

**United States Department of the Interior  
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

**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 Grace Lutheran Church of Barber

and/or common

**2. Location**

street & number West of Ryegate N/A not for publication

city, town Ryegate  vicinity of congressional district #2 Eastern

state Montana code 30 county Golden Valley code 037

**3. Classification**

<b>Category</b>	<b>Ownership</b>	<b>Status</b>	<b>Present Use</b>
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture <input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial <input type="checkbox"/> park
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational <input type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government <input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial <input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military <input type="checkbox"/> other:

**4. Owner of Property**

name Trustees of Grace Lutheran Church

street & number

city, town Barber  vicinity of state Montana

**5. Location of Legal Description**

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Golden Valley County Courthouse

street & number 107 Kemp

city, town Ryegate state Montana

**6. Representation in Existing Surveys**

title None has this property been determined eligible?  yes  no

date  federal  state  county  local

depository for survey records

city, town state

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## 7. Description

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<b>Condition</b>		<b>Check one</b>	<b>Check one</b>
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved date _____
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		

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### Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

Located about six miles West of Ryegate on Highway 12, off to the South side of the road about one-half mile is Grace Lutheran Church of Barber, Montana. This church was built in 1917 of wood with a shingled roof and clapboard siding. On the lower Southwest corner of the roof is the steeple and bell tower. The church has always been painted white.

The church is made up of three rooms. Up the front steps and through double doors one enters the smallest of the three rooms, the narthex. In this room hangs the rope for the church bell. Through the single door to the East lies the sanctuary. At the North end of the sanctuary is the altar. The altar was handmade by Clarence Nelson, son of one of the early church members. The church also contains the original wooden pews. On the right side of the altar is the minister's podium, on the left side is the baptismal fount. Slightly to the left and behind the baptismal fount is the piano. To the West of the sanctuary through double folding doors is located the kitchen. It contains a wood stove, some cupboards, and a couple of tables.

The windows of the church all have stained glass borders and the rest of the window is frosted. On the walls of the inside there is wainscoting about four feet up from the wood floor with plaster covering the rest of the wall.

When electricity was put in the church, ornate drop light fixtures were installed.

To the South when standing on the steps, lies the railroad tracks and still further South is the Mussellshell River and the hills. To the East are the fields of the Eklund ranch. To the West is the home of Gordon Eklund and what remains of the once thriving community of Barber. To the North, about one-half mile is the highway and across the highway, the rimrocks. There are no trees on church property; the building is completely surrounded by grass.

The Grace Lutheran Church of Barber retains its basic integrity of setting, design, and materials. The roof now leaks and this has caused some interior plaster damage. The bell tower shingles are almost completely gone. The exterior paint is chipping and there are a few woodpecker holes in the siding. Although the church requires some basic maintenance, it has remained structurally unaltered since its construction.

## 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 checked="" 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 type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> social/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700–1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800–1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900–	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

**Specific dates** 1917 **Builder/Architect**

### Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Grace Lutheran Church stands as a landmark and symbol of the town that was once Barber, Montana. Built in 1917, the church is a fine example of wood framed, vernacular architecture with pointed arch fenestration and wooden tracery. The church was constructed by the combined efforts of the people of Barber. In addition to its architectural significance, the Grace Lutheran Church is associated with a number of persons important in the early settlement of Barber.

Shortly after the Chicago-Milwaukee Railroad laid its tracks through the Mussellshell Valley and the area was opened for homesteading, the town of Barber was settled. In 1908, N.C. Eklund and Henry Bartz, the co-founders of the town, purchased 18,000 acres of land. By the time the families of these men arrived in Montana on July 7, 1910, Barber was thriving community. A grocery store, a general store for the sale of farm machinery, and a lumber yard had been set up. The movement for a church and school soon followed in regular order.

Although Mr. Eklund was a strong Lutheran and Mr. Bartz a strong Methodist, they cooperatively supported the formation of a union Sunday School on August 4, 1910. Mr. Bartz was the first superintendent and a few years later, Mrs. N.C. Eklund was elected to this office.

In 1912 work began on a Lutheran Church building, but it had to be abandoned and the lots were donated for the construction of a school. The Methodists also organized a congregation and, with the assistance of the entire community, were able to erect a church in 1917. This building, now the Grace Lutheran Church, was used by both congregations in its early years.

