

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICENATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED JUL 8 1976  
DATE ENTERED NOV 7 1976SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS  
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS**1 NAME**

HISTORIC

St. Paul's Memorial Episcopal Church and Guild Hall

AND/OR COMMON

**2 LOCATION**

STREET &amp; NUMBER

714-716 National Avenue

\_\_NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

Las Vegas

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

#1

STATE

New Mexico

\_\_ VICINITY OF

CODE 35

COUNTY  
San Miguel

CODE 047

**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	<b>PUBLIC ACQUISITION</b>	<b>ACCESSIBLE</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT
			<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL
			<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY
			<input type="checkbox"/> PARK
			<input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
			<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
			<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
			<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER:

**4 OWNER OF PROPERTY**

NAME

St. Paul's Memorial Protestant Episcopal Church, Inc.

STREET &amp; NUMBER

Box #937

CITY, TOWN

Las Vegas

STATE

New Mexico 87701

**5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**COURTHOUSE,  
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

San Miguel County Clerk's Office

STREET &amp; NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

Las Vegas

STATE

New Mexico

**6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE

New Mexico State Register of Cultural Properties

DATE

June 28, 1974

\_\_FEDERAL  STATE \_\_COUNTY \_\_LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR

SURVEY RECORDS New Mexico State Planning Office, 200 West de Vargas

CITY, TOWN

Santa Fe

STATE

New Mexico 87503

# 7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED    DATE _____
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Situated on a tree-shaded residential street in the northern New Mexico town of Las Vegas, St. Paul's Memorial Episcopal Church is a handsome folk-Gothic style building erected 1886-1888, and finally completed in 1950. To the east of the present church building across a gravel covered lot formerly occupied by the rectory stands a small pitched roof adobe building, the original chapel of the congregation now known as the Guild Hall, the first Episcopal church structure in New Mexico. The church buildings, surrounded by attractive houses and the churches of other denominations, which have given the neighborhood the name of "Zion Hill," are reminders of the late 19th century when Las Vegas was New Mexico's most important commercial center and St. Paul's was originally intended to be the cathedral church of the Episcopal Missionary District of New Mexico and Arizona. Its congregation included the families of many important New Mexico businessmen and political leaders.

Constructed of broken coursed red sandstone, quarried locally, the walls of the church rest on protruding brown stone foundations and are supported on the east and west sides by seven 1 1/2' x 2' buttresses. From the southwest corner of the structure rising high above the steeply pitched roof is a square tower topped with deep crenelations housing a carillon which strikes the hours and plays inspirational anthems at regular intervals. Under the apex of the red slate shingled roof in the south facade is a rose window over a large stained glass window depicting Saints Peter and Paul, a gift of the well-known Sellar family, 19th century Las Vegas merchants and freighters on the Santa Fe Trail. To the left of the Sellar window in the south facade of the tower is the main entrance to the structure; an arched double doorway painted red. The north wall of the building which encloses the chancel and sanctuary is a 1950 addition designed by prominent Santa Fe architect and leading Episcopal layman John Gaw Meem. Braced by two large concrete buttresses, it contains a large stained glass window depicting Jesus Christ which replaced three smaller windows installed when the extension was constructed.

The entry in the tower opens into a red carpeted vestibule which provides access to the nave through an arched doorway to the right. The high ceiling is composed of dark tongue and groove boards over nine heavy beams which extend the length of the nave on each side and are supported by a series of seven cross-braced scissor trusses embellished on their lower ends by ornate scrollwork. On each side of the nave spaced at regular intervals in the cream colored walls are six stained glass lancet windows, gifts of parishioners, one of which is dedicated to former Las Vegas attorney William J. Mills, the last Territorial Governor of New Mexico. The highly polished golden brown pews, intricately carved on each end, contrast with the red and beige tile floor and red carpet which covers the center aisle. Opposite the entry in the rear of the church are a marble baptismal font and a ewer which rests on a short column also of marble.

At right angles to the pews on either side of the chancel are the organ and choir benches set off by elaborately designed woodwork canopies rising above them. Towards the rear of the sanctuary, enclosed by the brass and wood communion rail, is the impressive grey marble high altar embellished with

(See Continuation Sheet #1)

# 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/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 checked="" 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			

Original construction-1886-88  
 SPECIFIC DATES: Sanctuary and Chancel added 1950 **BUILDER/ARCHITECT** John Gaw Meem - 1950 addition

## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

St. Paul's Memorial Church constructed 1886-1888 by the rising Anglo community of Las Vegas was originally intended to be the cathedral for the Protestant Episcopal Church in New Mexico. The village of Las Vegas had been in existence nearly fifty years before the coming of the railroad made it an important commercial center. The first permanent settlement was made by twenty-nine families from the nearby Pecos Valley community of San Miguel del Vado who were placed in possession of the Las Vegas Land Grant by Justice of the Peace José de Jesus Ulibarri y Durán on April 6, 1835 by order of New Mexico Governor Francisco Sarracino. Most of the same area had been claimed as having been granted by Mexican authorities in 1820 to Luis María C de Baca who had attempted to establish a ranch near the Gallinas River but had abandoned the land because of Indian depredations. The conflict between the Baca heirs and the residents of the Las Vegas Grant was resolved in 1858 by the Surveyor General of New Mexico in favor of the town grant with the Baca claimants being given land elsewhere.

