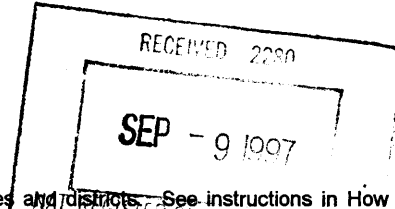


United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
REGISTRATION FORM



1218

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "X" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. 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. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name JOHNSON CHAPEL MISSIONARY BAPTIST CHURCH

other names/site number Osprey Baptist Church, File #8SO1833

2. Location

street & number 506 Church Street N/A  not for publication

city or town Laurel N/A  vicinity

state FLORIDA code FL county Sarasota code 115 zip code 34272

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this  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  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant  nationally  statewide  locally. ( See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

*Theresa W. Perry* 8/29/97  
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

Florida State Historic Preservation Officer, Division of Historical Resources  
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria. ( See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

- entered in the National Register  See continuation sheet
- determined eligible for the National Register  See continuation sheet.
- determined not eligible for the National Register  See continuation sheet.
- removed from the National Register.
- other, (explain) \_\_\_\_\_

*Edson H. Beall*  
Signature of the Keeper

10/8/97  
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)

- buildings
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include any previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1	0	buildings
0	0	sites
0	0	structures
0	0	objects
1	0	total

Name of related multiple property listings

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

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

RELIGION/Church

SOCIAL/Meeting Hall

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

VACANT/WORK IN PROGRESS

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

NO STYLE/Wood Frame Vernacular

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Concrete

walls Wood

roof Asphalt Shingle

other

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

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.)

- Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
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.
Property has yielded, or is likely to yield information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "X" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- 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 of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 36) 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

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

- SOCIAL HISTORY
ARCHITECTURE
ETHNIC HERITAGE/BLACK

Period of Significance

1915-1964

Significant Dates

- 1915
1947
1964

Significant Person

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Unknown
Unknown

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
Other State Agency
Federal agency
Local government
University
Other

Name of Repository

#

JOHNSON CHAPEL MISSIONARY BAPTIST CHURCH  
Name of Property

Sarasota Co., Florida  
County and State

**10. Geographical Data**

Acreege of Property Less than one

**UTM References**

(Place additional references on a continuation sheet.)

1	1	7	3	5	6	4	6	0	3	0	0	1	5	4	0
	Zone		Easting						Northing						
2															

3															
	Zone		Easting						Northing						
4															

See continuation sheet

**Verbal Boundary Description**

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

**Boundary Justification**

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title David Barber, Sarasota Department of Historical Resources/Carl Shiver, Historic Sites Specialist

organization Bureau of Historic Preservation date \_\_\_\_\_

street & number R.A. Gray Building, 500 S. Bronough Street telephone (904) 487-2333

city or town Tallahassee state Florida zip code 32399-0250

**Additional Documentation**

Submit the following items with the completed form:

**Continuation Sheets**

**Maps**

A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

**Photographs**

Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

**Additional items**

(check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

**Property Owner**

(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

name Johnson Chapel, Missionary Baptist Church

street & number 506 Church Street telephone (941) 485-5066

city or town Laurel state Florida zip code 34272

**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 amend 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. 470 et seq.).

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 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 Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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National Park Service**

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
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Section number 7 Page 1

**JOHNSON CHAPEL MISSIONARY BAPTIST CHURCH  
SARASOTA COUNTY, FLORIDA  
PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION**

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**SUMMARY**

The Johnson Chapel Missionary Baptist Church is located on the east side of Church Street in Laurel, an unincorporated community in Sarasota County. The building was moved to its present site in 1947 from its original location in the unincorporated community of Osprey, six miles north of Laurel (see Attachment A). The building was constructed in 1915 as the Osprey Missionary Baptist Church and originally stood on the west side of the Tamiami Trail in Osprey. When the Osprey congregation decided to construct a new church in 1947, the 1915 building was purchased by the Johnson Chapel congregation and moved to its present site. The one-story, wood frame vernacular building has a rectangular ground plan and rests on tapered concrete piers. The building is covered with a shallow-pitched gable roof, and the exterior walls are sheathed in clapboard. An addition was constructed on the rear of the building in 1947 to serve as chancel, and many of its original wood sash windows have been replaced with metal awning windows.

**SETTING**

The communities of Laurel and Osprey are quite similar in character. Both are located well outside of the county's urban core and contain a mix of new residential development and scattered remnants of their earlier rural history. Osprey and Laurel are two of several unincorporated communities located between Sarasota and Venice. Osprey is a small community located ten miles south of downtown Sarasota. The communities of Osprey and Laurel are located in southern Sarasota County, approximately five miles apart on the west and east sides of the Tamiami Trail respectively. The site at 506 Church Street compares favorably with the one in Osprey. Both are level, with the same soil type, Leon Fine Sand, sparse vegetation and scattered tree cover. The Laurel site is approximately 10 feet above sea level, five feet lower in elevation than the Osprey site. The old Seaboard Air Line Railway track right-of-way bounds the property diagonally from the northwest to the southeast. It is approximately 250 feet behind the subject structure.

