1. NAME OF PROPERTY

Historic Name: **BOSTON AVENUE METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH SOUTH**

Other Name/Site Number: BOSTON AVENUE METHODIST CHURCH Cincinnati

2. LOCATION

Street & Number: 1301 South Boston Not for publication:N/A

City/Town: Tulsa Vicinity: N/A

State: Oklahoma County: Tulsa Code: 143 Zip Code: 74116

3. CLASSIFICATION

Ownership of Property		Category of Property	
Private:	X	Building(s):	X
Public-Local:	__	District:	__
Public-State:	__	Site:	__
Public-Federal:	__	Structure:	__
		Object:	__

Number of Resources within Property

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

Number of Contributing Resources Previously Listed in the National Register: 1

Name of Related Multiple Property Listing:

Designated a
NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK on

JAN 20 1994

by the Secretary of the Interior

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 ____ 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.

_____ _____
Signature of Certifying Official Date

_____
State or Federal Agency and Bureau

In my opinion, the property ____ meets ____ does not meet the National Register criteria.

_____ _____
Signature of Commenting or Other Official Date

_____
State or Federal Agency and Bureau

5. NATIONAL PARK SERVICE CERTIFICATION

I hereby certify that this property is:

___ Entered in the National Register
___ Determined eligible for the National Register
___ Determined not eligible for the National Register
___ Removed from the National Register
___ Other (explain):

_____ _____
Signature of Keeper Date of Action

6. FUNCTION OR USE

Historic:	RELIGION	Sub:	religious facility
Current:	RELIGION	Sub:	religious facility

7. DESCRIPTION

ARCHITECTURAL CLASSIFICATION: MODERN MOVEMENT: Art Deco/Modern Gothic

MATERIALS:

Foundation:	GRANITE
Walls:	STONE--limestone
Roof:	ASPHALT
Other:	TERRA COTTA

Describe Present and Historic Physical Appearance.

SUMMARY

The Boston Avenue Methodist Episcopal Church South is located at 1301 South Boston Avenue in Tulsa, Oklahoma, south of the city's main business district. Built from 1927-1929, the original church building is a detached, strongly horizontal four-story building with wings massed on either side of a 250-foot central section that has a tower of approximately fifteen stories in height. The site is on the southeast corner of the intersection of Boston Avenue and 13th Street at a point on Boston Avenue at which that north-south artery begins to angle toward the northwest. On the north (across 13th Street), south, east, and west (across Boston Avenue) are parking lots for the church. The architect of the Boston Avenue Methodist Episcopal Church South described his creation as "Modern Gothic," and architectural historians since have described it as "abstracted Gothic," especially in its detailing. Seen from a distance, the building offers a definite Gothic aspect in the vertical massing of the huge central tower and spire and in the almost castle-like effect of the decorated parapet and square secondary towers. Materials, fenestration, and decoration give Boston Avenue Methodist Church its special architectural character. The building's walls are constructed of ashlar blocks of multicolored Bedford limestone, set in irregular courses. The building's elevations are regularly pierced by door and window openings that are uniformly narrow, strongly vertical, and generally metal or metal-framed, in the Art Deco style. Exterior decoration is placed generally at the uppermost level, along the parapet and on wall directly under it. Decorative elements consist of decorative panels, relief sculptures, sixty-two praying hands along the parapet, and a variety of window styles, shapes, materials. Abstract, but not non-objective, motifs, generally figurative and floral, were used extensively around and inside the building.

The decorative elements applied to the Boston Avenue Methodist Episcopal Church South are highly stylized in a modernistic way in the Art Deco mode. Exterior alterations include changing window openings to door openings in an east side porte cochere, enclosure of that area, and attachment to it, at the corners, of a new Education Building in 1965. Interior alterations include significant changes to the wall surfaces and seating in the Auditorium (1965), completion of offices in the Tower section (1965), addition of large murals in the Social Lobby in 1993, and removal and addition of walls on the first and second floors of the Education Wing (1980s and 1990s). The church represents an important example of Modernistic architectural style in the design of large public buildings and is a rare example of the principles of Modernism applied to religious facilities. Because of its innovative design and because of the scarcity of example, the Boston Avenue Methodist-Episcopal Church retains exceptional integrity.

DESCRIPTION

The Boston Avenue Methodist Episcopal Church South was built from 1927-1929, the original church building is a detached, strongly horizontal four-story building with wings massed on either side of a 250-foot central section that has a tower of approximately fifteen stories in height. The west section is an Auditorium, and the east section is an Education Wing. The church's main entry is on the north side, in the central section, adjacent to 13th Street. The site is

on the southeast corner of the intersection of Boston Avenue and 13th Street at a point on Boston Avenue at which that north-south artery begins to angle toward the northwest. On the north (across 13th Street), south, east, and west (across Boston Avenue) sides are parking lots for the church. Business buildings were removed from these areas in the 1960-1990 period to make additional church parking. On the south, 13th Place was closed in the 1960s to make church parking. The setting was and is now primarily commercial, but a residential building was removed in 1964 to accommodate the construction of a new Education Building on the church's east side.

The architect of the Boston Avenue Methodist Episcopal Church South described his creation as "Modern Gothic," and architectural historians since have described it as "abstracted Gothic," especially in its detailing. Seen from a distance, the building offers a definite Gothic aspect, in the vertical massing of the huge central tower and spire and in the almost castle-like effect of the decorated parapet and square secondary towers. Other Gothic-like elements include spires in the center of the two shorter buttressing lateral towers, as well as spires at the corners of the education wing, along the curve of the auditorium, and at the base of the steps outside the entrances. Other visual elements that lend a Gothic feel are elongated arches over the main (north) and secondary (south) entrances. The entire effect of these ascending, highly linear elements is to direct one's gaze up to Heaven, as medieval architects intended with their Gothic churches.

The Boston Avenue Methodist Church's original floor plan is in three parts. On the west is a semi-circular Auditorium (also called a sanctuary) section. The Auditorium's interior is open to the height of three stories. Below it is a ground floor with service and meeting rooms. Joining the east and west sections is a center section, consisting of the tower and the Social Lobby. The Tower section rises above the main entrance foyer at the northeast corner of the Auditorium wing. On the east is an Education Wing. This four-story wing consists primarily of small classrooms and meeting rooms. Joining the east and west wings is the Social Lobby, a long hallway that is four stories in height. In 1964-1965 a new three-story Education Building was built on the east side of the property, joined to the original Education Wing via Bishop's Hall, that was originally a porte cochere.

Materials, fenestration, and decoration give the Boston Avenue Methodist Church its special architectural character. The building's walls are constructed of ashlar blocks of multicolored Bedford limestone, set in irregular courses. The walls are sheer, the limestone undecorated. At the base of the walls, the foundation material is gray granite. This material is exposed above ground level at the entrance areas/platforms on the north and south.

The building's elevations are regularly pierced by door and window openings that are uniformly narrow, strongly vertical, and generally metal or metal-framed, in the Art Deco mode. In the central section, the massive tower exhibits elongated, narrow, vertical windows on each elevation. These are black-metal-framed, unleaded, single-light, strip windows set between narrow piers. Each window has two lights, and each light is set at an angle, so that the window projects outward at the center (like a V), giving a pleated effect. There are three sets of these windows on each side of the tower, and each window extends the height of two floors. The

central section has a set of three pointed-top double-doors in the north side and a set of three in the south side, each set accessing a large foyer (one moves from the street, up the stairs, onto a broad elevated platform, and enters the church through these doors). Each door has four narrow, vertical, colored-glass-leaded lights. On the south side, at ground level, in the supporting wall of the elevated entrance platform, are single pointed-arch doors at the east and west. Between the doors are three pointed-top, three-part windows with metal frames. These windows and doors access the lower/ground floor of the church.

The semi-circular Auditorium Section, attached to the west side of the central section, has eleven regularly placed, black-metal framed, elongated, colored-glass leaded-light windows. Each of these windows consists of five (vertically ranked) sets of four lights, and each light is set at an angle so that the window projects outward twice (like a W), giving a pleated effect. Beneath each of these, at ground level, are windows that illuminate the basement. These windows are small, vertical casements, with metal muntins and etched glass. All of the auditorium windows are covered by single light, multi-section protective covering windows with black metal frames. They do not lessen the visibility of the underlying windows. The auditorium has no exterior entrances.

The elevations of the original Education Wing, attached to the east side of the central tower, are regularly pierced by rectangular window openings on all floors. On each side there are bays of narrow windows, with a topmost pointed-top window above a narrow vertical strip of windows that extends the height of the four stories. The south elevation and north elevation have five sets of these, and the west elevation has two sets in the north and two sets in the south. The east side has twelve such sets. All of these are metal-framed casement windows that open outwardly from the center. The Education Wing's only entrances are in its east and northwest elevations. The northwest entrance is placed in the education section's west wall, which projects out and forms an enclosing wall for the entrance platform outside the north main entrance. This pointed-top door, with four narrow, vertical, colored-leaded lights, accesses the Rose Chapel.

