

COMMENT ON NATIONAL REGISTER NOMINATION

ADDRESS: 40 E Price Street, First Baptist Church of Germantown/Polite Temple Baptist Church

OVERVIEW: The Pennsylvania Historical & Museum Commission (PHMC) has requested comments from the Philadelphia Historical Commission on the National Register nomination of 38 E. Price Street located in the Germantown neighborhood of northwest Philadelphia and historically known as both the First Baptist Church of Germantown and Polite Temple Baptist Church. The official street address recognized by the City of Philadelphia is 40 E. Price Street. PHMC is charged with implementing federal historic preservation regulations in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, including overseeing the National Register of Historic Places in the state. PHMC reviews all such nominations before forwarding them to the National Park Service for action. As part of the process, PHMC must solicit comments on every National Register nomination from the appropriate local government. The Philadelphia Historical Commission speaks on behalf of the City of Philadelphia in historic preservation matters including the review of National Register nominations. Under federal regulation, the local government not only must provide comments, but must also provide a forum for public comment on nominations. Such a forum is provided during the Philadelphia Historical Commission's meetings.

This nomination proposes significance under Criterion A in the Area of Social History and Ethnic History and Criterion C in the Area of Architecture. The nomination also includes a Criteria Consideration A, which recognizes the property is owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes. Under Criterion A, the First Baptist Church of Germantown exemplifies the cultural, political, economic, social, and historical heritage of the Germantown community through two congregations who reflected the changing demographics and economics of Germantown in the late nineteenth through the early twentieth centuries. Under Criterion C, the church is recognized as the work of Philadelphia architect Samuel Sloan. The property is significant for its architecture and as the work of a master architect, representing the distinctive characteristics of both the late Greek Revival period as well as the architectural and material innovation that was a hallmark of Sloan's architectural practice, including one of the earliest surviving uses of architectural ornamental terracotta in the United States. This property was listed on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places in 1980.

The address used in the nomination should be updated to the official street address, 40 E. Price Street, and the Period of Significance for each Criterion should be clarified to correspond with key events in the church's history.



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 National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any 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.

1. Name of Property

Historic name: First Baptist Church of Germantown
 Other names/site number: Polite Temple Baptist Church
 Name of related multiple property listing: N/A

2. Location

Street & number: 38 E. Price St.
 City or town: Philadelphia State: PA County: Philadelphia
 Not For Publication: Vicinity:

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 at the following level(s) of significance:

national statewide local

Applicable National Register Criteria:

A B C D

_____ Signature of certifying official/Title	_____ Date
_____ State of Federal Agency/Bureau or Tribal Government	

In my opinion, the property <input type="checkbox"/> meets <input type="checkbox"/> does not meet the National Register criteria	
_____ Signature of commenting official	_____ Date
_____ Title:	_____ State or Federal Agency/Bureau or Tribal Government

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4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register
 determined eligible for the National Register
 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.)

Private:

Public – Local:

Public – State:

Public – Federal:

Category of Property

(Check only **one** box.)

Building(s):

District:

Site:

Structure:

Object:

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Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>	buildings
<u> </u>	<u> </u>	sites
<u> </u>	<u> </u>	structures
<u>1</u>	<u> </u>	objects
<u>2</u>	<u>1</u>	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

RELIGION (religious facility/church)

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

RELIGION (religious facility/church)

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

MID-19th CENTURY (Greek Revival)

Materials: (enter categories from instructions.)

Principal exterior materials of the property: Stone (Schist), Stucco, Brick, Terracotta

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Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance and condition of the property. Describe contributing and noncontributing resources if applicable. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, type, style, method of construction, setting, size, and significant features. Indicate whether the property has historic integrity.)

Summary Paragraph

Located at 38 E Price Street in the historic Germantown neighborhood of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, the First Baptist Church of Germantown is a temple-style Greek Revival building, designed by Philadelphia architect Samuel Sloan (see Photo 1). The church is built of Wissahickon schist rubble clad in stucco and adorned with a mix of wood and terracotta ornament. Though only one story high, the building has commanding height due to a combination of its location on a small natural geologic rise and its impressive Greek podium which measures six bays deep with a hexastyle¹ portico facing Price Street (see Photo 2). The verticality of the structure allows for a partially below-grade walkout basement level, with a later-added fully subterranean hand dug sub-basement beneath it. The main sanctuary occupies the elevated first floor and all six of the sanctuary's eastern windows feature stained glass installed ca. 1897. There is a contributing memorial obelisk in the side yard, commemorating Rev. J. Newton Brown, DD (see Photo 3). The property retains a high level of historic integrity, with one visible addition, small utilitarian modifications to the exterior, and some deterioration due to age and deferred maintenance.

Narrative Description

Exterior

First Baptist Church of Germantown is a temple-style Greek Revival building, designed by Philadelphia architect Samuel Sloan. It is located at 38 E. Price St. in the historic Germantown neighborhood of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania (see Map 1). Originally bilaterally symmetrical, the church is built of Wissahickon schist rubble clad in stucco and adorned with a mix of wood and terracotta ornament. It stands one story high on an impressive podium, measures six bays deep, with a hexastyle portico facing Price Street. A one-story annex used as a fellowship hall and storage space was built in 1873 at the building's southwest corner in a style meant to mimic the original building but is not a historic character defining feature of the structure (see Photo 4).

The portico consists of six colossal Corinthian columns with terracotta capitals made by Tolman, Luther & Company in Worcester, Massachusetts (see Photo 5). The columns support a basic Corinthian entablature with a dentilled and modillioned cornice.² The columns are constructed of stacked brick with wood and plaster fluting

¹ In Greek architecture, a six-columned porch

² On a Greek temple, the area immediately above the column capitals that includes the frieze, architrave, and cornice (if present), but does not include the roof itself.

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and rounded bases. They were damaged and repaired sometime after 1905, resulting in the loss of detail on two capitals and removal of the fluting. The podium rests on a euthyneria of cut shale that levels the foundation, which sits on a gently sloping hillside.³ Above the entablature, a low pediment with fine wooden dentils and a block modillion cornice caps the portico. Staircases ascend the podium on either side parallel to the colonnade.

A tabernacle-styled vestibule once sat on the podium behind the columns enclosing the principal entrance into the church (see Historic Photo 1). The vestibule appears in the earliest photographs of the church from 1905, but is not part of Sloan's original design, likely added during a major sanctuary renovation in 1897 when the stained-glass windows and pipe organ were added. The congregation removed the vestibule following damage caused by a ceiling collapse in the sanctuary in 2012 which did not impact the exterior integrity of the original design despite necessitating major internal repairs to the first story.

The western elevation features basement access via a secondary gable-roofed entrance which allows access to the church's basement multipurpose fellowship and Sunday school rooms (see Photo 6). This entrance has a composite wood and vinyl four-panel door with a curved fanlight and a mail slot. The gable end is clad in aluminum siding, and the roof is asphalt shingled. While the entrance to the basement is original to Sloan's design, the entrance originally opened directly into the fellowship hall with no exterior partitions. Historic photos and documents show this entrance has been modified several times, with the current gable-roofed entrance added sometime after 1972 (see Historic Photo 2). The windows of the basement contain clear frosted acrylic blocks with vents which replaced the original windows sometime in the mid-20th century.

The building also contains a dirt floor sub-basement which does not appear in Sloan's design and was likely dug out after the building was completed (see Photo 7). Supported by brick and stacked schist piers resting directly on bedrock, the basement is accessed via metal bulkhead doors to the right of the gabled basement entrance.

The rear elevation of the building is unornamented and has a utilitarian stair hall addition with a hipped roof for easier circulation between the first story chancel and baptistery to the basement classrooms and fellowship spaces. The stair hall also serves as a conduit for the exhaust chimney of the basement furnace. An aluminum chimney is mounted to the western exterior side of the stair hall and extends upwards past the roof. The stair hall is likely a later edition as it does not appear in Sloan's original design, in insurance surveys before 1910, nor in an aerial photograph by the Regional Planning Federation of the Philadelphia Tri-State District in 1928. The first definitive proof of the apse is a 1930 aerial survey of the city by Dallin Aerial Survey Company, suggesting the stair hall was added sometime between 1928 and 1930.

³ On a Greek temple, an upper course of stone partially emerging from the foundation

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Though not in Sloan's original plan, the annex was designed carefully to echo the design language of the main structure. All six of the main sanctuary's eastern windows feature stained glass installed ca. 1897. Similar windows appear on the western side, but the rearmost bay was enclosed in 1897 when a large pipe organ was installed in the sanctuary. Neither the stained glass nor the pipe organ is mentioned as options in Sloan's design, but Sloan did provide allowances for adaptive ornamentation to meet the needs of the congregation. A wooden steeple (shown in Sloan's published design and probably desired by the congregation from the outset) was added to the building in 1862 but was removed after being damaged by a storm in 1887. Initially, the building was finished with plaster scored to resemble cut ashlar block.

A contributing memorial obelisk in the side yard in front of the annex marks the resting place of Rev. J. Newton Brown, D.D. (1803-1868), a significant mid-19th century Baptist theologian and founding member of the original congregation (though never its pastor). The monument is contributing as the design for it appears in the mock-up of a proposed graveyard suggesting that when Brown died, they drew inspiration from Sloan's design when commissioning his tomb. The cemetery never expanded beyond Brown's burial, and the reasons for abandoning the planned cemetery are not known, but likely have to do with the constricted parcel size or local ordinances regarding internment of bodies at the site. The obelisk is adorned with excerpts of Brown's theological writings, but much of their legibility has deteriorated due to weathering. The memorial's construction date is unclear, either having been installed when the church was built or shortly after Brown's death. Brown was an influential member of the church and community at the time of construction and may have stipulated the form of the memorial as it appears in the original drawings of the site and was constructed virtually in the exact same place, shape, and size as the drawings making it a contributing part of the site.

The property retains a high level of historic integrity, with only small utilitarian modifications to the exterior and some deterioration due to age and deferred maintenance (see Appendix 1).

