

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

APR 23 1990

**NATIONAL
REGISTER**

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES REGISTRATION FORM

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in "Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms" (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

1. Name of Property

historic name Rock Spring Presbyterian Church
other names/site number N/A

2. Location

street & number 1824 Piedmont Avenue N.E.

city, town Atlanta

(N/A) vicinity of

county Fulton code GA 121

state Georgia code GA zip code 30324

(N/A) not for publication

3. Classification

Ownership of Property:

- (X) private
- () public-local
- () public-state
- () public-federal

Category of Property

- (X) building(s)
- () district
- () site
- () structure
- () object

Number of Resources within Property:

	<u>Contributing</u>	<u>Noncontributing</u>
buildings	2	0
sites	0	0
structures	0	0
objects	0	0
total	2	0

Contributing resources previously listed in the National Register: 0

Name of related multiple property listing: N/A

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this nomination 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 the National Register criteria. () See continuation sheet.


Signature of certifying official

4/18/90

Signature of certifying official

**Elizabeth A. Lyon
Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer,
Georgia Department of Natural Resources**

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

Signature of commenting or other official

Date

State or Federal agency or bureau

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

Entered in the
National Register

entered in the National Register

Melores Byer

5/24/80

() determined eligible for the National Register

() determined not eligible for the National Register

() removed from the National Register

() other, explain:

() see continuation sheet

for

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions:

RELIGION/ religious structure

Current Functions:

RELIGION/ religious structure

7. Description

Architectural Classification:

TUDOR REVIVAL

Materials:

foundation	granite
walls	granite; wood; stucco
roof	asphalt shingle
other	N/A

Description of present and historic physical appearance:

Rock Spring Presbyterian Church, located just north of the in-town Ansley Park residential section of Atlanta, was modeled after small, English country churches and is in the English Vernacular Revival or Tudor Revival style. Built in a cross-shape, it has the entrance centered under the spire on the east side of the sanctuary. The building has a blue-grey granite base with other granite stonework appearing two thirds of the way up the spire and to the sanctuary roofline. The roof and the octagonal spire are shingled. There are grouped lancet and perpendicular windows. Besides the granite, the exterior includes half-timbering and stucco. All decorative features continue the English country church style. The sanctuary has an exposed, hammerbeam ceiling and stained glass windows. There is a basement containing meeting rooms and offices. Additions to the rear of the original building have been made in 1952 and 1963. The nearby c. 1939 manse, a two story, brick and stone building, is also historic. The nearby non-historic recreation building and cemetery are not included within the nominated property.

The church sanctuary is modeled after a small English-styled Tudor Revival style church. Additions to this original structure follow the same styling although in less detail. The main entrance to the sanctuary is facing Piedmont Road on the east, and the lot slopes gradually back to the west and rear of the building complex. Several large oak trees flank the entrance and add to the rural appearance of the setting.

The sanctuary building is basically a cross shape in plan with major transepts at the southern end of the building and minor ones extending out from the chancel which faces north. The building contains three levels and has an approximate floor area of 5,250

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square feet per level. The entrance, centered under the spire, is located on the east side of the sanctuary and closest to the rear transepts. The base of the building is expressed through the use of blue-grey granite irregularly cut. Stone work ascends two thirds of the way up the spire and also up to the sanctuary roof line. The transepts, however, only have stone on the lowest level, half of which is below the ground line. The shingled roof of the building is pitched at an angle slightly larger than forty-five degrees. The roof lines of the gables are slightly lower than the peak of the sanctuary roof. The octagonal spire is shingled also and sits on a square base of grey half timbering infilled with stucco. The transepts and chancel elevation are also finished with half timbering and stucco above the stone line. The timbering is currently painted dark bluish-grey, and the stucco is a very light pastel yellow. Windows on the buildings are grouped lancet and perpendicular styles. Stained glass is used for all of the sanctuary windows.

The additions to the building are on the west end of the southern transept. An office wing extends at right angles from the main church building and connects an educational wing running parallel to the sanctuary. The non-nominated nonhistoric cemetery is to the north of the church while the historic manse is separated to the south but within the nominated property. The modern recreation building is west of the educational wing, off the nominated property, and the tennis court is behind the recreation building at the extreme western edge of the property.

