as a porch (Photo #1). The brickwork of these newer sections is fine, with stylized geometric capitals and paired columns supporting the round arches of the cloister, red tile roofs, and exquisite wrought-iron filigree screens in the openings of the passageway, (Photo #8) which forms a surprising semi-enclosed garden-retreat at the verge of downtown.

- 1 "The Kentucky Leader", August 7, 1893.
- 2 "The Kentucky Leader", July 23, 1894.
- 3 Ibid.

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STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE (Continued)

and one of the outstanding figures of the Great Awakening Religious Revival at the turn of the 19th century. Stone's followers united with followers of William Poindexter who met in various residences, one of them formerly just E of the present church complex (Photo #10). This combined group of Poindexter and Stone, joined by ex-Baptists led by Dr. James Fishback, became the Hill Street Christian Church in 1831 (Hill Street is now High Street). In 1832 Campbellites or "Disciples", followers of a rival of Stone, Alexander Campbell (1788-1866), joined the Stoneites or "Christians" or "New Lights", in an historic reconciliation at the Hill Street Church. They formed a single communion known as the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). In the process, this congregation became the first of the United Communion.

In 1842 the enlarged congregation erected an impressive late Greek Revival building, long a landmark, on East Main Street (later the site of the former Union Station). The second church building, known as the Main Street Christian Church, was the setting in 1843 of the famous Campbell-Rice debate, moderated by Henry Clay, one of the landmarks of American Protestant theology.

In 1892 the congregation purchased the present property at the NE corner of Walnut and Short Streets, a site notable in the history of freemasonry. It was here, in a little log house, that the first meetings of the first masonic lodge west of the Alleghenies were held in 1788. Lexington Lodge No. 25 (Virginia), later renamed Lexington Lodge No. 1 when the Grand Lodge of Kentucky was established in 1800, included many noted figures of early Lexington, Kentucky, and indeed national history. After an interlude on W. Main Street from 1824 to 1836, the lodge returned to a magnificent Greek Revival structure on their original site, which was torn down to be replaced by the present church. The church cornerstone was taken from the Lodge - See Exhibit No. 2.

This superb church complex was dedicated on July 22, 1894, (Exhibit No. 1) and symbolized the prominence of the congregation in the economic and social life of the community. On January 9, 1934, the auditorium of Central Christian Church was destroyed by fire, but was soon rebuilt with an enlarged sanctuary. The old education building, erected in 1914, was replaced by the present facilities in 1950-52, including the cloister, chapel, and Christian education services.

The church has proven innovative in structure, theology, education (including the education and training of black clergy), music, social services, and enlightened racial policy. Both the staff and the congregation have included many figures in the life of the community, particularly in the field of education (there has traditionally been a close association between the church and Transylvania University and its offspring, the College of the Bible).

