

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 for individual properties and districts. See instructions 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 First Reformed Church

other names/site number First Reformed United Church of Christ

2. Location

street & number 22 E. Center St. N/A not for publication

city or town Lexington N/A vicinity

state North Carolina code NC county Davidson code 057 Zip code 27292

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.)

Jeffrey Crow SHPO 3/3/00
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

State of 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:)

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property (Check as many boxes as apply)

Category of Property (Check only one box)

Number of Resources within Property (Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

- private, public-local, public-State, public-Federal

- building(s), district, site, structure, object

Table with 2 columns: Contributing, Noncontributing. Rows for buildings, sites, structures, objects, Total.

Name of related multiple property listing (Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

N/A

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

RELIGION/religious facility

RELIGION/religious facility

7. Description

Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions)

Materials (Enter categories from instructions)

Late Gothic Revival

foundation BRICK

walls BRICK

STONE

roof ASPHALT

other CERAMIC TILE

GLASS

Narrative Description

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

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.)

- Criteria A, B, C, D with checkboxes and descriptions.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

Architecture

Religion

Period of Significance

1927-1943

Significant Dates

1927-1928

1939

1943

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

Leonard, Jacob C.

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Hunter, Herbert B. (architect)

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- Criteria A-G with checkboxes and descriptions.

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographical 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):

- Documentation checkboxes: preliminary determination, previously listed, landmark, survey, engineering record.

Primary location of additional data:

- Location checkboxes: State Historic Preservation Office, Other State agency, Federal agency, Local government, University, Other.

Name of repository:

First Reformed Church
Name of Property

Davidson Co., NC
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property Less than 1

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1	1 7	5 6 7 5 6 0	3 9 6 4 4 3 0
	Zone	Easting	Northing
2			

3			
	Zone	Easting	Northing
4			

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 Laura A. W. Phillips, Architectural Historian

organization N/A date July, 1999

street & number 637 N. Spring St. telephone 336/727-1968

City or town Winston-Salem state NC Zip code 27101

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 First Reformed United Church of Christ (Congregation through Board of Trustees)

street & number 104 E. Center St. telephone 336/248-2617

City or town Lexington state NC Zip code 27292

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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First Reformed Church
Davidson County, North Carolina

DESCRIPTION

Summary and Setting

Located at the northwest corner of E. Center and N. Salisbury streets (22 E. Center Street) in Lexington, North Carolina, First Reformed Church is a modernized Gothic Revival building erected in 1927-1928 according to the design of High Point architect Herbert B. Hunter. It stands one block east of the old Davidson County Courthouse (NR) and Lexington's main intersection and is separated by Marble Alley and non-contributing properties from the Uptown Lexington Historic District (NR), a tightly-knit area of commercial and public buildings. Set back about thirty feet from E. Center Street, the church occupies nearly all of its less-than-one-acre lot. Small lawns across the front (south) and east elevations, a paved parking area at the rear, and a narrow alley along the west side make up the difference. The church stands several feet above street grade and is separated from the south and east sidewalks by a brick retaining wall. Across Salisbury Street stand the church offices and church school which were erected less than fifty years ago to replace an earlier Christian Education building. These structures are not included in the nomination. First Reformed Church maintains a high degree of historic integrity in its original location and setting; well-preserved design, materials, and workmanship; and historical feeling and association.

Exterior

Erected with a steel structural system, the church displays an exterior of tapestry brick in bronze, brown, red, and copper tones accented with stone detailing. The retaining wall separating the church yard from the sidewalk also uses tapestry brick. The facade of the church rises to a height of fifty-six feet and is flanked on the right (east) by a sixty-foot tower and on the left (west) by a smaller tower of forty-five feet. Midway between the two towers, the pointed-arched portal features a pair of massive oak doors trimmed with decorative ironwork strap hinges and escutcheons with ring door pulls. Above the doors, the tympanum is designed with a mosaic of black, gold, green, and red—a spare, abstracted echo of medieval sculptural tympanums. The whole is framed by a stone splayed arch. On either side of the portal are Gothic-designed copper wall lanterns. The side entrance on N. Salisbury Street is a smaller, simpler version of the main entrance; its tympanum contains lancet-arched colored windows and a surrounding splayed arch of brick.

