

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number _____ Page _____

SUPPLEMENTARY LISTING RECORD

NRIS Reference Number: 01000076

Date Listed: 2/13/2001

Fullerton 1st Methodist Episcopal Church Orange

CA

Property Name

County

State

N/A

Multiple Name

This property is listed in the National Register of Historic Places in accordance with the attached nomination documentation subject to the following exceptions, exclusions, or amendments, notwithstanding the National Park Service certification included in the nomination documentation.


Signature of the Keeper

2/13/01
Date of Action

=====
Amended Items in Nomination:

U. T. M. References:

The correct UTM Coordinates are: 11 414760 3748080

Photographs:

The photographs provided with the nomination adequately document the current condition of the property, as verified by the SHPO staff.

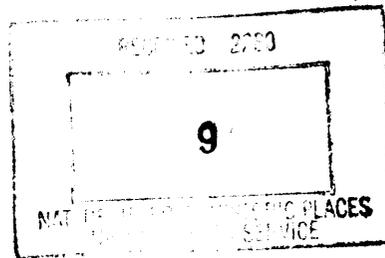
These revisions were confirmed with Cynthia Howse of CA SHPO.

DISTRIBUTION:

- National Register property file
- Nominating Authority (without nomination attachment)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register Of Historic Places
Registration Form



76

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name **Fullerton First Methodist Episcopal Church**

other names/site number **Seventh Day Adventist Church, Church of Religious Science**

2. Location

street & number **117 North Pomona Avenue**

NA not for publication

city or town **Fullerton**

NA vicinity

state **California** code **CA** county **Orange** code **059** zip code **92832**

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant nationally statewide locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Samuel A. Hays **DSHPO** **12/12/00**
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

California Office of Historic Preservation
State or Federal agency and bureau

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

Signature of commenting or other official Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

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

Signature of the Keeper **2/13/01**
[Signature] _____

Fullerton First Methodist Episcopal Church

Name of Property

Orange County, California

County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

Category of Property

(Check only one box)

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

Number of Resources within Property

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

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1	1	buildings
		sites
		structures
		objects
1	1	Total

Name of related multiple property listing

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

N/A _____

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

0 _____

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

Religion: religious facility _____

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

Religion: religious facility _____

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

Late Gothic Revival _____

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation **concrete** _____

roof **composition shingle** _____

walls **brick** _____

other **opalescent art glass** _____

Narrative Description

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

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing)

- A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

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

Property is:

- A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B removed from its original location.
- C a birthplace or a grave.
- D a cemetery.
- E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F a commemorative property.
- G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Narrative Statement of Significance

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

9. Major Bibliographical References

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

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 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 # _____

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

Architecture

Period of Significance

1909

Significant Dates

1909

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

NA

Cultural Affiliation

NA

Architect/Builder

Walker, Albert R. (architect)

Conner & McCann (builders)

Primary Location of Additional Data

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

Name of repository:

Fullerton Public Library, CSU Fullerton, UCLA

Fullerton First Methodist Episcopal Church

Name of Property

Orange County, California

County and State

10. Geographical Data**Acreage of Property less than one acre****UTM References**

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
1	11	415760	3748080	3	_____	_____	_____
2	_____	_____	_____	4	_____	_____	_____

 See continuation sheet.**Verbal Boundary Description**

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

Boundary Justification

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

11. Form Prepared Byname/title **Debora Richey, Secretary** _____organization **Fullerton Heritage** _____ date **March 20, 2000** _____street & number **211 N. Roosevelt Street** _____ telephone **714-278-3094** _____city or town **Fullerton** _____ state **CA** _____ zip code **92832** _____**Additional Documentation**

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets**Maps**A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.**Photographs**Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.**Additional items**

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

Property Owner

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

name **Annette Drake, Board of Trustees, Church of Religious Science** _____street & number **117 North Pomona Avenue** _____ telephone **714-525-1126** _____city or town **Fullerton** _____ state **CA** _____ zip code **92832** _____**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 *et seq.*).**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including the time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7__ Page __1

Fullerton First Methodist Episcopal Church
Orange County, California

Summary

The Fullerton first Methodist Episcopal Church is a red brick Gothic Revival building constructed in 1909 and characterized by a gable roof, arched windows and doorways, hood molding, square bell tower with crenellated parapet, and stained glass. The design also includes Craftsman elements in the wood trim and board and batten interior. In 1923 a "shed" was built to the rear of the church. This building, used for extra classroom space and storage, is counted as a noncontributing building. The church building retains a high level of integrity.

Narrative

Constructed in 1909, the Fullerton First Methodist Episcopal Church is located 117 North Pomona (previously 146 East Amerige), the southwest corner of Amerige and Pomona Avenues, in historic downtown Fullerton, California. The 40- by 82-foot Gothic-styled building covers nearly all of the 53- by 140-foot lot (.17 acres) that it stands on. Low in scale and set close to the street, the two-story dark brick structure features a three-story square tower oriented toward the street corner. The building's bricks, unique to Fullerton, were handmade by the Simons Brick Company in Los Angeles and bear the trademark Simons stamp. The building is the oldest continuous church in the City and the second home of one of Fullerton's original churches--the First Methodist Episcopal--established in 1888. Currently serving the parishioners of the Church of Religious Science, the impressive, stately building has housed different religious denominations through the years and stands today on its original site.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

**Fullerton First Methodist Episcopal Church
Orange County, California**

Section number 7 Page 2

The church as remained essentially unaltered, with the exception of the loss of its chimney, the replacement of doors on the east side, and minor interior changes (the addition/removal of partitions, acoustic ceiling panels, carpet, and paint). Otherwise, the building's integrity is intact. In 1923, a noncontributing square-shaped wooden building was constructed at the rear of the property. Characterized as a "shed" at the time of construction, it is 1000 square feet. It was built as additional storage and classroom space and is still used for that purpose.