In addition to the granite, the half timbering, and the stucco, other building materials are wood trim around all windows and door openings, concrete stone capping, and concrete window lintels. The stone patterning is random except for the arches over the main entrance and windows. Framing the doorway are smooth stones precisely cut to form a flattened perpendicular Gothic arch. Below the spring point, the stones are staggered, resembling quoins. Over the window arches the granite pieces are still semi-rough hewn, but are positioned to frame the top of the opening. A simple stone molding marks the spring point of the arch as well as the beginning of timbering on the steeple. A drip stone or hood mold surrounds the door arch. Wood framing around the windows consists of simple sills and mullions relating to the half timbering.

Other exterior details include iron work, gable trim, chimney design, and structural expression. Iron lanterns are attached to the stone walls on either side of the doorway. The doors themselves conform to the shape of the arch and are wood paneled, each having two decorative black iron braces. The barge board details are singularly ornate and are different on each gable. The southern transept gable facing the street has a barge board with cinquefoils cut out and

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surrounded by inset circular panels. The cinquefoil opening at the peak of the gable is penetrated by the bottom edge of the barge board, and all of the remaining openings are split by this same edge. The smaller gable of the northern transept has a quatrefoil inset at the peak with alternating quatrefoil openings and elongated quatrefoil panels immediately under the roof line. Finally, the chancel gable consists entirely of quatrefoil openings all along the barge board. In addition to these details, two wooden brackets extend from each corner of the steeple base, and wooden roof supporting members are expressed under the eaves of the sanctuary roof. The chimney is built of brick above the roof line on the southern elevation. Below the roof line, it extends a half foot from the wall and is wider at its base.

The existing steeple spire was meant to be a temporary structure but was never replaced. The proposed original design suggests a much taller spire with broaches. The doors to the sanctuary have been modified since the original construction. As built originally, the doors were rectangular with five perpendicular Gothic windows in the tympanum.

Stone steps allow access to the sanctuary level. The main auditorium basically consists of six bays with the chancel area composing the seventh bay to the north. To either side of the chancel, forming the transept ends, are smaller rooms originally for session meetings and storage of church supplies. The sanctuary area of today was originally split with the Sunday School auditorium to the rear and separated by sixteen foot high accordion doors. To the south of the entrance vestibule is the ladies' parlor which is connected with the sanctuary area under the balcony. Rooms are built into the corners of the southern end, and stairs descend to the lower level from the vestibule and northern transept. The lower level basically consists of a hall running along the eastern edge of the building with Sunday School rooms adjoining. The hall terminates in a lobby under the southern transept. Church offices are located off of this lobby.

Interior walls are plastered with the same wooden trim around the windows. Swinging doors, each with fifteen glass panels, lead into the sanctuary. The hardwood floors are carpeted in the aisles and chancel areas. The finished floor is probably a mixture of narrow strip oak and pine. The balcony and roof are of timber construction with metal supports. The beams are made of long leaf southern yellow pine. Wood railing separates off the chancel area which contains wooden choir pews, pulpits, and a raised marble altar. The organ is on one side of the choir area with the pipes under the transept gable on the opposite side. Above the altar are five stepped lancet windows.

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Other stained glass windows are arranged in groups of four on the walls of the northernmost three bays. Hammerbeam roof construction covers the entire length of the space, stopping at the chancel arch. Lanterns hang from the moulded pendants which are connected to the ceiling from the vertical support of each lateral rod. The chancel area is the most ornamental area of the sanctuary. A post-reformation style stone font stands in front of the chancel steps. Two pulpits face the congregational seating, the major one being on the same side as the sanctuary entrance. Both pulpits are wood with inset paneling reflecting the trefoil arches of the windows. The major pulpit extends out over the chancel floor edge and has a pendentive forming the link between the pulpit floor and the floor of the sanctuary. A polished marble base exists below the altar; and on the wall in back of this is a wooden screen with three panels, the middle one being the tallest. A St. Andrew's cross (symbolizing the Scottish roots of the Presbyterian faith) hangs within the arched opening of the central panel. Cloth is draped behind the screen, and curtains hang on either side of the altar. The leaded glass patterns of the windows are strictly geometric, resembling English Tudor designs.