On the east side of the Education Wing, an entrance is located north of the original porte cochere, but primary access is under the porte cochere. The original porte cochere is now enclosed by glass panels (with black metal framing) on the east, north, and south. In both the north and south walls is a heavy, metal, pointed top double-door. Each has four narrow, vertical, clear lights. After entering the enclosed porte cochere, now called "Bishop's Hall," one may enter the Education Wing's ground level through original openings (now having no doors) on either side of a large, very tall opening for a stairway that goes up to the second floor. This large opening was originally a window, removed in 1965 when the area was enclosed for Bishop's Hall. The altered porte cochere also has two sets of stairs that lead up to a second-floor level balcony that leads into the interior via two new openings in the limestone wall. On the west side of Bishop's Hall, stairs lead down into the lower/ground level of the new Education Building. The glass wall on the east side of Bishop's Hall gives a view of an enclosed sculpture garden.

Exterior decoration is placed generally at the uppermost level, along the parapet, and on the wall directly under it. Decorative elements consist of decorative panels, relief sculptures, sixty-two praying hands along parapet, and a variety of window styles, shapes, and materials. The

decorative elements applied to the Boston Avenue Methodist Episcopal Church South are highly stylized in a modernistic way through the employment of techniques of exaggerated size and combination of unusual materials and textures for the decorative details. Architectural historians have noted that these techniques may have been influenced by German Expressionism, a school of thought and design of some European and American architects and artists of the day. This is especially evident in the use of unusual materials, such as the copper and glass used to create the fins in the spires and in the abstraction of details, such as the exaggerated, elongated arches of the exterior door surrounds and the similar arches behind the choir and altar in the interior. The overall effect is that of Art Deco-style decoration.

Abstract motifs were used extensively around and inside the building. One such motif represents the tritoma, a spike-like flower native to Oklahoma (also called torch lily, flame plant, or red-hot poker, a species of the genus Kniphofia, of the lily family). Itself a strongly geometric plant with strong vertical linearity, the tritoma is primarily characterized by long flower stalks covered with fin-like floral leaves. This chevron-like form easily lent itself to abstraction. The abstracted geometrical tritoma form recurs in the relief sculpture and in the terra cotta spandrels. In the spires, the copper and glass fins recall the flower in its early stage of bloom. The tritoma motif is found in the leaded-light auditorium windows. Cast in polychrome terra cotta, the tritoma is also found in upward projections along the parapets, in short towers, in a broad band below the main tower's glass fins, and in narrow vertical strips below the highest ranks of tower windows. The motif of the coreopsis, a seven- or eight-petaled flower, is found in the leaded-light windows of the auditorium and in the leaded lights of the main entrance doors on the north and south.

Another very important Art Deco exterior element that is abstracted from the Gothic, and perhaps influenced by Expressionism, is a "pleated" effect in the stonework, accomplished by the combination of clustered, narrow piers, projecting sharply outward, that form the tower and the tall, very elongated windows that travel up the entire length of the tower between the piers. The windows themselves project outward in a V, in the tower, adding to the pleated effect. A very graphic quality is added by deep pleats, accomplished by using sharply carved stone blocks, set at the tops of the piers that separate the window bays in both of the horizontal wings. The shape/form and placement of the copper and glass fins at the top of the spire and of the lighting fixtures that top pedestals approaching the entries also add an element of abstract sculpture to the building.

Exterior art work found on all sides of the exterior is also representative of Art Deco style. A polychrone terra-cotta panel tops each of the eleven window bays around the auditorium's exterior. Executed by sculptor Robert Garrison, these highly stylized panels consist of a central image of downward swirling, intertwined lines. A file of seven-pointed stars is on either side, and a pair of projections rise above the center panel. Highly stylized terra-cotta relief sculptures (also by Garrison) over the north and south entrances depict various aspects of Methodism and Christianity. Over the south entrance are the images of three circuit-riding Methodist preachers--an Unknown Circuit Rider (center), Francis Asbury (west), and William McKendrie (east). Each is on horseback, with horse and rider facing forward, projecting outward from the wall. From the horses' feet and riders' heads come rays of light spraying upward. At a lower level, on top of the pointed door surrounds, are three symbolic groups, each with one central standing and two

smaller, kneeling figures. The central figures represent Spiritual Uplift, Brotherly Love, and Human Service. Praying hands atop merlons along the parapets. Over the north entrance, the three upper-level figures are John Wesley (center), Susanna Wesley (east), and Charles Wesley (west), among the founding family of Methodism. From their heads and feet come rays of light projecting upward. The symbolic group below them, above the pointed door surrounds, represents the Church (center), Religious Education (east), and Worship (west). A third decorative element is the Praying Hands. This set, executed in terra cotta by Garrison, appears sixty-two times along the building's parapet, usually rising from the top of the wall and banked by a terra cotta file of seven-pointed stars. In other instances, the hands rise from a short, terra-cotta-finned tower. These towers appear at the corners of the Education Wing, on the buttresses beside the main tower, and a dozen times around the third step from the top of the main tower, and twice on short towers above the auditorium.

Other decorative elements include the leaded, colored-glass lights in the auditorium, in all of the wooden doors, and in the Rose Chapel. A most important element is the arrangement of glass and copper fins atop the tower. There are four of these massive fins, each aligned with one of the four cardinal directions.

In plan, the church is divided into three functional areas: Auditorium, central section consisting of Tower and Social Lobby, and Education Wing. A fourth area, a new Education Building, is attached at the corners of the porte cochere which projects from the east wall of the Education Wing. Each floor of each section serves specific functions as well.

The first floor, or ground floor, of the church was designed for recreation and service-type functions. It is accessed from the south via two ground-level doors and from the east via an entrance foyer in the Education Wing (adjacent to the porte cochere/Bishop's Hall). In the Education Wing, north and south of the foyer, are rooms for choir practice, storage, and food preparation. The area north of the foyer was originally a large gymnasium. On the west, beneath the Auditorium, is a large, semi-circular area that is a community hall. A stage adjoins it on the west side.

The second, or main, floor encompasses all of the church's "public rooms." This floor is accessed by the church's main entrances in the center section. Inside each main entrance is a twenty-by-twenty-eight-foot foyer (above the north foyer rises the Tower). Flanking each entrance foyer are small lobbies that access either the Auditorium or the central hallway, called the Social Lobby.

The Tower, in the center section, rises above the two-story, open main entrance foyer on the north. Uncompleted until 1966, the Tower has one twenty-by-twenty-eight-foot room on each floor. Above the north foyer are ten more floors, and above that is a room, two stories in height, that is a prayer chapel (this would be the "fourteenth" floor). The tower has an original set of stairs. The rooms of the tower remained unfinished until 1966, at which time an elevator was added.

The entrances to the Auditorium are on the north and south. The west side, which is the semi-circular side, holds the tall, narrow, leaded-light windows. Along the east (or interior) side is a

rectangular area containing the organ and choir stalls. In the center of the auditorium lies the seating area, with five triangular sections of pews and aisles leading toward the choir area. Here the ceiling is domed, with a circular elaboration of chevrons radiating from a central leaded-glass skylight. A mezzanine balcony projects outward along the semi-circular wall, over the lower level.

Between the Auditorium and the Education Wing is the Social Lobby, a long, narrow room with tall pilasters that extend upward four stories to form broad, pointed arches beneath the flat ceiling. Between the arches, in the flat-ceiling sections, are metal-framed, colored-light skylights. This section has minimal decoration, that being primarily large, rectangular mosaic panels at the north and south ends of the hallway (mosaics were included in the 1929 plans but were not added until 1993). Other decoration includes glass-and-metal, Art-Deco-style hanging light fixtures, wall sconces, and square metal grilles with branches of chevrons radiating from a central circle. Doorways between the pilasters on the east side of the Social Lobby give access to classrooms and to the Rose Chapel, all in the Education Wing, and a centrally placed opening accesses a lobby and a stairway leading down to Bishop's Hall.

On this floor, the Education Wing has classrooms on the south. At the north end of the wing is a "parlor," or reading room, that serves as an anteroom for the Epworth Chapel. The Epworth Chapel, informally known as the Rose Chapel, lies at the north end of the education wing, and the chapel is oriented east-west across the width of the wing. The Rose Chapel is decorated with a carved band atop wood-panel walls, a carved altarpiece and organ screen, and a raised and carved pulpit. The motifs are of tritoma and praying figures. The arrangement of seating was altered in the 1990s to allow handicapped access.

The church's third floor plan is similar to that of the second floor. In the Auditorium, there is a mezzanine with seating around the semi-circular side. In the Education Wing, a short, narrow central corridor leads north-south to assembly rooms on each end of the building. Each assembly room is banked on three sides by small classrooms. At this level is the porte cochere's roof garden, accessed by doors in the north and south corners of its west side. The rooms on this floor are plain and undecorated.

The fourth floor arrangement is similar to that of the third floor. There is no seating in the auditorium at this level, but there are small anterooms on the north and south. The Social Lobby is open at this level. The education wing has an arrangement of plain, undecorated assembly rooms and classrooms much like that of the third floor.

Interior decoration is prominent only in the church's public areas, those being the Auditorium, the Rose Chapel, and the Social Lobby. Carved woodwork is the primary medium of decoration. In the Auditorium, finely carved, tall, narrow, chevron-like tritoma spears adorn the choir stalls, organ screen, the reredos that lie to the rear of the choir, and the huge circular chevron-like decorations of the central skylight. Tritoma motif grilles cover the heater vents and are repeated as the motif for grilles high in the wall (covering organ pipes). In the Rose Chapel, decoration consists primarily of bands of carving at the wall-ceiling junction. The band consists of tritoma alternating with a praying figure. Tritoma motif carvings decorate the organ screen and pulpit

area as well. The rose-colored, leaded-light window uses the coreopsis motif. In the Social Lobby, the tritoma motif appears again in the grilles inset into the walls and in the glass and metal wall sconces. Other decorations in the Social Lobby include cornice molding with the tritoma motif and tritoma motif bands in the terrazo. At each end of the hall is a large mosaic (placed in 1993) with symbolic representations from the Old and New Testaments of the Bible.

