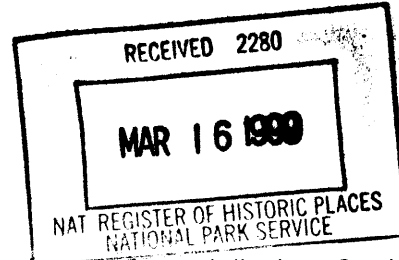


United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service



447

# National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determination for individual properties and districts. See instruction 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 an 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 Taylor Memorial Chapel

other names/site number Bemis Taylor Chapel at La Foret, 5EP1297

### 2. Location

street & number 6145 Shoup Road [N/A] not for publication

city or town Colorado Springs [ X ] vicinity

state Colorado code CO county El Paso code 041 zip code 80908

### 3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, 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 [ ]. )

Stephanie Cortez State Historic Preservation Office March 10, 1999  
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

State Historic Preservation Office, Colorado Historical Society  
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 certifying official/Title Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal agency and bureau

### 4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the 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  
See continuation sheet [ ].

Edson W. Beall Date 4-15-99  
Signature of the Keeper

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Taylor Memorial Chapel  
Name of Property

El Paso County/Colorado  
County/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 count previously listed resources.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	buildings
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	sites
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	structures
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	objects
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	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 Function**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

RELIGION/religious facility  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Current Functions**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

RELIGION/religious facility  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

Pueblo  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Materials**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation stucco  
walls stucco  
\_\_\_\_\_  
roof concrete  
other wood  
\_\_\_\_\_

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

**Name of Property**

**County/State**

**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 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 Bibliographic References**

**Bibliography**

(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  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Periods of Significance**

1929  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Significant Dates**

1929  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Significant Person(s)**

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above.)

N/A  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Cultural Affiliation**

N/A  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Architect/Builder**

Meem, John Gaw  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Primary location of additional data:**

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State Agency
- Federal Agency
- Local Government
- University
- Other:

**Name of repository:**

Univ. of New Mexico, Albuquerque, NM  
Zimmerman Library, Meem Archives

Taylor Memorial Chapel

Name of Property

10. Geographical Data

El Paso County/Colorado

County/State

Acreeage of Property less than one acre

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1. 13 524410 4317330  
Zone Easting Northing

3. Zone Easting Northing

2. Zone Easting Northing

4. Zone Easting Northing

[ ] 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 By

name/title The Rev. Wilbur Green, Chair, Chapel Restoration Committee & Robert Redwine, P.E.

organization La Foret Conference and Retreat Center, Inc. (Edited by S.Doggett) date 11/4/98

street & number 3575 Moose Run Drive telephone 719-532-1303

city or town Colorado Springs state CO zip code 80918-5628

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 SHPO or FPO.)

name La Foret Conference and Retreat Center, Inc.

street & number 6145 Shoup Road telephone 719-495-2743

city or town Colorado Springs state CO zip code 80908

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 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 Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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Continuation Sheet

TAYLOR MEMORIAL CHAPEL  
Section number 7 Page 1 El Paso County, Colorado

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DESCRIPTION

The Taylor Memorial Chapel is located northeast of Colorado Springs in the Black Forest area at an elevation of approximately 7250 feet. It is sited within a Ponderosa pine forest, and there is a dry ravine at the foot of the western edge of its courtyard. The ravine is slowly eroding, and a short wall has been built at the top of the ravine to stop visitors from getting too close to the edge. Walkways on the south side of the chapel have recently been paved with concrete, and lead to a rustic wood gate located in an archway at the western end of the courtyard wall. This walled courtyard, extending to the west from the chapel, is an integral part of the building's design. Landscaping within the courtyard includes a groundcover of pine needles and natural grasses, along with mature evergreen trees.

The chapel enjoys unimpeded views of Pikes Peak which rises above the valley beyond. It was built in 1929 as a memorial by prominent Colorado Springs resident Alice Bemis Taylor for her husband, Frederick Morgan Pike Taylor, and has remained essentially unchanged since its construction. The chapel now functions as part of a 490 acre retreat known as La Foret that is owned and operated by the La Foret Conference and Retreat Center, Inc.