The town of Barber grew rapidly around the time of World War I. The Church, also serving the community as a social center, was the setting for numerous picnics and community gatherings. During the 1920's, a combination of drought, hail, grasshoppers and low prices for grain forced farmers to leave. The Methodist Church was abandoned. In 1927, the Lutherans purchased the building and rededicated it in 1929,

Little remains to indicate the past presence of the once prosperous community of Barber. Only the vault section of the old bank and two small, unoccupied commercial buildings stand. The Grace Lutheran Church is the only building from Old Barber which remains in use, drawing its congregation from towns as far as 20 to 30 miles away. Today the Grace Lutheran Church has the distinction of being the smallest active American Lutheran Congregation in the States.

# 9. Major Bibliographical References

Grace Lutheran Church 25 yr. history and 50 yr. history.

**UTM NOT VERIFIED**

# 10. Geographical Data

**ACREAGE NOT VERIFIED**

Acreage of nominated property less than 1 acre

Quadrangle name unsurveyed

Quadrangle scale \_\_\_\_\_

### UMT References

A 

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Zone Easting Northing

B 

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Zone Easting Northing

C 

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D 

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E 

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F 

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G 

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H 

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### Verbal boundary description and justification

Lots 1,2 and 3, Block 2, Townsite of Barber, Golden Valley County, Montana.  
T 6N; R 19E Section 5.

### List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state code county code

state code county code

# 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Margaret Eklund, Treasurer and other church members

organization Grace Lutheran Church date May 15, 1980

street & number telephone 568-2510

city or town Ryegate state Montana 59074

# 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 Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature *Novella Shafy*