In 1964-1965, a new Education Building was designed by McCune, McCune & Associates and was constructed on the east side of the original education wing. This new building is a cantilevered, U-shaped construction with a garden and driveway at the level of the original building's first (ground) floor, beneath the section that joins the new building to the original education wing. The new Education Building is attached to the corners of the porte cochere on the east side of the original Education Wing. The design is sensitive to the church's original architecture and decoration and does not attempt to imitate it. The new building's walls are cast concrete panels and are decorated simply by placing five slits at the top and bottom every few feet to reflect the pleated stonework in the original building. The building is a cantilevered structure, elevated above ground in the center, where there is a driveway under the building. Glass corners in the new building are a "scaled-down" version of the tower's glass and black metal fretwork. The interior is divided into plain, undecorated classrooms and assembly areas. There is a playground area on the south side of the building. The Education Building cost $1 million and opened in September 1965.

ALTERATIONS

In 1965, the church completed construction on a new classroom section, the Education Building. It was attached to the outer corners of the original porte cochere that projects from the Education Wing's east side. Access was provided by enclosing the porte cochere with glass panels, leaving the most of the original materials intact. The porte cochere was renamed Bishop's Hall. In the process, changes to the Education Wing's east wall included removal of three windows to create one ground-level doorway and two balcony-level doorways. The original stairway in the Education Wing foyer was reshaped to extend forward toward the Bishop's Hall. Outside, the original driveway under the porte cochere was built up and concrete walls were added at the sides to make a ramp. There is also a two-level concrete step on the north and south. This left a broad walkway between the two buildings.

There have been no other exterior alterations.

A number of interior alterations have occurred since the early 1950s. In the early 1950s (c. 1952), the ground floor gymnasium was eliminated by dividing it into a choir room and a multipurpose room. In 1961, a five-year plan was instituted by the church in order to complete details that were left unfinished in 1929. This included the "renovation of the sanctuary [auditorium]; refinishing of the [Rose] chapel; remodeling of the second-floor offices; construction of new offices, work rooms, and classrooms in the tower; installation of an archives room; addition of elevators; remodeling and redecorating of the third and fourth floors. . . ." (quoted in *More Than A Building*, p. 154.) During this period of alteration, the following changes were made to the original auditorium: the original pews were removed and a new seating system was installed. A

mosaic had been originally planned in 1926-1929 for the auditorium but was never added. The 1961 plan acquired a mosaic, designed and installed by Italian artist Andrea Raffeo. This huge art work was placed behind the altar and made a considerable difference in the appearance of the auditorium. The motifs of tritoma and coreopsis were continued in this mosaic. A thirteen-foot bronze cross, in a post-modern style, by sculptor Duane Hatchett was attached to the center of the mosaic. The interior of the tower had not been finished in 1929 due to financial constraints. In the early 1960s, ten levels, including classrooms, library, offices, and storage, were completed, and a tower prayer chapel was added in the top two floors, by 1966. To facilitate access, an elevator was also installed.

In the 1980s and 1990s, the congregation instituted a new program of "refurbishing and renovating." In this phase, the sanctuary organ was enlarged, requiring the addition of two thousand new pipes and requiring massive new wood casings which replicated the carved, arched-angle motifs of the original wood-paneled walls but left a very large section of organ pipes exposed where before there had been a small grille.

In 1988, the lobby or center hall leading from the now-enclosed porte cochere (now called Bishop's Hall) was altered. The ceiling was elevated and pitched to repeat the angled ceiling of the adjoining Social Lobby.

In 1990, Terrazo was installed in Rose Chapel and part of the parlor. The parlor ceiling was coffered and arched. Two anterooms rooms were relocated and expanded.

In 1992, the community hall (ground floor) was altered with changes in the kitchen serving windows and stage area.

8. STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:
Nationally: X Statewide:__ Locally:__

Applicable National Register Criteria: A__ B__ C X D__

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions): A X B__ C__ D__ E__ F__ G__

NHL Criteria: 4

NHL Criteria Exception(s): 1

NHL Theme(s): III. Expressing Cultural Values
5. Architecture, Landscape Architecture and Urban Design

Areas of Significance: Architecture

Period(s) of Significance: 1927-1929

Significant Dates: 1929

Significant Person(s): N/A

Cultural Affiliation: N/A

Architect/Builder: Goff, Bruce, architect
Robinson, Adah, designer
Garrison, Robert, sculptor

Historic Contexts: XVI. Architecture
T. Modern--Art deco (1920-1945)

State Significance of Property, and Justify Criteria, Criteria Considerations, and Areas and Periods of Significance Noted Above.

SUMMARY

The Boston Avenue Methodist Episcopal Church South, located at 13th Street and Boston Avenue in Tulsa, Oklahoma, was constructed from 1927-1929. The church was designed by a team including art professor Adah Robinson and architect Bruce Goff, of Rush, Endacott and Rush, of Tulsa. The Boston Avenue Methodist Episcopal Church South is architecturally significant in four areas. First, it is exemplary of the Art Deco style, a form of Modernism in design and decoration that was current in the United States in the 1920-1940 period. Second, it exemplifies the period's trend toward the application of new structural materials--steel--to the construction of a particular type of building, the skyscraper. The Boston Avenue Church provides a rare example of an architect's application of this concept and material to a religious facility. Third, the church exemplifies an emerging trend in the functional design of churches, that being the elevation of educational facilities to an almost equal prominence with the sanctuary or worship center itself. Fourth, the Boston Avenue Methodist Church is significant for the architect's use of artistic productions, in the form of terra-cotta sculptures created by sculptor Robert Garrison for the building's exterior. The church's exterior was slightly altered by the addition of an education building in 1964-1965. The addition was attached to a large porte cochere on the east side and does not adversely affect the church's integrity. The church represents an important example of Modernistic architectural style in the design of large public buildings and is a rare example of the principles of Modernism applied to religious facilities.

NARRATIVE HISTORY

The last two decades of the nineteenth century and the first three decades of the twentieth century encompassed a dynamic period, a period of great change, in American life. In the words of historian Merle Curti, "the impact of science and above all of the new biology of Darwin and his disciples profoundly altered ideas about man's mind and society. . . ." [1] No real slaves to tradition, most Americans were receptive to new ideas in all aspects of life. As Curti so succinctly summarized, "the rapidly growing technological character of the culture" had enured Americans to the concept that "everyday life [was] in the constant process of remaking."[2] Evolutionary theory and concepts of the naturalness of progress were applied to all aspects of modern thought--psychology, education, social studies, art, and architecture. The epitome of this line of thinking, in terms of architecture, Curti found to be Louis H. Sullivan, who "formulated the creed that art, in addition to being founded on the scientific method, must liberate man's creative powers from the spell of tradition and authority that he may live more truly. . . ." [3] Frank Lloyd Wright carried the concept further, adding that "organic architecture [is] functional to the needs of the changing culture." This, according to Curti, "definitely reflected the influence of the

[1] Merle Curti, *The Growth of American Thought* (New York: Harper & Row, 1964), 540.
[2] Ibid.
[3] Ibid., 550.

evolutionary outlook." [4] In this seminal period of American architectural thought, artists and architects deserted traditional forms and ornamentation, learned to experiment with light and color, and "attempted to find a living, organic, functional art--new relationships of angles, surfaces, forms, and lines." [5] Within this broad context of the development of intellectual life in the United States grew the ideas and techniques of Modernism in architecture. Within this milieu, an Oklahoma community and an Oklahoma architect conceived and built Tulsa's Boston Avenue Methodist Episcopal Church South from 1924 and 1929.

In 1924, Tulsa's largest Methodist Episcopal congregation decided they needed a new, more imposing edifice in which to worship. The church had been chartered in 1893 when Tulsa was a small town. The town had grown to more than 140,000, and the church, with a membership that had grown to nearly 2,000, was currently occupying its third building, located at Fifth Street and Boston Avenue. A building campaign was undertaken in the late spring of 1924, and a forty-member Building Committee, chaired by C. C. Cole, an oil and mining millionaire, was constituted.[6] A wealthy, urban congregation could well afford creativity and innovation.

By their own admission, the church board wanted "a creation, not just a building. . . ." [7] Dr. John A. Rice, pastor, was known to have said that "he wanted to be free to build [a] church before which he could stand in the rain and let it talk to him; he wanted an interior that would impel him to worship whether he wanted to or not." [8] The Building Committee solicited proposals from five architectural firms, but none was compatible with the church's visions of what its new home should represent. According to the church's historian, "none of them offered a forward-looking, challenging creation," one that would "illustrate the deepest meaning of architecture." The Building Committee visited major churches on the East and West coasts and talked to "several important architects." [9] Period styles were discussed. The committee saw examples of Gothic, Neoclassical, and Colonial edifices--and rejected them all as outdated. The congregation clearly wanted an "important" building, one that would compare favorably on a national scale, but they also preferred to engage a local Tulsa firm for the work.