Three features in particular distinguish the facade of First Reformed Church. The first—the broad, massive proportions—serves as the backdrop for the other two. Secondly, above the main entrance and

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corresponding to the interior balcony height, a stone and stained glass rose or wheel window measures ten feet in diameter. Its blue, gold, and red glass provides colorful light to the interior. This round window is repeated—on a smaller, simpler scale—at the rear of the church. The facade's third distinguishing feature is the white stone banding that provides a sharp contrast to the tapestry brick of the walls. The banding begins near the bottom of the rose window and continues upward across the entire facade, except for the brick pilasters of the towers, to the gable peak.

The side elevations are visually rhythmic. The lower level consists of narrow, rectangular, stained-glass windows divided into bays by brick buttresses. The upper, clerestory level is set back from the lower level and features pairs of narrow, lancet-arched, stained glass windows that are taller than their first-story counterparts. The windows, made by the George Hardy Payne Studios of Patterson, New Jersey, are geometric, rather than figurative in design and contain seven or eight different colors.

The rear of the church is quite plain, except for a rose window and flanking buttresses. Here, the upper level, which houses the chancel with its choir loft and organ, is set back on either side from the clerestory level of the nave. Surrounding the entire building is a slightly projecting water table capped by a stone band of molded profile.

Interior

While the exterior of First Reformed Church is bold in design and somewhat severe in its simplicity, the interior projects a more traditional, academic interpretation of the Gothic Revival. Here the plan, materials, and details combine in a powerful ecclesiastical design that is remarkably well preserved. The main, front entrance of the church enters a marble-floored vestibule in which Gothic lanterns hang from a vaulted ceiling. At either end of the vestibule, a stair with an ironwork balustrade and marble treads leads to the balcony. In the balcony, rows of over two hundred folding wooden seats, similar to theater seating, feature ironwork ends of Gothic design. Decorative wood paneling forms a skirt across the front the balcony overlooking the nave.

In the nave, rows of white-oak pews decorated with Gothic motifs on the end panels provide seating for more than five hundred worshippers. The pews are divided by a marble-floored center aisle. On either side of the sanctuary, a Gothic arcade with limestone columns and arches separates the pews from narrow, cloister-like side aisles which, like the center aisle, are floored with marble tiles. Above the arcades, paired clerestory windows fill the interior with shafts of colored light. The stuccoed walls of the nave rise to a dramatic oak-trussed ceiling, from which iron and amber-glass Gothic lanterns are suspended.

The north end of the church provides the visual focal point for worship. Set on the main, marble

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floor in front of the pews are the oak communion table, flanking chairs, baptismal font, and flower stands. The pulpit is centered on a raised platform behind the communion table. An oak screen rises behind the pulpit platform to separate it from the higher level of the organ and choir loft. Behind the choir loft rise the organ pipes, which surround the rose window of the rear wall. The whole of the chancel is framed by a tall arch which defines the chancel's width. All the chancel furniture, as well as the pews, balcony seating, and other church furniture, is detailed with Gothic ornamentation and was designed and installed by the Charlotte firm of J. E. and E. H. Reilley, representatives of the American Seating Company.

Doors at the north end of the side aisles lead to various auxiliary rooms flanking the chancel. On the west side is the former minister's study with its simple Gothic chandelier and stairs leading to a door that provides direct access to the pulpit platform. Behind this are several closets and a short passage leading to an outside, rear door. Behind and beneath the choir loft and organ is the choir practice room, accessed at both west and east ends. At the northeast corner of the church are two restrooms and steps leading to the marble-floored side vestibule with its Salisbury Street entrance. As elsewhere in the church, a Gothic lantern hangs from the vestibule ceiling to light the space. At the southwest corner of the vestibule, a stair leads to the choir loft. Doors in all the north-end rooms are heavy, eight-panel oak doors. (The above description is based on an account printed at the time of the church dedication in the April 5, 1928 issue of *The Dispatch* [Lexington], and on on-site architectural documentation recorded by the author in December, 1998.)