Fullerton is one of the few cities in Orange County and Southern California at-large to both preserve and maintain its historic downtown area. The First Methodist Episcopal Church is situated in the original central core of the City laid out by town founders George Henry (1855-1942) and Edward Russell Amerige (1857-1915) in 1887. Commercial, residential, and institutional structures of both historical and cultural significance built between 1899 and 1930 surround the church. These buildings represent the roots of the community, and the downtown area still contains many of its significant structures. The City's oldest surviving commercial block, "which still retains most of its original façade," is the Dean Block (1899-1901), situated at 111-113 North Harbor Boulevard, the south side of the church block.¹ A number of adjacent buildings are City of Fullerton designated Local Historic Landmarks, including the Mission Revival Fullerton General Hospital (1909, replaced 1913) at 201 East Amerige, the Queen Anne Dauser House (1902) at 117 South Pomona Avenue, and a Craftsman Bungalow Court (1922) at 314 North Pomona. To the immediate west of the church is the former Colonial Revival Methodist Parsonage at 142 East Amerige. Built in 1905 prior to the construction of the 1909 adjacent church, the original parsonage now serves as a commercial establishment. Properties surrounding the church and block are in good to excellent condition. Specific changes to what was the historic setting of the First

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 7 Page 3

**Fullerton First Methodist Episcopal Church
Orange County, California**

Methodist Episcopal Church have been relatively minor; consequently, the historical significance of the church has not been diminished by a loss of integrity to its traditional setting.

The lot for the church was purchased in March 1905, permits were taken out in April, and the building was then rapidly constructed in seven months on a concrete foundation at a cost of \$20,000. The building's architect was famed Los Angeles architect Albert R. Walker, who later joined forces with Percy A. Eisen to establish the prolific and influential architectural firm of Walker and Eisen (1919-1941). The builders were Conner and McCann of Los Angeles. The church's design is a modified version of the Akron Plan, a popular design of the period that used roll up partitions to divide the building into classroom and sanctuary sections. Named because it was first used at the Methodist Episcopal Church (1870) in Akron, Ohio, the Akron Plan features a square or rectangular nave with a semi-circular arrangement of pews around a point of focus, which is the sanctuary and choir. This design plan can be found in hundreds of churches across the United States.²

Exterior

Rectangular-shaped, the building is reminiscent of contemporary Eastern construction and reflective of the French and British heritage of then Methodist Minister A.B. Embree. The Gothic Revival design characteristics include a pitched gable roof, obtuse angled arched windows and doorways, hood molding, a battlement tower, crenellation, stained glass, tracery, and engaged buttresses. The building contains unusual touches of the Craftsman style, present in its square wooden windows, wood trim, board and batten

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

**Fullerton First Methodist Episcopal Church
Orange County, California**

Section number 7 Page 4

interior, and original furnishings. These touches add an element of charm and freshness to the traditional style of the church.

Instead of a rose window, typical of the Gothic style, two 10- by 12-foot beautifully crafted opalescent stained glass windows are set on the north and west facades. Each side of the square bell tower features an arched louvered window with quatrefoil tracery. The north elevation contains a set of square stained glass casement windows and transoms; the east elevation features three sets of triple stained glass inset gothic windows about four feet high. The main entrance is at the corner, under the bell tower, set up on curved cement stairs leading to arched double wooden doors with matching stained glass inset windows. Cement stairs also lead to entrances on the east and west sides of the church. The roof, added to the building in the 1980s, is black composition shingle with decorative wooden brackets under the eaves. The building's façade remains remarkably unchanged. The tower was originally intended to house the bell from the Methodist's original 1893 church (razed), which had grown too small for its membership, but it was thought that the ringing of the bell would disturb patients at the nearby Fullerton General Hospital, so the bell was donated to the Methodist Church in Wintersburg, a small town in western Orange County, where it is still in use.³ Using a different type of red brick, the Seventh Day Adventists in 1931 added a marquee to the front of the building. Sometime prior to the 1950s, the church was painted off-white; the paint was removed in July 1967. In 1967, the doors on the east side were replaced with similar wooden doors, which utilized the original hardware, and in 1982, the cement stairs on the east side were rebuilt. In the 1987 Whittier Narrows earthquake, the tall, narrow chimney at the rear of the building, which serviced the furnace, was supported and rebuilt with the same bricks, but when the chimney collapsed in the 1993 Northridge earthquake, the decision was made not to rebuild it again.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Fullerton First Methodist Episcopal Church
Orange County, California