At the suggestion of a member, the committee solicited the advice of Adah Robinson, a Quaker lady who was then a teacher of art at Tulsa Central High School. Born in Indiana in 1882, Robinson had studied at Earlham College and at the Art Institute of Chicago as well as with Charles Hawthorne and other American artists of the era. She had come to Tulsa in 1923 to teach in the high school. In 1927, she was selected to chair the art department of the University of Tulsa, a position which she held until 1945. Robinson's background in art and in church history

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[4] Ibid., 551.
[5] Ibid.
[6] *A Twentieth Century Church: Boston Avenue Methodist Episcopal Church South, South* (Tulsa: N. p., 1929); Jo Beth Harris, *More Than a Building: The First Century of the Boston Avenue Methodist Church* (Tulsa: Centennial Committee, 1993), 86; see also Fred Clinton, *From Brush Arbor to Boston Avenue: The First Methodist Episcopal Church, South, 1893-1943* (N. p.: privately printed, 1943), and *Boston Avenue Methodist Church: Fiftieth Anniversary, 1893-1943* (booklet; Tulsa: Boston Avenue Methodist Church, 1943).
[7] Ibid., 14.
[8] Ibid.
[9] Ibid.

had led her to volunteer as supervisor of the Tulsa Methodist Church's educational programming as well.[10]

After providing the committee with "a small sketch . . . in the rough" of what a new church could possibly look like, Ms. Robinson was engaged to oversee the conceptualization of the building's design. She contracted to work with a professional architectural firm, to be chosen by the committee, and to oversee "the artistic features of the project."[11] She recommended the Tulsa firm of Rush, Endacott and Rush for the commission. According to both contemporary accounts and biographers, Robinson asked the firm to provide the services of Bruce Goff, one of her former students and at the time one of the firm's youngest and most brilliant architects, to help her articulate her ideas and draft them into a buildable form.[12] Unfortunately for historians, there are few written records of her ideas other than sketches of the designs for the terra cotta decorative elements. As one church historian noted, "Miss Robinson was not an engineer."[13]

Church historians note that Robinson "thought of the whole church in spiritual terms." She spent an entire summer reading church history and "steeped herself in the life of Methodism."[14] At the very least, she is credited with the selection of the personae for the Methodist iconography, for the symbols of Methodist allegory, the motifs of the seven-pointed star, native Oklahoma tritoma, and coreopsis for the windows, terra cotta, wood carving, and terraza.[15] She should as well be credited with the placement of these decorative elements throughout the church's interior.

Bruce Goff, who is generally acknowledged as the building's architect of record, was at this point not a novice whose work might be molded by a more forceful person. Young he certainly was, having been born in 1904 in Alton, Kansas. A veritable prodigy, Goff had begun his architectural pursuits at age twelve as an apprentice with the Tulsa firm of Rush, Endacott and Rush and had risen to the status of draftsman and then architect. Although Goff's initial training at the firm had been of the standard sort--performing drafting exercises to learn the classical orders and customary schools of design and building techniques--he had read a great deal and was influenced by modern ideas about architecture. He was particularly interested in the work of

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[10] Ibid., 14; Chris Pettys, ed., *Dictionary of Women Artists* (Boston: G. K. Hall & Co., 1982), 603; D. Gilbert, ed., *Who's Who in American Art* (New York: R. R. Bowker & Co., 1962), 514.

[11] Contract between Rush, Endacott and Rush and Boston Avenue Methodist Episcopal Church South, South, 26 June 1926 (File, National Register of Historic Places, National Park Service, Washington, D.C.); C. C. Cole to Adah Robinson, 26 June 1926 (countersigned contract letter), in ibid.; *A Twentieth Century Church*, 14-15.

[12] *A Twentieth Century Church*, 17.

[13] Ibid.

[14] Ibid., 19.

[15] In future years controversy surrounded the authorship of the church's design. Bruce Goff, who became a principal in the firm shortly after the church's completion, and Adah Robinson, both publicly and in print claimed to be the actual designer. Many supported her claim [H. Bascom Watts (Pastor) to Archie J. Baley (Tulsa Chamber of Commerce), 19 May 1941, National Register File, National Park Service, Washington, D.C.); C. C. Cole (parishoner) to Archie Baley, 9 June 1941 (in ibid.); Mary C. Cole (parishoner) to William J. Murtagh (Keeper of National Register), 2 December 1977 (in ibid.)]. Architectural historians, however, uniformly support Goff's contention that he was the designer [David DeLong, *The Architecture of Bruce Goff: Buildings and Projects, 1916-1974*, 2 vols. (New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1977): 1:481ff.].

Louis H. Sullivan and Frank Lloyd Wright. [16] Goff's first built design, a house in California, came in 1919. By 1927, at age twenty-three, he had participated in the design of thirty-one buildings, primarily commercial in nature, and had himself designed a number of buildings that had been constructed in Tulsa, including Adah Robinson's studio in 1923, the Tulsa Club Building in 1925, and the Page Warehouse in 1927. [17] His formal education lacking, nevertheless Bruce Goff, according to a biographer, "through his study of work by others . . . learned in a time-honored way. That he restricted his models to early modern work distinguishes his approach, and his extreme youth and seemingly remote location in Oklahoma make his progress impressive." [18] The young architect excelled at "combining and synthesizing . . . varied sources in a single design." He has been characterized as "one of the most inventive architects in the history of American architecture. His work is intrinsically significant for its spatial creativity and historically significant as a link between that of A. J. Downing and Frank Lloyd Wright on the one hand and the circle led by Robert Venturi and Charles W. Moore on the other." [19]

The study of modern architectural theory that Goff undertook before and during the designing of the Boston Avenue Methodist Episcopal Church South project marked a turning point in his career. He studied and "'dug deeply'" into the work of European Modernists such as Alfonso Ianelli, who visited Tulsa on another matter and talked extensively with Goff about design in Europe. Ianelli apparently reinforced the young architect's interest in the work of various Expressionists, such as Erich Mendelsohn. Their interest in form augmented Goff's own predilection for geometric figures and abstractions. [20]

As Goff worked on the Boston Avenue Methodist Episcopal Church South project, the concept became more and more his own, and as his native mathematical and engineering skills came into play. Ms. Robinson's contributions apparently were eventually restricted to the overall concept that the edifice be imposing and that it bear the actual iconographic and allegorical symbols peculiar to Methodism that are found in the building's decorative details. According to Goff's biographer, "she clearly functioned as an intermediary between the committee and the architects--not a small role considering the unusual nature of the design--and made many suggestions regarding decorative details. She should not, however, be considered as having a professional role much beyond that of advisor in the building's design." [21]

Goff, an experienced albeit youthful architect, possessed a command of the elements of various schools of architectural thought and a working knowledge of structural materials and engineering problems. Robinson's concept, with its huge central tower, faced many modern problems. Goff designed a "skyscraper" and used modern materials and modern structural solutions. As he would prove repeatedly in later years, Bruce Goff had an amazing ability to listen to a client, suppress his own ego, and personalize each client's building. In the case of the Boston Avenue Methodist

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[16] Jeffrey Cook, *The Architecture of Bruce Goff* (New York: Harper & Row, 1978), 1-6.
[17] David DeLong, *Bruce Goff: Toward Absolute Architecture* (New York: MIT Press, 1988), 19-22; DeLong, *The Architecture of Bruce Goff*, 481.
[18] DeLong, *Bruce Goff: Toward Absolute Architecture*, 19.
[19] David DeLong, "Bruce Goff," *Macmillan Encyclopedia of Architects*, 4 vols. (New York: Free Press, 1982), 2:221-22.
[20] DeLong, *Bruce Goff: Toward Absolute Architecture*, 22-27.
[21] DeLong, *The Architecture of Bruce Goff*, 63.

Episcopal Church South, he was able to translate Robinson's and Rice's vision and the attendant artistic concepts and religious symbolism into mathematical and structural-engineering reality, while adding modern stylistic and decorative features from his own study of emerging Modernism.

Ground was broken for the Boston Avenue Methodist Episcopal Church South at 13th Street and Boston Avenue on 16 May 1927. Construction by Bellows Construction Company, of Oklahoma City, proceeded apace, its progress marked by occasional features in statewide newspapers. One worthy organ prophetically proclaimed in September 1928 that "when the new Boston Avenue Methodist Church, South, in Tulsa is dedicated, early next spring, it will mark the completion of the first church in America designed along lines that architects and artists are now calling the Twentieth Century, or strictly American, style of architecture; a complete departure from all past styles and revolutionary to a degree which will make it stand out in future generations as a distinct and characteristic development." [22]

While the building project was in the initial stages, Robert Garrison, a young and rapidly rising Iowa-born artist from Denver, was selected to sculpt the church's iconographical and allegorical figures. Garrison had studied with Gutson Borglum, served in World War I, and then moved to Denver, where he opened a studio. When Garrison arrived in Tulsa to survey the project, he was presently completing work on sculptural elements of the Riverside Baptist Church in New York City (a building funded by John D. Rockefeller and pastored by Dr. Harry Emerson Fosdick). His credits included the Voorhees Memorial at Denver's Civic Center, sculpted mountain lions at the Colorado State House, and the Daly Memorial at Rochester, New York. In youth, Garrison had studied in Oklahoma with Adah Robinson, and his commission for the Tulsa church came as no surprise. Robinson selected iconographic and allegorical figures as decorative elements, and Garrison crafted them into terra cotta. [23]