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First Reformed Church
Davidson County, North Carolina

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Summary

First Reformed Church is the most architecturally ambitious church built in Davidson County in the 1920s. Designed by High Point architect Herbert B. Hunter, it is a monumental Gothic Revival brick building erected in the center of Lexington in 1927-1928. The exterior of this remarkably well-preserved church is boldly simple, while the interior is more traditional and academic. The design, materials, and detailing of both exterior and interior combine to form a powerful ecclesiastical design. Because of its architectural significance not only as an excellent example of the Gothic Revival style and the grandest church of the 1920s built in Davidson County but also as one of the finest ecclesiastical buildings of any period in Lexington, First Reformed Church fulfills Criterion C for listing in the National Register.

In addition, First Reformed Church stands today as the best physical reminder of the important role of the Reverend Jacob Calvin Leonard (1867-1943) in the denominational development of the Reformed Church in Davidson County, an area of strong Germanic heritage. Leonard established First Reformed Church and served as its pastor for its first thirty-eight years, at the same time organizing and serving as pastor of other Reformed churches in the county. Leonard's denominational work went well beyond the boundaries of Davidson County. From 1923 through 1926 he held his denomination's highest elected position, that of president of the General Synod of the Reformed Church in the United States. Even after his retirement as pastor of First Reformed Church in 1939, Leonard remained actively involved with both religious and secular endeavors. In addition to his work with the church, Leonard was an educator who, for various periods during his career, taught school, served on the Lexington School Board, and served as a trustee of Catawba College. He was also a published historian, with two of his best-known books being the *Centennial History of Davidson County*—still widely used as an important local history resource—and *The Southern Synod of the Evangelical and Reformed Church*, a book that continues to be an important ecclesiastical reference. Of the several buildings associated with J. C. Leonard, First Reformed Church is, by far, the one most strongly tied to his productive years. It is, in fact, the jewel in the crown of his considerable accomplishments. As such, First Reformed Church satisfies National Register Criterion B for its association with Jacob Calvin Leonard in the area of religious significance.

As a religious property, First Reformed Church meets Criterion Consideration A because it derives its primary significance from its architectural distinction and historical importance associated with the productive life of Jacob Calvin Leonard. The period of significance for First Reformed Church covers the years from 1927, when construction of the church began, to 1943, the year of J. C. Leonard's death.

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First Reformed Church
Davidson County, North Carolina

Historical Background and Religion Context

The stories of the First Reformed Church in Lexington and of the Reverend Jacob C. Leonard are inextricably linked. Jacob Calvin Leonard (1867-1943) was a religious leader, an educator, and a published historian. Although his contributions to early-twentieth-century Lexington and Davidson County were many, his highest calling was as the moving spirit behind the development of the Reformed Church in Davidson County and the surrounding area (*History of North Carolina*, 234).

In the territory now covered by Davidson County, there were more German settlers from about 1740 to 1775 than any other nationality. One consequence of this pattern was that Reformed and Lutheran churches had a strong start in the county and remain today one of the significant religious denominations in the area. One of the early German settlers was Valentine Leonard, who came to North Carolina in 1746. He was an elder in the mother church in the area, the ca. 1754 Pilgrim Reformed Church, and in his honor it was often called Leonard's Church. Jacob Calvin Leonard, who was born on February 13, 1867, was a fifth generation descendant of this pioneer (*Centennial History*, 486).

Jacob Leonard was educated at the public school in Pilgrim until he was fifteen, when he attended Lexington Academy. At age sixteen, he obtained a first-grade teaching certificate and taught at Burkhart's schoolhouse near his home. In 1884 he attended Catawba High School in Newton. While there, he taught for several months at Brick schoolhouse in Lincoln County. In 1885 he entered Catawba College (established in 1851 by the Reformed Church) as a freshman, graduating in 1889 as valedictorian of his class. Subsequently he attended Ursinus Theological Seminary in Philadelphia, graduating with a Bachelor of Divinity degree. In 1906 Catawba College conferred upon him the honorary degree of Doctor of Divinity in recognition of his work in homiletical and theological studies and historical research (*History of North Carolina*, 234; *Centennial History*, 486).