Interior

The interior of First Baptist Church is divided between two accessible public spaces on the elevated first story and basement, and a utilitarian sub-basement with limited access. The elevated first story is comprised entirely of the sanctuary of the church (see Appendix 2). From the main Price Street facing entrance, the space is entered via a small foyer functioning as a narthex⁴ with stairs on either side leading up to a gallery overlooking the sanctuary (see Photo 8 and 9). Following the pattern of a Greek temple, the sanctuary is rectangular lacking any transepts, laid out in the style of a lecture hall with a nave⁵ containing two aisles of pews leading to a raised stage-like chancel⁶ accessed by three shallow stairs. The central object of the chancel is an ambo⁷ behind which are seats for

⁴ In church architecture, an antechamber or foyer between the building entrance and the sanctuary.

⁵ In church architecture, the primary area where worshipers gather for services, usually containing pews, kneelers, and other religious or utilitarian furniture.

⁶ In church architecture, a space usually at the end of the nave for worship leaders and sometimes choirs or musicians.

⁷ In church architecture, a piece of furniture acting as both a pulpit and a lectern as opposed to more formal church architecture

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the elders⁸ of the congregation facing outwards towards the pews, a large corner pipe organ on the west side, and two rows of pews on the east side parallel to the nave meant for the choir. A narrow aisle cuts between the main section of the chancel containing the ambo, elders' seating, and organ, and the eastern side where the choir pews are. The aisle leads to a door that allows access to a stair hall connecting first floor and basement. Other than the rise of stairs, no altar rails or other dividing features separate the chancel from the nave. Behind the chancel is a raised baptistery⁹ set back in an oval-shaped apse with white and blue glazed tiling accessed via stairs descending from the stair hall behind the sanctuary. Both east and west walls of the sanctuary contain stained glass windows featuring geometric shapes and one central graphic each. The graphics are organized in such a way that they chronologically represent the story of Jesus's life and ministry on the west side, and the story of the Christian faith broadly on the east side. The northernmost windows are blocked from interior view by the gallery stairs, which despite the odd design decision is an original as-designed quirk of the sanctuary (see Appendix 3). The gallery overlooking the nave is plain, with two tiers of wooden planked floors with one long pew on each row. Above the gallery is a hatch through which the unfinished space under the roof can be accessed. Though the basic layout of the space has not significantly changed since the building's construction, a ceiling collapse in 2012 necessitated refurbishment of the sanctuary, which primarily involved adding new pews and expanding the chancel space to allow more flexible use as a multi-purpose stage (see Appendix 4).

Owing to its position on a slight geologic rise, the east side of the basement is underground, while the west side is accessible via a standard walkout foyer (see Appendix 5). The main volume of the basement is occupied by a large flexible fellowship space with no fixed furniture. A portion of the space is set up in a stage-like arrangement mimicking a chancel complete with a lectern and seating (see Photo 10). To the north of the fellowship hall (under the narthex) are restrooms. The south side (under the sanctuary chancel and stair hall) contains additional restrooms and a small kitchen as well as access to the stair hall leading to the sanctuary. What is likely an original window from before the construction of the stair hall has been repurposed as a serving window from kitchen to fellowship hall (see Photo 11). The southwest corner features a door leading to the late-19th century annex. On the east side, four smaller rooms function as a library and offices for various church leaders. The rooms themselves are plain with no fixed features (see Photo 12). The northernmost room contains a door leading to a flight of stairs to access the sub-basement. Apart from utilitarian modifications and spaces contained within the added stair hall, the room is laid out essentially as featured in the original drawings, suggesting it has not undergone significant modification in purpose or plan.

which separates the two.

⁸ In Christian hierarchy, especially Protestant denominations, a group of church members who are designated leaders of a congregation but are not usually professional clergy.

⁹ In church architecture, a vessel or pool containing water for use in formally marking a person's entrance to the Christian faith. Baptist congregations do this only for adults and usually via full immersion in a small pool as opposed to other Christian expressions that perform it on infants or via sprinkling or pouring water from a smaller vessel onto a person's head.

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Below the basement is a fully subterranean hand-dug sub-basement with dirt floors and walls (see Appendix 6).

The sub-basement does not appear in drawings and was likely dug out sometime in the late-19th or early-20th century to accommodate the installation of a coal-fired boiler and ductwork. The boiler is no longer used but remains in the space. A more modern HVAC system was added to the area in the early 21st century.

Though the neighborhood of Germantown has changed much since the construction of First Baptist Church, the building itself retains a remarkable level of integrity. The facade, massing, and exterior details are all immediately recognizable from *The Model Architect*, and most exterior changes such as the rear stair hall or annex are either not visible from public thoroughfares or are separate enough from the historic structure to be easily removed if necessary without impact the original Sloan construction. That is not to say that building has not changed at all, however, as weathering, deferred maintenance, and utilitarian modifications are evident on the structure. Specifically, the portico columns and their terracotta capitals have been damaged to the extent that the original fluting has been removed from the columns and the capitals on the ends have lost some details. Likewise, window openings have changed with the installation of stained glass, the filling-in of the window where the organ was installed, and the modification of various openings to modern materials like glass block. The clock tower has also been removed, though it is important to note that while the clock tower was in Sloan's design, it was not installed until later and so is not strictly speaking "original" to the structure. The interior likewise remains in excellent shape and many of the spaces retain the same layout, materials, and uses that Sloan had envisioned. Even quirks of design included by Sloan like the two narthex windows being blocked by the gallery staircases are still extant. The most notable changes to the interior from Sloan's design are in the sanctuary where the pew layout had been modified several times, and a pipe organ and new baptistery installed. Despite the few changes to the building, First Baptist Church is still easily recognizable as the 1852 structure designed by Sloan and published in *The Model Architect*, making it one of the few extant buildings by Sloan to directly reflect the visual intent of the architect's pattern books.

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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.)

- A. Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B. Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C. Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D. Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

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

- A. Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes
- B. Removed from its original location
- C. A birthplace or grave
- D. A cemetery
- E. A reconstructed building, object, or structure
- F. A commemorative property
- G. Less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years

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Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions.)

ARCHITECTURE

SOCIAL HISTORY

ETHNIC HISTORY (Black)

Period of Significance

1852-1868

1953-1980

Significant Dates

1852

1953

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

Cultural Affiliation

Architect/Builder

Samuel Sloan

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Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance, applicable criteria, justification for the period of significance, and any applicable criteria considerations.)

Criterion A: First Baptist Church of Germantown exemplifies the cultural, political, economic, social, and historical heritage of the Germantown community through two congregations who were reflective of the changing demographics and economics of Germantown in the late 19th through the early 20th centuries, and is significant in the areas of Social History and Ethnic Heritage - Black. These changes are a microcosm of larger social and demographic changes occurring in the American Northeast corresponding to the rise of suburbs outside major cities enabled by rail travel, the occupation of these suburbs with industrial-tied wealth and middle-class workers, and the subsequent “white flight” period following the Great Migration of southern working class African Americans. While other Black congregations and religious institutions exist in Germantown, the Polite Temple congregation is historically noteworthy as they are one of the few originally Black congregations still extant that existed prior to the start of the Great Migration, grew because of it, and then used the boosted finances from that growth to inherit First Baptist Church of Germantown from its original White builders, using their resources to care for the structure. The adaptive modifications and repairs the Black congregation made (or did not make) to the original building act as still-present witnesses to the demographic flux that shaped the Germantown neighborhood during the decades between 1950-1980 when the Migration occurred and so introduce another important period of significance directly related to the structure’s status.

Criterion C: First Baptist Church of Germantown is the work of noted Philadelphia architect Samuel Sloan, and likely acted as a prototype for one of the patterns distributed in his seminal work *The Model Architect* (see Appendix 7, 8, 9). The property is significant for its architecture and as the work of a master, representing the distinctive characteristics of both the late Greek Revival period as well as the architectural and material innovation that was a hallmark of Sloan’s architectural practice, including one of the earliest surviving uses of architectural ornamental terracotta in the United States, and creative use of substitutionary materials to save money, providing high style architecture on a modest budget.

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Narrative Statement of Significance (Provide at least **one** paragraph for each area of significance.)

Home to two different congregations in its 174 years, the First Baptist Church of Germantown (now Polite Temple) has been a measuring rod for community change. From 1850-1870 when the Germantown community was a booming railroad and manufacturing hub, to 1950-1980 when white flight saw the area change to a predominately African- American community, the makeup of its congregations, their finances, and the state of the building itself all reflect the larger fortunes and struggles of the Germantown community that grew and fluctuated around it. While these changes could arguably be true for most institutional structures surviving from this time, First Baptist Church of Germantown is unique in that it represents an enduring inheritance of Germantown from a predominantly white demographic to a Black one in a way that other buildings do not. Polite Temple is one of the very few congregations founded before the demographic changes of the mid-20th century, grew because of it, inherited an institutional structure from exiting whites directly as opposed to simply growing out of them or re- purposing an existing structure, and continues to exist in and maintain that building. Though not a progenitor or sustainer of the demographic movements that shaped the community, First Baptist Church of Germantown is an enduring witness to a period of massive change in the Germantown neighborhood locally and United States broadly that maintains a connective tissue directly to a time before and a time after in a way that similar institutions in the neighborhood do not.

In her book *Faith on the Avenue: Religion on a City Street*, Katie Day uses Germantown as a case study for how religious sites can help to understand demographic forces that shape urban ecology. She writes, “Any consideration of religious presence in a particular context begins with the physicality of that presence—that is, the *place* and the *space*.”¹⁰ Demographic changes like those that helped to define the modern Germantown between 1950-1980 are rarely objectifiable experiences that can be directly linked to one place or one person. Instead, they are broad movements that can only be understood by looking at case studies that help to place individual pieces of a puzzle into a larger discernible context. In this regard, First Baptist Church of Germantown is an extremely important structure as a survivor from the period of change in the Germantown neighborhood and broader urban areas of the North whose builders were members of the previous dominant white residents and whose present occupants are directly connected institutionally to the Black community who inherited the structure directly from the previous white builders as part of the on-going demographic change in the Germantown community. Thus, First Baptist Church of Germantown is a crucial site to understanding the emergence of Black identity in modern Germantown.

¹⁰ Katie Day, *Faith on the Avenue: Religion on a City Street* (New York: Oxford, 2014), 29.