**PRESENT AND ORIGINAL APPEARANCE**

When the Missionary Baptist Church of Osprey was completed the structure was located on a two acre parcel and oriented on an east/west axis, facing east. Today the gable of the main facade faces west and is oriented toward the street. (Photo 1) The building is 26'-2" wide by 52'-4" deep

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JOHNSON CHAPEL MISSIONARY BAPTIST CHURCH  
SARASOTA COUNTY, FLORIDA  
PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION

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and has a 12' addition on the rear that was constructed in 1947, after the church was moved. (Photos 2-4) The building rests approximately one foot above grade on a foundation of tapered concrete piers. The piers support a 4" x 6" sill plate, which serves as the base for this balloon framed wood structure. Floor joists, which are 2" x 6" in size, are spaced approximately 16" on center and rest on the sill.

The walls use 2" x 4" studs and are also spaced approximately 16" on center, with corner diagonal bracing. The roof system consists of 2" x 4" rafters and 2" x 6" ceiling joists, which are connected by diagonal braces creating a truss type system. The rafters and joists are spaced approximately 22" on center. Some of the joists span the entire 26' width of the building, while others consist of two members joined together to complete the span. (Photos 6 & 7)

There is an entry vestibule with a steeply pitched gable roof attached to the main facade. The vestibule measures eight feet wide by six feet deep. The exterior walls of the original section of the main structure—the vestibule and the lower six feet of the east wall of the addition—are covered with clapboards that have a rounded lower edge. The clapboards have a 4½" exposure to the weather. Novelty siding with a 5" exposure is found on the addition's north, south and upper section of the east side walls. The roof of the main structure and vestibule are covered with triple tab asphalt shingles.

The fenestration along both the north and south elevations of the original section of the building include five evenly spaced window openings, and there is also a window centered on both sides of the rear addition. The two windows flanking the vestibule at the front of the building have been closed up, as have the two windows on the north and south elevations nearest to the facade. The current metal framed awning windows measure 2'-5" x 3'-1". These windows replaced larger 2/2 double hung, wood sash windows with vertical muntins. The original window cavities measure 2'-5" x 6'-6". Some of the older sashes have been discovered in the enclosed lower sections of the window cavities. (Photo 8) There are smaller windows on the north and south sides of the vestibule that have also been refitted with metal awning units, and there is a large metal framed awning window centered on the east wall.

The main entrance to Johnson Chapel is through the double doors on the west elevation of the vestibule. These doors are covered with plywood on both sides. Two doors on the east wall of the building, each with five horizontal panels, provide access to the anterooms flanking the chancel.

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Section number 7 Page 3 JOHNSON CHAPEL MISSIONARY BAPTIST CHURCH  
SARASOTA COUNTY, FLORIDA  
PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION

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There are 4½" corner boards on the northwest corner of the main building and the northwest and southwest corners of the vestibule. (Photo 1) There are also paint shadow lines that indicate where corner boards were removed from the southwest corner of the main building. Window casings, 4 ½" in width, remain on the two most easterly window openings of the north elevation (one on the main structure and one on the addition).

The interior layout of the building is that of a large assembly hall with a chancel at the east end. Behind the cancel, along the rear wall, is a choir area. (Photo 5) The chancel is flanked by anterooms which may have been used as vestries or storage rooms.

The flooring consists of 3½" (finished size) tongue and groove boards, laid on an east/west axis, perpendicular to the floor joists. (Photo 6) Sections of the south wall and floor are severely deteriorated due to long term roof leaks. (Photo 9). The interior wall surfaces are covered with drywall. This material has been removed along the south wall to reveal 7" x ½" beaded match board vertical wainscoting with a pattern simulating two 3½" beaded boards. It has been covered with a dark stain. The 7'6" wall area above the wainscot is covered with horizontal novelty siding and painted white. (Photo 6) The ceiling material is the same beaded match board as used on the walls and installed in an east/west orientation. (Photo 6)

Currently, there is no electrical service to the Johnson Chapel, though there is evidence that there was a service connector at the northwest corner of the building. There are eight fixture boxes on the ceiling in the sanctuary and one over the chancel. Knob and tube wiring is predominant in the building.

Heating for the building is provided by a small gas space heater installed in the northwest corner and vented through the north wall. There is also evidence of other heat sources that would have been used in the sanctuary. There is a vent pipe in the center of the ceiling, though there is no longer evidence of it on the roof. There is also a vent pipe protruding through the center of the south wall over a window.

The building is currently undergoing a rehabilitation, which will stabilize and secure the structure. The work includes jacking up the building to counteract sagging caused by settling and deteriorated structural members. Defective structural members will be repaired or replaced, as will rotted or broken siding. New double hung sash windows will be installed in the original window openings, and the roof truss system will be strengthened. The asphalt shingles will be replaced with new metal roofing, and the exterior doors will also be replaced.