Shortly after graduating from Catawba College in 1889, Jacob Leonard was ordained to the ministry. From then until 1897 he served as pastor of the Upper Davidson Charge, which consisted of Pilgrim (Leonard's) Church, Bethany Church, Sowers Church, and Hebron Church. In 1891 to 1892 he organized Calvary Church at Moffit's Grove and oversaw construction of a church there; in 1894 to 1895 he organized and built Heidelberg Church in Thomasville. In 1891 Leonard remodeled Pilgrim Church, and in 1893 he did the same for Beulah Church. During these early years of his ministry, Jacob Leonard also maintained his ties with education. He fostered the building of Arnold and Pilgrim academies, taught at the Pilgrim public school for two terms, and served in 1893 to 1894 as principal of Pilgrim Academy (*History of North Carolina*, 234; *Centennial History*, 489).

In 1897, Leonard resigned his Upper Davidson Charge to become field representative for Catawba College, for which he traveled widely and raised large sums of money. During 1899 and 1900 he served as professor of English and History at the college. In 1900 he resigned from Catawba College

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First Reformed Church
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to accept the call of the Board of Missions of the Reformed Church to begin the work of the church in Lexington and High Point (*History of North Carolina*, 234; *Centennial History*, 489).

Leonard's approach to mission work was perhaps a little less conventional than most. His plan was to build a church first and then to organize a congregation. Accordingly, on July 20, 1900, J. C. Leonard purchased a lot at the northwest corner of Center and Salisbury streets in Lexington from Victor and Edna C. Humphreys for \$850 (Deed Book 53, p. 14). On October 2nd, he deeded the property to the Board of Missions of the Reformed Church in the United States for \$1,000. The purpose of this deed was to provide Leonard with funds for the construction of the church. When the congregation had been organized, the church had been erected and turned over to elected trustees of the congregation, and the congregation had paid the Board of Missions \$1,000 plus three percent per annum (by a deadline of December 31, 1906), then the Board of Missions of the national church would deed the property permanently to the church in Lexington (Deed Book 52, pp. 127-128). In fact, the Lexington church repaid its debt on January 5, 1904, well ahead of schedule (Deed Book 54, p. 329). With the \$1,000 from the national church, \$400 from the North Carolina Classis (the governing body of the Reformed Church in North Carolina), and additional contributions from interested local people in hand, J. C. Leonard laid the first brick of Lexington's First Reformed Church on October 4th. By the following January the building had been completed and at least partially furnished at a total cost of \$3,600. It was dedicated on February 17, 1901. The first services were held on January 20, 1901. By the end of the day, a congregation consisting of twenty-two people had been established, and a consistory of elders and deacons elected. The Sunday School was organized the following Sunday with fifty-five people (*Fiftieth Anniversary*).

The First Reformed Church of Lexington prospered. In 1902 the first parsonage was built. By 1907 the congregation had outgrown its worship space, so the church was enlarged. In 1910 the congregation notified the Board of Missions that it was ready to be self-sufficient. In 1912, construction began on a separate Sunday School building located across Salisbury Street from the church. For years, First Reformed held the distinction of being the only church in Lexington with separate buildings for its sanctuary and Sunday School. (*Fiftieth Anniversary*; *The Dispatch*, April 5, 1928).

Meanwhile, during Jacob Leonard's tenure as pastor of First Reformed Church, his missionary zeal and his charge from the national church's Board of Missions compelled him to start other Reformed churches in the area. In the spring of 1901 he built and established the First Reformed Church of High Point, and in 1904 he built and organized the Second Reformed Church of Lexington. In addition to serving as pastor of First Reformed Church, Lexington, Leonard served as pastor of the High Point church until 1903 and as pastor of Second Reformed Church, Lexington, for eighteen years. He also served on the committees that started the First Reformed Church of Salisbury in 1896 and the First Reformed Church of Greensboro in 1903 (*Fiftieth Anniversary*; *History of North Carolina*, 234;

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First Reformed Church
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Centennial History, 489; *Southern Synod*, 206).