The ground floor of the building is laid in concrete. On the lower level the finished floor is cement. The foundation walls are stone. A hip roof construction covers the chancel area. Partitions within the outer structure are wood construction with plaster covering.

The total amount of church grounds extend approximately 630 feet to the west of Piedmont Road with about a ten percent slope in the same direction. Parking for the church is in back of the educational wing, and a drive separates the main building from the manse to the south. The nominated area is considerably less than this. The non-nominated cemetery is north of the sanctuary. Large oaks line Piedmont Road and the back of the property. Around the church building, small bushes and flowering shrubs have been planted. A playground exists in the area between the sanctuary and the educational wing. The only other historic building on the property being nominated is the brick manse, or residence for the minister. finished with brick. The manse is three stories with a pitched roof and front porch.

8. Statement of Significance

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

() nationally () statewide (X) locally

Applicable National Register Criteria:

(X) A () B (X) C () D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions): () N/A

(X) A () B () C () D () E () F () G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions):

ARCHITECTURE

RELIGION

Period of Significance:

1923-1940

Significant Dates:

1923 (church); 1939 (manse)

Significant Person(s):

N/A

Cultural Affiliation:

N/A

Architect(s)/Builder(s):

Hopson, Charles H. (1865-1941)

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Significance of property, justification of criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above:

Narrative statement of significance (areas of significance)

The Rock Spring Presbyterian Church is significant in architecture because it is a unique example in Atlanta of the use of the English Vernacular Revival or Tudor Revival style reminiscent of many English country churches with its half-timbering, hammerbeam ceiling, and also the use of native stone, in this case granite. Other surviving historic churches in Atlanta from the same era are either all brick or all stone. The church's style is significant when compared to other historic Atlanta churches because they were designed and built in more traditional church styles, such as Gothic, Romanesque, or Classical Revival. The church is also significant as a work of Charles H. Hopson (1865-1941), an English-born architect whose work in Atlanta reflected a variety of styles and adaptations. This one no doubt reflects his English upbringing. His known Atlanta church designs were all different, yet all English-derived. This is the only known one he created in the Tudor Revival style. The church is significant in religion because the Presbyterian faith in Atlanta, as in most Southern cities, was very much in the minority. This church congregation, established in 1870 on this same site and continuing, with this new church, reflects the importance of the Presbyterian faith to many local citizens despite the overwhelming preponderance of Baptists and Methodists in the area. Founded as an even rarer rural Presbyterian church, it originally served the Rock Spring community, a mostly blue-collar area of railroad workers, farmers and teachers, while still providing charity for their less fortunate neighbors such as mill workers. This church is the only visible vestige of this former community.

National Register Criteria

The Rock Spring Presbyterian Church meets National Register Criteria A, the broad patterns of American history, because it is a rather unusual example of a rural Southern Presbyterian church in an area where the Baptists and Methodists were by far the most predominant faiths. The church is the last visible vestige of the former Rock Spring community which it was established to serve and represents the expansion of the city of Atlanta which engulfed, swallowed and virtually eradicated this small blue collar village.

The church also meets National Register Criteria C because of being a fine example of the English Vernacular Revival or Tudor Style employing half-timbering, native stone (granite), and stucco so

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reminiscent of the 16th century in England. Accompanied by the non-nominated nonhistoric adjacent cemetery, it gives a complete "picture" of the rural setting recalled by Thomas Gray in his famous "Elegy". The architect for this building and its setting was English-born Charles H. Hopson, who employed other English-derived styles for other churches in Atlanta, all of which were quite different and none resembling this one, since the others were in a more urban setting.

Criteria Considerations (if applicable)

This church meets Criteria Consideration A because it represents an important aspect of religious history in Atlanta and because it is a very striking piece of revival architecture in an enormously fast-growing metropolitan area which recalls the rural setting not only of the church and area where it sits, but also of by-gone eras where many churches would have been found in such rural settings with a cemetery adjacent.

Period of significance (justification, if applicable)

The period of significance is from the construction of the present church on the historic church grounds to the end of the historic period, since the church still is in use for the same purpose today.

