

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in *Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms* (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "X" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

1. Name of Property

historic name St. Paul's Reformed Church

other names/site number _____

2. Location

street & number SE corner, junction of SR 1151 and SR 1005

Not for publication

city, town Startown

Vicinity

state North Carolina code NC

county Catawba

code 035

zip code 28658

3. Classification

Ownership of Property

private

public-local

public-State

public-Federal

Category of Property

building(s)

district

site

structure

object

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing

Noncontributing

1

buildings

sites

structures

objects

1

0 Total

Name of related multiple property listing:

Historic & Architectural Resources of
Catawba County, N.C.

Number of contributing resources previously

listed in the National Register 0

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, 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. See continuation sheet.

William S. Fair
Signature of certifying official

4-19-90
Date

State or Federal agency and bureau _____

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet.

Signature of commenting or other official _____

Date _____

State or Federal agency and bureau _____

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this 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): _____

Signature of the Keeper _____

Date of Action _____

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Religion: religious structure

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Religion: religious structure

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(enter categories from instructions)

Gothic

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation brick
 walls weatherboard
 roof metal
 other wood
 glass

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

St. Paul's Reformed Church, the most architecturally significant rural frame church remaining from the late nineteenth-early twentieth century period in Catawba County, is located at the junction of SR 1105 and SR 1151 in Startown, not far southwest of Newton in central Catawba County. The small church is situated on what would be a rather starkly landscaped triangular lot, were it not for the softening effect of the shrubbery which enframes the church and the tall fir tree located near the entrance. The small church has had very few changes made to its interior and no changes to its exterior throughout its history, thus unquestionably retaining its architectural integrity.

Built in 1903-1904, St. Paul's Reformed Church is a fine example of the Gothic Revival style translated into the vernacular. The overall exterior appearance suggests a cruciform plan, but a closer inspection reveals this not to be the case. Rather, the church has an asymmetrical plan with central rectangular block, offset front wing, shallow rear apse and corner entrance tower. The broad expanse of weatherboard siding serves as a backdrop for the simple detailing of the church, which includes lancet windows edged in narrow panes of colored glass, a colored glass roundel in each of the three broad gables, a decorative king and collar post design in the gable peaks, and the recessed corner entrance/bell tower which serves as the exterior focal point. The tower features a double leaf paneled door with lancet transom and collar-braced "hood", a plain weatherboarded second stage, a steep bell-cast skirt beneath the open belfry, and a bell-cast pyramidal roof culminating the whole. The pyramidal roof and the belfry skirt are sheathed with the same patterned metal shingles as found on the main roof of the church.

The corner entrance of St. Paul's leads to a small vestibule from which other doors open to the sanctuary and to a side room that was used both as a men's classroom and as an extension of the sanctuary when needed. In the sanctuary, radiating aisles and original wood pews are oriented toward the Gothic pulpit and shallow apse in the center of the long wall. The sanctuary ceiling rises to a truncated gable. Separating the sanctuary

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from the classroom are two very large paneled doors which can be raised and lowered by a pulley system. The walls and ceilings in St. Paul's Reformed Church were originally covered with beaded boards. While this treatment remains visible in the men's classroom, it has been disguised by acoustical paneling in the sanctuary.

Bibliography, continued...

Peeler, Banks J. A Story of the Southern Synod of the Evangelical and Reformed Church. Philadelphia: Southern Synod, 1963.

Preslar, Charles J., Jr., ed. A History of Catawba County. Salisbury: Catawba County Historical Association, Inc., 1954.

"St. Paul's United Church of Christ." Undated one page type script. Survey and Planning Branch, Division of Archives and History, Raleigh.

Two Hundredth Anniversary 1759-1959. Newton: St. Paul's United Church of Christ, 1959.

8. Statement of Significance

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

nationally statewide locally

Applicable National Register Criteria A B C D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions) A B C D E F G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)
 Architecture

Period of Significance
 1903-04

Significant Dates
 1903-04

Cultural Affiliation
 N/A

Significant Person
 N/A

Architect/Builder
 Unknown

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

Summary

St. Paul's Reformed Church, a 1903-1904 frame Gothic Revival style building located in the Startown community of central Catawba County, is an important resource in the Property Type "Religious Buildings and Sites in Catawba County: Churches," and meets the registration requirements for that property type under Criterion C, in the area of Architecture, as the most architecturally significant rural frame church of the turn-of-the-century period. It also meets Criteria Consideration A, in that it is a religious property which derives its primary significance from its architectural distinction. St. Paul's Reformed Church is related to the Historic Context "Religion in Catawba County: 1747-1941," as a typical representative of the religious heritage of the German settlers who arrived in the western piedmont in the mid-nineteenth century. St. Paul's move from a rural location to Startown in 1903 reflected the demographic shifts to more urbanized areas in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

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Historical Background

The Reformed faith came to Catawba County with the German settlers who migrated to North Carolina in the mid-eighteenth century. Traveling along the "Great Wagon Road" from Pennsylvania, these settlers arrived without pastors and were thus dependent upon the services of itinerant ministers.¹ One such missionary, the Reverend James Martin, helped form a Lutheran and German Reformed congregation in 1759 from which eventually emerged St. Paul's Lutheran and Reformed Church.² For over 130 years, the dual faith congregation shared a common house of worship, first in a log structure and then in a two story weatherboarded building that served the members for about a century.³