Although First Reformed's original church had been enlarged in 1907, by 1922 the growing congregation realized that a new sanctuary would be necessary soon. Well before plans had been drawn or a building committee had been established, the congregation began systematically to set aside funds in anticipation of the need for a new building. When that time came in early 1927, the congregation decided that the new building should be erected on the site then occupied by both the church and the parsonage. The church established a building committee that consisted of J. T. Hedrick, chairman, Walter E. Conrad, Griff W. Smith, D. Lee Brinkley, and Holland E. Shoaf. Prominent High Point architect Herbert B. Hunter was selected to design the new church; Griff W. Smith, one of Lexington's leading contractors and a member of the building committee, was awarded the contract for its construction (*The Dispatch*, April 5, 1928).

Work on the building was steady up through Spring of 1928. Completed and equipped, the new sanctuary cost nearly \$100,000. The front page of the April 5th edition of *The Dispatch* proclaimed that Easter Sunday (April 8th) would mark the formal opening and dedication of "Lexington's most beautiful church building." Dr. Paul S. Leinbach of Philadelphia, editor of the *Reformed Church Messenger*, the official general church paper of the Reformed Church in the United States, preached the dedicatory sermon. As a tribute to their mother church and to Dr. Leonard, Second Reformed Church in Lexington waived its eleven o'clock service so that its congregation could attend the dedication of First Reformed Church's new sanctuary (*The Dispatch*, April 5, 1928).

By 1930 the congregation of First Reformed Church had grown to a confirmed membership of almost six hundred people, with a Sunday School enrollment of more than seven hundred. During the late twenties and early thirties, attendance at Sunday morning services often exceeded seven hundred. This level of activity continued into the 1930s, when the number of congregants reached a plateau (*Fiftieth Anniversary*).

After a fruitful ministry to First Reformed Church for its first thirty-eight years, J. C. Leonard retired as pastor on January 31, 1939. Having established the church with only twenty-two members, he left it with a confirmed membership of 733. In retirement, Leonard maintained an active involvement with First Reformed Church and continued a range of other activities, both religious and secular.

In addition to the accomplishments of his life already discussed, there were an astonishing number of others. The statistics of his ministerial life include 1,585 baptisms, a total of 2,344 received into the church, 398 marriages, 1,035 funerals, 6,852 sermons, and countless lectures and addresses. In 1930 he was appointed chaplain of the Junior Order United American Mechanics National Orphans Home (known locally as the Junior Order Home) located in Lexington and pastor of the non-denominational Junior Order Home Church. When he organized the church in 1930, there were twenty-one members composed of children of the home; seven years later, membership stood at 220. Leonard attended every annual

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First Reformed Church
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meeting of the Classis of North Carolina in his ministerial life of fifty years, and was Stated Clerk of the Classis for forty-eight years. In 1920 he was elected a member of the General Synod's Board of Home Missions, serving until 1932. Between 1923 and 1926 he held the highest office in his denomination when he served as president of the General Synod of the Reformed Church in the United States. For forty-two years Leonard was a trustee of Catawba College, for six years he was a trustee of Claremont College, and for twelve years he served as a member of the Lexington School Board. Leonard was the author of several books, including *Centennial History of Davidson County North Carolina*, *The Southern Synod of the Evangelical and Reformed Church*, *History of Catawba College*, and, with Dr. J. C. Clapp, *Historic Sketch of the Classis of North Carolina*. He also wrote numerous booklets and articles. On April 15, 1943, after a prolific career and a lifetime of service to his church and community, Jacob Calvin Leonard died (*Fiftieth Anniversary; Southern Synod*, xvi-xvii, 206; *Heritage*, 356).