Boston Avenue Methodist Episcopal Church South was completed in the spring of 1929. A formal opening came on 9 June 1929. Despite large expenditures, the rooms planned within the tower remained unfinished, as did some interior decoration in the auditorium. The total cost of the edifice was $1.25 million. [24]

In the 1950s, plans were drawn for expanding the church and completing the unfinished tower rooms. [25] In 1964-1965, a new education wing was designed by McCune, McCune & Associates and was constructed on the east side of the original education wing, connected to it by enclosing the original porte cochere, making a large glass room known as "Bishop's Hall." The education wing received the 1965 Regional Design Award from the American Institute of Architects. [26] By 1967, the congregation had completed the tower rooms and had also installed mosaic in the sanctuary, an element that had been in the original plans but had not been accomplished. The

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[22] *Daily Oklahoman* (Oklahoma City, Oklahoma), 2 September 1928.
[23] Mantle Fielding, *Dictionary of American Painters, Sculptors, and Engravers* (Greens Farms, Conn.: Modern Books and Crafts [1926], 1974), 134; *Tulsa (Oklahoma) World*, 21 June 1927.
[24] Harris, *More Than a Building*, 101; *Tulsa (Oklahoma) World*, 12 September 1993.
[25] Tulsa (Oklahoma) World, 2 February 1959, 23 October 1960.
[26] *Tulsa (Oklahoma) World*, 3 February 1964, 10 July 1965; Harris, *More Than a Building*, 149-159.

completed mosaic, by Italian artist Andrea Raffo, was augmented by a hand-wrought cross by sculptor Duane Hatchett. [27]

Other interior refurbishings came in the 1980s and 1990s. In 1988, the hallway leading from Bishop's Hall into the original education wing was renovated, a process in which the ceiling was elevated and pitched at an angle to match the main "Social Lobby." In 1990, the Rose Chapel was renovated, and in the adjacent parlor the ceiling was arched and coffered. [28] Despite interior alterations, the exterior of the building virtually retained its original appearance with the exception of the attachment of the new education building to the original east wing.

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[27] *Tulsa (Oklahoma) Tribune*, 10 September 1965; *Tulsa (Oklahoma) World*, 5 July 1964, 28 August 1966, 20 January 1967, 5 February 1967; Harris, *More Than a Building*, 152-153.
[28] Harris, *More Than a Building*, 184-185.

Today, the Boston Avenue Methodist Church, at 13th Street and Boston Avenue, stands as a monument to its builders, to the community of Tulsa, and to its designers and architects as well.

ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE

The Boston Avenue Methodist Episcopal Church South is architecturally significant in four areas. First, it is exemplary of Art Deco style, a form of Modernism in design and decoration that was current in the United States in the 1920-1940 period. Second, the period's trend toward the application of new structural materials--steel--to the construction of a particular type of building, the skyscraper was carried out in the Boston Avenue Church. The church provides a fine example of an architect's application of this concept and material to a religious facility. Third, the church exemplifies an emerging trend in the functional design of church facilities, that being the elevation of educational facilities to an almost equal prominence with the sanctuary or worship center itself. Fourth, the Boston Avenue Methodist Church is known for the architect's use of artistic productions, in the form of terra-cotta sculptures found on the building's exterior.

The Boston Avenue Methodist Episcopal Church South, Tulsa, Oklahoma, embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type of American architecture, called Modernism. The Boston church has a nearly unique place within the emerging style of Modernism. Modernistic styles were popular in the United States from the 1920s through about 1940. Art Deco, the earliest form, was common in public and commercial construction in the earlier decades. It is characterized by smooth walls with decorative elements that are strongly geometrical, such as chevrons, zigzags, and stylized or abstracted (non-objective, non-representational) forms. Verticality is emphasized by towers and other projections above the roof line. The Art Deco style was popularized by the 1922 *Chicago Tribune* competition for the design of its headquarters. While first prize went to a Modern Gothic design, second prize was given to an Art Deco design by Eliel Saarinen. The publicity given to the competition and to the winners began a trend away from traditional styes and popularized the Modernistic styles, as well as combinations of traditional and modern elements. [29] The Boston Avenue Methodist Episcopal Church South was immediately hailed by contemporary architectural critics as a tour-de-force in "modern" design. It exemplified a major new approach, and its place in the mainstream of modernity was duly noted by Sheldon Cheney in his book *The New World Architecture* (1930).

Writing in 1929, Cheney exulted that the "beginnings of a consciously different world architecture are apparent, not only in business skyscrapers and factories but in homes, studios, schools, even churches." In his time--the late 1920s--Cheney found that a pattern of Modernism had emerged over the previous several decades. This he called a "new mode, . . . constituting an architectural revolution more fundamental than any in seven centuries." Modern architecture, he said, is defined by qualities of "geometric simplicity," "absolute honesty in the use of materials," "total independence from known styles of decoration," "a new massiveness and precision,"

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[29] Virginia McAlester and Lee McAlester, *A Field Guide to American Houses* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1989), 465-66; John J.-G. Blumenson, *Identifying American Architecture: A Pictorial Guide to Styles and Terms, 1600-1945* (Nashville: A. A. S. L. H., 1981), 76-79.

"clean lines, hard edges, smoothness, restless drive," and "new modes of ornamentation appropriate to our age," the Machine Age. [30]

Cheney's analysis of architectural trends is pertinent as well for his further insights into the intellectual milieu within which Bruce Goff worked during the 1920s. Cheney describes a period of "Eclecticism," up until the 1920s. In this seminal period Bruce Goff received his training. A precursor to Modernism, Eclecticism was characterized by tall buildings that stood like classical columns, with a more or less elaborated base but relatively plain shaft, capped by a "flowering of ornament." Exemplary of this were the *New York World* Building, the Flatiron Building, the Woolworth Building, in New York, and the *Chicago Tribune* and *Chicago Times* buildings. He calls these "Gothic skyscrapers" of the "Modern city" and finds them to be "symbolically typical of today." Eclecticism, he notes, quickly evolved into Modernism, a time of "the sudden deluge of stripped architecture," following the Chicago competition. [31]

The Boston Avenue Methodist Episcopal Church South was, to Sheldon Cheney writing in 1929, "the most provocative American example of different church building," representative of a particular modern style that "begins with the [traditional, Gothic] accenting of the aspiring line. But its detail is daringly new, its ornamental idioms fresh and vital, its masses fairly well sculptured and perfectly expressive of plan." [32] In short, the Tulsa church represented the most current stylistic thinking of that time period of American architecture and had few peers among its contemporaries. The church's stark appearance, its sheer walls, its highly stylized geometric decorative elements, both figurative and abstract, identify it as a highly effective exercise in Art Deco design.

From the perspective of national architectural history, it may be readily noted that non-traditional architectural styles have never been popular for religious buildings in America. In the nineteenth century, regional preferences, coupled with other factors such as ecclesiastical tradition, ethnicity, and social class, generally governed church design. As the twentieth century approached and became reality, regionalism, especially among Protestant denominations, gave way to nationally popular styles such as Colonial, Medieval, and Neoclassical revivals. The non-traditional, avant-garde nature of Modernistic styles, such as Art Deco or Art Moderne, did not make them attractive to many congregations, although the affluent members of some churches might well adopt newer, forward-looking styles for their homes or places of business. [33] The Tulsa Methodist congregation approved Bruce Goff's unusual design with some trepidation. As he noted years later: "The church I designed . . . for Tulsa, Oklahoma, was regarded in its initial stages as 'a trip to Mars.'" [34] Nevertheless, his contemporaries in architecture regarded the edifice as very much on the cutting edge of Modernism.

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[30] Ibid., 15, 65-66, 123, 140.
[31] Cheney, *The New World Architecture*, 65-70, 123, 140.
[32] Ibid.
[33] Peter W. Williams, *Houses of God: Region, Religion, and Architecture in the United States* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1997), 115, 180.
[34] Philip B. Welch, ed. *Goff on Goff, Conversations and Lectures* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1996), 324.

While in the years between the turn of the century and World War II, many Modernistic buildings were built, few Modernistic churches were constructed and fewer even in the Art Deco style. The two prominent examples of Art Deco religious facilities are Bruce Goff's Boston Avenue Methodist Church (Tulsa, 1929) and H. J. McGill's Shrine of the Little Flower (Royal Oak, Michigan, 1931). [35] Chicago architect Barry Byrne's Christ the King Church, at Cork, Ireland (c. 1925), is a European example of Art Deco. In other non-historical, non-traditional, modern styles are Frank Lloyd Wright's Unity Temple (Chicago, 1908), and his Community Christian Church (Kansas City, 1940); Barry Byrne's Church of St. Thomas the Apostle (Chicago, c. 1925) and his Christ the King Catholic Church (Tulsa, Oklahoma, 1926); Temple Building/First Methodist Church (Chicago, 1924, a "Gothic" skyscraper); and Louis Sullivan (et al.), St. Paul's Methodist Episcopal Church (Cedar Rapids, Iowa, 1914). [36]

In the new Modernistic mode, said historian Cheney, buildings are "grown organically out of machine-age materials and methods of structure, out of modern needs and modern living, and out of honest creativeness. . . ." [37] The most visible change was in the increasingly easy use of steel superstructure and of reinforced concrete, which could be applied to produce massive verticality or horizontality, or to allow for different shapes, such as large, circular, open spaces, or to allow huge windows in large expanses of wall. [38] The resulting skyscraper concept, seen in business buildings, was occasionally applied to a religious building, as in the enormous towers of the First Methodist Church of Chicago (1924), the Boston Avenue Methodist Episcopal Church South (1929), and the Shrine of the Little Flower (1931), as well as in the circular auditoriums of the Boston Avenue Church (1929), Barry Byrne's Tulsa Church (1926), and Sullivan's Cedar Rapids building (1914). In the instance of the Boston Avenue edifice, the construction of the 225-foot tower was facilitated by Goff's use of a structural steel skeleton, in essence providing a fifteen-story skyscraper as a lynchpin between a sanctuary, or auditorium, and an education wing.