Section number 7__ Page 5

Simons Brick Company

Although Fullerton had a brickyard on nearby Commonwealth Avenue, bricks from the Simons Brick Company in Los Angeles were imported to the City for construction of the church. Company founders Walter and Joseph Simons arrived in Los Angeles in the 1880s and set up a brick making company that lasted until 1952. The company was an extension of the family's 100-year-old brick making business that began in Worcester, England the century before. The Simons brothers established eight brick making factories throughout the Los Angeles area. Around the 350 acre City of Commerce Plant No. 3, which today comprises Montebello and the City of Commerce, the Simonses built a company town with a store, post office, railroad station, church, school, and hundreds of small houses. Most factory workers and their families came from rural Mexico. Bricks from the Simonses' factories were used to build thousands of Los Angeles landmarks, including UCLA's Royce Hall, the University of Southern California (USC), Walt Disney Studios, the Los Angeles City Hall, and more than half of Pasadena's homes and businesses. Bricks were also shipped north to help reconstruct San Francisco after the 1906 earthquake. The Simonses' easily identifiable handmade bricks, each bearing the Simons stamp, were higher in price, but were also noted for their superior hardness and distinctive reddish brown color. 4 The Fullerton first Methodist Episcopal Church is the only building in Fullerton constructed with Simons Company bricks.

Interior

Although not as unchanged as the exterior, the church's interior retains many of its original Gothic-style appointments and decorative elements, including hardware, doors,

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

**Fullerton First Methodist Episcopal Church
Orange County, California**

Section number 7 Page 6

stairways, heat registers, windows, pews, trusses, screens, and rest rooms. Gothic-styled carvings are embedded in a number of the wooden furnishings and elements, such as doors and pews. Aside from the addition or removal of three partitions, the room and floor layouts are intact. The arched main entrance leads directly into a 10- by 50-foot auditorium/sanctuary. The pulpit is located in the southwest corner of the auditorium on a slightly raised platform. Directly behind the pulpit is a door leading to the minister's office and workrooms. When originally constructed, two rooms at the rear of the first floor were fitted and supplied with furnishings for the accommodation of visiting clergymen and friends, but these rooms are now used for work space. The interior contains a number of original furnishings built by local craftsman, such as tables and chairs, including a few moved from the earlier 1893 Methodist church.

Two aisles separate 27 curved wooden pews, which are arranged in a quarter circle on a slightly inclined floor. In keeping with the meeting room format of the Akron Plan, the sloping floor, curving rows of seats, and aisles radiating out from the pulpit offer a maximum number of good seats from which to see and hear the minister. The curved pews also allow "the congregation to view the magnificent stained glass window without having to turn away from the minister."s The auditorium seats 175, the balcony another 125, and partitions to the adjoining minister's parlor on the north side expanded the seating capacity to 300. In the early 1920s, the 10- by 20-foot parlor, heated by a small gas fireplace, was converted into a "crying room" after glass windows and a speaker system were added so mothers with small children could still hear the weekly sermons.

The Fullerton First Methodist Episcopal Church is a varied version of a popular church design of the period, the Akron Plan, which gives clear definition to the organization of the church. The church includes standard Akron Plan elements – the sloping floor,

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

**Fullerton First Methodist Episcopal Church
Orange County, California**

Section number 7 Page 7

radiating aisles, partitions, curving rows of seats, etc. – but lacks the classrooms facing or to the rear of the central auditorium. Classroom space in the Methodist Church was located on the second floor and in the basement. The Akron Plan was developed by industrialist Lewis Miller, a Methodist who established the first graded Sunday school, with each step corresponding to a grade in elementary school. Miller's Sunday school lessons were first used at the United Methodist Church in Canton, Ohio where he also designed the church's semi-circular sanctuary layout.⁶ Miller perfected his plan at the Methodist Church in Akron, Ohio, which has separate classrooms opening out onto the sanctuary. The flexible floor plan was adopted by many Protestant churches nationwide and was particularly popular during the first quarter of the twentieth century.⁷ The Fullerton First Methodist Episcopal Church is the first church in Fullerton to use the Akron Plan.⁸

The walls, wood trim and paneling, wainscoting, pews, and screens are painted off-white, and the wood floor is covered by carpet. The interior wood used throughout the building on paneling, trim, trusses, ceilings, pews, etc. is either dark oak or ironwood. The dark wood was originally intended to dramatically contrast with the light walls, but over time in an attempt to lighten the rooms, a number of features, such as the pews, were painted off-white. The original dark unpainted wood is still apparent in a number of features--stairways, balcony railings, the decorative trefoil trusses, and auditorium ceiling--making it easy to discern the church's 1909 interior. In the 1950s, the high wooden ceiling was obscured by the addition of acoustic tiles. Originally, three gothic-styled chandeliers lit the church auditorium, matched by four additional chandeliers in the basement. These chandeliers have been replaced by hanging lantern lamps in the auditorium and fluorescent lights in the basement.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

**Fullerton First Methodist Episcopal Church
Orange County, California**

Section number 7 Page 8

The second floor of the building is used for classrooms. A basement, a half story above the street level, runs the entire length and width of the building and includes a dining room, a "buffet" kitchen, rest rooms, the furnace room, a bookstore, and additional classrooms. Two doors open out of the kitchen into the dining room, one to enter and one to exit. The kitchen contains the original cabinetry.