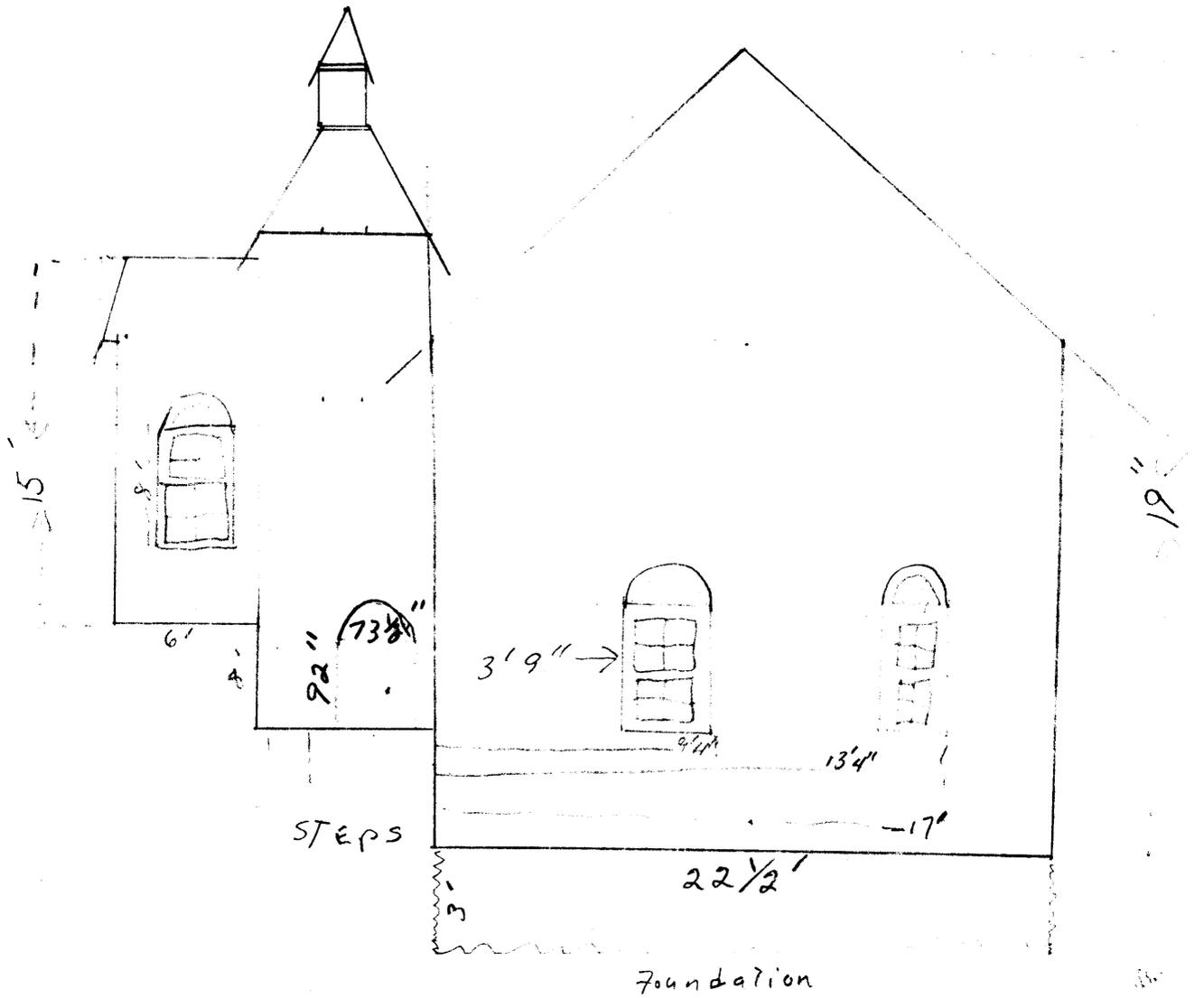
title Deputy SHPO date 12-1-80

William H. Bravham  
609

2/1/8