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The roots of the first congregation of First Baptist Church of Germantown stretch back to 1837, when Baptist missionaries from the nearby Haddington College attempted to establish a congregation in the area. This venture was largely unsuccessful and collapsed after Haddington College closed in 1841.¹¹ In the words of George Scatchard, "...From the experience of over one hundred and fifty years, Germantown was a field where Baptist could never flourish and Baptist preaching would do no good."¹² The reasons for the initial Baptist struggle are unclear but may have to do with the demographics of early 19th century Germantown. During this time, Germantown was home to a large amount of Christian churches of various denominations, containing Methodist, Episcopal, Presbyterian, Quaker, and Mennonite churches all with roots stretching back into the 18th century, in addition to ethnic identity ties.¹³ Likewise, when the neighboring St. Vincent de Paul congregation was established in 1848, the 1850 census shows a large Catholic Irish minority was in the process of moving into Germantown, giving the parish an ethnic anchor out of which to grow.¹⁴

The American Baptist denomination, on the other hand, sought to establish itself amongst already converted white Baptists who were already living in Germantown as the basis for its new congregation, of which there were around 30.¹⁵ It does not appear the Baptists in Germantown had any strong ethnic connection to draw upon. Though African American Baptists were a large and growing presence at this time in history elsewhere in the United States, the African American population of Germantown was only 113 in 1840, and 119 in 1850, concentrated mainly around Haines and Rittenhouse Streets on the industrial east side of Germantown.¹⁶ Large African-American Baptist churches would not appear in Germantown until the 1890s.¹⁷

Even though there were only about 30 Baptists in Germantown at this time, the pastor of Milestown Baptist Church—Rev. John M. Richards—agreed to preach in the area in January 1852 after being repeatedly asked by a local Baptist woman who desired a Baptist congregation in her neighborhood. He found some success, and by October 1852, with a following of 73, he purchased a parcel of land from Eli K. Price and was able to raise \$12,000 to erect a new meeting house. Designed by architect Samuel Sloan, First Baptist Church of Germantown opened on East Price Street in June 1853.¹⁸

¹¹ Samuel Fitch Hotchkin, *Ancient and Modern Germantown, Mount Airy, and Chestnut Hill* (Philadelphia: P.W. Ziegler & Co., 1889), 135.

¹² Edwin C. Jellett, *Germantown Churches: Baptist, Brethren, Catholic, Evangelical, Jewish* (Germantown Historical Society), 5

¹³ Katie Day, *Faith on the Avenue: Religion on a City Street* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014), 32.

¹⁴ Ancestry.com. *1840 United States Federal Census* [database on-line]. Provo, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operations, Inc., 2010.

¹⁵ Jellett, 8.

¹⁶ David W. Young, "The Battles of Germantown: Public History and Preservation in America's Most Historic Neighborhood During the Twentieth Century," PhD diss., Ohio State University, 2009, 15-16.

¹⁷ Young, 16-17.

¹⁸ Jellett, 5-6.

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The period of 1850 to 1900 saw Germantown at what might perhaps be considered its peak. Once a town composed mostly of yeoman farmers and merchants, the town had grown to become a center for manufacturing and trade, thanks to the mills of the local creeks, and in 1832 the opening of the Philadelphia, Germantown, and Norristown Railroad.¹⁹ The construction of the railroad provided a significant catalyst for change. Whereas once a commute into Philadelphia took over three hours, the steam-powered locomotive of the new railroad could take people into the city in under an hour. With the railroad came a land rush, as once cheap farmland suddenly became an in-demand commodity for real estate speculators, investors, and merchants seeking to cash in on the success of the railroad. The plot of land that Rev. Richards bought from Price in 1852 was a fourth of an acre and sold for \$1558;²⁰ only 18 years prior, Price had purchased the land as part of a larger acquisition of over an acre for only \$1000.²¹

Following the church's establishment, the congregation had moderate success. Richards presided over regular baptism of converts, and by the time he resigned as pastor in 1854 the membership of the church was 174.²² The years following Richard's departure, though, were marked by difficulty centering around the outstanding debt of \$5000 still owed on the church building and the short tenure of the succeeding pastors. Nevertheless, the church managed to pay off the sum of its debt in 1858. These trials, while difficult for the membership of First Baptist Church, proved fruitful for white Baptist churches in general as divisions in the congregation resulted in the formation of Second Baptist Church in 1859, which became a successful community church after officially establishing an independent congregation in 1866 a mile north at the intersection of Upsal Street and Germantown Avenue.²³ Following a wave of conversions across the nation as part of the Second Great Awakening in the 1860s, First Baptist Church saw a membership boost going from 121 members in 1858, to 450 members in 1868.²⁴ The church building reflected these changes with an addition in 1873 of an annex to hold its growing Sunday School, built at a cost of \$1310.71.²⁵ Following the sudden increase in membership, the church decided to split, resulting in 153 members including the pastor, three out of five deacons, five out of seven trustees, and most of the Sunday School teachers leaving to form the now-defunct Third Baptist Church of Germantown about a mile south near the intersection of Wister and Wakefield Streets. Church records portray this split as amicable and intentional, though given the history of strife and division already in the congregation's short history, there is room to doubt.²⁶ Between 1890 and 1940, Germantown was once again in a period of flux.

¹⁹ Hotchkin, 318.

²⁰ Deed Sale from Eli K. Price and wife to Rev. John M. Richards, 29 April 1852, Philadelphia County Deed Book TH, no. 167 (Philadelphia City Archives, Philadelphia, PA.), 291-293.

²¹ Deed Sale from John Bowman to Eli K. Price, 11 December 1844, Philadelphia County Deed Book RLL, no. 29 (Philadelphia City Archives, Philadelphia, PA.), 326-328.

²² Jellet, 6.

²³ "First Baptist Members Join Second in Rites," *Germantown Courier*, May 12, 1955; Jellet, 6.

²⁴ Day, 33; Jellet, 6.

²⁵ Jellet, 7.

²⁶ Jellet, 6.

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The first Great Migration brought many African American families from the South to Philadelphia in search of jobs. The African American population, once less than 200, rose to nearly 2000 by 1900 and 4000 by 1915.²⁷ Around the same time, the Great Depression affected the industry around Germantown, resulting in the closure of many of the mills along the Schuylkill River.²⁸ The economic and demographic crisis of the period weighed heavily on the congregation of First Baptist; and in 1926, the congregation of First Baptist Church, which had struggled to maintain its building almost from the beginning, sought to move to a site that was never firmly determined somewhere near Wayne Ave. Though the move did not happen, it reflected a growing demographic shift in the Price Street area around First Baptist Church. As part of the proposed move, the congregation of First Baptist Church entered discussion with Rev. J.T. Fletcher of the African Methodist Episcopal Church to sell their building to the African American congregation once the mostly white congregation had vacated.²⁹

The period following World War II from 1950 to 1980 once again saw large important shifts to the population of Germantown. Another mass migration of African Americans to Philadelphia saw the city's Black population rise from 251,000 in 1940 to 376,000 in 1950 triggering another round of white flight even further out of the city.³⁰ These changes were particularly notable in Germantown where only 15% of the residents were Black in 1940, compared to 1980 where almost 80% were Black.³¹ For a congregation that already had a history of financial and social trouble, the loss of the core of its white membership proved to be the deathblow for the original congregation of First Baptist Church. Meanwhile the demographic change was proving fruitful for African American churches, which were rapidly multiplying in the area. As the congregation of First Baptist lost its identity, a new group was forming their own identity through institutional organizations in Germantown, often inheriting the structures previous generations had left behind.³²

By 1954, the predominantly white congregation, which at one time had boasted over 400 members, was reduced to only 27.³³ In January 1955, unable to maintain their aging building any further, they turned ownership of the building over to the Philadelphia Baptist Association.³⁴ However, while the demographic changes were harsh to the white congregation of First Baptist, a few blocks away on E. Haines St., a Black congregation was flourishing. Led by Rev. Collin N. Polite, the congregation known as "Polite's Temple"³⁵ was founded in 1940 during a

²⁷ Young, 16.

²⁸ Abigail Perkiss, "Northwest Philadelphia," *The Encyclopedia of Great Philadelphia*, 2013, accessed November 7, 2016, <http://philadelphiaencyclopedia.org/archive/northwest-philadelphia-essay/>.

²⁹ "Church to Move in Germantown," *Independent Gazette* (Germantown), July 22, 1926.

³⁰ Perkiss, "Northwest Philadelphia"

³¹ Barbara Ferman, Theresa Singleton, and Don DeMarco, "West Mount Airy, Philadelphia," *Cityscape* 4, no. 2 (1998), 30.

³² Day, 41; Young 17.

³³ "First Baptist Members Join Second in Rites," *Germantown Courier*, May 12, 1955.

³⁴ Deed Sale from First Baptist Church of Germantown to Philadelphia Baptist Association, 30 January 1955, Philadelphia County Deed Book MLS, no. 887 (Philadelphia City Archives, Philadelphia, PA), 123-127.

³⁵ The name "Polite Temple" is a shortened form of "Polite's Temple." The congregation is not named after the Temple-style

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period before the mass migration of Black residents to the area, having only 13 members who gathered weekly in the home of a local resident. But, by the 1950s, riding the swelling wave of Black migrants, the congregation's weekly attendance had bloomed to over 1200, outgrowing their E. Haines St. building.³⁶ Needing more space to hold their growing congregation, Polite's Temple purchased the First Baptist Church from the Philadelphia Baptist Association for \$55,000. Though this was a large sum of money for the time, the congregation accepted a mortgage from the Philadelphia Baptist Association, and successfully paid off the building in only 20 years.³⁷ For the congregation who had, until now, gathered and worshiped in houses on the edge of the neighborhood, the purchase of First Baptist Church represented an institutional evolution that was reflective of both a geographic and demographic shift of Black residents from the fringes of Germantown to its literal and figurative center.

