

OMB NO. 1024-0013  
EXP. 12/31/84

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*

Type all entries—complete applicable sections

For NPS use only  
received APR 10 1984  
date entered

## 1. Name

historic Nineteenth Century Churches of  
South Nashville Thematic Resources

and/or common N/A

## 2. Location

street & number See Inventory Forms N/A not for publication

city, town Nashville N/A vicinity of ~~Congressional district~~

state Tennessee code 047 county Davidson code 037

## 3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture <input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial <input type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational <input type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government <input type="checkbox"/> scientific
<input type="checkbox"/> Thematic	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial <input type="checkbox"/> transportation
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Group		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military <input type="checkbox"/> other:

## 4. Owner of Property

name Multiple Ownership - See Inventory Forms

street & number N/A

city, town Nashville N/A vicinity of state N/A

## 5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Davidson County Courthouse

street & number Public Square

city, town Nashville state Tennessee 37201

## 6. Representation in Existing Surveys

Metro Historical Commission  
title Survey of South Nashville Churches has this property been determined eligible? ☐ yes ☒ no

date October 1983 ☐ federal ☐ state ☐ county ☒ local

depository for survey records Metro Historical Commission

city, town Nashville state Tennessee 37203

## 7. Description

### Condition

☒ excellent  
☒ good  
☒ fair

☒ deteriorated  
☐ ruins  
☐ unexposed

### Check one

☐ unaltered  
☒ altered

### Check one

☒ original site  
☐ moved date \_\_\_\_\_

### Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

Church buildings in the area of Nashville known as South Nashville comprise this thematic group nomination. South Nashville, the city's first suburb, became incorporated as a separate town in 1850. Although annexed only four years later into Nashville, South Nashville retained a separate identity well into the twentieth century. Seventeen churches were built prior to 1934 in the area. Six of the ten remaining churches are included in this nomination. Three of these continue to be used as churches; one is serving as office and warehouse space; one is vacant; and rehabilitation work is in progress on one. Although three of the six buildings are no longer used as churches, these relate to the theme of the nomination because each is an example of ecclesiastical architecture built to serve South Nashville. The six buildings are: St. Paul's AME Church, built in the 1870s and altered in 1914 with a new facade (#1); Holy Trinity Church, a Gothic Revival-style building constructed in 1852 (#2, NR 1972); Elm Street Methodist Church, built in 1871 in the Italianate style (#3); Primitive Baptist Church, an 1850 Gothic Revival period building (#4); Lindsley Avenue Church of Christ, a Victorian Gothic-style building constructed in 1894 (#5); and St. Patrick's Catholic Church, built in 1890 in the Second Empire style (#6).

Architecturally, the churches are for the most part similar in neighborhood scale and proportion; each was built for an urban middle-class congregation in the South Nashville community. All were built within a fifty-year span from 1850 to 1894. Two were built in the 1850s, two in the 1870s, and two in the 1890s. (One of the 1870s churches, the St. Paul's AME Church, is built on a somewhat larger scale and was extensively altered in 1914.) Except for the stone Holy Trinity Church, the churches are of brick. Although similar in scale and construction materials, the churches were built for different denominations and are different from one another in degree of decoration and in architectural style.

The churches range from simple and plain to highly ornate. Their styles, or interpretations of styles, are relatively unique in Nashville. The Italianate-style Elm Street Methodist Church and the Second Empire-style St. Patrick's Catholic Church are the only ecclesiastical examples of those styles in Nashville. While the Holy Trinity and Primitive Baptist churches are both from the early Gothic Revival period, they are two of the three such examples in the city. They demonstrate variations of the early Gothic Revival style; Holy Trinity is more purely a Gothic Revival-style building and the Primitive Baptist is a plainer version. The Lindsley Avenue Church of Christ, a late Victorian Gothic-style building with a great deal of ornate architectural detailing, is unique in Nashville for its decorative exuberance on a church of its scale. St. Paul's AME Church appears to have been built originally in a style influenced by the Victorian Romanesque style, as evidenced by the remaining original round-arched windows on the church's side elevations. However, its new facade (1914) changed its architectural character completely with an unusual combination of Gothic, Romanesque, Neo-Classic, and early twentieth century commercial features which give the building a look all its own.

The churches included in this nomination were selected from those surveyed by Metropolitan Historical Commission of Nashville and Davidson County in the October 1983, survey of all buildings constructed as churches prior to 1934 in South Nashville. Survey

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boundaries were based on a description of the incorporated limits of South Nashville in the History of Nashville, Tennessee by H. W. Crew, published in 1898 and reprinted in 1970. Surveyors, staff members of the Metropolitan Historical Commission, were: John Compton, Shain Dennison, and David Paine. Historical research on Nashville, South Nashville, and churches of both areas was conducted by John Compton.

The surveyed buildings were photographed and recorded on the inventory forms used in this nomination. Of the seventeen church buildings recorded, six were selected for nomination under National Register criteria A and C for historic and/or architectural significance. The remaining buildings were not selected because each did not possess enough historical significance and/or architectural merit or integrity, in the context of South Nashville or Nashville, to meet National Register criteria for eligibility.

## 8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400–1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500–1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600–1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700–1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800–1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900–	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

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Specific dates	N/A	Builder/Architect	N/A
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### Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Nineteenth Century Churches of South Nashville Thematic Resources are nominated under National Register criterion A for significance in local history and criterion C for architectural significance. South Nashville developed as Nashville's first suburban area and was incorporated as a separate town for four years. Ten church buildings over fifty years old remain in the old South Nashville city limit. Six of these are included in this nomination. Individually considered, they are significant and as a group, they represent both the broad spectrum of religious life and the architectural character of a once-thriving residential and academic community.