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[35] Edward Norman, *The House of God: Church Architecture, Style, and History* (London: Thames & Hudson, 1990), 303.
[36] Peter W. Williams, *Houses of God: Region, Religion, and Architecture in the United States* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1997), 180-182, 200-201, 203, 215; Roger Kennedy, *America's Churches* (New York: Crossroad Publishing Co., 1982), 36-37. 118-119;
[37] Sheldon Cheney, *The New World Architecture* (New York: AMS Press, 1967 [1930]), 12, 13.
[38] Edward Norman, *The House of God: Church Architecture, Style, and History* (London: Thames & Hudson, 1990), 292-293, 303.

The Boston Avenue Methodist Episcopal Church South is also important for its early place within a national trend toward designing churches to serve multiple functions--shared worship, Christian education, fellowship, charity, and entertainment. Architectural historians have pointed out that for the first four decades of the twentieth century there was very little stylistic change in religious architecture, except for a few "experiments in new styles" (i.e., Modernistic styles such as Deco, Moderne, and Expressionistic, the latter being mainly in Europe). However, after the turn of the century, churches, particularly Protestant ones, rapidly became multipurpose centers. There came to be a greater emphasis on the community of worshipers, rather than on liturgical forms. As Paul Tillich noted in an essay in 1962, Protestantism was and is based on a priesthood of the believers, rather than on an hierarchical system in which sacrament and leaders preside over the congregation. [39] Other historians, as well, have noted that modern Christianity and its buildings focus on community, rather than liturgy. [40]

In 1929, Sheldon Cheney also dealt with the then-contemporary problem of applying Modernistic design principles to houses of worship. He asked the question: "Is there a modern spirit in the old Churches that might be a starting-point for a new-age ecclesiastic architecture?" He answered in the affirmative, analyzing the modern church building as not merely a house of worship but as a community hall, a building where educational and social activities are combined with preaching, a place in which community activities are centered and which reflects community's self-concept, world view, and aspiration. [41] He gives comparative examples of structurally and decoratively modern buildings in Europe, including churches in Switzerland, France, Germany, Sweden, and other nations. He gives only three American examples: Frank Lloyd Wright's Unity Temple (Chicago, 1908), Barry Byrne's Church of St. Thomas the Apostle (Chicago, c. 1925), and Bruce Goff's Boston Avenue Methodist Episcopal Church South (Tulsa, 1929). [42]

In the instance of the Boston Avenue church, it may be seen that the tall vertical tower and central hallway provide physical, visual, and philosophical unity between two important church functions--shared worship (in the auditorium) and Christian education/fellowship (in the education wing). That these two wings are of nearly equal size indicates the growing importance of non-worship activities. The tower was designed for offices, classrooms, and at the very top, a prayer chapel. In the wholeness of the concept, form definitely follows function. Louis Sullivan's plan of the St. Paul's Methodist Church (1914) is a similar, earlier example of this new concept in church plan. Later, in the years after World War II, many a congregation, inhabiting a traditionally styled church, rushed to build a "Sunday school wing" and a "community hall," additions that, in their size and modern style, often visually overwhelmed the original house of worship. In the latter half of the century, newly designed churches often have integrated all of the

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[39] Paul Tillich, "Contemporary Protestant Architecture," in Albert Christ-Janer and Mary M. Foley, *Modern Church Architecture: A Guide to the Form and Spirit of 20th Century Religious Buildings* (New York: McGraw Hill, 1962), 122-125.
[40] Norman, *The House of God*, 280, 191.
[41] Ibid., 331.
[42] Ibid., 341-43.

functions into a unified visual presentation, often one that belied the religious nature of the building.[43]

Other contemporaneous assessments serve to solidify the Boston Avenue Methodist Episcopal Church South's place in national architectural history. In late 1929, Italian architect Alfonso Ianelli described it as ". . . a building that is a voice of the Twentieth Century, giving joy to beholders."[44] In 1941, the *Encyclopedia Britannica* pictured the church under "Modern Church Architecture," and *National Geographic* magazine featured the building in an article.[45] In 1958, historian Robert C. Broderick would note that "Tulsa, Oklahoma, has a church which exemplifies in its every detail the blending of modern design with religious validity. . . . It is, by any standards, a splendid achievement."[46] In 1993, the church plans and photographs became part of an Art Institute of Chicago exhibit on the life and work of architect Bruce Goff.[47]

The Boston Avenue Methodist Church is also significant for the designers' use of artistic details, in the form of terra-cotta sculptures and panels on the building's exterior. Designed by Adah Robinson and executed in terra cotta by sculptor Robert Garrison, these decorative elements depict important personages, allegorical figures, and symbols of faith that are important to Methodism and include stylized versions of the coreopsis and the tritoma, flowers native to Oklahoma. The panels are placed regularly around the curving exterior wall of the auditorium, and the sculptures appear above the main entrances on north and south. In addition, sixty-two highly stylized "praying hands," designed by Garrison, rise from the parapets in numerous places and also sit atop short towers. The original maquette of this art work resides in the Metropolitan Museum of Art. Clear-glass, leaded-light, windows in the auditorium and rose-colored, leaded-light windows in the Rose Chapel were designed by Jacoby Art Glass Company, of St. Louis, Missouri. In all, 11,500 square feet of leaded glass windows flood the building with light.

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[43] Norman, *The House of God*, 280; Kennedy, *America's Churches*, passim.; Christ-Janer and Foley, *Modern Church Architecture*, 3, 45; *Religious Buildings* (New York: Architectural Record Magazine, 1979), passim.
[44] Alfonso Ianelli, "The Boston Avenue Methodist Episcopal Church South of Tulsa, Oklahoma," *Western Architect* 38 (October 1929): 173-74.
[45]
[46] Robert C. Broderick, *Historic Churches of the United States* (New York: Wilfred Funk, Inc., 1958), 202.
[47] Pauline Saliga and Mary Woolever, eds., *The Architecture of Bruce Goff, 1904-1982: Design for the Continuous Present* (New York: Prestel, for the Art Institute of Chicago), 1995 [exhibition catalogue].

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Previous documentation on file (NPS):

__ Preliminary Determination of Individual Listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.
_X_ 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:

_X_ State Historic Preservation Office
__ Other State Agency
__ Federal Agency
__ Local Government
__ University
__ Other (Specify Repository):

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

Acreage of Property: Approximately 1.8 (one and eight-tenths) acres

UTM References:	Zone	Easting	Northing
	15	231460	4003830

Verbal Boundary Description:

Beginning at the southeast corner of the intersection of Boston Avenue and 13th Street, proceed due east, following the curbline of 13th Street for 350 feet to the corner of Cincinnati Avenue and 13th Street; turn due south and proceed for 218 feet; turn west and proceed due west for 350 feet; turn due north and proceed north, following the curbline of Boston Avenue, to the point of beginning, having described an enclosed polygon.

Boundary Justification:

The boundary includes all the property directly associated with the Boston Avenue Methodist Episcopal Church South building. This included the entire city block bounded by the curblines of Boston Avenue, 13th Street, Cincinnati Avenue, and 13th Place, but excludes the street surface of 13th Place which has been vacated and is a church parking lot.