The Polite Temple congregation continues in the First Baptist Church building, maintaining a strong community presence through their active worship and Bible study ministries, youth group, and community concerts and movie nights. They have also sought to maintain the aging building, a task which has not been easy. In 2007, they restored the original pipe organ with the help of donors. However, five years later, the roof of the building collapsed, destroying most of the interior of the sanctuary. The congregation rebuilt, redoing the interior, replacing pews, and stabilizing the structure. Unfortunately, the roof collapse further damaged the portico of the building, resulting in the removal of the tabernacle vestibule. The congregation has also restored many of the monuments inside and outside the church, including a plaque recognizing the original donors who subscribed to the fundraiser to build the church in 1852, and a memorial to those from the original congregation who fought in World War I. Future plans for maintenance of the structure include a restoration of the portico columns and installation of a new boiler to more efficiently heat the structure so that it can continue to be a community presence.³⁸ In 2018, the church took another step forward by ordaining its first female pastor, Rev. Bernadine Waterman. Previously, the congregation had barred female clergy from serving in ministerial leadership.³⁹

The rise and fall of community organizations often acts as a gauge to measure larger changes in the community they serve and reside. In the case of First Baptist Church of Germantown, the church's fortunes rose and fell with the changes of the community around it, but the building itself nevertheless endured as a reminder of the importance of sacred spaces to the ecology of the neighborhood around them.³⁴⁰ Riding a wave of prosperity in the mid-19th century, the original congregation was able to enlist one of Philadelphia's most prominent architects to design their church. However, by the early years of the 20th century, the same economic and demographic factors

architecture of First Baptist Church, but after C.N. Polite, making their acquisition of First Baptist ironically appropriate.

³⁶ Julia Jordan, "Germantown News." *Philadelphia Tribune*, May 02, 1953.

³⁷ Mortgage Satisfaction for Polite Temple Baptist Church to Philadelphia Baptist Association, 11 November 1976, Philadelphia County Mortgage Book DCC, no. 1426 (Philadelphia City Hall, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania), pg. 558.

³⁸ Information here is taken from 2016-2017 conversations with then-pastor Dr. Franklin Williamson.

³⁹ Nathaniel Lee, "Polite Temple Baptist: A Church Family That Members Never Leave," *Philadelphia Tribune*, September 2, 2018, accessed October 28, 2021, https://www.phillytrib.com/religion/polite-temple-baptist-a-church-family-that-members-never-leave/article_311778d0-8d9d-5313-81e7-03c055798b57.html.

⁴⁰ Day, 24.

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that were causing turmoil in the makeup of Germantown also began to shake the foundations of the First Baptist. By 1926, the church was in crisis, unable to afford its building, and unable to adapt to the changing environment around them. By 1955, facing major changes in demographics, and reduced to only 27, the original congregation disappeared from Germantown, passing along the torch of community organization to the African-American Polite Temple Baptist Church, the second congregation to inherit the building and its current occupants. In this way, the history of First Baptist Church of Germantown reflects the history of the wider Germantown community, and the building, occupied by two quite different congregations, acts as a still-present witness reminding the city of Germantown's past.

In Katie Day's typology of faith communities in Germantown, First Baptist Church and the Polite Temple congregation are a "hermit crab", that is a congregation that has inherited a sacred space left behind by another group who either went extinct or outgrew it. Writes Day, "The continuity of sacred purpose contributes value to the neighborhood."⁴¹ Day goes on to argue that these spaces are a necessary part of new groups making a space their own and learning to value a community as owners and not as outsiders. While most historic churches in Germantown can claim this title, these other buildings are largely the result of denominational groups staking a claim to a space that would serve their ministry needs meaning their locations are incidental, resulting from an attempt to serve a community that already exist. First Baptist Church, on the other hand, was intentionally placed by a secular developer as a planned amenity to help him shape his corner of Germantown for a community that did not yet exist. This gives First Baptist Church an important role in helping to understand the locus of the greater community, as Price Street was its own sub-development of Germantown. The two planned churches of Price Street—St. Vincent's and First Baptist—were intentionally placed by Price to attract (white) Catholics and Protestants to his new suburban cut which he envisioned as the gemstones of the Germantown neighborhood. As demographic change swept the area from 1950-1980, the Polite Temple congregation, a group who already existed before the change but grew because of it, adopted the structure, moving from historically ostracized members of a predominantly white community to owners and shapers of an increasingly Black one. Yet, for both congregations, the structure of First Baptist acted as an anchor point that helped them articulate the value they placed in the community they called home. As such, understanding First Baptist Church only through its historic physicality as a high style structure is not sufficient to fully encapsulate its historic importance to the communities of Germantown broadly and Price Street specifically—communities that though they have changed demographically, have nevertheless looked to the building as a means of declaring presence and giving value to their space.

Sitting atop a small rise on Price Street, First Baptist Church of Germantown is a surprising structure. Designed by Samuel Sloan and built in 1852, the Baptist congregation that commissioned the church was a new congregation of modest means but with high missionary ambitions for the growing mid-19th century Germantown area. Built upon land purchased by the well-to-do pastor of the congregation, the church was intended to be a

⁴¹ Day, 41.

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Protestant counterpart to the neighboring Catholic St. Vincent de Paul's down the road, all part of real estate magnate Eli K. Price's meticulously planned street which bore his name. Sloan would immortalize his plan for the church in the second volume of his two-part pattern book-cum-treatise *The Model Architect*.

Though a remarkable landmark, the building stands out even more so when compared to its contemporary structures on the same street which are mainly variations of Italianate, Second Empire, and Romanesque inspired designs. Directly adjacent to a station on the newly constructed extension line of the Philadelphia-Germantown-Norristown Railroad, the impressive façade of the church would have been among the first things visitors to Germantown saw and would have been visible from the windows of the Railroad Hotel across the street.⁴² The immediate noticeability of the church is intentional as the building was meant to be a billboard advertising the success of the community and ambitions of three men in particular—real estate baron Eli K. Price, religious leader Rev. John M. Richardson, and carpenter-turned-architect Samuel Sloan. For the Rev. Richardson's Baptist congregation who owned the building, the site was to be a holy acropolis to preach the virtues of civic virtue and moral living. For Price, the church and its Catholic counterpart up the street, acted as gatekeepers to the mix of Catholic Irish and Protestant Anglo-American workers flooding into his planned neighborhood while demonstrate through architecture the high ambitions he had for the moral and industrial character of his community. For Sloan, the building was a showcase for his design prowess, demonstrating his ability to provide fashionable form on a limited budget. In looking at First Baptist Church of Germantown, one sees a microcosm of the forces that were shaping more broadly the Germantown suburb in the mid-19th century.

Architecture

The first half of the 19th century was a time of rapid change for the Germantown community. Once a rural community of German farmers and artisans situated along Germantown Avenue, during the first three decades of the 1800s, manufacturing and trade on the mills of the local waterways drew enough attention to the area to justify the development of a rail extension. Completed in 1832, this extension of the Philadelphia, Germantown, and Norristown Railroad allowed commuters to travel to Philadelphia in under an hour and gave Germantown industries greater access to the commerce of the rest of the state and nation.⁴³ The success of the railroad increased an already rapidly changing landscape, so much so that historian S.F. Hotchkin notes that immediately following the opening of the rail line, "...The rush of people anxious to buy shares [in the Railroad] was so great that the windows [of the rail office] were broken, and iron railings demolished by the swaying crowds..."⁴⁴

⁴² R.L. Barnes, "Ward 22," map, in *New Map of the Consolidated City of Philadelphia, 1855* (Philadelphia, PA: R.L. Barnes, 1855).

⁴³ Hotchkin, 318.

⁴⁴ Hotchkin, 41.

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With the new economic opportunities brought by the railway, real estate values in the Morton neighborhood immediately adjacent to the depot station where the railroad deposited goods and people onto Germantown Avenue boomed. In 1844, prominent Philadelphia lawyer and real estate developer Eli K. Price bought 1.8 acres of land from John Bowman, a local hatter who owned a significant amount of land abutting Germantown Ave.⁴⁵ Price added this tract of land purchased from Bowman to a larger area of land he had purchased off of a variety of other individuals, totaling around 15 acres. Price's goal in acquiring this land was to develop an intentionally planned and laid out street within Germantown that would both serve as a source of real estate investment income for him and help define the characteristics of the area of Germantown it was a part of.⁴⁶ Price opened the eponymous Price Street through his new land.

When Price purchased his 15 acres of land, he was keenly aware of the growing demand for real estate in the increasingly popular Germantown neighborhoods near the railroad. Indeed, the depot for the railroad sat at the edge of Price's property, and Price had already erected his Railroad Hotel directly opposite the depot.⁴⁷ The new street fit perfectly into this railroad-centric view of the rising value of the neighborhood. Price Street, sitting on an elevated section of land, would be one of the first sites visible to passengers riding the rail into Germantown; and Price's Railroad Hotel would be one of the first structures visible when they left the railroad station across the street. Price, therefore, wanted his street to be centerpiece in Germantown; no doubt meant to imply the high character of the man who created it.⁴⁸ To help ensure his vision for Price Street, Price used restrictive clauses in the deeds of the land he sold to ensure the uniform setback of buildings 15 feet from the street. Price also planned out the lots, selling lots that were 50 to 75 feet wide, with depths around 125 feet on the southeast side, and 88 or 175 feet on the northwest side. Combined with proximity to the railroad and access to gas and water lines, Price Street property soon became some of the most in-demand areas of Germantown.⁴⁹

However, it was not only industrialists and real estate barons like Price who saw opportunity in Germantown. For decades, the Baptist denomination had attempted and failed to establish a foothold in Germantown. Other Christian groups, specifically the Methodists, Episcopalians, Presbyterians, Quakers, and Mennonites, had roots in Germantown stretching back to the 18th century while other religious groups like the Catholics that would form the heart of the large parish of St. Vincent de Paul's congregation, grew rapidly thanks to the Catholic Irish minority establishing itself in the area. Baptists, however, were at a disadvantage. With no strong Baptist ethnic or cultural group, and only 30 people holding a Baptist identity in Germantown, the Baptists simply could not establish any meaningful presence.⁵⁰ Despite this, fervor amongst the few Baptists was high enough that Rev. John M. Richards, pastor of a large Baptist church elsewhere in the city, agreed to test the willingness of the

⁴⁵ Deed Sale from John Bowman to Eli K. Price, 11 December 1844, Philadelphia County Deed Book RLL, no. 29 (Philadelphia City Archives, Philadelphia, PA.), 326-328.

