

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

For NPS use only

received JUL 27 1980

date entered

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic Cool Spring Presbyterian Church

and/or common N/A

2. Location

street & number County Road 247

N/A not for publication

city, town Lewes vic vicinity of ~~Congressional district~~

state Delaware code 10 county Sussex code 005

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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s) | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private | <input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied | <input type="checkbox"/> commercial |
| <input type="checkbox"/> structure | <input type="checkbox"/> both | <input type="checkbox"/> work in progress | <input type="checkbox"/> educational |
| <input type="checkbox"/> site | Public Acquisition | Accessible | <input type="checkbox"/> entertainment |
| <input type="checkbox"/> object | <input type="checkbox"/> in process | <input type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> religious |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> being considered | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted | <input type="checkbox"/> scientific |
| | N/A | <input type="checkbox"/> no | <input type="checkbox"/> transportation |
| | | | <input type="checkbox"/> other: |

4. Owner of Property (information obtained 1/5/82 from Sussex Co. Tax Records)

name Trustees of Cool Spring Presbyterian Church

street & number c/o The Rev. Donald P. Boardman; Georgetown Presbyterian Church; 203 N. Bedford

city, town Georgetown N/A vicinity of state Delaware

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Sussex County Couthouse

street & number The Circle

city, town Georgetown state Delaware

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Del. Cultural Resource Survey-S-138 has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date 1980 federal state county local

depository for survey records Bureau of Archaeology & Historic Preservation

city, town Dover state Delaware

7. Description

| | | | |
|--|---------------------------------------|---|---|
| Condition | | Check one | Check one |
| <input type="checkbox"/> excellent | <input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated | <input type="checkbox"/> unaltered | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good | <input type="checkbox"/> ruins | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered | <input type="checkbox"/> moved date _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> fair | <input type="checkbox"/> unexposed | | |

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

Situated on County Road 247 near the junction of County Road 281, the Cool Spring Presbyterian Church is located in western Lewes and Rehoboth Hundred in a small rural community named as Cool Spring after the name of the branch running along the northwestern edge of the churchyard. The present frame structure was built in 1854 and stands on the site of two earlier church buildings which have served the congregation since it was established in 1726. The 4.75-acre churchyard was officially granted to the church by Governor Thomas Penn in 1737. Partially enclosed by an early-twentieth-century brick wall, the churchyard contains many graves dating from the earliest history of the congregation. The church and setting are substantially unaltered and provide a clear illustration of the rural Greek Revival style in Sussex County.

The style is reflected more in the building's classic lines and symmetry, its corner pilasters, and the portico effect of the full return on its gable end, than through emphasis on more elaborate Greek Revival design elements. The church is a single-story frame structure, three bays in length, and of extreme symmetry and austerity. It rests on a brick foundation and has a wood-shingled gable roof with a simple molded box cornice and frieze. One of the more distinctive features of the structure is the full return on the gable ends; this feature, although typical of the Greek Revival style, was only rarely seen in Sussex County. The exterior walls are now covered with machine-sawn wood shingles with simple corner pilasters.

The facade of the building is symmetrical, with six-over-six lights, double-hung sash windows at the gallery level on either side of the entrance. These windows have simple board trim. The facade entrance has wooden double doors with two recessed panels in each, a three-light transom, and heavy molded cornice on simple pilasters. The entrance is shaded by a simple pedimented portico; it has a wood-shingled gabled roof with a molded cornice and frieze, supported by two Doric columns and two flat Doric-style pilasters. The brick stoop and sidewalk are more recent additions.

The east and west sides of the church are penetrated by twelve-over-twelve light double-hung sash windows, three on each side. These large windows have simple trim and black wooden shutters with three recessed panels in each. A simple brick chimney on the exterior of the east side is a later addition.

The north gable end has a small shed-roofed section which accommodates the apse, although that feature has an arched top on the interior. This section was slightly altered in 1950 with the addition of a circular stained-glass window.

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Continuation sheet

Item number

7

Page

1

The interior of the church also reflects the extreme symmetry characteristic of the Greek Revival style as used in rural Sussex County. The vestibule is approximately four-and-a-half feet deep and runs across the entire width of the structure. At each end of this space is a semi-circular enclosed staircase with a beaded board and batten door, turned rails, and chamfered newel post. These staircases lead to one of the few remaining church galleries in Sussex County. The gallery is divided into two Sunday school classrooms by a partition running from the outer church wall to the gallery rail. It is otherwise relatively unaltered.