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CONTINUATION SHEET

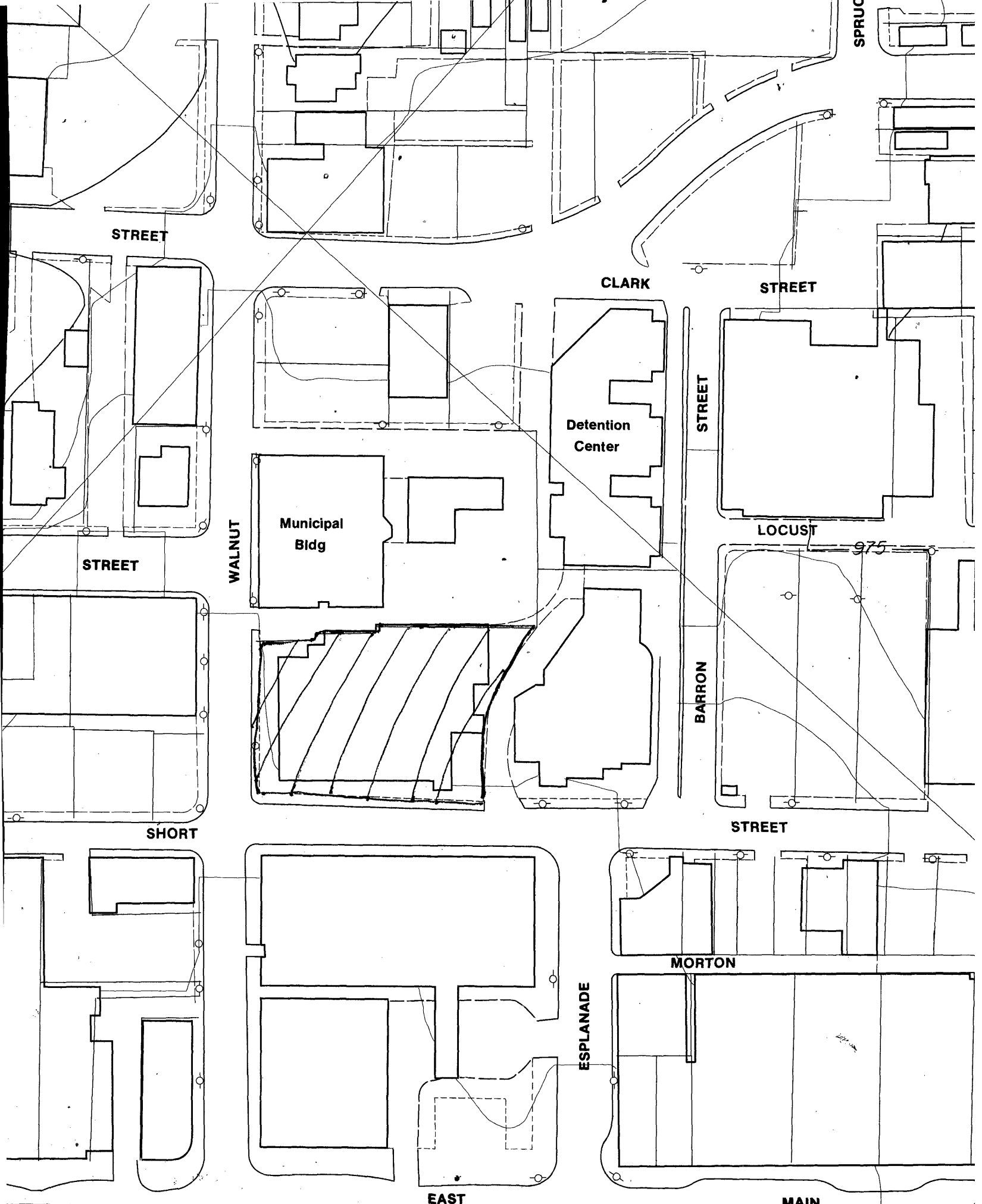
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STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE (Continued)

The contemporary significance of Central Christian Church cannot be over-emphasized. It has always been and intends to always be an integral part of the "heart" of Lexington.

In the mid 1960s the congregation was extremely limited in space for church school, offices and parkings. A committee was formed to develop a solution to this problem and abandoning the present building and location was contemplated. Although severely limited in land for parking and growth the overwhelming majority did not want the building destroyed and felt that central city churches were needed and could serve their purpose.

More than two million dollars was spent obtaining and upgrading adjacent properties for various programs, which has helped revitalize the congregation and the downtown area. Although the congregation is strong and growing (one of the largest in Lexington) it is presently threatened by the commercial and governmental need for additional land.



STREET

SPRUC

CLARK

STREET

Detention
Center

STREET

Municipal
Bldg

LOCUST

975

STREET

WALNUT

BARRON

STREET

SHORT

MORTON

ESPLANADE

EAST

MAIN

Central Christian Church

SEP 11 1979

Lexington
201-219 E. Short St.
Fayette *County*
Kentucky

JUL 10 1979

Downtown Area Topographic Map
Lexington-Fayette Urban Co. Government
Division of Planning

Scale - 1" = 100'

Map, 2