⁴⁶ J.C. Sidney, *Map of the Township of Germantown* map. (Philadelphia, PA: R.P. Smith, 1848).

⁴⁷ Holst, 106-107.

⁴⁸ Holst, 107.

⁴⁹ Jellet, 8.

⁵⁰ Jellet, 5-6.

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community to host a Baptist congregation.⁵¹ By 1852, he had more than doubled the number of Baptists in the community, and evidently felt there was enough interest in the area to found a permanent congregation, saying in an 1852 interview with the *Germantown Telegraph*, "...We learn that the prospect of building up a church here is quite encouraging."⁵²

Using \$1558 of his own money, Richards purchased a ¼ acre plot of land from Price. Interestingly, the deed for the land does not include many of Price's tight controls for his planned neighborhood, including omitting the 15-foot setback present in virtually all of the other deeds for the street.⁵³ The reasoning for this is unclear. One possibility is that Price may have had an established relationship with Richards, as Richards' father was a well-to-do businessman who served with Price as a Trustee at the University of Pennsylvania. Price may have also had in mind the Baptist denomination's reputation as defenders and promoters of civic virtue through their emphasis on temperance, charity, and Christian morality. For his part, Richards was keenly aware of the power of location, calling the lot a "commanding one...in the very centre of business travel, population, and perspective growth."⁵⁴ To build their new house of worship, Richards' contracted architect Samuel Sloan. Born in Chester County, Pennsylvania in 1815, Samuel Sloan began his career as a carpenter, working in the Philadelphia area beginning in the mid-1830s. In 1851, the success of Sloan's proposed commission for the Delaware County, PA courthouse and jail and his commission for Andrew Eastwick's Bartram Hall villa inspired him to begin pursuing architecture as a full-time vocation. By 1851, Sloan had become one of Philadelphia's best-known architects and had changed his entry in *McElroy's Philadelphia Directory* from "carpenter" to "architect" to reflect his new found success in the field.⁵⁵

By 1852, Sloan was receiving hundreds of requests for commissions, and the Philadelphia publishing house E.G. Jones & Co. contracted him to publish an architectural guidebook containing patterns and plates of his designs. This book, known as *The Model Architect*, went on sale in the summer of 1852, selling out almost immediately and becoming one of the most popular works of its kind in the United States.⁵⁶ After the success of the first volume of the work, Sloan began working on essays and architectural plans to include in a second volume, partnering with John S. Stewart to form the firm Sloan & Stewart in order to deal with the increasing demand for his services.⁵⁷

⁵¹ Edwin Iwanicki, "Germantown's First Baptist Church," *The Germantown Crier* 18, no. 2 (May 1966): 52.

⁵² Nancy A. Holst, "Pattern Books and the Suburbanization of Germantown, Pennsylvania in the Mid-Nineteenth Century," PhD diss., University of Delaware, 2008, 104-105.

⁵³ Deed Sale from Eli K. Price to Rev. John M. Richards. 29 April 1852. Philadelphia County Deed Book TH, no. 167. (Philadelphia, PA: City of Philadelphia Municipal Archives), 291-293.

⁵⁴ Iwanicki, 52.

⁵⁵ Harold N. Cooledge, *Samuel Sloan, Architect of Philadelphia, 1815-1884* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1986), 34.

⁵⁶ Cooledge, 36.

⁵⁷ Cooledge, 39.

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Richards contracted Sloan during the interlude between volumes of *The Model Architect*. The exact reason why the congregation chose Sloan is unknown but may have to do with Sloan's reputation as an architect who was willing to design and build for a wide range of clients, or it may have been as simple as attempting to secure the most fashionable architect of the time in the area.⁵⁸ However, budgetary reasons must have played a part, as the congregation's humble group of 73 members were only able to raise \$12,000 of the \$17,000 required to build the church and Sloan was known as an architect who thrived on sites where space and budget were a concern.⁵⁹ For his part, Sloan seems to have relished the challenge of building a high style Greek building on a modest budget. In his writings for popular magazines, and in his own published treatises, Sloan often highlighted new techniques and technologies, musing on how innovation allowed the fashionable tastes of contemporary architecture to be accessible to people of modest means. For example, in his *American Builders' Journal* Sloan opined that providing working class with access to "good taste" built moral character and loyalty to the nation, thus ensuring a great society.⁶⁰

For the First Baptist congregation, Sloan designed a Neoclassical Greek Revival structure. Though the design for First Baptist Church was not Sloan's first church commission, nor his first Greek Revival design, the design is nevertheless an extremely important part of the corpus of Sloan's work as he incorporated the design for the building into the second volume of *The Model Architect* as "The Church: Design the Thirty-Fifth" in 1853.⁶¹ The Greek Revival design became his standard for commissions for Baptist churches, with five out of seven Baptist church commissions following the First Baptist pattern. For other denominations, Sloan tended to favor Gothic Revival designs. Sloan's biographer, Harold Cooledge, suspected that Sloan was attracted to the relatively free worship style of the Baptists compared to other "old church" Protestant denominations that practiced more liturgically centered worship and desired the old forms of the tightly prescribed sanctuaries of Gothic spaces.⁶² He expressed this sense of freedom internally through a flexible chancel space that included a pulpit on wheels that could be moved away to reveal a hidden baptism pool under a hatch in the chancel.⁶³ Though material evidence from the structure itself suggests that Sloan's basic plan for the interior was followed as rendered in his pattern, his interior concept art shows a sanctuary with much more ornamentation than was actually added to First Baptist Church (see Appendix 10). Sloan's design, though likely prototyped by First Baptist Church, was meant to be repeated by other congregations and so Sloan likely presented a more high-style interior to ensure

⁵⁸ Cooledge, 176.

⁵⁹ Jellet, 6.

⁶⁰ Samuel Sloan, *City Homes, Country Houses and Church Architecture, or The American Builders' Journal* (Philadelphia, PA: Claxton, Remsen, & Haffelfinger, 1871): 746-748.

⁶¹ Samuel Sloan, *The Model Architect*, vol. 2 (Philadelphia: E.S. Jones & Co., 1852), 32-33. See also: Plates: XXV-XXVIII.

⁶² Cooledge, 45.

⁶³ Sloan, *The Model Architect*, 33.

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the pattern could be used by congregations of varying financial means. Sloan acknowledges this fact in the prose accompanying his designs in *The Model Architect*, where he says the church may be plain or have abundant ornamentation depending on the needs and capabilities of the congregation.⁶⁴

Yet the congregation may have also had a hand in the particulars of the design. Though Germantown had few Baptists when Richards organized the First Baptist congregation, those Baptists that were in the area had roots back to 1837 when the nearby Baptist school of Haddington College attempted to establish a congregation in the area. Indeed, one of the founding members of the congregation was Rev. Dr. J. Newton Brown, an influential 19th century Baptist missionary and theologian who is the only known person buried on the site.⁶⁵ Given the intellectual and missionary bent of the congregation's theology, the congregation may have been attracted to the intellectual simplicity of Grecian forms, especially their reputation as being a chaste and moral form used throughout the civilized form, not indulgent or over-ornate as other contemporary forms. Perhaps even more importantly, the form had a contemporary reputation as being much more economic than Neogothic styles.⁶⁶

Without the kind of money available to other religious groups in Germantown, the Baptists needed Sloan's frugality and creative innovation to keep the project financially tenable. For most areas, Sloan used traditional means of saving money—wood instead of stone or ornate plaster for the modillions and dentils, and scored plaster to mimic cut stone on the façade. Sloan also compromised the design where possible. For example, he omitted the clocktower originally in the design, placing instead a small cupola cap. However, the capitals would pose the biggest challenge to the budget restraints placed upon Sloan by the Baptist congregation.

While Sloan acknowledged in *Constructive Architecture* that ornamentation was almost a necessity for good taste in America, in *The Model Architect*, he objected to the notion that the Classical orders were so perfect that they could only be reproduced, not innovated upon.⁶⁷ Sloan felt this was largely an excuse by the wealthy to deprive people of modest means from accessing good taste. Says Sloan, "Thousands of dollars may be expended in decoration, and the result be mere gaudy ostentation, utterly devoid of pleasing effect. The wealthy man may build more extensively, and with more luxurious splendor than one in moderate circumstances, but he cannot build more tastefully. Even a simple laborer, at no additional expense, may [obtain] a highly picturesque effect."⁶⁸ Sloan's drive to provide fashionable taste on a budget to ordinary citizens led him to adopt a new type of architectural material, not yet widely used in the United States—terracotta.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ David Spencer, *Historic Germantown* (Germantown, Philadelphia: Horace F. McCann, 1908), 151.

⁶⁶ William Barksdale Maynard, *Architecture in the United States, 1800-1850* (New Haven, CT: Yale Univ. Press, 2002): 255.

⁶⁷ Samuel Sloan, *Constructive Architecture: A Guide to the Practical Builder and Mechanic* (Philadelphia, PA: J.B. Lippincott, 1859): 67.

⁶⁸ Sloan, *The Model Architect*, 1: 10.

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The terracotta Sloan used at First Baptist Church Germantown appears to have always been plastered or painted to give the impression of marble or some other carved stone. However, two of the capitals are damaged, and samples taken from underneath the plastering reveal relatively uniform buff colored terracotta with large inclusions of grog. Striations visible under a microscope show how the terracotta was hand-packed into a mold, while porous vacuums still show the shrinkage caused by the original firing of the clay.