When the building was dedicated on November 21, 1909, it was considered not only the finest church in Orange County but also the most modern, featuring electric lights, a back-up generator (an "independent gas plant"), telephone connections, and a 12- by 15-foot furnace room in the basement designed to heat the entire building. Ventilation and cooling were provided by transoms, fans, and in the case of the auditorium, two windows within the west stained glass window. The church also had a separate mailroom or "post office" for the distribution of literature, lavatories, water closets, and cloak rooms.⁹

OPALESCENT ART GLASS

The church interior features two stunning stained glass windows, one on the west side and another at the north end in the balcony. Of opalescent glass, the windows are noted for their deep, rich coloring. Based upon an original English sketch which had never before been produced by the United States, the west window is a picture of Jesus in a velvet robe. The figure's hand, face, and foot, and the writing on the book, are hand-painted on the glass. This window suffered some damage in the 1987 Whittier Narrows earthquake but was repaired, and Plexiglas was installed on the outside for protection. The north window – donated by the family of the late LuLu Collins, a local

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

**Fullerton First Methodist Episcopal Church
Orange County, California**

Section number 7 Page 9

resident and former school teacher – highlights the three separate stained glass arches, with a white lily plant (the symbol of rebirth) in the center, and a series of botonee crosses.

Archival church documents indicate that artist Joseph McKay of Los Angeles designed the stained glass windows, but there are not records of the art glass firm responsible for their production and installation. At the turn of the 20th century, most architects and contractors in Los Angeles and Orange County ordered stained glass pieces from catalogs put out by Eastern and Midwestern firms. In 1909, Los Angeles had only two stained glass firms – W. H. Judson Art Glass Company (later The Judson Studios) and L. A. Art Glass – and craftsmen from Judson Studios, who currently maintain the windows in the church, have identified the building's decorative art glass windows as probably being crafted by L. A. Art Glass.

Also referred to as “art glass” and “American glass,” opalescent glass was produced and used primarily in America in both secular and ecclesiastical buildings. In the 1890s, “large figural opalescent windows” which used “paint only for hands and faces: became particularly popular in churches.¹⁰ This opalescent style competed with other styles of the period, such as traditionally painted glass or cathedral glass. The Fullerton First Methodist Episcopal Church is the only building in Fullerton that features opalescent glass.

1987 WHITTIER NARROWS EARTHQUAKE

On October 1, 1978, the 25th anniversary date for the Church of Religious Science, the Whittier Narrows earthquake and its subsequent aftershocks caused significant

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 10

Fullerton First Methodist Episcopal Church
Orange County, California

structural damage to the building: the upstairs balcony separated from the wall; wooden trusses in the ceiling came apart; cracks from the interior walls went through to the bricks outside; the chimney crumbled; and the west stained glass window suffered minor damage when the window frame bowed. Fullerton city officials and structural engineers studied the building and originally estimated that the cost to repair the church and to bring it up to code at approximately \$500,000, and ordered the building vacated.⁶ The congregation was allowed to hold one final service on October 18, 1987 and was asked to decide whether it wanted the building demolished or restored. Unwilling to give up the historic structure, members of the congregation raised \$350,000 to restore and retrofit the building. The California State Office of Emergency Services provided two grants (\$98,000 and \$11,500), the Fullerton Redevelopment Agency supplied an interest-free \$75,000 rehabilitation loan, and fund-raising activities netted an additional \$70,000.⁷

To preserve the historic look of the building, the congregation hired Melvyn Green of Manhattan Beach, a seismographic expert, as structural engineer and architect on the project. James McDowell and Company, contracting firm based in Arcadia, completed the major structural work. Church member Carroll Avery served as contractor for the interior and other cosmetic reconstruction. Because the church is a Local Historic Landmark, *The Secretary of Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation* were adhered to during the restoration and retrofit, which preserved the property's historic integrity. For the retrofit, workers removed floorboards around the edge of the walls, drilled angled holes into structural supports, and inserted steel bolts that anchored the walls. A steel frame was constructed in the interior walls to reinforce the structure. Six steel I-beams were paired alongside the wooden trusses that run from the floor to the arched ceiling.⁸

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 7 Page 11

**Fullerton First Methodist Episcopal Church
Orange County, California**

The church was reopened in June 1989, and aside from the loss of the brick chimney in the 1993 Northridge earthquake, has suffered no damage from later earthquakes.

Noncontributing Building

In 1923, a noncontributing square-shaped wooden bungalow was constructed at the rear of the property. Characterized as a "shed" at the time of construction, the 1000-square foot structure was built as additional classroom space and is still used for that purpose. In good condition, the building does not detract from the historic character of the First Methodist Episcopal Church.