These hardwood pews are plain with simple trim and are built in an unusual, almost semi-circular pattern. Eight rows of pews are divided by an aisle running up the center of the church; there are side aisles as well. Two choir rows are located on either side of the central apse, surrounded by panelled railings. The recessed apse has a rounded arched ceiling; it is surrounded by simple fluted pilasters with bull's-eye trim and with a wooden keystone at the top. The circular stained-glass window was added in 1950. The pulpit is in the center of the building about four feet in front of the apse. It has fluted pilasters and raised panel trim. Architrave trim surrounds the windows and doors on the interior. The interior walls are plastered and are presently painted pale green, with molded chair rail trim about four feet from the floor. Three iron kerosene wall lamps are located on each side wall, and a four-lamp chandelier hangs in the center. All these fixtures are original to the building, but have been converted to electricity.

Boundary Justification

The boundaries of this nomination enclose the churchyard and cemetery around the church building and total 4.75 acres, according to a 1972 Sussex County field survey for tax assessment purposes. This area is precisely the same as that originally granted to the elders of Cool Spring Church by Governor Thomas Penn in 1726, though it was originally surveyed out at 4.5 acres. Because of their historic origin, the boundaries themselves add to the historic significance of the overall nomination.

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 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/ humanitarian |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1700–1799 | <input type="checkbox"/> art | <input type="checkbox"/> engineering | <input type="checkbox"/> music | <input type="checkbox"/> theater |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800–1899 | <input type="checkbox"/> commerce | <input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement | <input type="checkbox"/> philosophy | <input type="checkbox"/> transportation |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1900– | <input type="checkbox"/> communications | <input type="checkbox"/> industry | <input type="checkbox"/> politics/government | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other (specify) Local History |
| Specific dates | 1854 | Builder/Architect | Unknown | |

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

Cool Spring Presbyterian Church is architecturally and historically significant as a classic example of the mid-nineteenth-century country churches of southern Delaware. The symmetry and severity of Greek Revival architecture, when shorn of its ornamental friezes and with classical porticos trimmed back, seems to have appealed particularly to the conservative Methodists and Presbyterians of the rural southern section of the state; they continued to build variations of the style up to the turn of the century. Cool Spring Church is particularly illustrative because it survives virtually unaltered, and with an unusual interior gallery. The building and its grounds have substantial historical significance as well. The cemetery surrounding the present building was granted, in its present dimensions, by Governor Thomas Penn upon the petition of the Reverend James Martin, in 1737. As noted in Martin's petition, an earlier church was already standing at the time. The cemetery is the only surviving relic of this eighteenth-century community. It contains the graves of several Revolutionary War veterans, a member of the Continental Congress, a mid-nineteenth-century member of the U. S. Congress (Elisha D. Cullen), and other notable Sussex countians. These qualities of historical association and architectural integrity render the property significant in terms of National Register, criteria B and C. It is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past; and it embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type. The primary significance of the property is derived from these qualities; it is nominated on the basis of them, although it is owned and used by a religious institution.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Conrad, Henry C. "History of Cool Spring Presbyterian Church." (A pamphlet in which is reproduced an address delivered in the church on Oct. 10, 1926). 1926.

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property 4.75

Quadrangle name Fairmount

Quadrangle scale 7.5 minute

UMT References

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Verbal boundary description and justification The boundaries follow the exact lines of the parcel of land on which the nominated structure is situated. It is illustrated on Sussex Co. Tax Map 3-34-4, parcel No. 33. This parcel has remained unchanged since originally granted by Gov. Thos. Penn in 1726. No metes and bounds description of the

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

state NA code county code

state NA code county code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Richard B. Carter, Phyllis A. Hastings

organization Sussex County Historical Preservation
Planner's Office

date December, 1981

street & number Old Courthouse, South Bedford St.

telephone (302) 856-7701, Ext. 361

city or town Georgetown

state Delaware

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national state 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.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

Daniel R. Griffith

title Deputy/ State Historic Preservation Officer

date 7/15/82

For NPS use only

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

Thomas M. Dwyer

date 8.31.82

Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

Emma Jane Saxe

date 8-27-82

Chief of Registration

Cool Spring Presbyterian
Church
Lewes & Rehoboth Hundred, Sussex County
— Delaware —
Not drawn to scale
R.B. Garter

