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TARBORO MULTIPLE RESOURCE
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TARBORO MULTIPLE RESOURCE NOMINATION

B. St. Paul Baptist Church ED432

Northwest corner of Edmondson Street at Lloyd Street, Tarboro, NC

LESS THAN ONE ACRE: 1 lot

Owner: Deacon Board of St. Paul Baptist Church
c/o Emmanuel Pippin, Chairman
401 East Pitt Street
Tarboro, North Carolina 27886

UTM REFERENCE:

Description:

Vigorous, eclectic church building with abundant wooden decoration and dramatically irregular massing. The central portion has a multigabled belvedere that serves the interior space as skylight, and projecting from the core are multiple gabled wings, and a corner tower. Windows occur singly and in trios, with the tiny outlining panes typical of the Queen Anne style. The wall surfaces are weatherboarded and enriched with bands of panels, brackets, heavy labels over windows, and other ornamentation, all beautifully preserved. Unfortunately the corner tower, which originally rose to a dramatic multigabled belfry, was awkwardly truncated in recent years, (ca. 1976), and topped with a reduced upper level. Otherwise the church is unaltered. Inside, the dominant space is a large open sanctuary with a dome and oculus above. Most of the original woodwork is intact, typical of the turn of the century. Reflecting the circular orientation created by the dome was the curved pews, with the same vigorous, curvilinear profile of the Eastern Star church (A), a notable and important survival of the period. These were in bad condition, the congregation has had difficulty in finding people to repair them, and have recently been replaced.

Significance

The building is significant architecturally as a vigorous eclectic late 19th century church, with rich and abundant wooden detail. It is historically significant as the home originally of a prominent Baptist congregation and as a 20th century prominent black congregation, which it has served for nearly half a century.

This frame church was originally on North Main Street, serving the Baptist Church congregation established in the early 19th century, when the Primitive and Missionary Baptists separated. This was evidently the third church building of the group, under the ministry of Reverend Mr. J. D. Hundley. O. C. Farrar, prominent postwar business leader, gave the land and financed the construction, and his funeral is said to have been the first service held in the new building. He died in 1891, and his obituary described his last project: "The crowning act of his life was the building of the Missionary Baptist Church at this place. It is an ornament to the town...."

In 1871 St. Paul Baptist Church was organized with sixteen members from the black community, following leadership by George C. Caine, a Virginia native, who settled in Tarboro soon after the Civil War with his wife Agnes; they initiated

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Significance

a weekly prayer service, because of the lack of black churches in the community, and within a few years the new church was established under the leadership of Reverend S. A. Davis, assisted by A. F. Flood, Samuel Perry, and Reverend Thomas Owens, the latter minister of the white Baptist church. The church building was moved from its Main Street site to the present location ca. 1926, and it is a social and architectural focal point of the community.

Source of information: Tarboro Daily Southerner, Bicentennial Edition

Verbal Boundary Description: Small lot on which church stands-