11. FORM PREPARED BY

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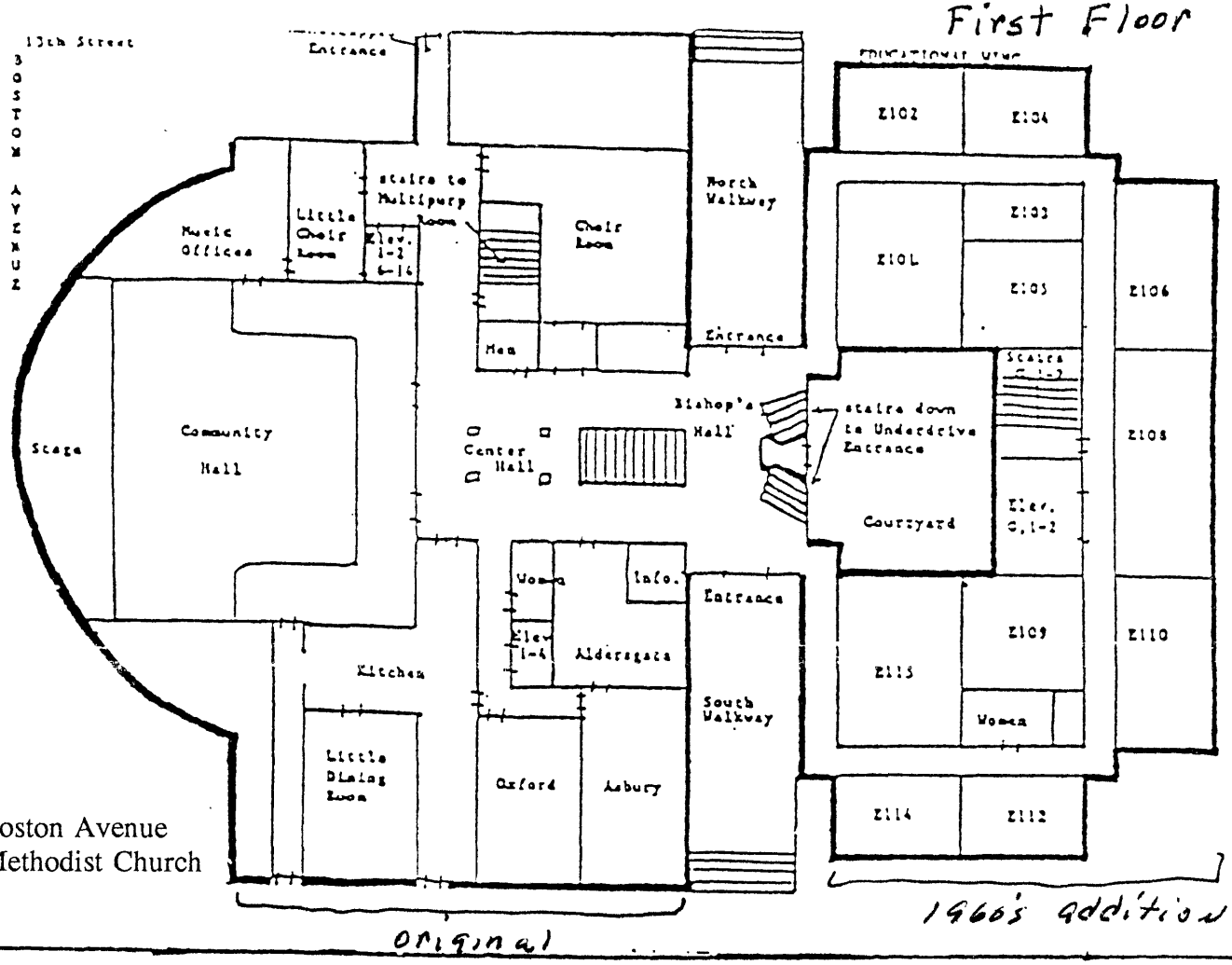
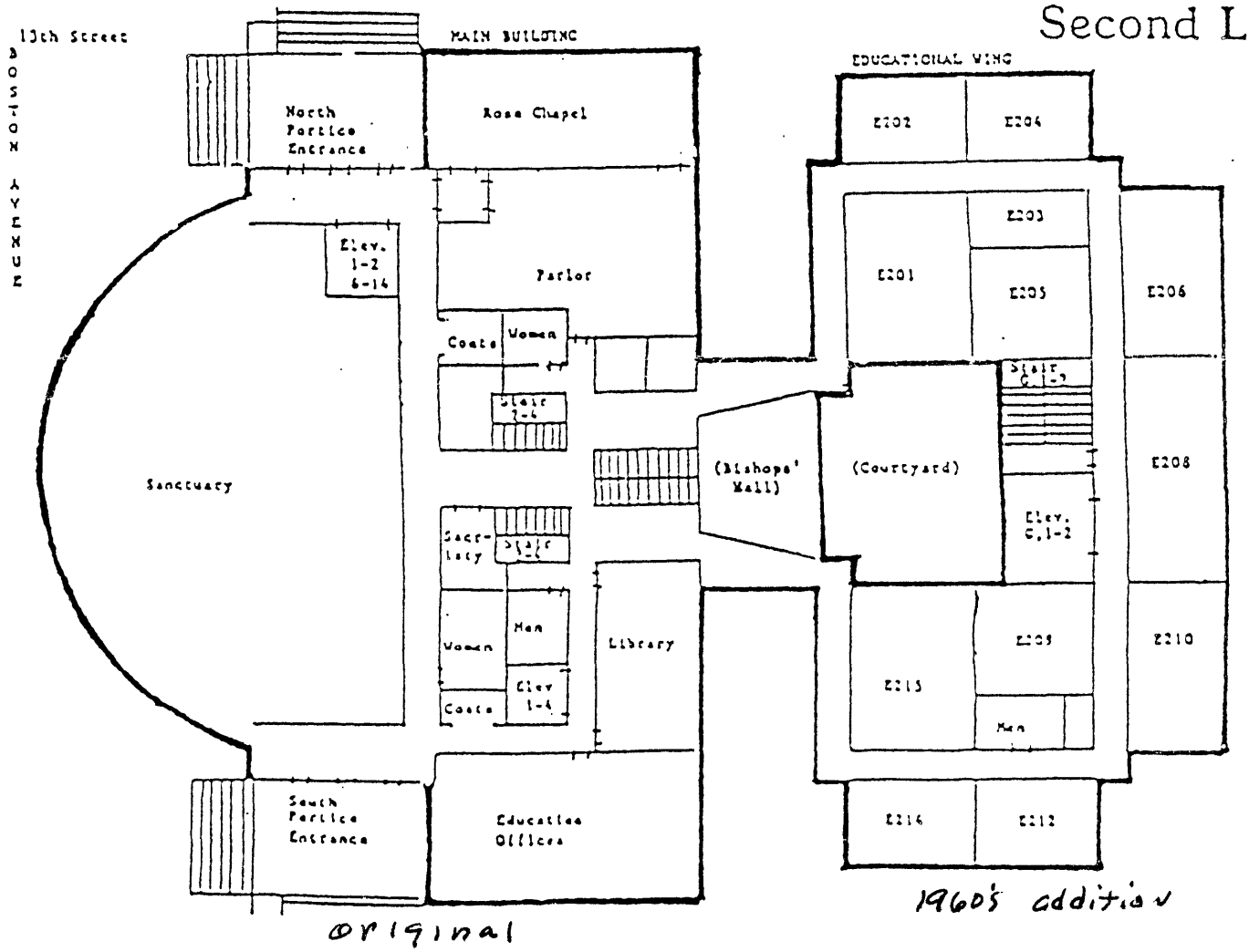
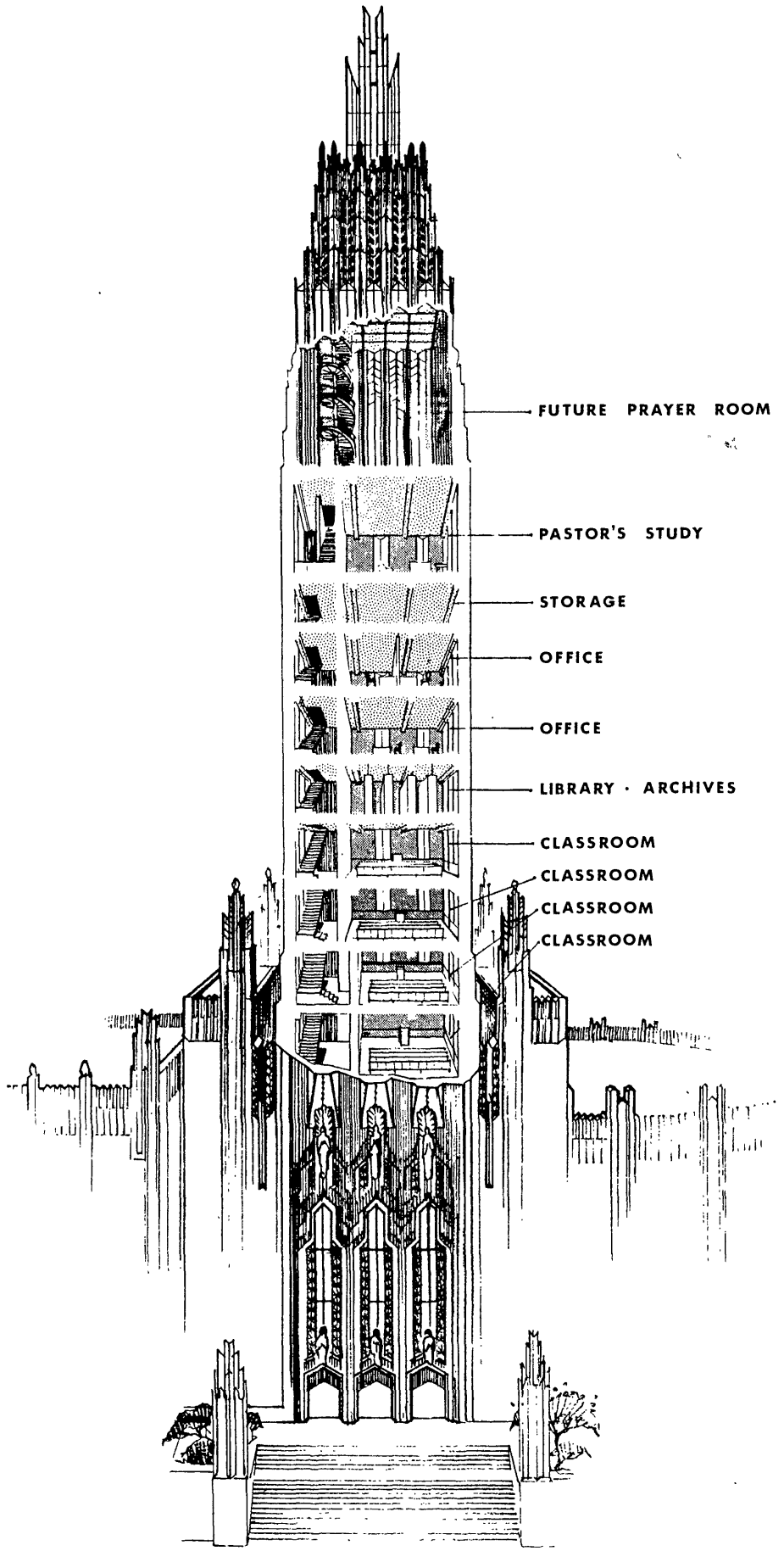