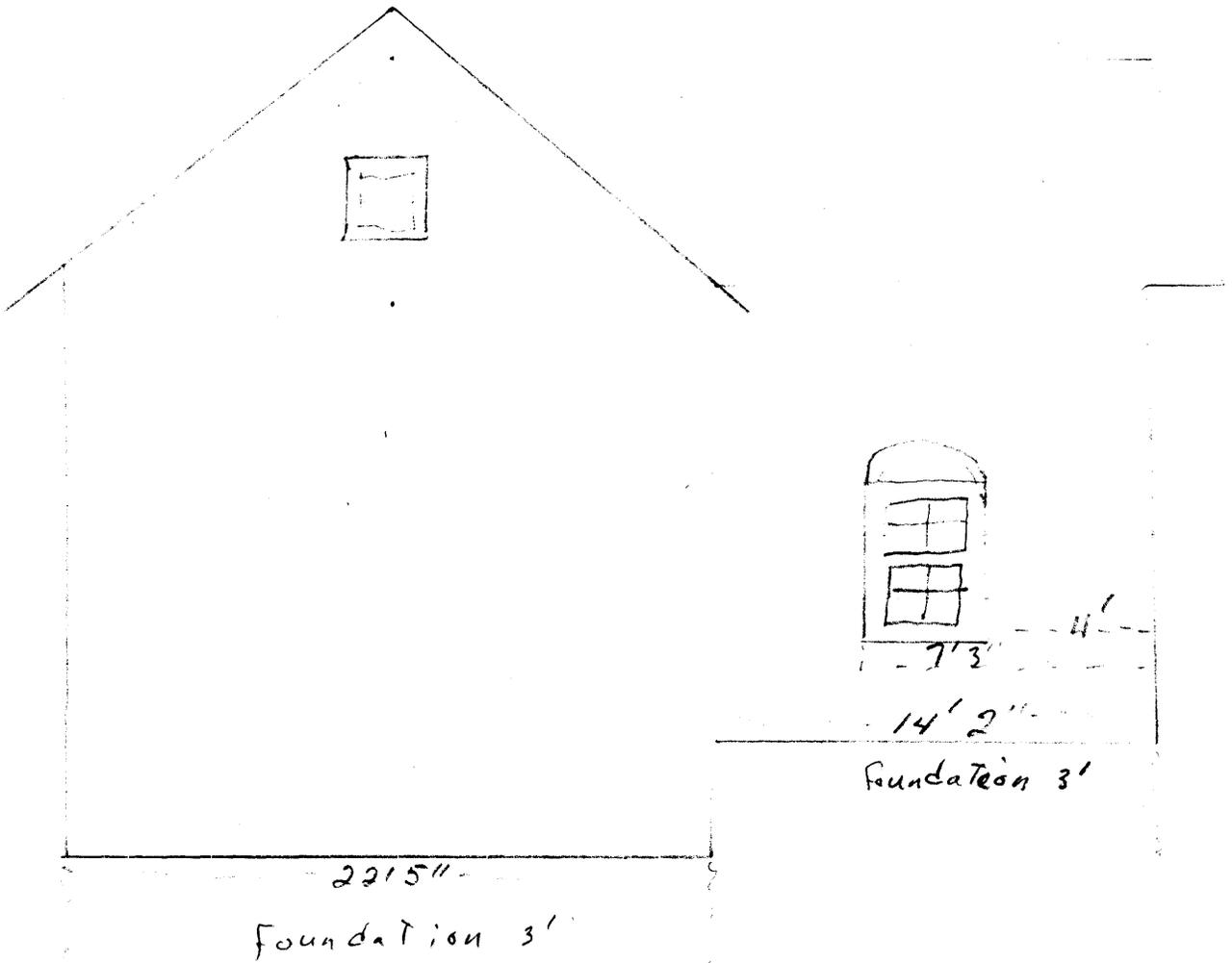
#7

South View



# 1

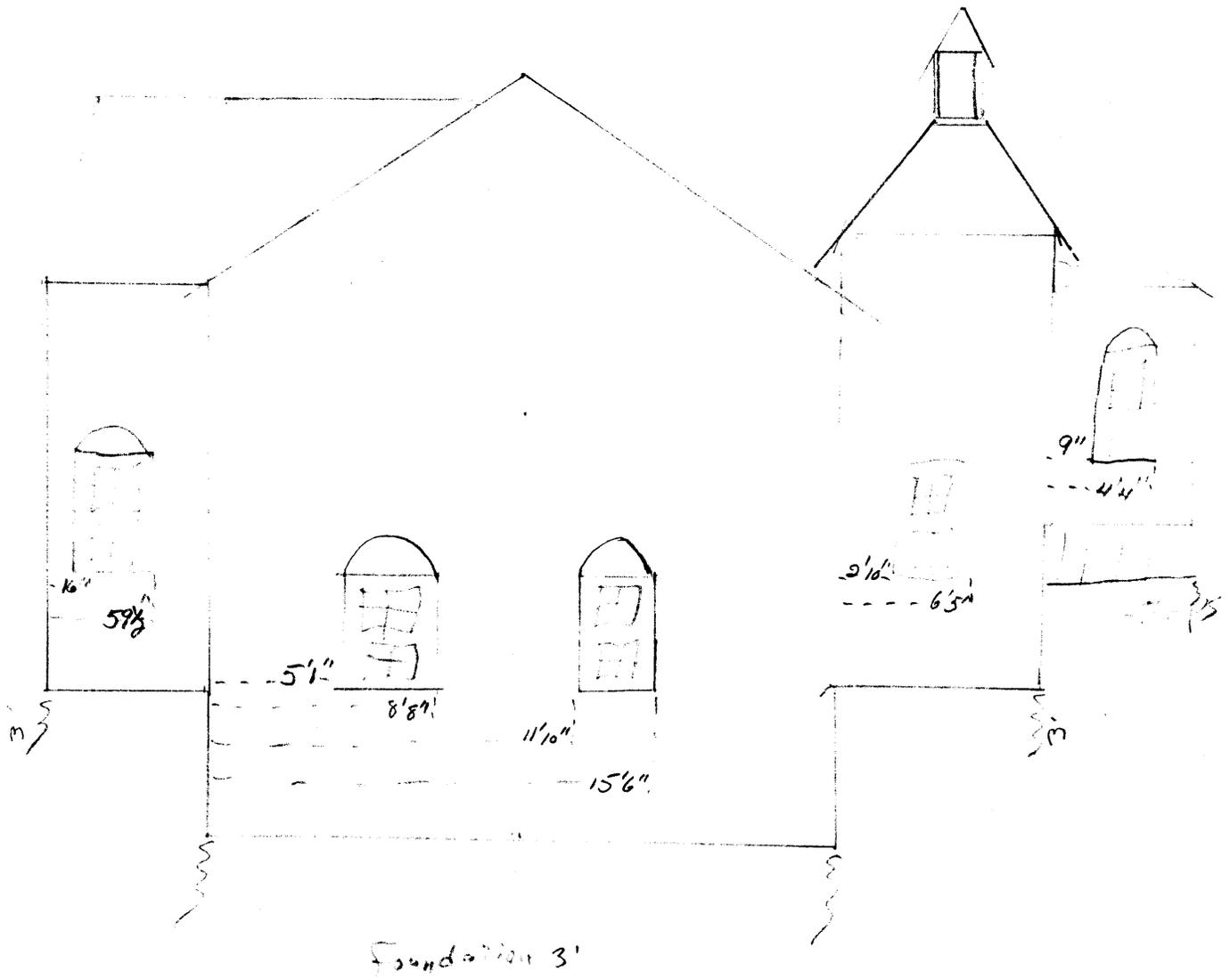
# North View



AUG 18 1980

