

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

For NPS use only
received MAY 23 1986
date entered JUN 20 1986

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic First Church of Christ Scientist

and/or common N/A

2. Location

street & number 614-20 East Fifteenth Street N/A not for publication

city, town Minneapolis N/A vicinity of ~~Congressional district~~

state Minnesota code 22 county Hennepin code 053

3. Classification

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

4. Owner of Property

name Merrill J. Busch / Arland Athneosen

street & number 2120 Girard Avenue South / 5125 Lee Way

city, town Minneapolis N/A vicinity of Minnetonka state Minnesota

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Registry of Deeds, Hennepin County Government Center

street & number 300 South Sixth Street

city, town Minneapolis state Minnesota

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title N/A has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date N/A N/A federal state county local

depository for survey records N/A

city, town N/A state N/A

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one	
<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 N/A
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed			

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The First Church of Christ Scientist (1897) is a Beaux-Arts Roman/Renaissance Revival building located in the Elliot Park district south of downtown Minneapolis at 614-20 East Fifteenth Street. A fragment of its original residential neighborhood survives in a cluster of Victorian houses immediately to the east of the property. Its other neighbors typify the mix of multifamily and commercial development that has gradually been displacing single-family residences since World War I.

The street facade and lateral elevations appear much the same today as they did in Christian Science publications at the turn of the century.¹ These in turn show only slight variations from the architect's rendering published locally at the time of construction.² A deep portico in the Doric order is flanked by piers engaged to the front ends of the lateral walls. These and two fluted columns spaced in the open manner of a diastyle carry a very thin architrave and a frieze of triglyphs, each of which continues around the building. Above the portico is a low-pitched pedimented gable. Apart from its dentiled base and rakes, the only ornament on the pediment is a raised brick inscription: "FIRST CHURCH OF CHRIST SCIENTIST".

Within the portico is a central, double-doored entry headed and flanked by semi-circular lights. Directly above these are three rectangular lights muntined in Beaux-Arts fashion with diagonal and upright crosses in superimposition.

The side elevations carry entablatures and gables identical to the front; but these bear on walling rather than columns. Each of the lateral walls is pierced by three tall, closely placed, round-headed windows. These are the major lights for the church auditorium.

The building is cruciform in plan, with the front niches infilled with cubicles initially used for small meeting and lecture rooms. The formal severity of these corner structures is relieved by quoined and muntined (now glass block) windows on the street elevation and a curious three-step parapet, each step terminated by a volute. This parapet also softens the transition from two-story portico to single-story cubicles.

The property is of solid masonry construction faced in Twin Cities cream pressed brick and trimmed in matching terra cotta. Surface treatment throughout is elaborated to create equivalents in brick of the coursing and carving of natural stone. The most conspicuous example of this is the setting-back of every fifth course to approximate the profile of rusticated ashlar. A similar device creates vertical ridges at five-brick intervals on the side walls, suggesting stacked rather than bonded coursing. Window heads are also radially "raked", creating the effect of massive stone rather than multiple brick voussoirs. Even the triglyphs, dentils, and molded belt course are formed of brick, in these cases set out rather than back.

(See continuation sheet)

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 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 1897 **Builder/Architect** S. J. Bowler, architect

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The First Church of Christ Scientist (1897) is an outstanding example of scaled down and vernacularized Beaux-Arts classicism. Its design skilfully synthesizes Roman and Renaissance sources with the functional requirements of a modern church building; its masonry surfaces are handled with clarity and imagination; and its scaling is perfectly matched to its lot and neighborhood. This property is equally significant as the first Christian Science Church to be built in the Upper Midwest. As such it is a major landmark in the early development of an important American religious movement.