The Pueblo style building was designed by noted southwestern architect John Gaw Meem. It was constructed by George O. Teats of Rocky Ford, Colorado. The parapeted walls are of stuccoed clay tile block. The flat roof, supported with vigas, is covered with metal over a layer of concrete. The "batter of the walls is exaggerated, and the profiles of the parapets self-consciously irregular" (Bunting, 1983). There are some exterior stucco cracks at the top of the walls. The log vigas are clad with sheet metal caps to prevent water damage, but the caps are in need of repair and replacement. Exposed exterior wood is rotting, including window lintels, edge beam at the balcony, and trim at the north transept. However, in general, the building is in good condition and exhibits a high degree of integrity in terms of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association.

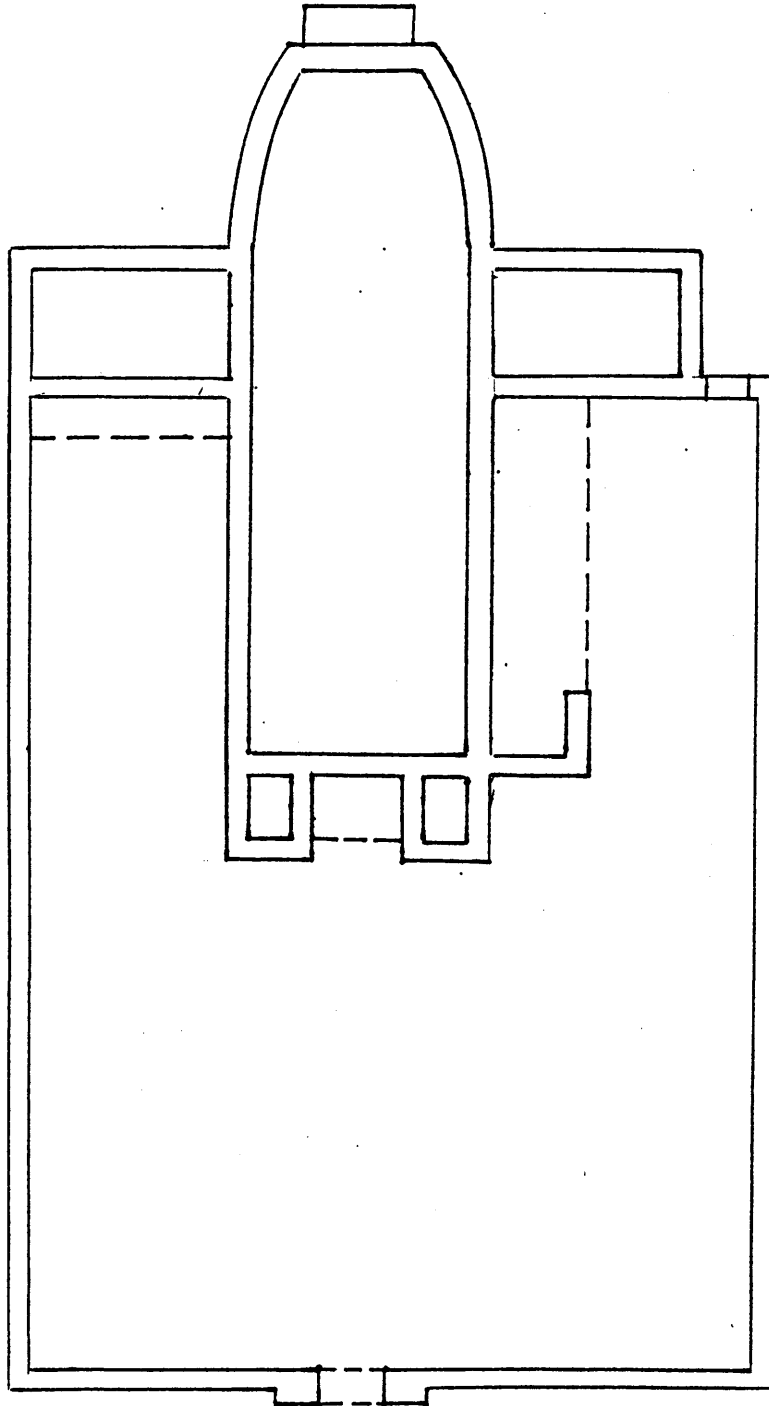
Primarily two-stories in height, the building is cruciform in plan; the altar is in the east, facing the west. The afternoon sun comes directly through the transverse clerestory windows to illuminate the altar with maximum effect, and the morning sun does not interfere with early mass. The one-story north transept has a sheltered porch (portales) with a brick floor to the east, while the one-story south transept has an attached side porch adjacent to the south wall, also with a brick floor.