The 1835 settlers immediately began construction of a plaza (National Register 12/74) on the west bank of the Gallinas which soon became an important stopping place for traders on the Santa Fe Trail. On August 15, 1846 the Army of the West arrived at Las Vegas and Brigadier-General Stephen Watts Kearny proclaimed U.S. sovereignty over New Mexico. Las Vegas also served briefly in 1861 as the Territorial capital when the Confederate forces occupied Santa Fe. After the arrival of the railroad in 1879 the growing town developed as a transshipment and wholesaling point for ranchers and businessmen from a wide area of the Territory. Although Las Vegas lost some of its economic preeminence after the turn of the century to Albuquerque and Santa Fe, Saint Paul's and its preceding structure, the first Episcopal Church built in New Mexico now known as the Guild Hall, remain as landmarks of this important historical period.

The first Episcopal Church service in New Mexico was held June 28, 1863 when Morning Prayer was conducted by the Rt. Rev. Josiah Cruikshank Talbot at Fort Union, a frontier U.S. Army post thirty miles north of Las Vegas. During an official visitation of Colorado, Talbot, Missionary Bishop of the Northwest, had been instructed by church authorities to extend his visitation into New Mexico to determine the possibilities of establishing his church in that basically Roman Catholic region. Leaving Fort Union Bishop Talbot continued to Santa Fe where he held services July 4 and 5 and then returned to Colorado by way of Taos where he met with dissident Roman Catholic priest, Padre Antonio José Martínez, who had originally requested the visitation.

(See Continuation Sheet #1)

# 9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Jenkins, Myra Ellen. "New Mexico-1863," Historical Magazine of the Protestant Episcopal Church, Vol. XXXII, No. 3 (Sept., 1963).  
 . "The Diocese of New Mexico and Southwest Texas," The Southwest Churchman, Vol. XIII, No. 3 (Dec., 1971).  
Las Vegas Daily Gazette, June 5, 1881, May 11, 1886.  
 (See Continuation Sheet #3)

# 10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY approx. 3/4 acre  
 UTM REFERENCES

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

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

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: John O. Baxter, Archivist I

ORGANIZATION: State Records Center and Archives DATE: June 29, 1976

STREET & NUMBER: 404 Montezuma TELEPHONE: \_\_\_\_\_

CITY OR TOWN: Santa Fe STATE: New Mexico 87503

# 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: Thomas W. Meade

TITLE: State Historic Preservation Officer DATE: 6-30-76

FOR NPS USE ONLY

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

DATE: 11/2/96

ATTEST: Charles [Signature] DATE: 11-3-76

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
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four Corinthian columns under a frieze in which the words "Holy, Holy, Holy" are chiseled. A gift of the first parishioners of Bishop George Kelly Dunlop, Missionary Bishop of New Mexico when the church was constructed, the altar is flanked on the left by a finely carved bishop's chair another gift of friends of Bishop Dunlop who was buried in a crypt to the right of the altar at his death in 1888. Towards the front of the sanctuary are two beautifully wrought brass lecterns.

The stucco covered 1879 Guild Hall, a 40' x 25' building constructed of adobe bricks on stone foundations, is topped by a wood shingled pitched roof. In the east and west facades are six large double hung 6 over 6 windows, three on each side, excellent examples of the New Mexico late 19th century adaptation of Greek Revival architectural characteristics locally known as Territorial style. The woodwork features triangular pedimented lintels and an interesting flourish at the bottom of the sash. The door sash and mullioned transom in the entrance are also original but the half glass paneled double doors appear to be replacements although of the same style. A small 8' x 15' bathroom has been added to the north end after original construction. The one-room interior, used at various times for church suppers, rummage sales and other parish activities, was badly neglected during a period in which the structure was turned over to a student group from a nearby college and is now in poor condition. Parish members are currently planning its rehabilitation. A new prefabricated auxiliary building has been erected to the north behind the old and new churches.

#8

In his report to the presiding bishop, however, Talbot stated that the time was not opportune for Episcopal missionary activities in New Mexico and recommended that Martinez' overtures to the Episcopal church be discouraged.

