

**THIS PROPERTY IS LISTED IN THE
TARBORO MULTIPLE RESOURCE
NOMINATION. FOR FULL FORM,
PLEASE SEE TARBORO MULTIPLE
RESOURCE NOMINATION.**

TARBORO MULTIPLE RESOURCE NOMINATION

FD 29

A. Eastern Star Baptist Church *Demolished*

NW corner of junction of Church and Wagner streets, East Tarboro, NC

LESS THAN ONE ACRE: 1 lot

Owner: Deacons Board of Eastern Star Baptist Church
c/o Arthur Lyons, Chairman
512 East St. James Street
Tarboro, North Carolina 27886

UTM REFERENCE:

Latitude

Longitude

Description

The frame church is a notable example of Carpenter Gothic architecture, the only ecclesiastical example in town; the domestic use of the style is seen in the house on the Common (#450) probably built about the same time, shortly after the Civil War. This church has the board-and-batten wall surfaces, lancet arched door and window openings, and rich wooden detail typical of the style so popular in the mid-19th century. The gable and main facade features a central tower, rectangular in plan, which rises in three stages each with lancet openings; corner posts break out at the corners to define the tower and rise through all stages, with caps or bands at various levels. These are topped by dramatic, pointed finials covered with shiny metal, accentuating the Gothic character of the structure. The interior, with an entry vestibule in the tower and a balcony overlooking the sanctuary, is remarkably well preserved, as is the exterior. The balcony is carried on chamfered posts, and reached by a graceful curving stair with heavy detail. Moldings across the ceiling suggest timbering. The pews are of unusually vigorous and beautiful curvilinear design and contribute greatly to the character of the building. The altar area is framed by a polygonal arch, whose soffit has lights--a dramatic feature of several Tarboro churches.

Significance

The building is significant architecturally as the only example in Tarboro of the Carpenter Gothic style of ecclesiastical architecture, a style popularized by the pattern books of Richard Upjohn and others and widely used in the middle and late 19th century. It is very well-preserved, and represents an aspect of architecture not otherwise seen in Tarboro. Historically the church is important not only as the first church of the Presbyterian denomination in Tarboro but also as the longtime home of the Eastern Star Baptist congregation, a black congregation established in 1906, for whom it has been the only church building.

TARBORO MULTIPLE RESOURCE NOMINATION

A. Eastern Star Baptist Church (Page 2)

Significance

This was originally the Tarboro Presbyterian Church and is believed to have been built in the 1870s at the corner of St. James and St. Patrick Streets. The church was organized in 1874, as the Presbyterian denomination had been relatively small in number previously. Three women, raised as Presbyterians before moving to Tarboro as wives of Tarboro businessmen--Anna Stamps Howard of Milton, N. C., Anna MacNair of Florida, and Mrs. Anna Stronach Wilkerson of Raleigh--were important in organizing the congregation, and are said to have determined the design of the building. In 1906, the building was moved to make way for the present brick church. It was moved to its present site, where it has been used by the Eastern Star Baptist Church, a black congregation established in that year. Among the men and women who organized the church were Caroline Pittman, Victoria Sledge, Lizzie Hart, Dora Barlow, Annie Joyner, Mary Whitley, Charlotte McKnight, Hattie Reeves, and Eliza Lewis; and A. W. Woods, Willie Reeves, Henry Hart, Redmond Joyner, and Daniel Key. The first minister was J. H. Ramsey. The congregation has been an important focus of the community, and the church building, well-preserved by the congregation, is a landmark in east Tarboro, and the prime example of its style in the town.

Source of information: Tarboro Daily Southerner, Bicentennial Edition, based on information provided by congregations about their histories.

Verbal Boundary Description: Includes only the tiny corner lot on which the church now stands.

Although a religious structure moved from its original site, the property is significant architecturally as the only carpenter gothic church in Tarboro (and very well preserved); and historically as the first Presbyterian church and as an important black Baptist Church for over seventy years.