Windows are flat headed, with hewn wood lintels. On the west facade there are wooden pintle-hinged carved double doors, a balcony with carved balustrade, and a stepped espadana (bell-cote). The balcony, supported by vigas, is recessed between thick buttresses that are spanned by heavily carved timbers. The chapel's bell comes from an old mission church in New Mexico. Frescos of deer flank the balcony's doorway.

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TAYLOR MEMORIAL CHAPEL  
Section number 7 Page 2 El Paso County, Colorado



PLAN  
1" = 20'-0"

United States Department of the Interior  
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Continuation Sheet

TAYLOR MEMORIAL CHAPEL  
Section number 7 Page 3 El Paso County, Colorado

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**Interior**

Ceilings are flat. Aspen saplings, laid in a herringbone pattern, appear above the hewn log vigas. Flooring is flagstone throughout. The severe lines created by the massive log vigas are eased by the ornate carved corbels, and the stark white of the walls is offset by hand-carved woodwork.

Rough hewn wood carvings include a 20 foot high reredos, depicting seven saints; the altar; and the 16 foot high archways into the transepts, all still painted in the original softened hues of Mexican primary colors. Original carved wood furnishings include the lectern, pulpit, candlesticks, candelabra, chancel railings, and 23 individual chairs with kneeling platforms on their backs.

A second story balcony, accessed by a hand-carved spiral staircase houses additional seating and provides access to the exterior balcony with its views of the courtyard and Pikes Peak. Interior furnishings and detailing, including the reredos, were carved by artist Eugenie Shonnard.

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TAYLOR MEMORIAL CHAPEL  
El Paso County, Colorado

Section number 8 Page 4

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**SIGNIFICANCE**

The 1929 Taylor Memorial Chapel is significant under Criterion C for Architecture as a good local example of the Pueblo style as executed by master architect John Gaw Meem (1894-1983). Among the characteristics associated with the style reflected in the building are: battered and stuccoed walls, irregular parapets, flat roof with vigas, and straight headed windows. The chapel is a rare example of the Pueblo style in a Colorado ecclesiastical building located north of the San Luis Valley, and it represents a phase in Meem's development of the "Santa Fe Style".

Meem was born in Pelatas, Brazil, in 1894, the son of missionary parents. Following graduation from Virginia Military Institute with a degree in engineering, he worked in New York City for his uncle, also an engineer. After a stint in the military during World War I, he turned to banking as a career. Taking advantage of his bilingual capacity, his employer sent him to Rio de Janeiro. He contracted tuberculosis and found it necessary to return to the United States for treatment. Quite by chance, he chose Santa Fe, New Mexico where he settled in for a long period of recuperation.

Dr. Anne Taylor, in her book, *Southwestern Ornamentation & Design: The Architecture of John Gaw Meem*, describes the scene like this:

When Meem arrived in Santa Fe, there had already been two architectural movements in progress, one of which served to change and the other to preserve the traditional adobe architecture of the city. One was the "Anglo-ization" and erosion of the traditional architecture and distinctive character of Santa Fe. The other movement consisted of a group of people who worked to conserve the traditional art of the Southwest and did much to support the revival of its architecture. Among this group were Dr. Edgar Lee Hewett (a founder of what is known now as the School of American Research), Sylvanus Morley, Jesse Nusbaum (archaeologist and builder), Frank Springer, Paul Walter, Kenneth and Kate Chapman (connoisseurs of Indian art), Dan Kelly, Carlos Vierra (a photographer and artist), I.H. Rapp (architect), Ralph Twitchell, and Dr. Frank Mera who ran Sunmount Sanitorium, where John Gaw Meem spent his first years in New Mexico.