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section number 8 _____ Page 1 _____

FULLERTON
First Methodist Episcopal Church
Name of property
Orange County, California
County and State

SUMMARY

The First Methodist Episcopal Church, constructed in 1909, is significant to the City of Fullerton on the basis of its unusually fine architecture, its association with the influential architect Albert R. Walker, and its place in the architectural development patterns of the community. The building is the only brick Gothic Revival structure within the City and only one of two extant Gothic-styled buildings within Fullerton. The church retains the majority of its exterior and interior integrity of location, setting, materials, and workmanship, exhibiting a wide range of superior materials and expert craftsmanship evident in the building's appointments, finishes, and decorative details. The First Methodist Episcopal Church is the only building in Fullerton designed by noted architect Albert R. Walker and is representative of the early architecture built by Walker after he briefly established his own practice in 1909. The church reflects the early phase of Fullerton's building activity when traditional designs were almost exclusively favored and builders relied on architectural styles imported from other regions. While the church's exterior resembles a "traditional" church on the outside, the church's interior features a varied version of the theater-like Akron Plan, which was new to Fullerton. The First Methodist Episcopal Church is a City of Fullerton designated Local Historic Landmark. The property meets Criteria Consideration A: Religious Properties because the **ARCHITECTURE** property is significant for its architectural and design qualities not for religious doctrine.

The First Methodist Episcopal Church is the finest example of Gothic Revival architecture surviving in Fullerton. The brick church is only one of two Gothic-styled structures in the City. The only other Gothic-styled building within Fullerton is a 1926 wood-shingle residence at 601 West Valley View Drive. Many of the building's appointments, finishes, and decorative details are unique to Fullerton and exhibit a wide range of superior materials and expert craftsmanship. Two of the church's material/design elements--the Simons Company bricks and the opalescent art glass--are unique to the City. The church's interior was based upon the auditorium-style Akron Plan. Although by the 1890s the Akron Plan had become standard for medium-sized and large Methodist and other Christian denominations,¹⁴ this style was not used in the City until the construction of the 1909 Methodist Church.

ARCHITECT: ALBERT RAYMOND WALKER (1881-1958)

The First Methodist Episcopal Church was designed by very productive and famed Los Angeles architect Albert R. Walker. Walker designed hundreds of buildings which changed the Los Angeles skyline and is credited with starting the City's westward development along Wilshire Boulevard.

Born in Sonoma, California in 1881, Walker went East in 1902 for special college work at Brown University in Rhode Island, and, upon his return to

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section number 8 _____ Page 2 _____

Fullerton

First Methodist Episcopal Church

Name of property

Orange County, California

County and State

California, joined the architectural firm of Hebbard and Gill in San Diego. After a year in San Diego, he moved to Los Angeles where he continued his apprenticeship with Parkinson and Bergstrum, and later with A.F. Rosenheim, Hunt and Grey. In 1909, he briefly established his own practice, concentrating his efforts chiefly on domestic and church architecture. These buildings relied on traditional styles popular at the time, but were also noted for their freshness, interesting touches, charm, and high quality materials. It was during this period that Walker designed the First Methodist Episcopal Church in Fullerton, one of only a handful of structures built by Walker before he formed a series of partnerships with other architects. The Methodist church is reflective of Walker's early predilection for Gothic architecture, which continued throughout his long career, but became more elaborate and ornate in style in the 1920s and 1930s. The use of the gothic motif is particularly apparent in his later commercial structures in downtown Los Angeles, such as the Platt Music Building (1927), the Texaco/United Artists Building (1927), and the Bay Cities Guaranty Building (1929), noted for their abundance of ornament, pinnacles, and towers. Walker's first religious buildings reflect his respect for traditional styles, which he never lost, but as tastes changed in Southern California, he designed churches of varying architectural styles, including Byzantine and Spanish Colonial Revival styled structures. Walker continued to design religious buildings throughout his fifty-year career.

In 1910, Walker formed a partnership with John Terrell Vawter (1879-?), who graduated from the School of Architecture at the University of Illinois and who had also studied for two years at the Umbenstock Atelier in Paris. Walker and Vawter confined their talent to private residences and churches that ranged in style from Gothic to Craftsman to New England Colonial.¹⁵ Their two best known buildings are the Craftsman bungalow Hill House (1911) at 201 South Coronado Street and the Bible Institute (1913) on South Hope Street in Los Angeles. The Renaissance-inspired Bible Institute was lauded by the *Los Angeles Times* as the "largest and finest structure devoted to religious training in the world" and "one of the structural marvels of the Coast,"¹⁶ and this building proved to be the first major recognition of Walker's talent. The firm was dissolved in October 1917 when Vawter joined the army. After World War I, Vawter returned to San Diego to continue his architectural practice.¹⁷

In 1919, Walker entered a partnership with Percy A. Eisen (1885-1946), also a California native, that lasted until 1941. Although both men were involved in the business and design ends of the firm, Eisen "occupied himself predominately with the procurement of contracts" while Walker "was primarily concerned with the design work."¹⁸ Walker and Eisen soon established themselves as premier architects and "designed 293 office, commercial, industrial and apartment buildings, as well as hotels, theaters, schools, hospitals and municipal buildings throughout the Southland."¹⁹ Many of these buildings are listed and described in Gebhard and Winter's *Architecture in Los*

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section number 8 _____ Page 3 _____

