

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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

FOR NPS USE ONLY	
RECEIVED	
DATE ENTERED	

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

1 NAME

HISTORIC: Pittsboro Presbyterian Church

AND/OR COMMON

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER N. East St. (U.S. 64) 100 yds. E. of Court House

CITY, TOWN

Pittsboro

—NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

4th

STATE

North Carolina

— VICINITY OF

CODE

37

COUNTY

Chatham

CODE

37

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE
<input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input 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 type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY
			<input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
			<input type="checkbox"/> PARK
			<input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
			<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
			<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
			<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER:

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME Mrs. W. S. Whitaker

STREET & NUMBER

Clerk of the Session c/o Pittsboro Presbyterian Church Box 713

CITY, TOWN

Pittsboro

— VICINITY OF

North Carolina

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC. Chatham County Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

Pittsboro

STATE

North Carolina

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

DATE

FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

CITY, TOWN

STATE

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The original interior arrangement of the church is not known. The double entrance doors give access to a small vestibule within the tower projection. A door to the left leads to a tiny, narrow room now used as a nursery, while on the right, an open string, curving stairway awkwardly leads to the small balcony. Directly opposite the entrance, two swinging doors lead to the sanctuary. To either side of the central aisle are eight rows of pews, believed to be the original seating. Plain benches of wide, flush board, these simple pews derive their aesthetic quality from the subtle curve of their end panels. At the northeast corner, there is an enclosed, L-shaped, stepped platform for the choir and ministry. The pulpit is placed upon it, directly in front of the pentagonal, vaulted apse.

A simple but nicely executed dado three feet high surrounds the west, north, and east sides of the sanctuary. Above a seven inch baseboard, vertical, molded members are applied to flush board paneling, which is framed at the top and bottom by a molded surround. The top molding continues around the lower window frames (which descend into the dado level by approximately six inches) and forms a pleasing, decorative effect. The step platform, which was probably not an original feature, is enclosed by a dado-like railing with paneling similar to that of the walls. Above the doorway at the south end of the sanctuary, the overlooking balcony's low railing is paneled similarly.

When the educational wing was added in 1953, the north window on the west wall was lengthened to form a doorway from the sanctuary. The upper four sash still remain in place, and the door was cut to the same width as the former window. It leads into a large, square room that serves as the vestry and a classroom. Upon entering, the low ceiling height is in marked contrast to the high ceiling of the sanctuary. From this main room, doorways lead to two other classrooms, two toilets, and a classroom/kitchen. All building materials and finishes, such as linoleum floors, acoustic tile ceilings, and drywalls, are characteristic of the mid-twentieth century.

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institutions for bells to be recast into cannon. The Presbyterian church's bell was supposedly ordered from London in the 1850s.⁶ Despite its considerable value, it was ordered unanimously in May, 1862, that "the Pastor of this church be requested to offer our bell to the government through their agent Capt. Booth of the Fayetteville Arsenal."⁷ Fortunately for the church, the offered bell was never taken.

On April 1, 1875, the session met in the Methodist church, the reason being, as stated in the minutes, that "our own church had been rendered unfit for service by a recent storm."⁸ No details were given regarding the extent of the damages. However, a review of nearby Raleigh's newspapers offered more information on an apparent tornado that occurred on Saturday, March 20, 1875. Many area barns had been blown down, shops and a warehouse were destroyed in Hillsborough and Durham, and the Chatham County courthouse had lost its roof. Most interesting of all, an article on storm damage in Pittsboro related that "the steeples of the Presbyterian and Baptist churches were blown off and the roofs of the churches crushed in."⁹ Considerable rebuilding therefore must have been undertaken, which the present appearance of the Presbyterian church attests. Many of its architectural elements reflect a strong late nineteenth century influence, rather than a mid-century origin. When the new roof was put on and a new steeple erected, efforts to modernize the church according to contemporary currents of style no doubt were carried out. In the few years following the storm, the congregation often held services on the first floor of the Masonic Hall next door,¹⁰ logically indicating extensive work on the church.

During the 1920s the 1870s steeple was taken down due to its structural weaknesses. The replacement, of poorly matched brick, was a tower with a large, pointed arch opening on each side and sparse castellations on top. The derivation of the design of this tower is not known, though it is remotely possible that it may have been based on the original 1851 steeple. In the summer of 1971, the 1920s tower was taken down and replaced by a fourth steeple, a near copy of the one built after the 1875 storm. The Victorian color scheme of the exterior, with its sharp, dark and light trim accents, was also restored.

The only major addition to the church occurred in 1953, over a century after the building was finished, when an L-shaped one-story wing was annexed to the northwest corner. Largely built to provide for an educational facility, the addition houses a vestry, kitchen, and toilets in addition to classrooms.

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Barber, Wade. "History of the Presbyterian Church of Pittsboro." A four page typescript. Chatham County Records. Chatham County Courthouse. Pittsboro, North Carolina.

Subgroup: Deeds.

Minute Book of the Presbyterian Church of Pittsboro. Volume I. 1848-1922. August 12, 1848. This book is in the possession of Wade Barber, Esquire of Pittsboro, whose family has retained it since the 1920s.

"Pittsboro." Raleigh Daily Sentinel. March 24, 1875.

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY less than 1 acre

UTM REFERENCES

A

1	7
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6	6	4	9	8	0
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3	9	5	4	3	7	0
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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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VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE Description and Significance prepared by Mary Ellen Gadski, Survey Consultant

ORGANIZATION

DATE

Division of Archives and History

STREET & NUMBER

TELEPHONE

109 East Jones Street

733-4783

CITY OR TOWN

STATE

Raleigh

North Carolina 27611

12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL

STATE

LOCAL X

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

TITLE State Historic Preservation Officer

DATE September 8, 1977

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

ATTEST:

DATE

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

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A	1 7	6 6 4 9 8 0	3 9 5 4 3 7 0	B			
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
C				D			

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STREET & NUMBER

TELEPHONE

109 East Jones Street

733-4763

CITY OR TOWN

STATE

Raleigh

North Carolina 27611

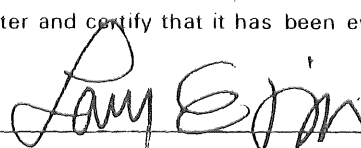
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DATE

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

ATTEST:

DATE

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