Issac Hamilton Rapp, whom Carl D. Sheppard credits as the "Creator of the Santa Fe Style", had already designed the Museum of Fine Arts in Santa Fe, the La Fonda Hotel, and Sunmount Sanitorium when Meem became affiliated with the Rapp firm. From this early influence, Meem launched his architectural career, ultimately establishing his own firm and earning the reputation of what Bainbridge Bunting has dubbed "the master of what has... come to be known as the Santa Fe Style".

The Meem firm enjoyed a long and prolific history, spanning a period of 35 years (1924-1959) and dealing with some 650 projects. While many architectural firms failed in the 1930s, Meem's prospered. Part of his success had to do with the wealthy patronage he enjoyed. One such patron was Alice Bemis



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TAYLOR MEMORIAL CHAPEL  
El Paso County, Colorado

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Taylor. The Bemis and Taylor families' philanthropic interests played an important role in the development of education, art, and social services in the Colorado Springs area. In 1928, while on a trip to New Mexico to buy artwork and view ceremonial Indian dances, Eugenie Shonnard, a Santa Fe artist of considerable importance, introduced Taylor to Meem. In his book, *John Gaw Meem: Southwestern Architect*, Bainbridge Bunting writes:

The Taylor chapel, Meem's first essay in the traditional church form, was commissioned in 1928 by Mrs. Alice B. Taylor. As in his early Spanish-Pueblo houses, the forms here tend to be more picturesque, the batter of the walls is exaggerated, and the profiles of the parapets self-consciously irregular. The woodwork is also elaborately carved, much more so than any that survives in a mission church. This is especially true of two interior doors leading to the "transepts." These and the reredos were carved by Meem's friend Eugenie Shonnard....

The Taylor Memorial Chapel was Meem's first effort at the traditional church form and his first commissioned work in Colorado. Similar in design, but much grander in scale is his Alumni Memorial Chapel at the University of New Mexico in Albuquerque. Meem worked primarily in New Mexico, but in Colorado, between 1930 and 1941 came commissions from the Fountain Valley School for the design of dormitories, faculty apartments, the headmaster's residence, plus several alterations and enlargements of already existing buildings, all reflecting the Pueblo style. In 1932, he designed the James McLane house and in 1938 the E. N. Sacks house, both private residences in Colorado Springs.

The commission to design the Taylor Memorial Chapel at La Foret was the first step toward a significant relationship between one of the southwest's most original architects and one of Colorado Springs' most influential families, a relationship that was heightened in 1933 when Meem took as his bride Faith Bemis, Alice Taylor's niece. Faith Bemis Meem, a trained architect, collaborated with Meem on several major projects. Meem was a founder of the Committee for the Preservation and Restoration of New Mexican Mission Churches, to which Taylor was a heavy contributor. He was again employed by Taylor to design the 1936 Colorado Springs Fine Arts Center (5EP622). Listed in the National Register in 1986, the center reflects a blend of the Pueblo style with Modernism and earned Meem a Silver Medal at the Fifth Pan American Congress of Architecture in 1940. (Bunting)

The Taylor Memorial Chapel, located at La Foret the Taylor summer retreat, reflects the values embodied by Alice Bemis Taylor. The overall simplicity of the Pueblo style chapel is in keeping with her New England puritanical beliefs. It demonstrates her deep-flowing piety coupled with a passion for southwestern art. The building is a reinterpretation of the family chapel, once prevalent in the Southwest, where Taylor's piety and passion are juxtaposed in memory of her husband, Frederick Morgan Pike Taylor, whose love for the west and the arts equaled hers. Complementing the setting, with its unparalleled view of Pike's Peak, the hands of a talented master architect created a building, with sculptural qualities that may itself be considered a work of art.

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TAYLOR MEMORIAL CHAPEL  
El Paso County, Colorado

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**Historical Background**

The Taylors are considered to be one of Colorado Springs' most important founding families. Because Alice Taylor's support for local causes was typically given without fanfare, she has not received recognition in proportion to the support that she gave the Colorado Springs community. (Sprague) Her father, Judson Moss Bemis was a trustee of Colorado College and built Bemis Hall on that campus. Alice Taylor was the first woman to serve as a trustee of the college. In 1897, her mother, Alice Cogswell Bemis, was one of the founders of the Day Nursery. Its present Tudor style facility, a gift of Taylor in memory of her mother, at the corner of Rio Grande and Tejon Streets continues to fulfill the purpose for which it was constructed in 1923. Taylor also funded the maternity ward at Glockner Hospital and founded the Bemis-Taylor Child Guidance Clinic.