Developmental history/historic context (if applicable)

The area around Rock Spring Presbyterian Church was originally inhabited by Cherokee and Creek Indians. In 1821, however, the land between the Flint and Ocmulgee Rivers as far north as the Chattahoochee River was ceded to the United States; and the Indians were moved away. White settlers began to arrive in the 1820s, and in 1835, a log cabin school was built near here on what is now Montgomery Ferry Drive. Twelve years after this, on December 29, 1847, Atlanta received its charter from the legislature of Georgia, as the City of Atlanta, although this church ground was far from the city limits.

In 1862, the schoolhouse was rebuilt at what is now the intersection of Rock Spring(s) Road and Morningside Drive, southeast of the church grounds. The building had only one room, was built of roughly hewn boards placed upright, and had a mud chimney with a fireplace. Water from the nearby spring was taken to the school in buckets for drinking. In 1868, a Scottish Presbyterian teacher at the schoolhouse organized the Union Sunday School. The Sunday School met in the schoolhouse for two years; then, on the second sabbath of November in 1870, the Rock Spring Presbyterian Church was established by the Presbytery of Atlanta. The Reverend Dr. Myron Wood and several

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of the elders from Decatur Presbyterian Church organized the original congregation of twenty-seven members.

The following year, James Washington Smith, whose family had moved into the area in 1824 and held large acres of land in DeKalb and Fulton Counties, deeded an acre of his property to the church on the condition that the land continue to be used for a Presbyterian Church. The first church, a white frame building with no steeple, was completed on March 12, 1871, and stood on the present church property.

In 1877, the Reverend T. M. Hollingsworth became the first installed pastor. Also in that year, the schoolhouse was moved to the present church property and converted into a manse. Three rooms and a hallway were added, but there were no electric lights or running water, just a deep well.

By 1888, the area around the church had developed into Easton Township, a thriving community of around one hundred persons. The town had a grist mill, post office (closed in 1904), and a railroad depot serviced by the Air Line Belle, a commuter train which ran from Toccoa to Atlanta. The development of nearby neighborhoods in Ansley Park and Virginia-Highlands began in 1911. Plaster Bridge Road (the road running in front of the church) was paved in that year and later, in 1917, renamed Piedmont Road. Public transportation in 1918 came only as far north as the Piedmont Driving Club, several miles south.

In 1906, four rooms were added to the church building as well as a vestibule and steeple. Even though the church building had served the congregation for nearly fifty years, on May 11, 1919, a committee was formed to consider the possibility of modernizing the facilities. This idea was soon seen as less than ideal; and on September 3rd, the congregation voted, with one exception, to build a new structure. Charles H. Hopson, an elder in the church and an architect practicing in the Atlanta area, presented some sketches for a new building to the Reverend William Huck in 1920. One hundred dollars had already been spent for other plans, but these were discarded in favor of Hopson's design. Due to the high price of materials caused by World War I, construction was delayed. On July 9, 1922, the cornerstone ceremony took place. Every piece of granite used in the construction came from a quarry located a mile and a half from the church in the Cheshire Bridge area. To save costs, a member of the congregation volunteered to blow it out; and other members hauled the stone to the site using two mule teams. Sand came from the Nancy Creek Bottoms on the Bearse farm. In addition to these tasks, the men of the congregation also transported the crushed rock and sand for the sidewalks and shingled the roof. The building was completed in 1923. During Reverend Huck's ministry, the manse was also renovated.

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Charles Henry Hopson (c. 1866-1941) was a native of Reading, England. He studied architecture in his native England and worked for several firms who specialized in Gothic Revival designs. He came to North America while still a minor and settled first in Nova Scotia, Canada, and designed a number of churches there. In 1890 he came to the United States, first settling in Washington, D.C., working for the U. S. Treasury Department and designing post offices. Next he lived in Selma, Alabama, where he also designed many buildings. He came to Atlanta around 1914 and remained there for the rest of his life. Besides churches he designed other public buildings including schools as well as private residences. His specialty was always churches. At his death, the churches specifically mentioned in his obituary, besides the nominated property, included Peachtree Christian Church, where he was a member (now NR), and Ponce de Leon Methodist Church (now a restaurant). He also designed Covenant Presbyterian Church (survives), and Buckhead Presbyterian Church (demolished). No thorough analysis of his career or any attempt to make a listing of his works has been attempted.