Tulsa, Tulsa County, Oklahoma

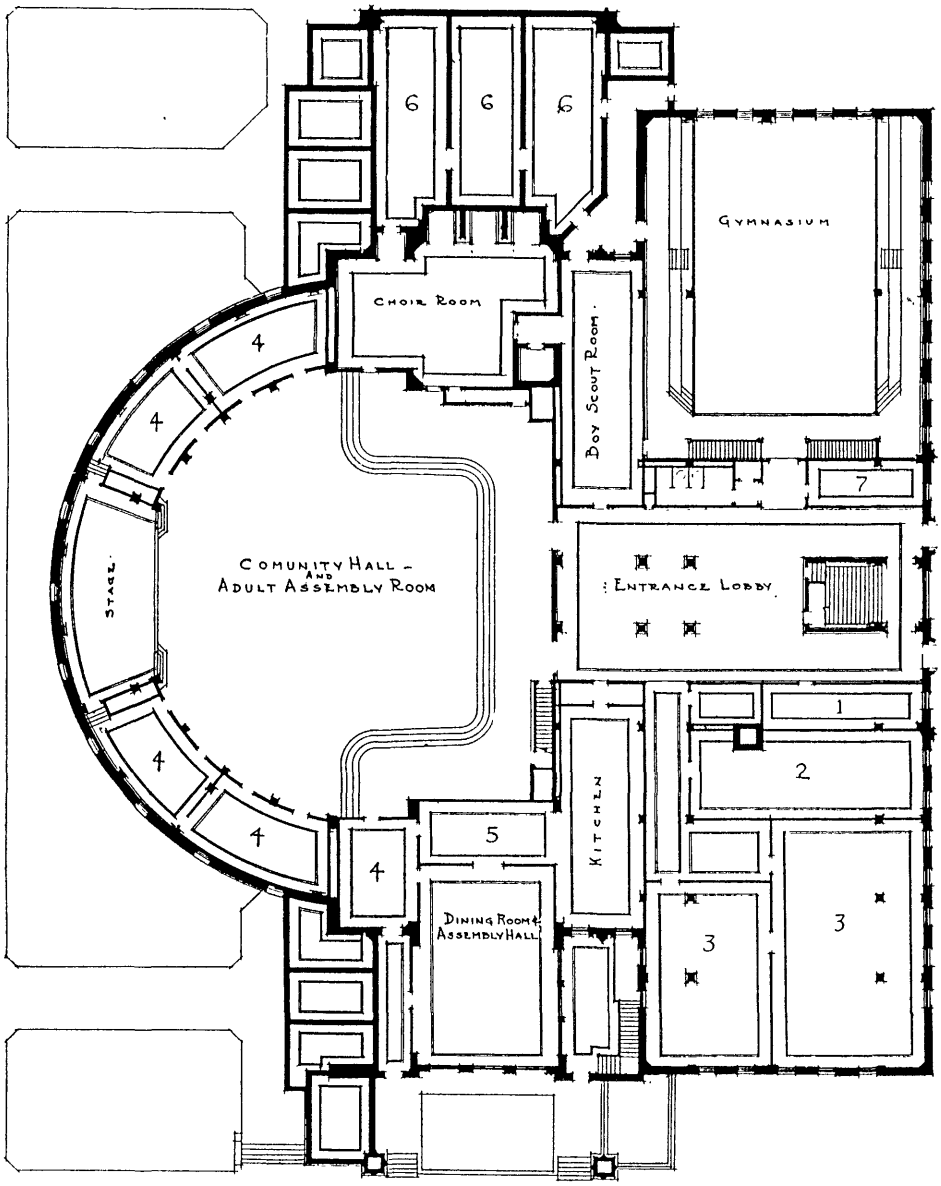
NORTH entrance (view looking south)



BOSTON AVENUE
UNITED METHODIST

N

13th Street



Boston Avenue

Porte Cochere

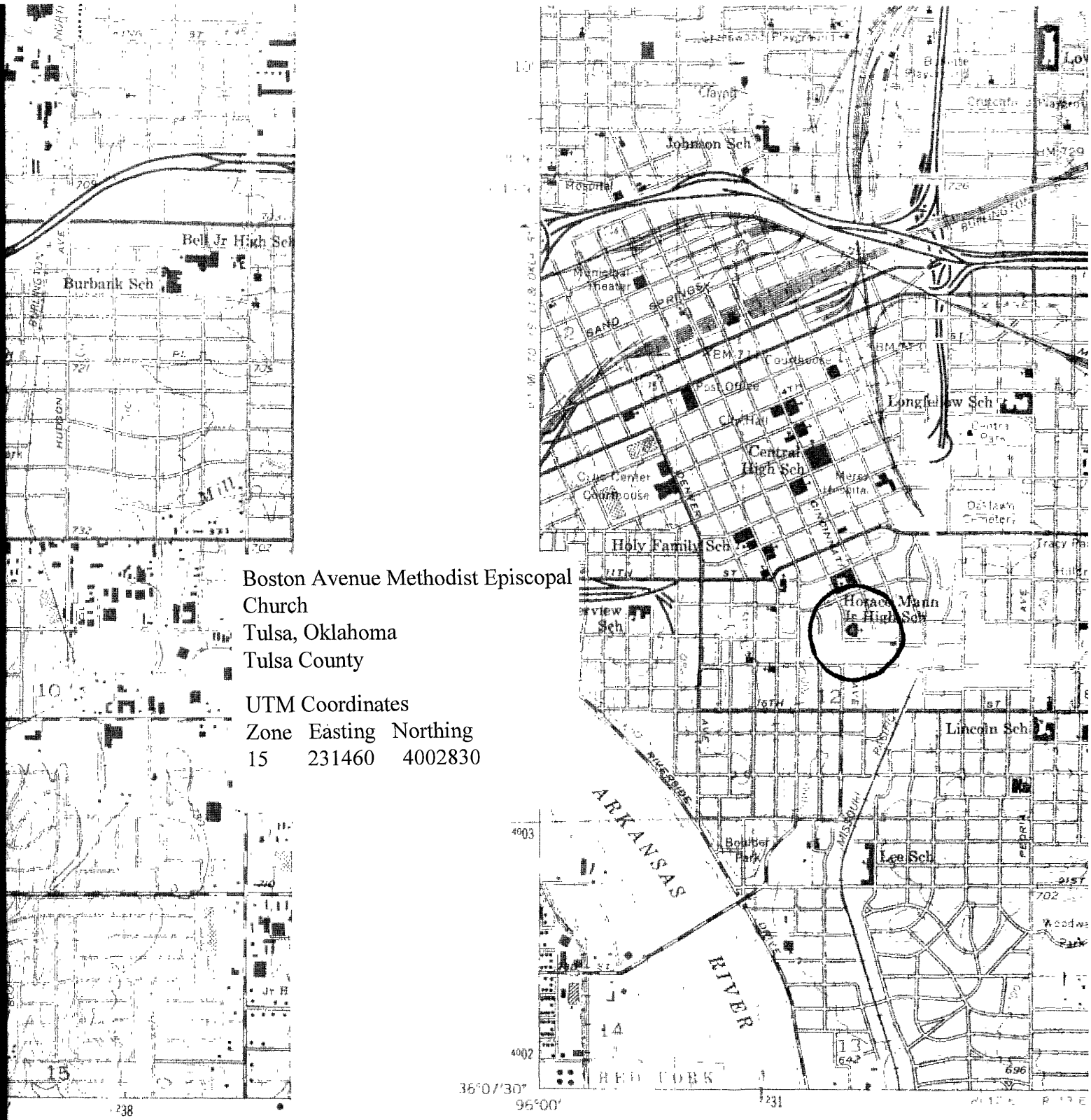
First Floor/Ground level

1. Nursery
2. Cradle Roll
3. Beginners
4. Adult Class Rooms
5. Service Kitchen
6. Storage Rooms
7. Physical Director

Community Lounge—East Entrance Lobby

13th Place (now parking)

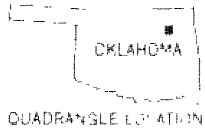
BOSTON AVENUE
UNITED METHODIST



Boston Avenue Methodist Episcopal Church
Tulsa, Oklahoma
Tulsa County

UTM Coordinates

Zone	Easting	Northing
15	231460	4002830



QUADRANGLE LOCATION

(SAPULPA NORTH)

Mapped, edited, and published by the Geological Survey

Control by USGS, USC&GS, USCE,
and Oklahoma Geodetic Survey

Culture and drainage in part compiled from aerial photographs
taken 1950-1951. Topography by plane-table surveys 1954

Polyconic projection. 1927 North American datum
10,000-foot grid based on Oklahoma coordinate system, north zone
1000-meter Universal Transverse Mercator grid ticks,
zone 15, shown in blue

Red tint indicates area in which only landmark buildings are shown

To place on the projected North American Datum 1983
[illegible] projection lines 3 meters south and
[illegible] meters east as shown by dashed corner tick