Despite First Reformed Church's great loss at the death of Dr. Leonard, it continued on, both in ministry and in stewardship of its fine sanctuary. In 1940 the roof, windows, and large areas of the sanctuary walls were repaired, and the entire building was painted inside and out. In 1942, a sixteen-bell carillon was given to the church by Mrs. J. Tilden Hedrick in memory of her husband. In 1949 repairs and improvements were begun in preparation for the church's fiftieth anniversary. Two oil-burning furnaces were installed in an excavated chamber beneath the pastor's study in 1949, and in 1950 roof, window, and wall repairs were undertaken. Today, the church proudly prepares for its centennial.

Architecture Context

The front page of the April 5, 1928, issue of Lexington's newspaper, *The Dispatch*, proclaimed in reference to First Reformed Church, "Easter Sunday morning will mark the formal opening and dedication of Lexington's most beautiful church building. . . ." This was not simply local hyperbole, but a fair assessment of the building's appearance and, as history demonstrates, its architectural significance.

First Reformed Church is a monumental Gothic Revival masonry building whose bold exterior and academic interior combine design, materials, and details to form a powerful ecclesiastical structure. It was designed by Herbert B. Hunter, a High Point architect noted in North Carolina for his work on the Junior Order Home in Lexington, High Point College, Elon College, the Kinston Hotel, and the Atlantic Christian Church in Wilson. Griff W. Smith, one of Lexington's leading contractors, was in charge of construction. The tinted-glass windows that allow so much ethereal light into the sanctuary were produced by the George Hardy Payne Studios of Paterson, New Jersey and Venice, Italy. J. E. & E. H. Reilley, a Charlotte firm representing the American Seating Company of Grand Rapids, Michigan, was responsible for much of the Gothic Revival interior furnishings, including the pews, organ screen, choir

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First Reformed Church
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screen, pulpit, pulpit platform front, communion table and chairs, baptismal font, flower stands, hymn boards, and choir and balcony chairs (*The Dispatch*, April 5, 1928).

In Davidson County and in Lexington in particular, First Reformed Church stands alone in the scale and refinement of its 1920s Gothic Revival design. Most churches of other denominations currently standing in Lexington date either from the nineteenth and very early twentieth centuries—often with multiple later twentieth-century updates—or were built later in the twentieth century. St. Stephens United Methodist Church, located near First Reformed Church, is either a ca. 1921 church or a remodeling of an 1896 church. While the congregation of this black church has an interesting history, its present building is a much more modest church that lacks both the stylishness and design integrity of First Reformed Church. And while Lexington's Second Reformed Church was built in the 1920s, it is a large, rambling brick structure that lacks a sense of design cohesiveness. Elsewhere in the county, several brick churches were built in the 1920s. Among these are Abbott's Creek Missionary Baptist Church near Wallburg, Hedrick's Grove Church near Lexington, and First Pilgrim Holiness Church in Thomasville. While handsomely designed with a Romanesque influence, these are nonetheless more modest churches than First Reformed Church (*Building the Backcountry*, 67, 94, 96, and 170).

The 1927-1928 First Reformed Church is not only the grandest church of the 1920s in Davidson County, but remains one of the finest ecclesiastical buildings of any period in Lexington.

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First Reformed Church
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Section Number 10 Page 11

First Reformed Church
Davidson County, North Carolina

GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

Verbal Boundary Description -

The boundary of the nominated property is defined as Davidson County Tax Map 60, Block C, Lot 2. The boundary is illustrated by the heavy black line on the accompanying tax map, drawn to a scale of 1" = 50'.

Boundary Justification -

The nominated property, consisting of a town lot of less than one acre, constitutes the historic and current setting of First Reformed Church.