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**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
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Section number 8 Page 1

JOHNSON CHAPEL MISSIONARY BAPTIST CHURCH  
SARASOTA COUNTY, FLORIDA  
STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

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**SUMMARY**

Johnson Chapel Missionary Baptist Church is significant under Criteria A and C at the local level in the areas of Social History, Black Ethnic Heritage and Architecture. The building has served for more than half a century as a church for both white and black congregations and as a meeting center for members of the area's African American religious and social groups. It was erected in 1915 by Bertha Potter Palmer for the Osprey Missionary Baptist Church. In 1947 the building was moved to its present location in the community of Laurel. There, it served as a church and community center from the time of its relocation. It was used for meetings by the Lilly White Lodge #22, an African-American association which cared for the sick and the needy, by the Colanthes, the Knights of Pythias, the Masons, and the Eastern Star. Johnson Chapel is the only remaining rural church in southern Sarasota County dating from the 1910s.

**HISTORICAL CONTEXT**

Originally part of Manatee County, Sarasota County was established in 1921. The county lies within Florida's coastal lowlands which consist for the most part of level to nearly level plains with very gradual changes in elevation. Historically, Osprey and Laurel developed quite differently. Osprey grew slowly, while Laurel experienced rapid growth in the 1910s and '20s as a result of industries associated with the railroad.

**Historical Development of Osprey**

The community of Osprey began with the homestead of a white family, John and Eliza Webb, on Spanish Point. In 1867, the Webbs and their five children, along with Eliza's father and sister, left Utica, New York, for the existing pioneer settlement of Manatee on Florida's southwest coast. After remaining there several months, they moved to their new homestead on a high point of land along Little Sarasota Bay. They named their homestead Spanish Point. The Webbs planted crops, fished, and hunted to provide themselves with food and with some products for sale. Within a few years they also earned income by housing winter guests in a hotel they built on their property. The Webb Resort Hotel also became a stopping place for hunters and sport fishermen. In 1884, John Webb's application for a post office in Osprey was granted, and he became the first



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SARASOTA COUNTY, FLORIDA  
STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

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postmaster, operating the mail service out of his home. He had selected the name Osprey when "Spanish Point" did not meet the requirement for a one-word name for the post office.<sup>1</sup>

The community of Osprey grew slowly. The General Directory for Manatee County listed only 15 entries for Osprey in 1897. Twenty-five years later the directory listed seventy-one.<sup>2</sup> When the Missionary Baptist Church of Osprey organized in 1909 it was the third white church in the Southwest Florida Baptist Association. The Friendship Baptist Church of Fruitville and the Sarasota Baptist church had been organized earlier. Some early members of the Osprey Missionary Baptist Church came to services from Bee Ridge, Venice, Casey Key and Sarasota (now Siesta) Key. V.A. Saunders, church clerk, donated two acres of land on which the members built their first one-room church building.<sup>3</sup>

When the Osprey Baptist Church originally overlooked today's Tamiami Trail, the road was narrow and sandy. By 1918, however, the Sarasota-Venice Road, a 9 foot asphalt roadway had been constructed through Osprey to connect the two communities.<sup>4</sup> The roadway in front of the church was improved again with the completion of the Tamiami Trail from Tampa to Miami in 1928.<sup>5</sup> The Tamiami Trail followed the alignment of the Sarasota-Venice Road through Osprey and was 40 feet wide at the time of its construction. Today's Tamiami Trail through Osprey has a curb to curb dimension of approximately 100 feet.

Bertha (Mrs. Potter) Palmer came to the Sarasota area in 1910. By the time of her death in May 1918, she and her family had purchased nearly 90,000 acres in what later became Sarasota County. Putting together properties along Little Sarasota Bay, which she purchased from the Webb family and Lawrence Jones, Palmer established a winter home in Osprey which she called "The Oaks."

Palmer's presence at "The Oaks" and at her ranch, "Meadowsweet Pastures," and her involvement with a variety of land development programs, left her mark on Sarasota County long after her

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1. Alfred G. Bradbury and E. Story Hallock, A Chronology of Florida Post Offices (Florida Federation of Stamp Clubs, 1962), 63; Janet Snyder Matthews, Edge of Wilderness: A Settlement History of Manatee River and Sarasota Bay, 1528-1885 (Tulsa: Carine Press, 1983), 275-307.

2. Andrew Meserve, General Directory of Manatee County, 1897, 65; Sarasota City Directory for 1921-1922 (Ashville, N.C.: Florida Piedmont Directory Co., 1921), 250-251.

3. Historical Committee, "First Baptist Church, Osprey, Florida, 80th Anniversary," May 7, 1989, 4.

4. Anton Kleinoscheg Whitaker, "The Webb Palmetto Plow and the Velvet Highway," One Man's Family (Unpublished Manuscript, 1983), VI-301-32; Sarasota Times 26 September 1918: 6.

