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United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

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Continuation sheet

Item number

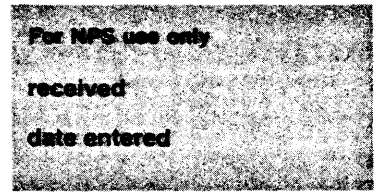
Page 79

#1001 First Baptist Church, 700 University,
ill. 27.

4. Owner: First Baptist Church, P.O. Box 54, Las Vegas, N.M.
7. Description: Three-story rectangular shape with symmetrical two-story wings; concrete foundation; brick walls; asphalt shingles over wood truss roof fronted by parapets; brick coping, engaged piers and string courses; 2/2, complex 5/2 double-hung windows with brick sills and splayed brick lintels (1st front). Original entrance--double doors with transom; brick piers with decorated hood. Ca. 1965 entrance--double doors, random ashlar sandstone stair wall, retaining wall and piers. Located between the **North New Town Residential** and the **Douglas-Sixth Street Historic Districts**. The original painting scheme accented the entrance, splayed lintels and string courses with the lighter of two colors and created corner "quoins" up to the first string course.
8. Significance: This utilitarian, school-like building reflected the practical values and emphasis on education of this congregation in the same way that the Episcopal Church one block to the northeast (NNT ill. 9) reflected the interest in ritual and history of that congregation in the 1880's. The local Baptist congregation was formed in 1880 and erected a frame church at Sixth and University five years later. When Springer Hall at the Normal (now Highlands) University burned in 1922, classes were moved to local halls and churches including the Baptist's structure. The University president received an anonymous letter threatening to burn out the institution, and fires in three of the temporary class rooms followed. The one in the wooden Baptist Church could not be controlled.
The congregation rallied around Rev. M.L. Fergeson's plans for a large new building to include Sunday School rooms on the first floor, a low-ceilinged auditorium on the second, and additional rooms and a personage on the second and third. A contract for \$20,000 was let to O.M. Sperry of Las Vegas and work commenced in June of 1922 on a new lot one block west at Seventh and University. The combination of all church related functions yielded a large building which emphasizes the educational aspect through its massing, window placement and restrained decoration, leaving the meeting space unarticulated on the exterior.
The ambitious size of the plan reflected an optimism based on the recent founding of a Baptist College at the nearby former Montezuma Hotel and on the prosperity expected to come with the completion of the Storrie Dam and irrigation project. The local agricultural depression of the mid-1920's bankrupted the Storrie

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Continuation sheet

Item number

Page 80

(#1001 First Baptist Church, continued)

project and hastened the closing of the Baptist College. Meanwhile, the congregation had incurred a debt of \$30,000 in completing the church. Through the following hard times, the debt was gradually reduced and finally retired in 1946.

10. Acreage: under 1. UTM Reference: 13 480310 3939000

Boundary: Lots 1-3 of Block 23 of the San Miguel Town Company's Addition.