However, no makers mark is visible on the terracotta, leaving the exact provenance of the capitals something of a mystery. That said, there is good reason to believe that the terracotta originates from Tolman, Luther, and Co. of Worcester, MA. Sloan used Tolman terracotta at several other locations, including the Lancaster Courthouse in Lancaster, Pennsylvania, designed and built by Sloan in 1853.⁶⁹ The Corinthian capitals of the Lancaster Courthouse, though larger than those of First Baptist, nevertheless bear striking resemblance to each other, including the shape and position of the acanthus leaves, and the volutes of the central helix beneath the rosette. Likewise, the columns of First Baptist Church also bear strong resemblance to advertisements for Tolman Corinthian capitals that appear in an 1852 catalog of products available from the Tolman, Luther, and Co. terracotta factory in Worcester as well as the capitals displayed by Tolman at the Exhibition of Industry in New York in 1853.⁷⁰

The 1852 Tolman catalog is particularly compelling. A surviving catalog once part of the Franklin Institute library in Philadelphia and now in possession of the Canadian Centre for Architecture in Quebec has a label on the front cover that says "S.A. Harrison, No. 146 Walnut Street, Philadelphia." Given that Sloan and Stewart's firm shared an address with Harrison in 1852 at the same time First Baptist was being built and Harrison and Sloan collaborated heavily from 1851-1857, there is a strong chance Harrison sourced the capitals for Sloan on both First Baptist and Lancaster Courthouse. A set of virtually identical capitals were also used by Sloan on a double villa in Harrison's West Philadelphia Hamilton Terrace development at 508-510 S. 42nd Street.⁷¹ This makes First Baptist Church of Germantown one of the earliest surviving buildings known to use architectural terracotta in the United States.

The 1855 *Contractor's Manual and Builder's Price-Book*, a manual advertised heavily in Sloan's published works, estimates that a Corinthian capital in most places would cost \$6.00 per square foot in materials and \$11.00 in labor if made of wood, while one made of marble would cost \$25.00 per square foot in materials and \$30.00 in labor.⁷² Thus the six terracotta capitals of First Baptist using these prices would have cost about \$210 in carved

⁶⁹ Jay Shockley and Susan Tunick, "A Capital Idea: Philadelphia and the Promotion of 1850s American Terracotta," *APT Bulletin* 43, no. 2/3 (2012):34; Tunick, *Terra-cotta Skyline*, 32-33.

⁷⁰ *New Designs of Terra Cotta Ornaments Manufactured by Tolman, Luther, and Co.* (Worcester, MA: Tolman, Luther, and Co., 1852); Silliman 21

⁷¹ Shockley and Tunick, 34.

⁷² A. Bryant Clough, *The Contractor's Manual and Builder's Price Book* (New York, NY: Stephen Hallet, 1855): 34, 129.

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wood, and \$780 in marble. Though the book does not list prices for terracotta, Sloan includes pricing for a whole house worth of exterior terracotta ornamentation, including at least six architraves and an unknown number of brackets, for a double Italianate house in his “Design Forty-Second” *The Model Architect* as only being \$75.00. Though the exact cost of the terracotta capitals at First Baptist is not known, if made from wood or stone they would have cost more than an entire house worth of terracotta. Based on the cost of nearly identical capitals from Tolman in Sloan’s 1853 Lancaster Courthouse, it is likely that those on First Baptist cost around \$50-\$75 total. Were the church to have three dozen capitals identical to its current ones made of marble or wood, the cost would be \$28,000 and \$7500 respectively, effectively showing how much money Sloan’s innovation saved. The only other alternative—cast iron—was rejected outright by Sloan, because according to him, terracotta weathers better than cast iron and therefore reduces long-term maintenance costs.⁷³

When completed in 1853, the building was hailed as “one of the handsomest in the country and an ornament to the place.”⁷⁴ Sloan must have agreed, as he immortalized the design in volume two of *The Model Architect* as “The Church: Design 35th” published soon after, and built at least five more churches on the design, of which only three survive, with First Baptist being the only one to largely retain its original form, the others having been heavily modified by their congregations and/or their successors. For Price, the completion of both St. Vincent’s and First Baptist in short succession as well as the growing influx of lower and upper middle class families seemed to mark his Price Street development as a success—granting him the moral and virtuous center he hoped for. Richards too must have seen it as a success, by the time he retired in 1854, the church had grown to almost 200, paying off its outstanding \$5000 on the building by 1858, and even adding the originally planned steeple by 1862.⁷⁵ Additional improvements on the structure came in 1873 with the construction of an annex, and from 1893-1897 with the addition of stained glass and a modest pipe organ. For a time, it seemed First Baptist Church of Germantown was indeed the “Model” church Price, Richards, and Sloan had designed it to be. In contributing to the design of First Baptist Church, these three in particular were using the building as a type of billboard through which they hoped to influence the character of the growing neighborhood around them, being one of the first things visitors and residents alike would see upon arrive at the rail station right next door.

⁷³ Samuel Sloan, *City Homes, Country Houses and Church Architecture, or The American Builders' Journal* (Philadelphia, PA: Claxton, Remsen, & Haffelfinger, 1871): 531.

⁷⁴ Iwanicki, 53.

⁷⁵ Cooledge, 174.

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For Price, the church balanced St. Vincent's providing religious options to attract both Protestants and Catholics alike to occupy his neighborhood, while at the same time also acting as a counterpoint to his Railroad Hotel as a moral anchor encouraging the kind of virtues Price hoped his neighborhood would typify. For Richards, the church was an embassy of God from which his faithful congregation could evangelize to the incoming new residents of the growing Philadelphia suburb, its design reflecting the civilized temperate morality and free form of religious worship of his congregation's Baptist identity. And for Sloan, the structure was a giant advertisement of his architectural prowess, showcasing to the wider city and nation he was able to provide good taste and fashionable form even on the tightest of budgets.

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First Baptist Church of Germantown
Name of Property

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
County and State

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Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # HABS PA-1688
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____
- recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # _____

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository: American Baptist Historical Society, Atlanta, GA

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): 2002RE00062

First Baptist Church of Germantown
Name of Property

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 0.25 acres

Use either the UTM system or latitude/longitude coordinates

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates (enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

Latitude: 40.037369

Longitude: -75.174458

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

From a point along the northwest curve line of Price Street, approximately 60 feet southwestward from the southwest side of Lena Street, the boundary of the property runs southwestward for 87 feet and 6 inches before continuing at a right-angle southeast 127 feet and 2 inches, then turning at a right angle and continuing northeast 87 feet 6 inches, then turning at a right-angle and continuing 127 feet 2 inches meeting at the beginning point, for a total of approximately .25 acres accounting for 11,114 square feet of land.

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

Boundary is from property deed. The boundary has not been modified since it was originally subdivided during the initial land purchase immediately prior to the construction of the building in 1852.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Anthony R.C. Hita
organization: Archway Preservation
street & number: 409 Fonthill Dr.
city or town: Doylestown state: PA zip code: 18901
e-mail: ahita@archwaypreservation.com
telephone: 724-854-0191
date: March 14, 2023

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for nominations 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.460 et seq.). We may not conduct or sponsor and you are not required to respond to a collection of information unless it displays a currently valid OMB control number.

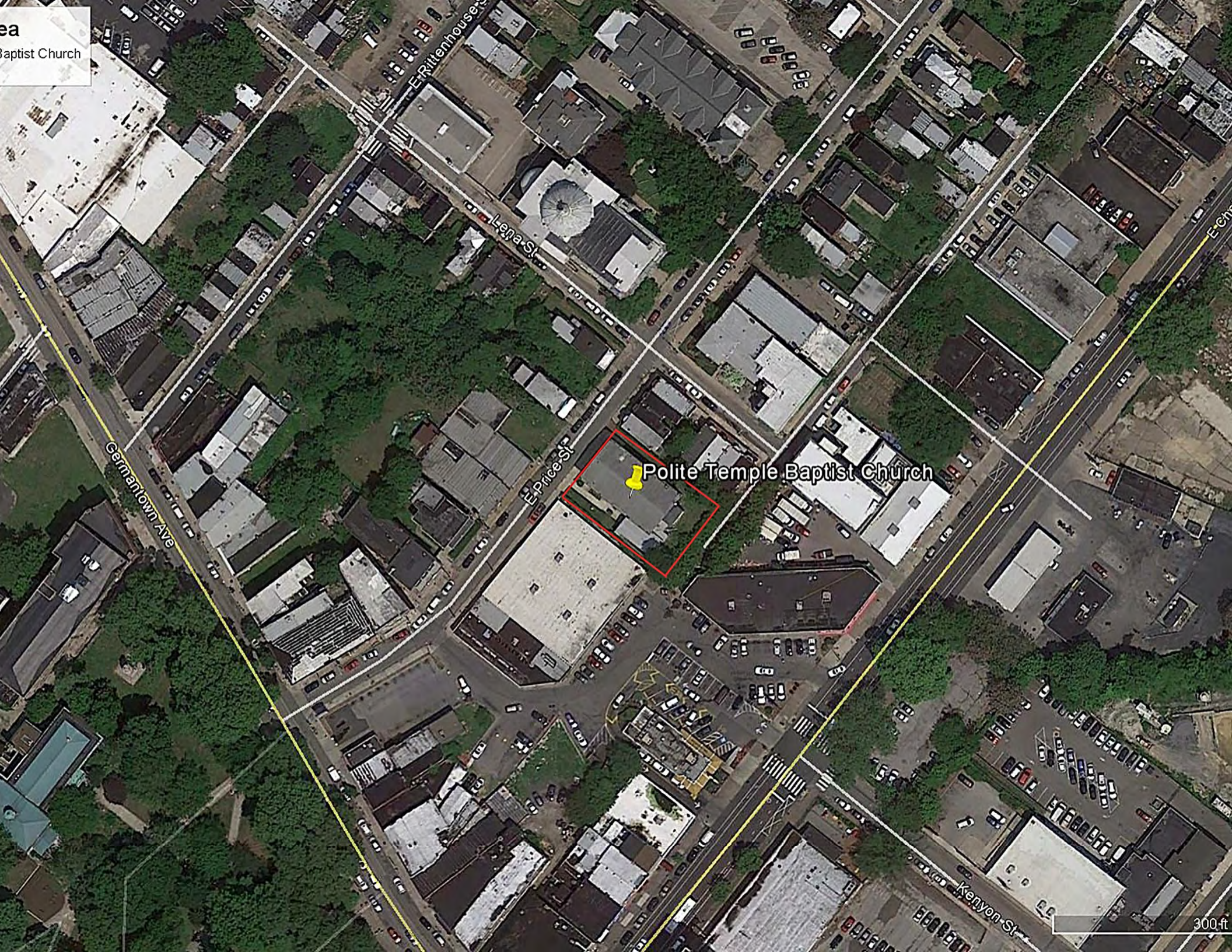
Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for each response using this form is estimated to be between the Tier 1 and Tier 4 levels with the estimate of the time for each tier as follows:

- Tier 1 – 60-100 hours
- Tier 2 – 120 hours
- Tier 3 – 230 hours
- Tier 4 – 280 hours

The above estimates include time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and preparing and transmitting nominations. Send comments regarding these estimates or any other aspect of the requirement(s) to the Service Information Collection Clearance Officer, National Park Service, 1201 Oakridge Drive Fort Collins, CO 80525.