The Bemis and Taylor families interacted with other important Springs families including the Palmers, Jacksons, Howberts and Penroses. Mrs. Taylor was a patron of the fine arts with a special interest in art from the southwestern part of the United States. She made many trips to New Mexico to find pieces for her collection. Thus, it came as no surprise that when she wanted to build a shrine to her recently deceased husband, its architect and form would be southwestern.

The Taylor Memorial Chapel was completed in 1929 at La Foret, the family's approximately 500 acre summer retreat in the Black Forest. The chapel housed Mr. Taylor's ashes and the cremains of both Taylors upon her death on June 6, 1942. The cremains resided at the chapel until September 28, 1945, when they were moved to Evergreen Cemetery. Other buildings and structures at La Foret, such as summer home and guest house known as Ponderosa Lodge are not included in this nomination.

Alice Bemis Taylor was a very private woman whose support and beneficence often occurred behind the scenes. Taylor is perhaps best remembered as a generous benefactor to Colorado College and the arts. The Colorado Springs Fine Arts Center was a gift to the community. Though originally proposed as a place to house her immense collection of southwestern art, it became a showplace for all the arts.

In 1944, two years after the death of Taylor, the Bemis Taylor Foundation deeded La Foret to the Colorado Congregational Conference, forerunner of the Rocky Mountain Conference of the United Church of Christ. This was in keeping with Bemis family connections with Congregationalism that can be traced to colonial New England. Since the date of its transfer, the property has served as a conference and retreat center, a place for rest and renewal.

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TAYLOR MEMORIAL CHAPEL  
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TAYLOR MEMORIAL CHAPEL  
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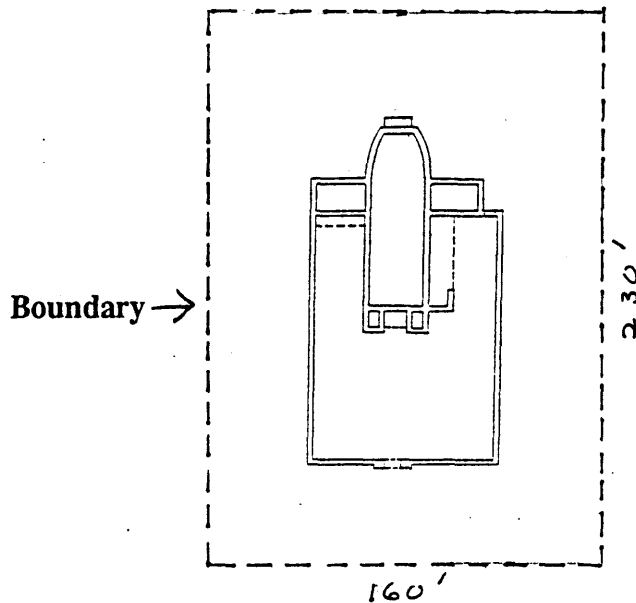
GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

Verbal Boundary Description

The boundary, as shown below, includes the footprint of the chapel and its courtyard, plus 40 feet around the perimeter, forming an approximately 160' x 230' rectangle.

Boundary Justification

The boundary includes the parcel of land historically associated with the chapel that retains the highest degree of integrity.



$1/2'' = 40'$



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Continuation Sheet

TAYLOR MEMORIAL CHAPEL  
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Section number Additional Materials Page 10

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**PHOTOGRAPH LOG**

The following information pertains to photographs:

Name of Property: Taylor Memorial Chapel  
Location: El Paso County, Colorado  
Photographer: Bob Redwine  
Date of Photographs: October 19, 1998  
Negatives: Redwine-Reizian Inc., 1515 Arapahoe St.,  
Suite 1300, Denver, CO 80202

<u>Photo No.</u>	<u>Information</u>
1	South side, view north
2	North and west sides, view southeast
3	East and north sides, view southwest
4	South porch and walkways, view east
5	West facade, view east
6	Interior from balcony, view west
7	Altar and reredos, view west
8	Balcony, view east

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USGS MAP  
Black Forest, Colorado