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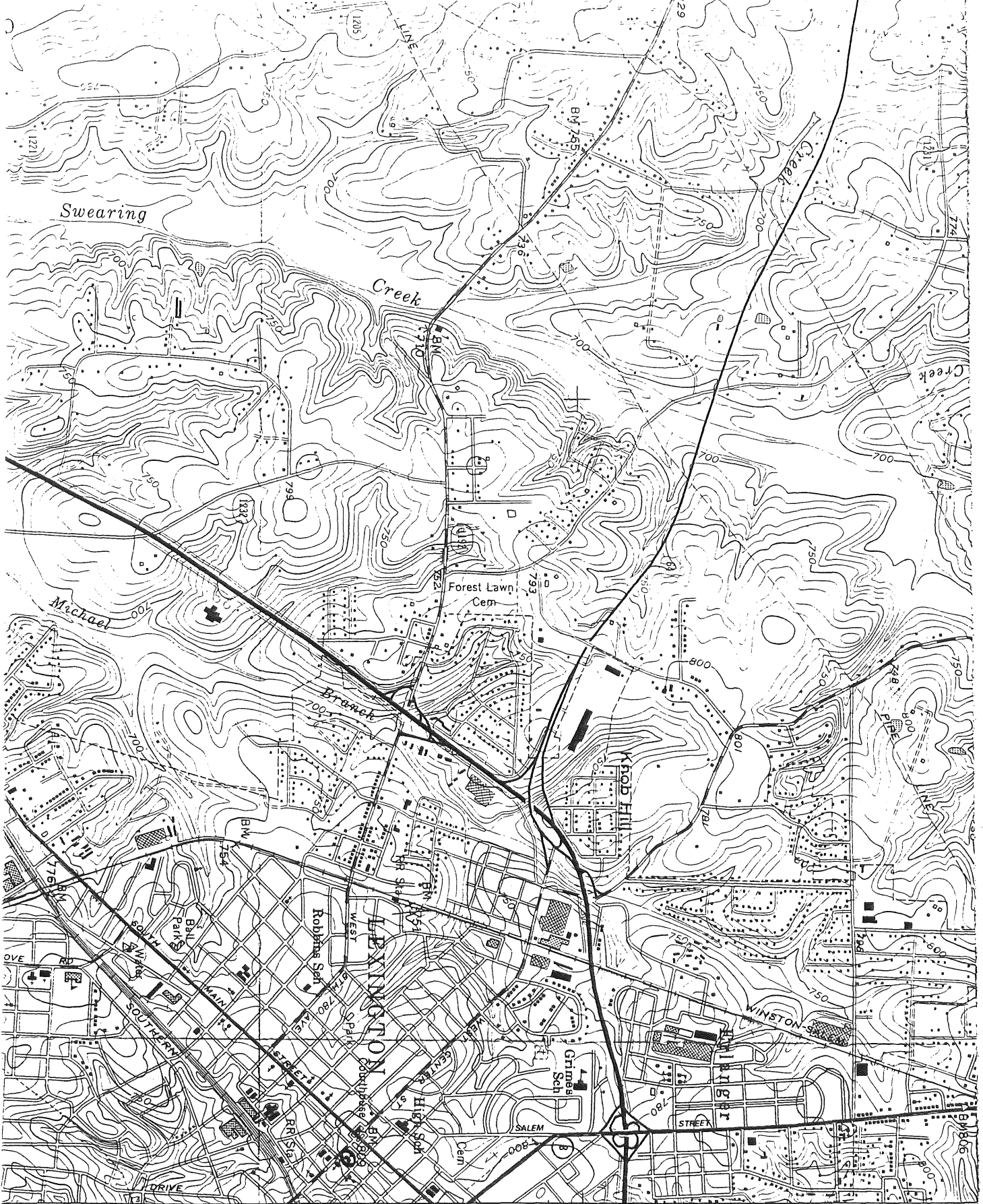
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First Reformed Church
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PHOTOGRAPHS:

The following information for #1-5 applies to all nomination photographs:

- 1) First Reformed Church
- 2) Davidson County, North Carolina
- 3) Laura A. W. Phillips
- 4) 12/1998
- 5) State Historic Preservation Office, Raleigh, North Carolina
- 6-7) A: Overall, view to NW
B: Context, view to W
C: Facade, view to N
D: Facade portal, view to N
E: E & N elevations, view to SW
F: N & W elevations, view to SE
G: Sanctuary, view to chancel and north end
H: Sanctuary, view to balcony and south end
I: Vestibule, view to W
J: Stair to choir loft/Gothic lantern, view to SW



(LEXINGTON EAST)
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17/567560/364430

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