5. Venice News 26 April 1928.

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SARASOTA COUNTY, FLORIDA  
STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

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death. Although she had arrived with the reputation of a wealthy international socialite and art patron, Palmer devoted most of her time in the area to real estate development and agricultural experimentation. Her influence helped ensure the paving of the Sarasota to Venice Road and the extension of the Seaboard Air Line Railway from Fruitville to Venice. The rail terminus, which Palmer prevailed to have named "Venice," was south of the 19th century community of that name. To retain its individuality, the original Venice community found itself needing to select a new name. They chose "Nokomis."<sup>6</sup>

At "Meadowsweet Pastures" Palmer practiced agricultural techniques which were new to the traditional cattlemen. Fencing her land and dipping her cattle to prevent tick fever were met with skepticism and even hostility. Palmer was in frequent correspondence with agricultural experts, as she sought information on the latest agricultural techniques and conducted experiments to determine the best crops for her land.<sup>7</sup>

To make "The Oaks" property more unified, in 1915 Palmer exchanged two acres of land she owned to the south of the Missionary Baptist Church of Osprey for the two acres owned by the church on which its building was located.<sup>8</sup> Initially, Palmer had proposed moving the church building to the new site. However, the final arrangement provided that she keep the old building and construct a new church on the property now owned by the Baptist congregation.<sup>9</sup> The first services in were held in the new building on February 13, 1915.<sup>10</sup> The church was located on the west side of what is now called the Tamiami Trail.<sup>11</sup>

The new, one-room frame building constructed by Palmer was used for worship services, Sunday school classes, and as a school house. Lacking a baptismal tank, baptisms were held in nearby Dona Bay.<sup>12</sup> In 1947, the congregation decided to build a new sanctuary. Ownership of the old Palmer-built church was transferred to the Johnson Chapel Baptist Church of Laurel, and the

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6. Janet Snyder Matthews, Venice: Journey from Horse and Chaise (Sarasota: Pine Level Press, 1989) 193-194.

7. *Ibid.*, 182.

8. Warranty Deed, Bertha Honore Palmer to Missionary Baptist Church of Osprey, February 24, 1915, Manatee County Deed Book 48, 275; Warranty Deed, Missionary Baptist Church of Osprey to Bertha Honore Palmer, February 24, 1915, Manatee County Deed Book 52, 421; "First Baptist Church," 4.

9. Sarasota Times 4 February 1915, 6:2; 11 February 1915, 3:4; 14 October 1915, 7:5.

10. Sarasota Times 18 February 1915, 3:5.

11. Lucy Hamlin, Interview by Ann Shank, Telephone, Sarasota, Florida, September 20, 1995.

12. Mabel Simmons, Interview by Ann Shank, Telephone, Sarasota, Florida, September 20, 1995; Hamlin, "First Baptist Church," 5.

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NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
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SARASOTA COUNTY, FLORIDA  
STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

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building was moved to its present location. During construction, services were held in the Osprey Elementary School, located immediately north of the church site.<sup>13</sup>

### Historical Development of Laurel

Settled by a few white families in the last third of the nineteenth century, the Laurel community gained official recognition with the establishment of a post office in 1903. Mail was handled in the home of the first postmaster, Wilson Stephens, which was located along the road from Osprey to Venice.<sup>14</sup> The extension in 1911 of the Seaboard Air Line Railway from Fruitville through Osprey and Laurel to Venice set the stage for the industrial and agricultural enterprises that shaped the development of Laurel.

The Laurel Turpentine Company, the Arnold Lumber Company, Albee's farm and dairy, and the Blackburn groves all depended on black laborers. Each establishment built "quarters" for their workers in Laurel. The Turpentine Quarters straddled the Laurel Road and abutted the east side of the railway. To the north and adjacent to the railroad tracks, were the Sawmill Quarters and to the south, the Albee Quarters abutted the west side of the railroad. The Blackburn Quarters were to the west of the sawmill and turpentine quarters.<sup>15</sup>

The Turpentine Quarters had a commissary and a church, Mt. Zion Baptist, which also served as a school for black children and meeting place for African American Masons. These facilities, as well as an additional store, served the residents of the four quarters. After a fire in the early 1940s destroyed the church/school building, the congregation of Mt. Zion Baptist Church moved to temporary locations, first in the Blackburn Quarters and then in the Albee Quarters. Shortly thereafter, the Sarasota County Board of Public Instruction provided a two-room school building in the Albee Quarters for black students in grades 1-8. They permitted the congregation of Johnson Chapel Missionary Baptist Church to use one of the two rooms for worship and as a Sunday school.<sup>16</sup>

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13. Hamlin, "First Baptist Church," 5.

14. Bradbury and Hollock, 47; Janet Snyder Matthews, "Historic Overview," A Historical, Architectural, and Archaeological Survey of the Laurel Target Area (Sarasota: Archaeological Consultants, Inc., 1993), 4-2.

15. Joan Berry Dickenman, The Homesteaders: Earl Settlers of Nokomis and Laurel (1987), 112, 120; Matthews, "Historic Overview," Figure 4.2.

16. Rev. James Clarence Sims, Interview by David Baber, Lorrie Muldowney and Ann Shank, Tape Recording, Laurel, Florida, August 3, 1995.