The economic changes created by the Industrial Revolution of the late nineteenth century had a profound effect upon St. Paul's Church. In 1890 Catawba County's population was considered 100 percent rural despite the county seat of Newton and a few villages that would later become cities or towns. By 1900 about 12 percent of the population had congregated in emerging urban areas.⁴ Located about one and a half miles from Newton, St. Paul's felt the effects of the demographic shifts. With another Reformed congregation in the county seat, St. Paul's was drawing most of its members from the emerging community of Startown and its surrounding countryside. The Reformed congregation voted to move to Startown because of its more central location.⁵

Land arrangements were negotiated and work began on a new church in October, 1903. The first service was held in the newly completed structure on March 17, 1904.⁶ As both Newton and Startown grew and prospered, the membership at St. Paul's Reformed church increased. About 1930 a wooden "hut" (no longer standing) was constructed for social and recreational use; a new parsonage was built in 1947; and in 1955 a house was purchased for additional church school rooms.⁷ By 1958, the fifty-four year old structure in Startown was no longer large enough to meet the growing needs of the congregation. Land was acquired north of the building then in use, but not until January 5, 1975 could the congregation begin worship in its new church.⁸

Perhaps the most significant individual associated with the historic church at Startown was the Reverend Roy E. Leinbach, Jr. (1907-), who served as a Catawba County minister for thirty-nine years, twenty-five at St. Paul's. Leinbach, a native of Pennsylvania, became deeply involved in community activities

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almost from the day of his arrival in 1940. In addition to demanding ministerial duties, Reverend Leinbach was a businessman; the prime mover in organizing the Newton Recreation Department; responsible for reestablishing Easter sunrise services in the community; instrumental in reactivating the Boy and Girl Scout programs in Newton; chairman of many charitable organizations, including a long tenure as chairman of the local branch of the Red Cross; a director of the Catawba County Club; and head of civilian defense work in Newton during World War II.⁹

Among the most interesting highlights of his long career was the Reverend Roy Leinbach's brief foray into the world of politics. He was a Democrat but was, nevertheless, urged by a prominent Catawba County group to enter the state legislative race of 1950 as a Republican. He agreed to run but refused to engage in "politicking," promotion and speechmaking. He spent a total of ten cents in the campaigns, but election for two consecutive terms to the State House of Representatives attested to the widespread popularity of the minister.¹⁰ That popularity was largely responsible for the growth of the St. Paul's congregation in the mid to late 1950s that forced it out of its original home in Startown.

When the Reverend Roy Leinbach retired in 1979, the congregation of St. Paul's was well ensconced in its new brick complex, but the members have not neglected the structure that served them for nearly three quarters of a century. Though no longer in active use, the old church is being maintained in excellent condition.

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FOOTNOTES

¹Banks J. Peeler, A Story of the Southern Synod of the Evangelical and Reformed Church (Philadelphia: Southern Synod, 1963), 405-406; Charles J. Preslar, Jr. (ed.), A History of Catawba County (Salisbury: Catawba County Historical Association, Inc., 1954), 88, hereinafter cited as Preslar, Catawba County; and Hugh Talmage Lefler and Albert Ray Newsome, The History of a Southern State: North Carolina (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1973), 84-85, 141, hereinafter cited as Lefler and Newsome, North Carolina.

²Two Hundredth Anniversary 1759-1959 (Newton: St. Paul's United Church of Christ, 1959), 2, hereinafter as 200th Anniversary.

³Preslar, Catawba County, 94; 200th Anniversary, 2; and "St. Paul's United Church of Christ" (Newton: undated typescript), one page, hereinafter cited as "St. Paul's."

⁴John L. Cheney, Jr. (ed.), North Carolina Government 1584-1974 (Raleigh: Department of the Secretary of State, 1975), 1086, hereinafter cited as Cheney, N.C. Government.

⁵"St. Paul's"; and Jacob C. Leonard, The Southern Synod of the Evangelical and Reformed Church (Lexington, 1940), 296.

⁶Catawba County Deed Books, Office of the Register of Deeds, Catawba County Courthouse, Newton, Deed Book 76, p. 268, and Book 93, p. 17; and 200th Anniversary, 4.

⁷"St. Paul's." Both the parsonage and the house mentioned here are located on separate lots from St. Paul's Reformed Church. The cemetery associated with this church is located at St. Paul's Lutheran Church (NR CT7), where this congregation met before moving to the present location.

⁸200th Anniversary, 4; and "St. Paul's."

⁹Observer-News-Enterprise (Newton), April 13, 1979.

¹⁰Observer-News-Enterprise, April 13, 1979; and Cheney, N.C. Government, 524, 526.

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The following pertains to all photographs:

- 1) St. Paul's Reformed Church
 - 2) Startown vicinity, North Carolina
 - 3) Randall Page
 - 4) March 1982
 - 5) North Carolina Division of Archives and History, Raleigh, NC
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- A. 6) Church exterior, southeast
 - B. 6) Church exterior, east
 - C. 6) Church exterior, west
 - D. 6) Church entrance detail
 - E. 6) Church interior, apse

NOTE: All photos used in this nomination were taken in 1982. The resource has been thoroughly field checked by Barbara Kooiman in 1989 and has been determined to be unchanged from its appearance and condition portrayed in these photographs.

