

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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RECEIVED JUL 17 1975

DATE ENTERED SEP 9 1975

## NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*  
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

### 1 NAME

HISTORIC

Provo Tabernacle

AND/OR COMMON

Utah and Provo Stake Tabernacle

### 2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

50 South University Avenue

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

Provo

VICINITY OF

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

STATE

Utah

CODE

1560

COUNTY

Utah

CODE

049

### 3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE	
<input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL	<input type="checkbox"/> PARK
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input 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"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER:

### 4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints

STREET & NUMBER

50 E. North Temple

CITY, TOWN

Salt Lake City

VICINITY OF

STATE

Utah

### 5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,  
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

County Recorder's Office

STREET & NUMBER

University and Center Streets

CITY, TOWN

Provo

STATE

Utah

### 6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

Utah Historic Sites Survey

DATE

1970

FEDERAL  STATE  COUNTY  LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR  
SURVEY RECORDS

Utah State Historical Society

CITY, TOWN

Salt Lake City

STATE

Utah

# 7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		DATE _____

## DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The present Provo Tabernacle was built due south of the older tabernacle constructed 1856 to 1867, which continued to stand until 1919. The old tabernacle could seat 1100 to 1300 people, but in 1882 was deemed too small and a decision was made to build a tabernacle that would house three times the number of people as did the older edifice. At a quarterly conference held in September, 1882, a building committee was chosen and soon after, work on the tabernacle began. The following description of the building was made in 1914, four years before its renovation: "Located in Provo, Utah and erected between 1883 and 1896, it is made of brick and stone, the superstructure being of brick. The building measures 128 by 75 feet and 40 feet to the square. The seating capacity is three thousand. It cost between eighty and ninety thousand dollars. There is one auditorium and a vestry. William H. Polsum was the architect. Building supervisors were Elder H. H. Cluff, and later, Elder Reed Smoot. The building was so far completed that the general conference of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints was held in it in April, 1887."

Another description, made in 1947, also tells of the building's interior: "The Provo Tabernacle, located on University Avenue between Center Street and First South Street, was erected at a cost of \$100,000. It is built of red brick and set in wide lawns covering most of the city block. The building has octagon towers at each of its four corners. A central tower that arose above the lintel to the height of 140 feet was later removed, being too heavy for the roof. Cathedral windows are used throughout the building, and beautiful ivy vines cover the walls. The interior is finished with painted, stained and varnished sugar pine wood. The stand was designed by Thomas Allman. When first finished the benches were made with straight backs and the seats were covered with red velvet--later these were replaced by curved back, spring-filled, leather upholstered benches. A green plush curtain separated the choir from top pulpit and speakers. When the green curtain was removed, the space was filled with a strip of fir lumber, beautifully designed, carved and engraved by Thomas M. Allman, which has been admired by many church leaders, diplomats, and thousands of Saints and friends. The balcony extends around the entire assembly hall and the building is well lighted, heated and ventilated. The pipe organ was imported by D. O. Calder and was one of the finest to be bought at that time. The Tabernacle has been in service for sixty years, being used for church gatherings and other special occasions. It has a seating capacity of 3000 people."

"At the time it was completed, Utah Stake boundary lines included all of Utah County. All joint meetings and special church assemblies, including the semi-annual conference in October, 1886, were held in the Tabernacle. At the present time Provo and Utah Stakes use the Tabernacle jointly, arranging quarterly conferences at different times."

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CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 7 PAGE one

Another report states that the indebtedness upon the building was liquidated by the "50¢ Fund" which called upon men in the stake to contribute 50¢ a month toward the building, and women 25¢.

The building was partly condemned in 1918 because the roof was under great stress from the large tower which sat at the crossing of the ridges. The building was renovated at this time, but the tower was permitted to stay until 1949 when the building was again condemned. At that time the building was about to be destroyed when Provo architect Fred Markham stepped in just in time to save the structure. He designed a method for removing the central tower and rebuilding the roof and in this manner the tabernacle was saved. This work was done in 1950. Stake meetings continue to be held frequently in the edifice.

The Provo tabernacle is a stately structure. It is slightly cruciform in plan and is a split-level with two full stories altogether. At each of the four major corners is a large, octagonal tower. At the east end they also serve as vestries. The towers have a combination of Gothic and segmented bays, each having corbeled arches and keystones. The towers have molded cornices and segmented, conical steeples. The four major gabled ends are extensively detailed. Features include a corbeled dentil run with tiny Gothic arches, a curious terminal piece at the top of the gable, a swooping steep roof pitch, indented Gothic arches, large Gothic windows with central mullions and several other decorative elements which harmoniously combine to give an overall effect of dignity and grandeur. In the English tradition ivy grows on the walls. The city fathers themselves once admitted that "the design was adapted with the view of preserving among us a reminiscence of a Presbyterian meetinghouse, that the children of the saints might see in what kind of edifice their fathers worshipped before they heard the gospel." With this in mind we can better appreciate some of the unusual decorative elements of the building. The central tower which was taken away was wider and had a taller steeple than the existing towers. It sat on a square pedestal. From the ground level to the top of the tower the height was 140 feet.

The interior assembly hall is a spectacular space. The original pews, horseshoe gallery, decorative woodworking and beautiful organ loft with exposed pipes remain as a tribute to the craftsmanship of our pioneer ancestors. Below the chapel are four rooms for the accomodation of the Stake Presidency, High Council and auxiliary Stake boards. On the top floor is a circular prayer room with dressing rooms attached. There is also a baptismal font with dressing rooms in the basement. The treatment of the interior is tastefully lavish and inspiring. There is an especially impressive mood in the morning when the sunlight floods into the huge chapel through the many stained glass windows.

# 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/HUMANITARIAN
<input 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 type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES 1883-96

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

William H. Folsom

## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Provo Tabernacle is significant for both religious and architectural reasons. It is still the place where great masses of Mormons come to hold their conferences. It is also the major symbol of pioneer accomplishment in Utah Valley. The Tabernacle is used by the Utah Valley Symphony and other groups promoting cultural, political and religious betterment, causes which were greatly espoused by the pioneers in Utah Valley.

Since the destruction of the old tabernacle in 1919 and the later razing of the old court house and others of Provo's historic buildings, the Tabernacle stands out as the most important architectural landmark in the valley. Both its monumentality and its architectural refinement continue to hold the observer somewhat awestruck. The building is useful, beautiful and it should continue to serve the community for countless years.