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**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
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SARASOTA COUNTY, FLORIDA  
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Named for its first pastor, the Johnson Chapel congregation had met in a variety of places, including family homes, before it had its own church building. When education for black students was consolidated on the Booker campus in Sarasota, the Laurel school building was moved there, and the Johnson Chapel congregation was left without a building. When the Johnson Chapel Baptist Church acquired the church from the congregation of the Osprey Baptist Church in 1947, they moved the building to its present site on the east side of Church Street in Laurel.<sup>17</sup>

From 1930-1974 the pastor of Johnson Chapel Church was the Reverend Norman Raymond Herring. Herring was a leader in the community as well as in area churches. He served as recording secretary for the Mount Pilgrim Missionary Baptist Church Association of Churches for 17 years. Elks Lodge #1098 recognized Herring for his community activities with its Outstanding Citizen Award in 1965.<sup>18</sup>

The Johnson Chapel church building served the community as well as the Missionary Baptist congregation. It was the regular meeting place for a number of local fraternal organizations, including the Lily White Lodge #22, Colanthes, the Knights of Pythias and, later, the Masons and Eastern Star.<sup>19</sup>

The Lily White Lodge #22 was one of a number of lodges in southern Florida connected with the Lily White Security Benefit Association. The Association was formed in the 1920s as a fraternal organization to provide burial benefits and, later, health care for its members. The Depression caused the Association to close, but in 1945 C. Blythe Andrews, Sr., of Tampa, reorganized it. Centered in Tampa, the association operated the Lily White Hospital on 29th Street.<sup>20</sup> The local Lily White lodges cared for the sick and needy in the community, providing services that often were unavailable or difficult for African-Americans to obtain from the white community. They provided transportation to the Lily White Hospital in Tampa, if needed.<sup>21</sup>

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17. Rev. James Clarence Sims, August 3, 1995.

18. Annie McElroy, But Your World and My World (Sarasota: Black South Press, 1986), 14-15; James Clarence Sims, August 3, 1995.

19. James Clarence Sims, August 3, 1995; Edna Watson, Telephone Interview by Ann Shank, September 26, 1995; Annie Bowen, Telephone Interview by Ann Shank, September 26, 1995.

20. Rev. James Clarence Sims, Telephone Interview by Ann Shank, September 25, 1995; Bruce Ergood, "The Female Protection and the Sun Light: Two Contemporary Negro Mutual Aid Societies," Florida Historical Quarterly (July 1971), 26-27; "Tampa Hospitals," Sunland Tribune (November 1980), 98; "Doctor, Lawyer, Merchant," Tampa (September 1969), 16.

21. Annie M. McElroy, Telephone Interview by Ann Shank, September 22, 1995; Rev. James Clarence Sims, August 3, 1995; Sims, September 25, 1995.

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Section number 8 Page 6 JOHNSON CHAPEL MISSIONARY BAPTIST CHURCH  
SARASOTA COUNTY, FLORIDA  
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During the most active years (1940s and '50s), there were approximately 50 members of Lodge #22 in Laurel. They came from Venice, the Blackburn Quarters, Albee Quarters and Turpentine Quarters, and are estimated to have included about ten to fifteen percent of the area's black community. In addition to their welfare activity, members of Lodge #22 held annual parades to celebrate the Association's anniversary, and participants dressed in Lily White regalia.<sup>22</sup>

On May 5, 1948 the Venice Land Company sold the north one-half of lot sixteen of Lilly's subdivision to trustees of the Johnson Chapel, then an unincorporated church organization for \$10.00.<sup>23</sup> On the 15th of February 1964, the Johnson Chapel Church sold the parcel to Lilly White Lodge #22 for \$10.00.<sup>24</sup> On June 2, 1992, Lilly White Lodge #22 sold the subject parcel to Johnson Chapel of Laurel Florida Inc. for the sum of ten dollars.<sup>25</sup>

**HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE**

Johnson Chapel is significant as the oldest surviving church in southern Sarasota County built to serve a white Baptist congregation. It is also significant for its continued use as a religious, educational, and social welfare center for the county's rural African American community. C. Merritt, in his handbook on Historic Black Resources, states that "Amongst the richest resources of the black built environment are the buildings of religious, educational and social institutions. The church has been the most important of these, not only serving the spiritual needs of its members but also fostering their social interaction."<sup>26</sup> The Johnson Chapel represents this type of resource in Sarasota County.

The Johnson Chapel was first listed in the Florida Master Site File in 1990. In 1993 the chapel was evaluated and deemed eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places.<sup>27</sup> The survey of the Laurel Target Area resulted in the identification of 25 historic buildings and structures. The majority of these are from the 1930s and 1940s. The only building identified in the course of the Laurel survey as eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places

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22. Rev. James Clarence Sims, September 25, 1995.

23. Sarasota County Deed Book 238, Page 250.

24. Sarasota County Deed Book 465, Page 200.

25. Sarasota County Deed Book 2480, Page 586.

26. Carde Merritt, Historic Black Resources (Atlanta: Georgia Department of Natural Resources, 1984), 25.

27. A Historical, Architectural and Archaeological Survey of the Laurel Target Area (Archaeological Consultants, Inc., 1993).

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SARASOTA COUNTY, FLORIDA  
STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

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was the Johnson Chapel.

Although Sarasota County is racially and culturally diverse, the resources in the county currently listed in the National Register do not reflect this diversity. At present, there are no resources in Sarasota County listed in the National Register that reflect black ethnic heritage.

A review of resources in Sarasota County recorded in the Florida Master Site File and listed in the National Register of Historic Places shows only six buildings in Sarasota County constructed in the 1910s that served community purposes. These are the Sarasota Woman's Club and Crocker Church (both located in downtown Sarasota), the Miakka School and Myakka Church (located in northeastern Sarasota County in the community of old Miakka), and the Bee Ridge Presbyterian Church and Friendship Baptist Church (both located in north central Sarasota County). None of these remaining resources served the black community, and all are located in the northern portion of Sarasota County.