The Doric order was frequently hailed at the turn of the century as the simplest, most logical, and most adaptable to modern use of all the classical styles.¹ However, apart from a tedious proliferation of porticos grafted onto otherwise pedestrian commercial and residential buildings, the order was seldom exploited for more than details. L. S. Buffington's University of Minnesota Library (1895, extant; now Burton Hall) and the First Church of Christ Scientist (1897) are the outstanding examples of the style remaining in Minneapolis. The Buffington design represents the scholarly, imitative aspect of Beaux-Arts classicism, whereas the First Church of Christ Scientist (1897) freely adapts classical devices to industrial materials and highly individual planning requirements. The church design in fact makes a virtue of its small (\$13,000) budget by adopting the scale of its residential neighbors and translating the lexicon of classical stone construction into an arresting array of modern brick and terra cotta equivalences.

The architect of the First Church of Christ Scientist (1897) was S. J. Bowler, a native of London who began as a carpenter at the age of 16. Apparently self-taught in architecture, he began to list himself as a member of that profession in Minneapolis in 1888, when he was 20. By the time of the church commission, he had a thriving practice with a strong design orientation.² His few remaining buildings all display the compositional clarity and incisive detailing of the design for the Church of Christ Scientist, though they wander freely over the stylistic terrain familiar to late nineteenth century architects.³ Bowler's design for the Church of Christ Scientist was selected over six others, some apparently from out of state.⁴

Christian Science's first foothold in Minnesota was a number of Student Associations formed in the late 1880's. Following the Boston lead of Mary Baker Eddy, their emphasis was on spiritual healing and a reform of existing Christian churches from within. However, the enormous and unexpected growth of the movement, and its vociferous rejection by existing denominations, led to the formal organization of the Christian Science Church. In Minneapolis this took place in 1890, with

9. Major Bibliographical References

(See continuation sheet)

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property less than one

Quadrangle name Minneapolis South, Minnesota

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UMT References

A	<u>1</u> <u>5</u>	<u>4</u> <u>7</u> <u>9</u> <u>0</u> <u>2</u> <u>0</u>	<u>4</u> <u>9</u> <u>7</u> <u>9</u> <u>2</u> <u>5</u> <u>0</u>	B			
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
C				D			
E				F			
G				H			

Verbal boundary description and justification

East 70 feet of the south 125 feet, Lot 16, Auditor's Subdivision Number 1, City of Minneapolis.

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

state	<u>N/A</u>	code	county	code
state	<u>N/A</u>	code	county	code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Paul Clifford Larson

organization Paul Clifford Larson

date August 22, 1985

street & number 225 West Fifteenth Street, Apt. 300

telephone 870-8758

city or town Minneapolis

state Minnesota 55403

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

Russell W. Fridley

Russell W. Fridley

title State Historic Preservation Officer

date 5/16/86

For NPS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

Enter on the
National Register

date 6-20-86

Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

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First Church of Christ Scientist, Minneapolis, Hennepin Co., MN

Continuation sheet

Description

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The exterior of the church displays very few symbols of its religious creed. The belt course just referred to, which actually forms a frieze for the cubicles in the niches, contains the only apparently Christian symbolism of the architecture: a sequence of piercings in the form of a Greek cross. According to one contemporary account³, the numbers three and seven were worked into the design as often as possible because of their significance to the early Church. From the exterior, the fenestration is the only clear example of this.

The interior of the church is Italian Renaissance in conception, as it once was in finish. A broad vestibule leads into an octagonal auditorium. At front and rear are balconies placed back of triarcades. At the sides are the window walls already described, each glazed in a top-to-bottom gradation from clear to deep orange stained glass. The remaining sides of the octagon are opened at second story level into shallow seating galleries and, in the right rear corner, an organ loft. The ceiling is vaulted in the center to form a false dome with truss lines exposed. Originally, the dome was fitted with an art glass lantern and a chandelier pendant from its center. The floor slants down towards the organ loft and speaking platform in front of it, orienting the interior space on a diagonal to the crossing.

Despite its delapidated appearance and the loss of its monumental entry stairway, the property retains its design integrity without significant subtractions or alterations. The only visible facial alterations to have occurred are the chiseling off of the raised inscription on the front pediment, the infilling of the cubicle windows with glass block, and the loss of one of the capitals. The owner intends a complete exterior and interior restoration. A significant amount of repair and mechanical work has already been undertaken in order to assure the safety and preservation of the building until the general restoration takes place.