#7

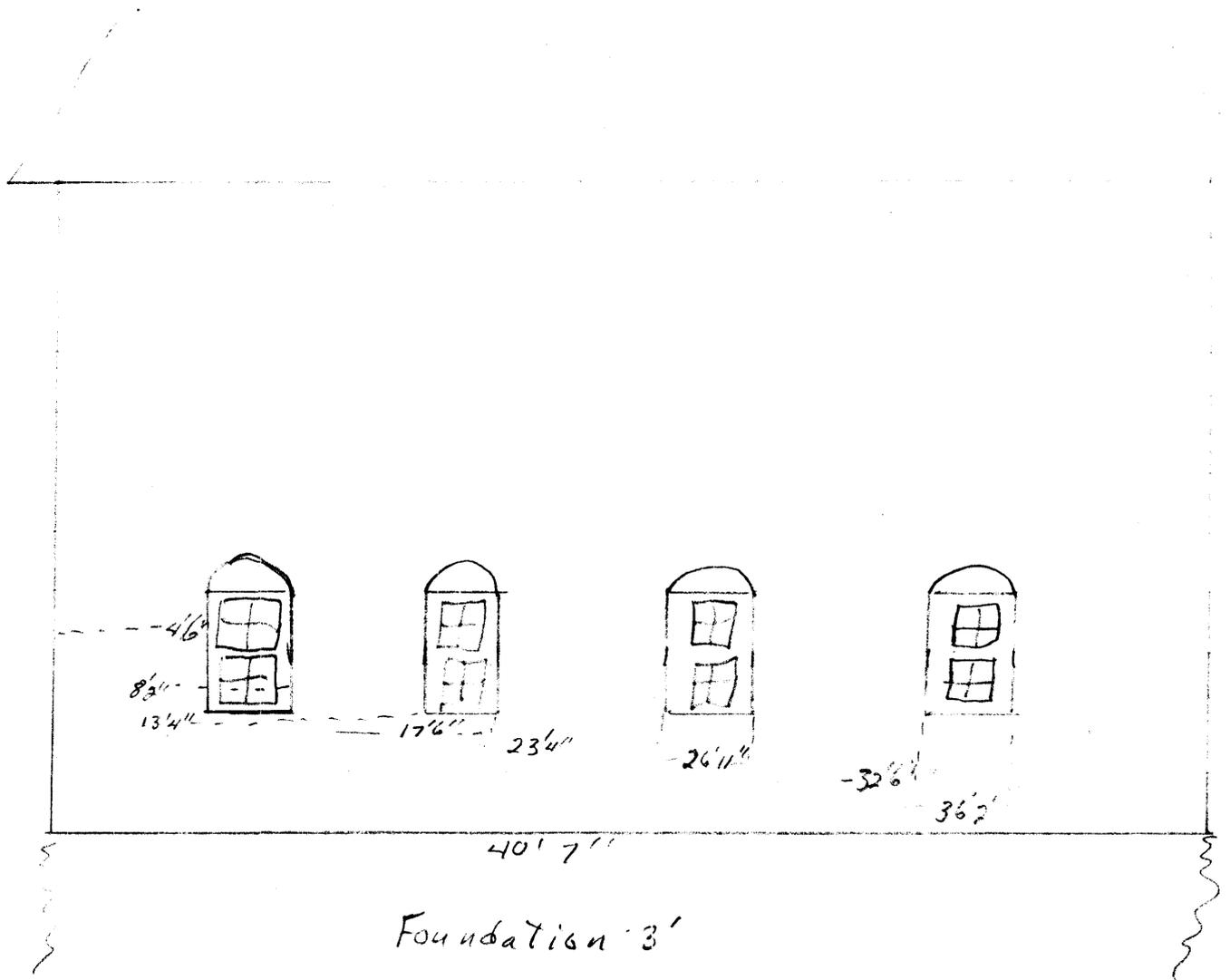
# West View



AUG 18 1981

#7

# East View



6-13-1911