A building similar to the Johnson Chapel existed in Central Sarasota County. It served as a community school and church for the Mount Moriah Missionary Baptist Church, a predominately black congregation beginning in 1913. The building was replaced by a modern facility in 1969.<sup>28</sup> The Johnson Chapel, therefore, is unique to Sarasota County in its representation of a community service building remaining from the 1910s which during its lifetime has served as a meeting place for an African-American community.

**ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE**

Johnson Chapel is architecturally significant as a surviving example of the kind wood frame vernacular church typically erected in rural areas by small black and white Protestant congregations. These usually take the form of a simple rectangular meeting house capable of holding fewer than 100 worshipers. Like the Osprey Baptist Church/Johnson Chapel, they may also feature a vestibule, podium or chancel, and vestry. Although they were once common to rural America, they are now becoming rare with the disappearance of small agricultural based communities. Johnson Chapel is the only surviving example of such a rural church recorded in Sarasota County dating before 1920.

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28. "Sixth Anniversary of the Mount Moriah M.B Church," n.d.

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JOHNSON CHAPEL MISSIONARY BAPTIST CHURCH  
SARASOTA COUNTY, FLORIDA  
GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

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**Verbal Boundary Description**

A Parcel of land lying in Lot 16, Lilly's Subdivision, more particularly described as follows:  
Begin at the NW corner of Lot 16 of an unrecorded plat of Lilly's Subdivision in Deed Book 250,  
page 84, Public Records of Sarasota County, Florida; thence N89° 56' E, 121.35'; thence S 5°  
37'45"W, 72.20'; thence S89° 53'30"W, 105.63; thence N6° 51'W,72.41' to the point of  
Beginning, lying and being in Section 31, Township 38S, Range 19E, Sarasota County, Florida.

**Boundary Justification**

All historic resources associated with Johnson Chapel are located within the above described boundaries.

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PHOTOGRAPHS

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**LIST OF PHOTOGRAPHS**

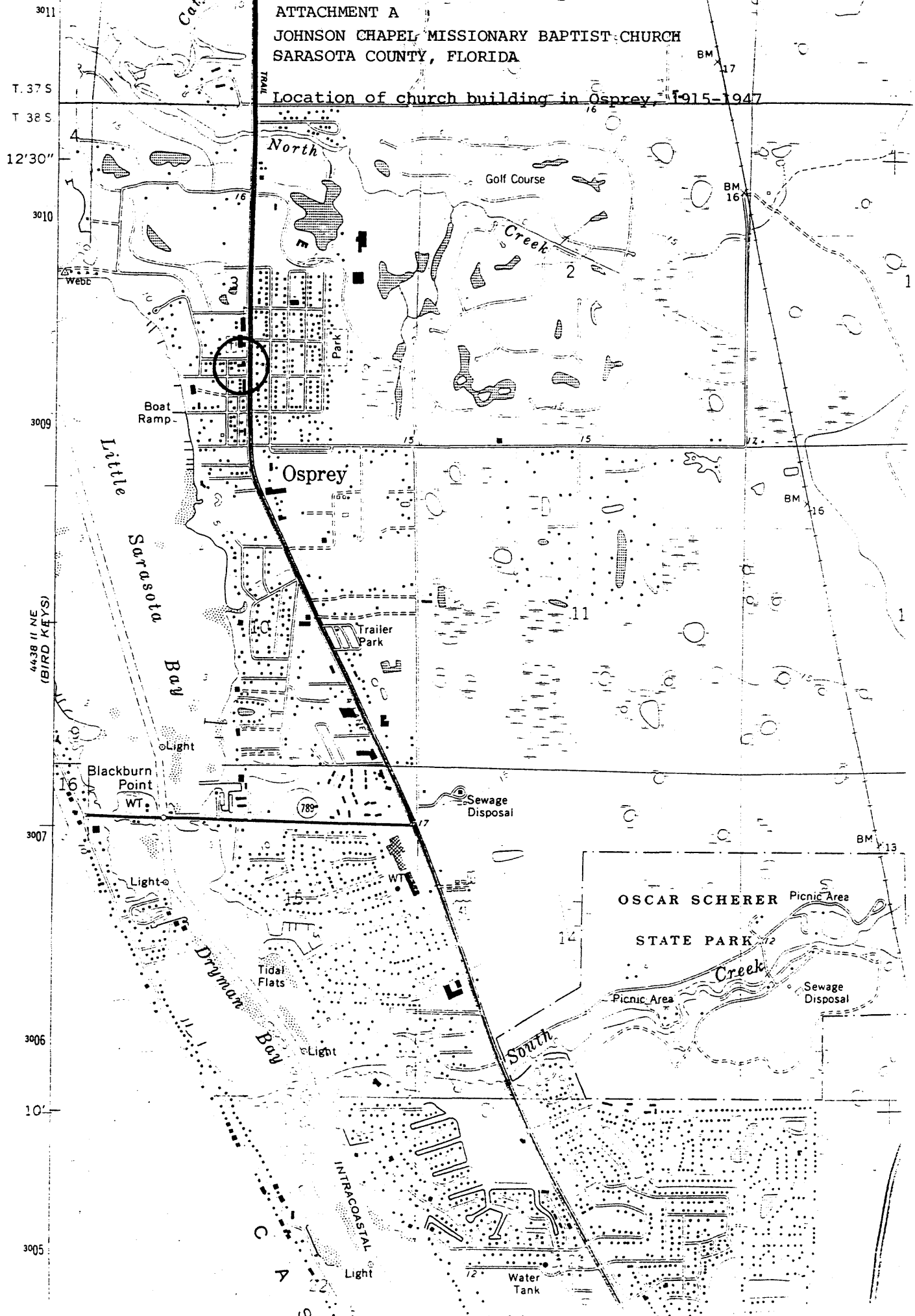
1. Johnson Chapel
2. 506 Church Street, Laurel (Sarasota County), Florida
3. Lorrie Muldowney
4. 1995
5. Sarasota County Department of Historical Resources  
701 Plaza de Santo Domingo, Sarasota, Florida 34236-4899
6. West elevation, Looking east.
7. Photo 1 of 9