Small Episcopal Church missions were established in 1869 at Santa Fe and the following year at Mesilla Park in southern New Mexico but major activity did not begin until 1875 when the Missionary District of New Mexico and Arizona was created under the Rt. Rev. William F. Adams of New Orleans. Adams did not stay in New Mexico but his work was carried on by the Rev. Henry Forrester who began a vigorous missionary campaign throughout New Mexico with his first headquarters at Santa Fe. Believing that the arrival of the Santa Fe Railroad would make Las Vegas, New Mexico's most important city, Forrester moved there in 1879 and immediately founded the small congregation of St. Paul's. In August of that year Bishop John F. Spalding of Colorado, to whose jurisdiction New Mexico was temporarily assigned, came to Las Vegas and paid \$100 for four twenty-five foot lots between Seventh and Eighth Streets on National, then called Blanchard Street. With some

(See Continuation Sheet #2)

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\$750 raised in Las Vegas and an additional \$300 from eastern contributors, work was begun on a small adobe church building which was ready for consecration to St. Paul by Bishop Spalding on November 16, 1879. Not only was the tiny chapel the first Episcopal Church building in New Mexico but it was the first house of worship of any denomination in East Las Vegas, the new town which sprang up across the Gallinas from the old plaza, now called West Las Vegas, to provide access to the new railroad sidings and depot. The subsequent shift in social and economic activity caused ill feelings in the community which persisted for several decades. The Rev. Mr. Forrester felt that because people on both sides of the Gallinas had cooperated in building the church that it would "prove a bond of union between the two towns," a wish doomed to disappointment. In January the church directory in the local newspaper listed Episcopal services at 11:00 a.m. and 7:00 p.m. with Sunday School meeting at 3:00 p.m.

Soon finding the little church too small to accommodate the growing congregation the members began to plan a larger building, accumulating funds by means of subscriptions and various social activities. In 1880 the Rt. Rev. George Kelly Dunlop was consecrated as the second Bishop of the Missionary District of New Mexico and Arizona and accepting Forrester's estimate that Las Vegas would be the most important city in the mission district, established his headquarters there. A rectory was built for his use next to the church in 1881. Although depressed business conditions during the early 1880's sharply curtailed contributions for the new building, now envisioned as the cathedral of the missionary district, by 1886 sufficient funds had been collected so that the cornerstone of the new structure to be built of red sandstone in folk-Gothic style was laid on May 11. Financial problems persisted, however, as did Bishop Dunlop's fear of debt, heightened by difficulties of other missions within his jurisdiction, and two years later when the building was put into use the north end was enclosed by a "temporary" lath and plaster wall which remained for sixty-two years. Unfortunately the bishop did not live to see the church's completion for he died in 1888 and was buried in a crypt to the right of the present altar. On April 27, 1890 Dunlop's successor Bishop John Mills Kendrick, consecrated the new St. Paul's Memorial Church which was dedicated to Bishop Dunlop in services described as "imposingly impressive." The 1879 building was then used as the meeting place of the "Ladies' Auxilliary Guild" and was designated as "Guild Hall." It remains as an interesting example of the local adaptation of Greek Revival style known in New Mexico as "Territorial Architecture."

Burial records in the parish register of the 1880's reflect the frontier character of the community. In addition to the normal causes of death

(See Continuation Sheet #3)

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several entries state that the deceased did not die of natural causes but of "pistol shot" although it is hard to picture Episcopalians "dying with their boots on" even in Las Vegas.

In spite of the expectations of Forrester, Bishop Dunlop and many Las Vegas businessmen, it had become evident by the 1890's that Albuquerque was destined to be New Mexico's largest city and it was there that Bishop Kendrick moved his residency. In 1895 after the addition of Southwest Texas to the mission district, Kendrick again moved his episcopal headquarters this time to El Paso where they remained until 1927 when Albuquerque was permanently established as the cathedral city.

In 1950 the congregation was able to purchase, for \$600, sufficient sandstone from the recently razed San Miguel County Courthouse to enclose the sanctuary and replace the "temporary wall" which had swayed back and forth on windy days for sixty-two years. The plans were prepared by architect John Gaw Meem and the building was finally completed using funds raised by parishioners' pledges and the sale of decorative dinner plates.

Little changed today from their original construction, the two church buildings continue to serve the congregation of St. Paul's and are significant landmarks for the citizens of Las Vegas as well as for the present Diocese of the Rio Grande of the Episcopal Church.

#9

Las Vegas Daily Optic, passim, 1879-1890 and March 13, 1907.

Southwest Churchman, Vol. VIII, No. 1 (Jan., 1950).

St. Paul's Memorial Episcopal Church, Inc., Abstract of Title, Archives of the Diocese of the Rio Grande.

\_\_\_\_\_, Parish Register, No. 1, Archives of the Diocese of the Rio Grande.

Stoney, James M. Lighting the Candle (Santa Fe, 1961).