Fullerton

First Methodist Episcopal Church

Name of property

Orange County, California

County and State

Angeles: a Compleat Guide, including: the Spanish Colonial Temple Hall (1919-23) at 15415 East Don Julian Road, La Puente; the Neo-Renaissance Taft Building (1923) at 6290 Hollywood Boulevard; the Romanesque Fine Arts (Havenstrite) Building (1925) at 811 West 7th Street, noted for its extensive use of Ernest Batchelder tile; the Italian Renaissance Beverly Wilshire Hotel (1926) at 9500 Wilshire Boulevard, Beverly Hills; the Spanish Mar Monte Hotel (1927) at 1121 East Cabrillo, Santa Barbara; and the Beaux Arts National Bank of Commerce (1929-30) at 439 South Hill Avenue.²⁰ In 1936-37, Walker and Eisen also planned and built the Torrance City Hall, jail, library, and municipal auditorium, and engaged in similar civic projects in San Luis Obispo, San Gabriel, and Montebello. Buildings designed by the firm are located in almost every major city in California, including San Francisco and Berkley. Their buildings can be also be found in Phoenix, Tucson, Salt Lake City, Denver, Portland, and Las Vegas. In Mexico, one of their buildings is located in Mexico City, another in Baja. During World War II, under the auspices of the National Housing Administration, Walker and Eisen contributed to the war effort by designing public housing for defense workers in Los Angeles. On 15.2 acres in the Boyle Heights area, the firm designed 449 masonry living units known as the William Mead Homes (1942-43).²¹

The firm's two masterpieces are the James Oviatt Building (1928), now the Cicada Restaurant, and the Texaco/United Artists Building (1927), both in Los Angeles. Largely Romanesque in style on the exterior, the Oviatt Building (617 Olive Street) is considered a "masterpiece of Art Deco" featuring Lalique glass.²² Part of the historic Los Angeles Broadway Theatre District, the Spanish Gothic Texaco/United Artists Building (929 South Broadway) houses offices in the upper stories and the United Artists' flagship theater on the ground level. United Artists built the theater to premier all their motion pictures.

During their peak in the 1920s, Walker and Eisen obtained the bulk of the contracts in Los Angeles, employing up to fifty draftsmen. As tastes changed over the decades, Walker was able to adapt his buildings to architectural trends throughout Southern California. In 1941, Walker and Eisen dissolved their partnership, and Walker went on to form the firm of Walker, Kalionzes & Klingerman (1941-1954). His last major work before retiring in 1954 was another church, the 1948 Byzantine Saint Sophia Greek Orthodox Cathedral (11324 South Normandie Avenue) in Los Angeles. Walker died of cancer on September 17, 1958 in Westwood at the age of 77.

LOCAL ARCHITECTURAL CONTEXT AND EVOLUTION

Southern California was really "discovered" when the transcontinental Railroad to Los Angeles was completed in 1881. The "railroad's promotion of cheap fares, the lure of sunshine, irrigation, and the promise of land, all were to contribute to transforming Southern California into a mecca of those seeking to fulfill the American dream. In spite of the region's hedonistic

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section number 8 _____ Page 4 _____

Fullerton

First Methodist Episcopal Church

Name of property

Orange County, California

County and State

reputation, it became one of the most 'churched' areas in the nation."²³ Because the transcontinental railroad did not arrive in Fullerton until 1888, the town "did not reap the full benefits of the 1880s land boom" and was in sore need of new settlers and capital.²⁴ Both before and after Fullerton's incorporation in 1904, boosters heavily promoted the town's conservative, civilized, and religious lifestyle to attract needed new residents. This heavy promotion continued into the 1920s when Fullerton experienced a major economic boom, sparked in part by the oil being pumped in the hills to the north.

It was during the first phase of boosterism, when there was surge in the number of building permits, that the First Methodist Episcopal Church was designed and built. Like the construction of other early public and institutional buildings in Fullerton, the church represented the pioneers families' desire to put down roots and establish a successful and permanent municipality. These structures relied almost exclusively on architectural styles imported from other regions. The Methodist Church's traditional style was indicative of the trend by newcomers to build churches that resembled those they had left behind. The stately Methodist Church, situated in the central core of the new town, added an impressive note of permanency and New England environment to downtown Fullerton, which less than a decade before consisted only of a few ramshackle stores. Newcomers to the town would have felt comfortable and familiar with the building's architecture. The Gothic-styled church was also reflective of both the Huguenot and British background of A.B. (Albert Benjamin) Embree (1864-1942), the minister responsible for the construction of the 1909 church.²⁵ Although other Gothic Revival structures were built in the City's central core, including the Methodist congregation's first church (1893, razed), the 1909 church is the only surviving Gothic-styled structure from this early period, and remains a dramatic architectural focal point in the downtown area.

When constructed in 1909, the church was considered to be "the finest most modern edifice in the county." Local newspapers tracked the building through its planning and construction phases and published sketches and photographs of the church both before and after its construction. The local *Fullerton News Tribune*, the *Santa Ana Register*, and the *Los Angeles Times* devoted full- and half- page spreads to the church's November 1909 dedication.²⁶ This extensive publicity and the church's fine architecture and craftsmanship reflected the social, cultural, and economic aspirations of the community. The Methodist Church was also often featured on postcards and promotional literature mailed to the East. The building's stature in Fullerton and the north Orange County community was enhanced by the fact that everything associated with the church from the architect to the builder to the masonry came from more cosmopolitan Los Angeles. Early Fullerton buildings were usually designed by local builders or architects, such as Frank Benchley, and the use of a Los Angeles architect was unusual for the period. It wasn't until the 1920s that noted Los Angeles architectural firms, such as

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section number 8 _____ Page 5 _____

Fullerton

First Methodist Episcopal Church

Name of property

Orange County, California

County and State

Meyer and Holler, Inc. (Alician Court Theatre, 1925) and Morgan, Walls and Clements (Firestone Building, 1929) designed buildings in the City.