All information for sections 1-5 are the same for the remaining photographs.

6. South and west elevations, Looking northeast
7. Photo 2 of 9
  
6. South and west elevations, Looking northwest
7. Photo 3 of 9
  
6. Detail of eaves between original building and addition, Looking north
7. Photo 4 of 9
  
6. Interior, Chancel and ante-rooms, Looking east
7. Photo 5 of 9
  
6. Interior, Detail of ceiling, floor and west walls, Looking southwest
7. Photo 6 of 9
  
6. Interior, Detail of ceiling joists and rafters, Looking east
7. Photo 7 of 9
  
6. Interior, Original window, Looking north
7. Photo 8 of 9
  
6. Interior, Detail of balloon framing and deteriorated floor section, Looking south
7. Photo 9 of 9

ATTACHMENT A  
JOHNSON CHAPEL, MISSIONARY BAPTIST CHURCH  
SARASOTA COUNTY, FLORIDA

Location of church building in Osprey, 1915-1947



JOHNSON CHAPEL MISSIONARY BAPTIST CHURCH  
SARASOTA COUNTY; FLORIDA

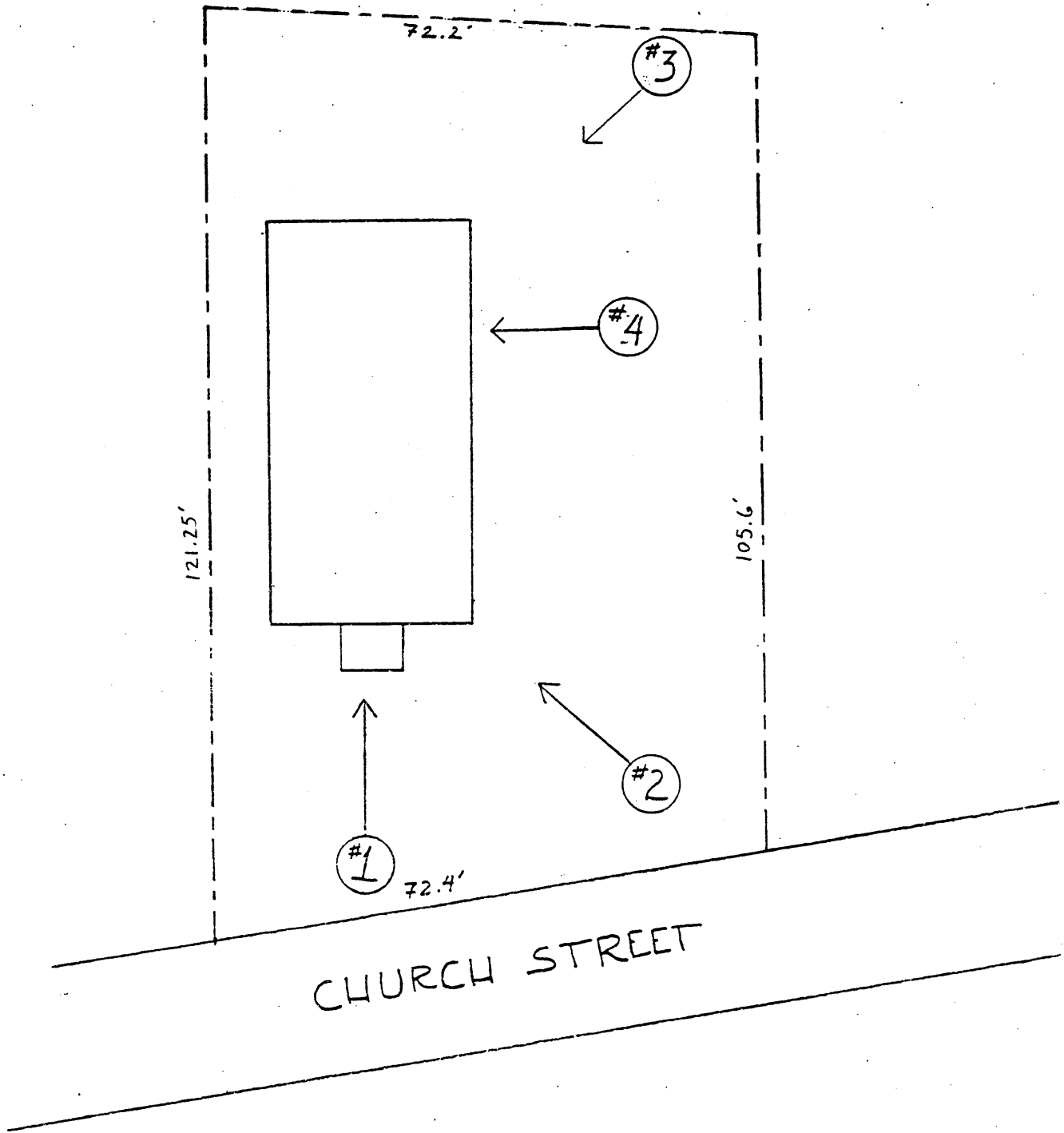
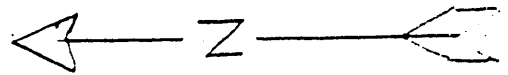