Map 1: Property and Boundary (Google Earth)

ea
Baptist Church



Polite Temple Baptist Church

Germantown Ave

E Rittenhouse St

E Price St

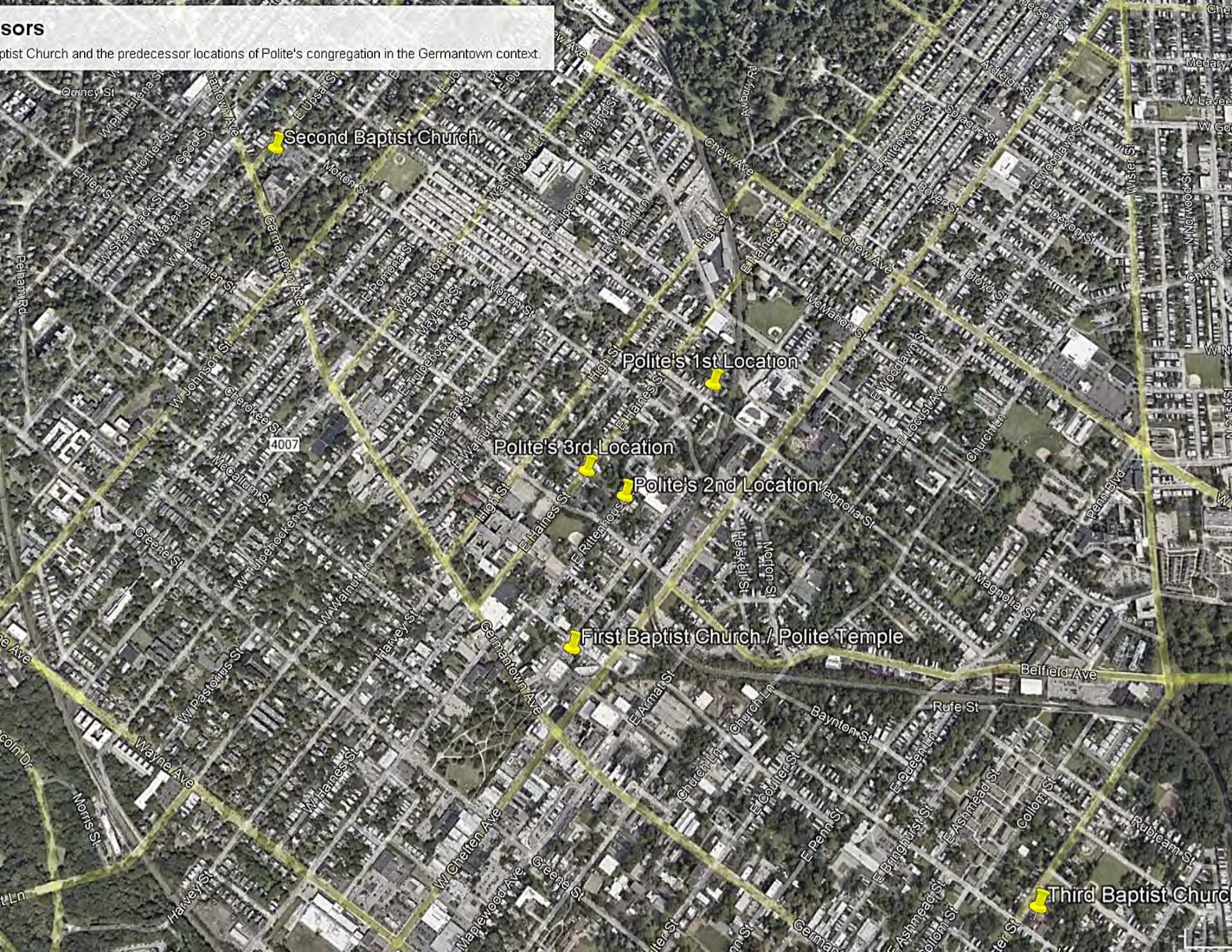
E Kenyon St

300 ft

**Map 2: Splinter Congregations from First Baptist Church
of Germantown and Predecessor Locations of Polite Temple
(Google Maps)**

SORS

ptist Church and the predecessor locations of Polite's congregation in the Germantown context.



Second Baptist Church

Polite's 1st Location

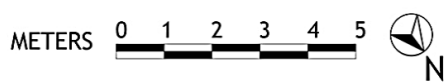
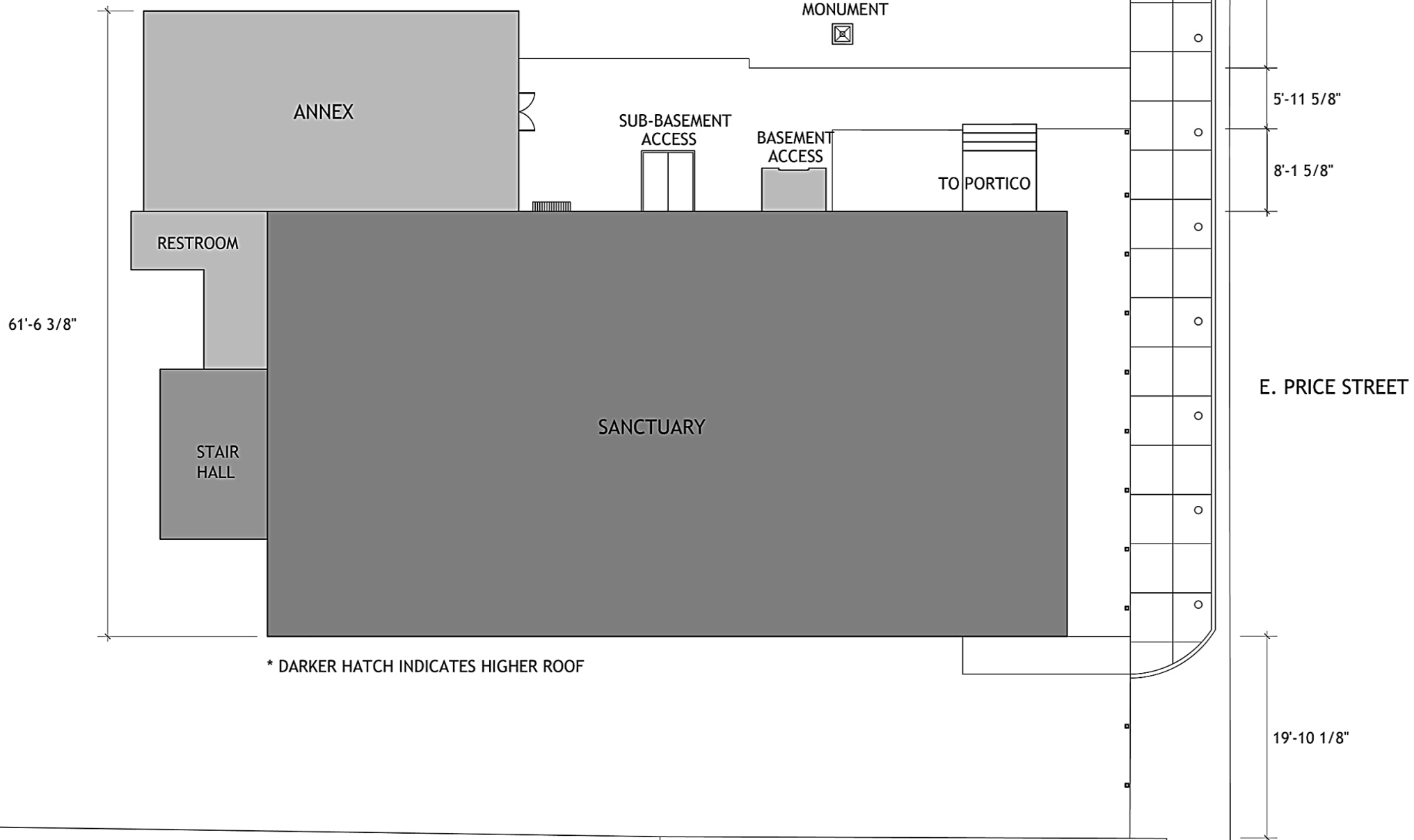
Polite's 3rd Location