South Nashville began developing as a suburb early in the nineteenth century. Situated on a bluff overlooking the Cumberland River and what was then the small waterfront town of Nashville, the area developed around the campus of the University of Nashville which began in 1785 as Davidson Academy. Henry Middleton Rutledge, a prominent attorney and a trustee of the University, was an early resident of the bluff; and the area became known as Rutledge Hill after him. The area was a center of academic activity. In addition to the University of Nashville, Vanderbilt University Medical School, George Peabody College, and Montgomery Bell Academy, a secondary school for boys, all began on Rutledge Hill during the nineteenth century.

South Nashville developed from the first as a comfortable residential area and remained so until well into the twentieth century. It was incorporated in 1850 with Isaac Paul as mayor and was consolidated into Nashville in 1854. Although no longer a separate town, South Nashville retained its separate identity based on its academic orientation until the 1920s when the last of its academic institutions moved away. The Vanderbilt University Medical School, which moved to Vanderbilt's west Nashville campus in 1925, was the last to go.

A long slow period of decline ensued and has left the area drastically changed. Today land use in the area is primarily commercial and light industrial. All but two of its academic buildings are gone, and most of its residences are gone or deteriorating. Of seventeen churches built in South Nashville before 1933, ten remain. Of these, six possess sufficient historical associations and/or architectural integrity to merit inclusion in this nomination. Although only three of these buildings are still used as churches, all six are representative of the religious life of the now-vanished South Nashville community. They also represent a vital part of the nineteenth century architectural character of the area among a rapidly dwindling number of nineteenth century buildings.

Although churches are not ordinarily eligible for inclusion in the National Register, those in this nomination are considered exceptions for two reasons. First, they are a part of the fabric of a now-vanished community. They are evidence of the existence of South Nashville as a residential area with an active religious life. Such evidence continues to dwindle as older buildings are razed and residential use in the area diminishes. Second, several of these buildings possess significance in the local context as an excellent and/or unique example of an architectural style. The survey results upon which this nomination was based are filed at the office of the Metropolitan Historical Commission and are available to public agencies for use in environmental review and to private organizations and individuals.

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

Carter, Cullen T., editor, History of Methodist Churches and Institutions in Middle Tennessee, 1787-1956. The Tennessee Conference Historical Society, The Parthenon Press, Nashville, Tennessee, 1956.

Crew, H. W. History of Nashville, Tennessee. (Nashville: Publishing House of the Methodist Episcopal Church South, 1890) pp. 453-505.

## 10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property see inventory forms

Quadrangle name Nashville West, Tennessee

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UTM References see inventory forms

A 

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Zone Easting Northing

B 

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Zone Easting Northing

C 

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D 

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E 

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F 

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G 

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H 

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Verbal boundary description and justification

see inventory forms

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state N/A code N/A county N/A code N/A

state N/A code N/A county N/A code N/A

## 11. Form Prepared By

name/title John Compton, Shain Dennison, and David Paine

organization Metro Historical Commission date November 1983

street & number Customs House, 701 Broadway telephone 615/259-5027

city or town Nashville state Tennessee 37203

## 12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

   national    state   X   local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

Deputy

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

*Herbert L. Hays*

title Executive Director, Tennessee Historical Commission

date 4/4/84

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I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

*See Continuation Sheet for listings*

date

Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

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Elm Street Methodist Church, Nashville, Tennessee, Records 1869-1971, 40 Vols., and 9 items. Microfilm Accession No. 684, Tennessee State Library and Archives, Nashville, Tennessee

Lindsley Avenue Church of Christ, Nashville, Tennessee, Records.

National Register Nomination, Holy Trinity Church, Nashville, Tennessee, prepared by Anatole Senkevitch, Jr., 8 July 1971.

St. Paul's AME Church, Nashville, Tennessee, Records.

St. Patrick's Catholic Church, Nashville, Tennessee, Records.

Stephens, Dr. J. Bunyan, Biography, Metropolitan Planning Commission Library, Nashville, Tennessee.

"Your Church in Nashville", Vol. 1, No. 2, November 1947, Tennessee Conference of the Methodist Church, Nashville, Tennessee 1947. (Original in Library of Methodist Publishing House, Nashville, Tennessee.)

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Multiple Resource Area  
Thematic Group

dnr-11

Name Nineteenth Century Churches of South Nashville Thematic Resources  
State Davidson County, TENNESSEE

Nomination/Type of Review

Date/Signature

1. St. Paul's AME Church

Substantive Review

Keeper

Return

5

Attest

2. Elm Street Methodist Church

Entered in the  
National Register

for Keeper

Delores Byers 5/15/84

Attest

3. Primitive Baptist Church

Entered in the  
National Register

for Keeper

Delores Byers 5/15/84

Attest

4. Lindsley Avenue Church of  
Christ

Entered in the  
National Register

for Keeper

Delores Byers 5/15/84

Attest

5. St. Patrick's Catholic Church  
and Rectory

Substantive Review

Keeper

Lawl Duhie 5/15/84

Attest

6. Holy Trinity Church  
(already listed on NR)

Keeper

Attest

7.

Keeper

Attest

8.

Keeper

Attest

9.

Keeper

Attest

10.

Keeper

Attest