At the time of the church's construction, Fullerton architecture reflected the current fashions popular in the Midwest and East, serving as architectural guideposts for older migrants to the area. As the City began to expand, this borrowing of traditional styles began to concern Fullerton residents who preferred a style more appropriate to California and the West. In 1919, when all of Orange County had only a population of 61,000, Fullerton was preeminent as one of the first cities in California to adopt an architectural policy. Concerned with "indiscriminate building" and a lack of "architectural harmony" in the City, the Fullerton Board of Trade adopted a policy requiring "all public and semi-public buildings to follow the Spanish style."²⁷ Thereafter, a large number of buildings, including several surrounding the First Methodist Episcopal Church, were built in the Mission Revival or Spanish Colonial style. This dramatic shift in architectural styles is reflected in the Methodist churches themselves. The first two churches (1893 and 1909) were constructed in the Gothic Revival style; the third church (1923), next to the second church, appeared in the Mission Revival style.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section number 9 _____ Page 1 _____

Fullerton
First Methodist Episcopal Church
Name of property
Orange County, California
County and State

BIBLIOGRAPHIC NOTES

¹City of Fullerton Historical Building Survey: *Heritage Revisted*. 2nd ed. Fullerton: City of Fullerton, 1983, p. 14.

²Roger G. Kennedy. *American Churches*. Crossroad, NY: Crossroad Publishing Company, 1982, p. 238.

³F.R. Holcomb and Mrs. William Starbuck. "A History of the Methodist Episcopal Church of Fullerton, California from 1888-1937." Fullerton: n.p., 1938, p. 7. An unpublished paper; available in the Launer Room, Fullerton Public Library.

⁴Cecilia Rasmussen. "Brick Firm Cemented Lives, Communities." *Los Angeles Times* November 6, 1995, p. B3.

⁵Phylcia Bernstein. *The Church of Today: the History of Fullerton's Oldest Church*. Fullerton: Privately Printed, 1996, p. 24. This booklet provides the best in-depth history of the church building to date.

⁶"Church History." *Church of the Savior United Methodist Church*. <http://www.nci2000.net/cotsum/history.htm>. March 3, 2000.

⁷James Ewinger. "Church Members Focus on Rebirth; Heritage Recalled after Friday's Fire." *Plain Dealer* May 2, 1994, p. 1B.

⁸Fullerton has a second church, the Spanish Colonial Revival styled Christian Science Church (1920), now the Self-Realization Fellowship, at 142 E. Chapman Avenue that used the Akron Plan.

⁹"Church Dedicated! Methodists Open Their Beautiful House of Worship with Impressive Services." *Fullerton News Tribune* November 24, 1909, p. 1.

¹⁰H. Weber Wilson. *Great Glass in American Architecture: Decorative Windows and Doors Before 1920*. New York: Dutton, 1986, p. 103.

¹¹Jackie Brown. "City Church is Vacated After Earthquake Damage Found." *Fullerton Star-Progress* October 21, 1987, p. 5.

¹²Kirk Jackson. "They're Halfway Home: Concert's Proceeds Go Toward Repairing Church Damaged by Oct. 1 Earthquake." *Los Angeles Times* March 29, 1988, sec. 6, p. 9.

¹³Mary Owen. "Fullerton Church Badly Damaged in Whittier Quake Reopens." *Orange County Register* December 17, 1989, p. B3.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section number 9 _____ Page 2 _____

Fullerton
First Methodist Episcopal Church
Name of property
Orange County, California
County and State

¹⁴Kenneth E. Rowe, "'Redesigning Methodist Churches: Auditorium-Style Sanctuaries and Akron-Plan Sunday Schools in Romanesque Costume, 1875-1925," In *Connectionalism: Ecclesiology Mission and Identity* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1887), p. 128.

¹⁵Donald J. Schippers. "Walker and Eisen: Twenty Years of Los Angeles Architecture: 1920-1940." *Southern California Quarterly* vol. 46, no. 4 (December 1964), p. 373.

¹⁶"To Rush Work on Bible Home." *Los Angeles Times* April 6, 1913, Industrial Section, p. 1.

¹⁷"John Terrell Vawter." In *The City of San Diego and San Diego County, the Birthplace of California*. Ed. by Clarence Alan McGrew. Volume II. Chicago: American Historical Society, 1922, p. 420.

¹⁸Schippers, p. 374.

¹⁹"Famed L.A. Architect Albert R. Walker Dies [obituary]." *Los Angeles Times* September 18, 1958, sec. 3, p. 1.

²⁰David Gebhard and Robert Winter. *Architecture in Los Angeles: a Compleat Guide*. Salt Lake City, UT: Peregrine Smith Books, 1985. The later edition of this book, *Los Angeles: an Architectural Guide* (Salt Lake City, UT: Gibbs-Smith, 1994), contains additional buildings and information.

²¹"The Housing Authority of the City of Los Angeles Presents a Solution." *California Arts and Architecture* May 1943 (number 60), p. 56.

²²Paul Gleye. *The Architecture of Los Angeles*. Los Angeles: Rosebud Books, 1981, p. 206.