In 1933, Reverend Gellespie became the minister, and Charles Hopson finished his design work with the completion of the chancel area and the final payment for chancel furniture. The dedication of the chancel, some new seating, and the Austin organ was held during the one hundred and thirtieth stated session of the Presbytery of Atlanta on October 26, 1936 which met at Rock Spring Church. The organ, which originally had fourteen ranks, had been contracted to be built in 1929 by St. Timothy's Church in Chicago. The church had burned, but the organ was saved and given to the Rock Spring church as a gift from Mr. Clyde L. King, Sr., a prominent Atlantan, in memory of his father, Reverend James L. King, who was minister of Rock Spring Church from 1885 to 1888. The Austin organ, however, was replaced in 1978 with some of its parts being used in the manufacturing of the new organ by M. P. Moller Co.

In 1938, a new manse was built on the present property, and in 1949, the sanctuary was enlarged by removing the tall accordion doors which had separated the Sunday School auditorium. On June 7, 1952, ground breaking began on the education annex featuring a large fellowship hall and several Sunday School classrooms above. The annex was later expanded in 1963, extending further to the south. The recreation building, to the west of the church, was completed in 1956. Rock Spring Cemetery Association was formed in 1960. Also in that year, air conditioning equipment was installed for the sanctuary, Sunday School rooms and church offices.

The Rock Spring Presbyterian Church remains today an active Presbyterian congregation.

9. Major Bibliographic References

Vernon, James Johnson. "Rock Spring Presbyterian Church", Historic Property Information Form, March 14, 1983, done as a student project at the College of Architecture, Georgia Institute of Technology. A copy of this information is on file at the Historic Preservation Section, Georgia Department of Natural Resources, Atlanta.

Hopson, Charles H. File at the Historic Preservation Section, Georgia Department of Natural Resources.

Previous documentation on file (NPS): (X) N/A

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67)
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 #

Primary location of additional data:

- State historic preservation office
- Other State Agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other, Specify Repository:

Georgia Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned):

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property approximately 1.5 acres

UTM References

A) Zone 16 Easting 743640 Northing 3743420

Verbal Boundary Description

The nominated property is that portion of the church parcel which contains the two historic buildings and is so marked on the enclosed sketch map based on the current tax map.

Boundary Justification

The nominated property is that part of the church property which contains the historic church and manse, but not the adjacent non-historic cemetery and recreation building.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Kenneth H. Thomas, Jr., Historian

organization Historic Preservation Section, Georgia Department of Natural Resources

street & number 205 Butler Street, S.E., Suite 1462

city or town Atlanta **state** Georgia **zip code** 30334

telephone 404-656-2840 **date** March 21, 1990

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Photographs

Name of Property: Rock Spring Presbyterian Church
City or Vicinity: Atlanta
County: Fulton County
State: Georgia
Photographer: James R. Lockhart
Negative Filed: Georgia Department of Natural Resources
Date Photographed: December, 1989

Description of Photograph(s):

1 of 8: Front or east facade fronting Piedmont Avenue. Photographer facing west.

2 of 8: North facade and adjacent (non-nominated) cemetery. Photographer facing south.

3 of 8: South facade from the Manse. Photographer facing north.

4 of 8: Interior, sanctuary. Photographer facing south.

5 of 8: Interior, sanctuary facing altar and choir. Photographer facing north.

6 of 8: Interior, sanctuary, close-up of altar and choir. Photographer facing north.

7 of 8: Sunday School Building, not being nominated. Photographer facing northeast.

8 of 8: The Manse, south of the church. Photographer facing southwest.

Sketch Map/Tax Map
Rock Spring Presbyterian Church
Atlanta, Fulton County, Georgia
Scale: ----- = 80 feet
Source: Fulton County, Georgia
Tax Assessor's Office, Tax Map
Date: 1983
Key: The nominated part of the
church parcel is marked by a
heavy black line.