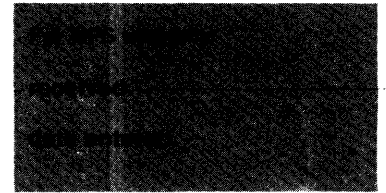
A rear Sunday School addition was built in 1899 without the architect's supervision. This has been cheaply modified and expanded over the years without, however, threatening the structural or design integrity of the historic property. Much of this wing requires extensive rebuilding, which the present owner intends to undertake in a manner suited to the historic structure but adapted to modern living quarters.

FOOTNOTES

1. See Henrietta H. Williams, "Among the Christian Science Churches", Granite Monthly, v. 28 n. 5 (May, 1900), p. 274; and L. M. Holt, Christian Science Church Architecture (Los Angeles, 1908), p. 151.
2. Minneapolis Journal, November 6, 1897.
3. Minneapolis Journal, February 5, 1898.

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reorganization under a corporate charter in 1892. With the building of the first Minneapolis church in 1897, the new sect took hold so quickly that by the end of the next decade six congregations had their own edifices, three of which ranked among the largest Protestant churches in the state. The First Church itself outgrew its first building and chose to build anew on a larger lot in an upscale neighborhood in 1911. Ironically, of the seven early church buildings, only the two homes of the First Church of Christ Scientist remain.

The early buildings of the Church of Christ Scientist are of particular importance because of the initial emphasis of the sect on architecture of high quality without reference to prior religious associations. It is no coincidence that Christian Science was first formally presented before an international religious forum at the Chicago World's Exposition in 1893, an exposition in which American architects proudly displayed to the world their mastery of classical architectural forms. Though the style of Christian Science churches varied considerably from region to region (the Boston mother church of 1894 was Richardsonian Romanesque), the first Minneapolis and Chicago buildings followed the lead of the World's Fair.

The First Church of Christ Scientist (1897) is thus doubly significant in Minnesota religious history, as the first building of its denomination in the state and as a lucid example of the sect's early emphasis on architectural quality above traditional religious form.

FOOTNOTES

1. The most outspoken Minneapolis exponent of the Doric order was George Emil Bertrand. See, e.g., his "Discourses on Architecture VI", Western Architect (January 1903).
2. Bowler apparently survived the Panic of 93 by specializing in interior and facade work, much of it reported in the local Improvement Bulletin.
3. Major remaining structures are the Gate Lodge and Mortuary Chapel of Montefiori Cemetery at 4153 3rd Avenue South (1894) and a brick store and flat at 929 Centennial Place (1895).
4. Minneapolis Journal, November 6, 1897.
5. For its second building, the First Church of Christ Scientist enlisted the services of the Chicago architect Solon Beman, who had built the Second Church of Christ Scientist in Chicago fifteen years earlier. The Minneapolis design (1914, extant), like its Chicago forbear, is loosely based on Palladio's work. World's Fair Palladianism became the model for the church's buildings for many years. The second, fifth and sixth churches all seated congregations in excess of 1200 shortly after they were built; the latter two buildings survived until this last year.

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Minnesota

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Resource Count

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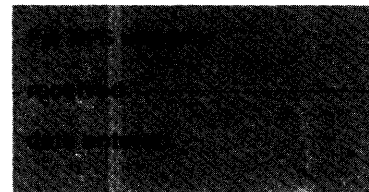
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date entered

The First Church of Christ Scientist Nomination
contains 1 contributing building.

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Continuation sheet Bibliographical
References

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Minneapolis Journal, November 6, 1897.

Minneapolis Journal, February 5, 1898.

Minneapolis Journal, December 4, 1899.

Minneapolis Journal, December 17, 1905.

Minneapolis Journal, August 20, 1911.

Minneapolis Journal, October 25, 1914.

Williams, Henrietta H., "Among the Christian Science Churches", Granite Monthly
v. 28 n. 5 (May 1900), 264-78.

Permit Records, Department of Building Inspection, City of Minneapolis .

Minneapolis City Directories, 1884-1939.