²³Marilyn J. Chait, *America's Religious Architecture: Sacred Places for Every Community*. New York: Wiley, 1997, p. 403.

²⁴Jann Young. *An Historical Geography of Fullerton, California through Incorporation in 1904: a Thesis Presented to the Faculty of California State University, Fullerton*. Fullerton: California State University, Fullerton, 1976, p. 60.

²⁵The Embrees are descendents of Huguenots who later moved to England. A.B. Embree's parents Ann and Ezra were strong abolitionists prior to the Civil War, and Ezra served as a station agent for the Underground Railroad. The Embree family moved to Riverside in 1883. Embree received a B.A. from the University of Southern California. Additional information on Embree and the Embree Family will be found in "The Genealogy and Biography of Albert Benjamin

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section number 9 _____ Page 3 _____

Fullerton

First Methodist Episcopal Church

Name of property

Orange County, California

County and State

Embree, Minister of the Methodist Episcopal Church, Fullerton, CA., 1909" on file in the church archives.

²⁶"Fullerton News." *Fullerton News Tribune* May 17, 1909, p. 5 and May 19, 1909, p. 5; "New Methodist Church." *Fullerton News Tribune* March 31, 1909, p. 1 (includes Walker's drawing of the church); "Church Dedicated!" *Fullerton News Tribune* November 24, 1909, p. 1 (includes photograph of church); "New First Methodist Church at Fullerton Dedicated Yesterday." *Santa Ana Daily Register* November 22, 1909, p. 2; "Fullerton Debt-Raiser Gets Results: Church is Dedicated by First Methodists." *Los Angeles Times* November 22, 1909, p. 19 (includes photographs of the church, Embree, and Building Committee members).

²⁷R.A. Marsden. "Choosing an Architecture for a Town." *California Southland* December 1919-January 1920, p. 7-8.

ADDITIONAL REFERENCES

Brown, Jackie. "Congregation Coming Home to Historic Church." *Fullerton Daily Star-Progress* May 9, 1989, p. 17.

"Fine Arts Building." *Architectural Forum* November 1927, p. 465-469.

Fisher, Michael. "Grants, Loans Help Save Fullerton Church From Wrecking Ball." *Orange County Register* September 29, 1988, Community Section, p. 1.

Ford, Andrea. "Churchgoers Keep Faith After Quake Shuts Old Building." *Los Angeles Times*, October 19, 1987, sec. 2, p. 1.

Kelly, Erin. "Weakened Church Might Not Have a Prayer." *Orange County Register* October 19, 1987, Metro Section, p. 1.

Lauber, Joseph. "European Versus American Color Windows." *Architectural Record* February 1912, p. 138-151.

"Oranges and Oil: a Fullerton History." Fullerton: Launer Room, Fullerton Public Library, n.d.

Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps, Fullerton, California. Pelham, NY: Sanborn Fire Map Company, 1931. On file in the Special Collections Section, California State University, Fullerton Library.

Zeibel, Bob. *Fullerton: a Pictorial History.* Virginia Beach, VA: Donning Company, 1994.

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section number 10 _____ Page 1 _____

Fullerton
First Methodist Episcopal Church
Name of property
Orange County, California
County and State

Verbal Boundary Description:

Lot 12, Hotel Block, Townsite of Fullerton Tract (Book 1, Page 100)

Boundary Justification:

The nominated property includes the entire city lot historically associated with the First Methodist Episcopal Church proper.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section number _____ Page _____

Fullerton

First Methodist Episcopal Church

Name of property

Orange County, California

County and State

PHOTOGRAPHS

First Methodist Episcopal Church

117 North Pomona Avenue

Fullerton, California 93832

Orange County

1910

Archives, Church of Religious Science of Fullerton

Exterior facing northeast

1 of 7

First Methodist Episcopal Church

117 North Pomona Avenue

Fullerton, California 91832

Orange County

ca. 1929-1931

Archives, Church of Religious Science of Fullerton

Exterior facing northeast

2 of 7

First Methodist Episcopal Church

117 North Pomona Avenue

Fullerton, California 92832

Orange County

1973

Archives, Church of Religious Science of Fullerton

Interior auditorium/sanctuary/nave

3 of 7

First Methodist Episcopal Church

117 North Pomona Avenue

Fullerton, California 92832

Orange County

1980

Archives, Church of Religious Science of Fullerton

Exterior facing northeast

4 of 7

First Methodist Episcopal Church

117 North Pomona Avenue

Fullerton, California 92832

Orange County

1989

Archives, Church of Religious Science of Fullerton

Exterior facing north

5 of 7

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section number _____ Page _____

Fullerton

First Methodist Episcopal Church

Name of property

Orange County, California

County and State

PHOTOGRAPHS (CONTINUED)

First Methodist Episcopal Church
117 North Pomona Avenue
Fullerton, California 92832
Orange County
Olin Mills
1989

Archives, Church of Religious Science of Fullerton
Interior auditorium/sanctuary, west stained glass window
6 of 7

First Methodist Episcopal Church
117 North Pomona Avenue
Fullerton, California 92832
Orange County
David Zenger
1993
Launer Room, Fullerton Public Library
Exterior facing east
7 of 7

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including the time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