PHOTO LOG  
EXTERIOR



JOHNSON CHAPEL MISSIONARY BAPTIST CHURCH  
SARASOTA COUNTY, FLORIDA

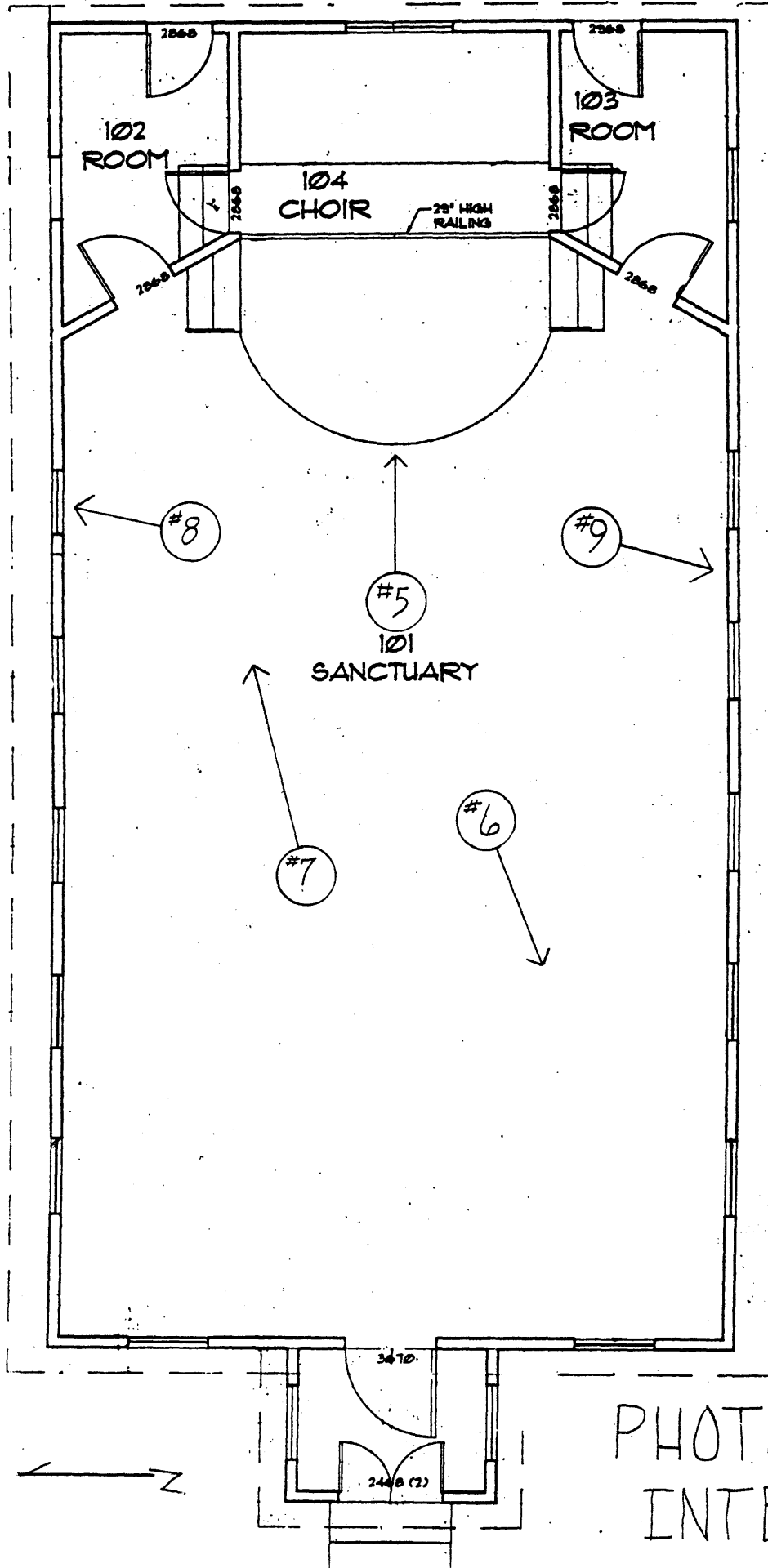


PHOTO LOG  
INTERIOR