Polite's 2nd Location

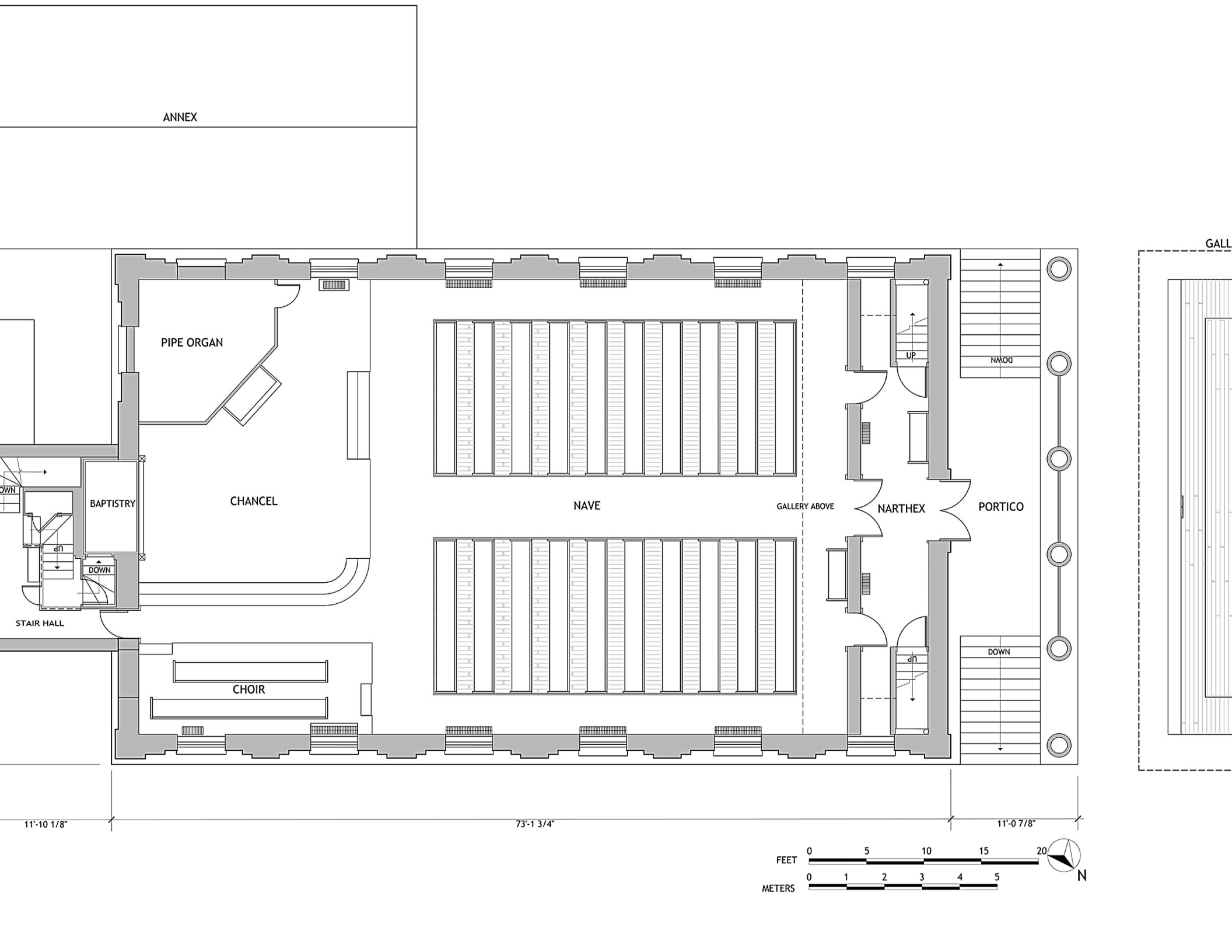
First Baptist Church / Polite Temple

Third Baptist Church

Appendix 1: Site Plan



Appendix 2: First Floor Plan



Appendix 3: Sanctuary Window Schedule



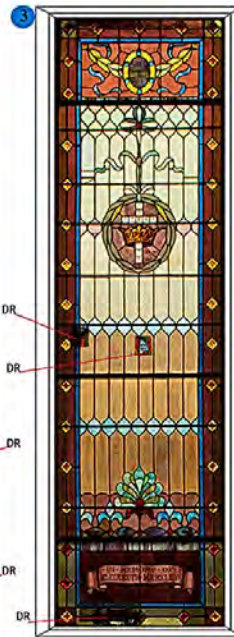
ANCESTRY WINDOW
IN MEMORY OF
JOHN V. PATTERSON
FROM THE PRIMARY SCHOOL

THE HARP, A SYMBOL OF KING DAVID, REPRESENTS DAVID AS JESUS' ANCESTOR AND THE SONGS OF PRAISES SUNG BY THE ANGELS AT JESUS' BIRTH.



BAPTISMAL WINDOW
[DEDICATION LOST]

THE DESCENDING DOVE WITH A BRANCH REPRESENTS JESUS BAPTISM AND BEGINNING OF HIS PUBLIC MINISTRY. THE THREE-LEAVES ON THE BRANCH ARE A SYMBOL OF THE TRINITY.



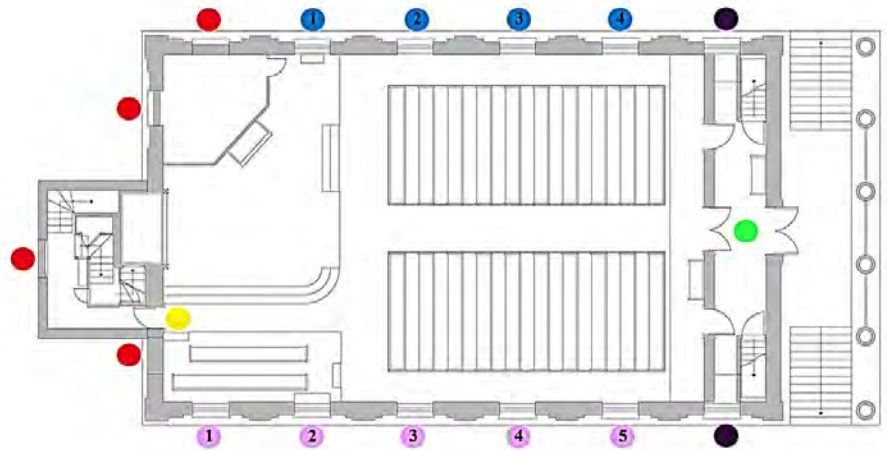
CRUCIFIXION WINDOW
IN MEMORY OF
ELIZABETH MARKLEY

THE CROSS AND CROWN REPRESENT JESUS HUMILIATION VIA CRUCIFIXION, AND EXALTATION IN RESURRECTION.



CHRISTIAN ENDEAVOR WINDOW
IN MEMORY OF OUR MOTHER
BETTY SCATCHARD

THE CHRISTIAN ENDEAVOR SOCIETY SYMBOL REPRESENTS JESUS' SENDING OUT DISCIPLES INTO THE WORLD AT HIS ASCENSION, ACTING AS A TRANSITION TO THE STORY OF THE CHURCH.



HOLY BIBLE WINDOW
PRESENTED BY THE
CHRISTIAN ENDEAVOR SOCIETY

PARALLEL TO THE PULPIT, THE OPEN BIBLE REPRESENTS THE BEGINNING OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH IN ACTS, AND SYMBOLIZES THE FIRST APOSTLES WHO WROTE THE NEW TESTAMENT.



ANCHOR AND CROSS WINDOW
[IN MEMORY OF]
[MATT]H[A]S SPENCER

THE SOUL ANCHOR AND CROSS ARE ANCIENT CHRISTIAN SYMBOLS ADOPTED TO REPRESENT THE PERIOD OF THE EARLY CHURCH AND CHRISTIAN MARTYRS.



CROWN OF LIFE WINDOW
IN MEMORY OF
JOHN S. BOWLEY

THE CROWN GIVEN TO THOSE WHO COMPLETE LIFE AND DIE IN THE FAITH, REPRESENTING THE CHRISTIANS WHO HAVE GONE BEFORE AND ARE NOW IN HEAVEN IN CHRISTIAN BELIEF.



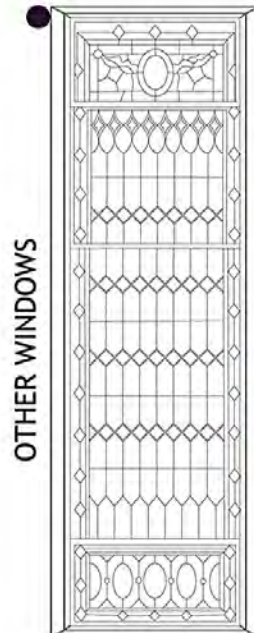
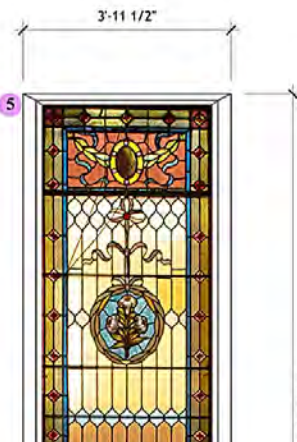
HARVEST WINDOW
IN MEMORY OF
HENRY [H]OLLARD

WHEAT REPRESENTS THE PRESENT PERIOD OF "GROWING" WHILE THE SCYTHE SYMBOLIZES "HARVEST" DENOTING THE END TIMES WHEN GOD WILL COLLECT THE FAITHFUL.



RESURRECTION WINDOW
IN MEMORY OF
JOSEPH AUCOTT

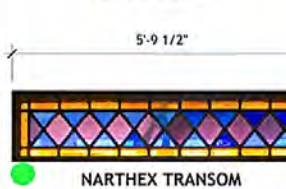
EASTER LILIES SYMBOLIZE THE PERIOD AFTER THE END WHEN THE FAITHFUL ARE RESURRECTED AND JOIN GOD IN FINAL VICTORY OVER EVIL IN A REDEEMED AND RECREATED EARTH.



OTHER WINDOWS

Unsymbolic Windows
[No Dedications]

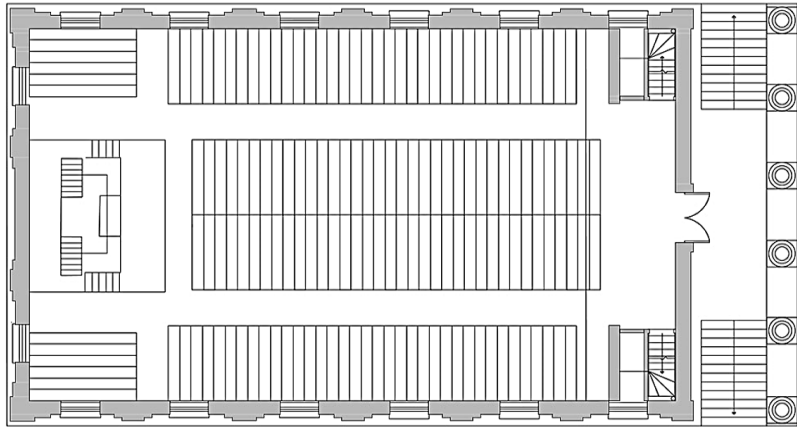
These windows bear no symbolism and are largely hidden behind the gallery stairs, visible in whole only from the exterior.



NOTATION KEY:

- LIFE OF JESUS WINDOWS
- STORY OF THE CHURCH WINDOW
- BORROWED LIGHT WINDOW
- TRANSOM WINDOW
- REMOVED WINDOW
- DR DAMAGE AND REPLACEMENT

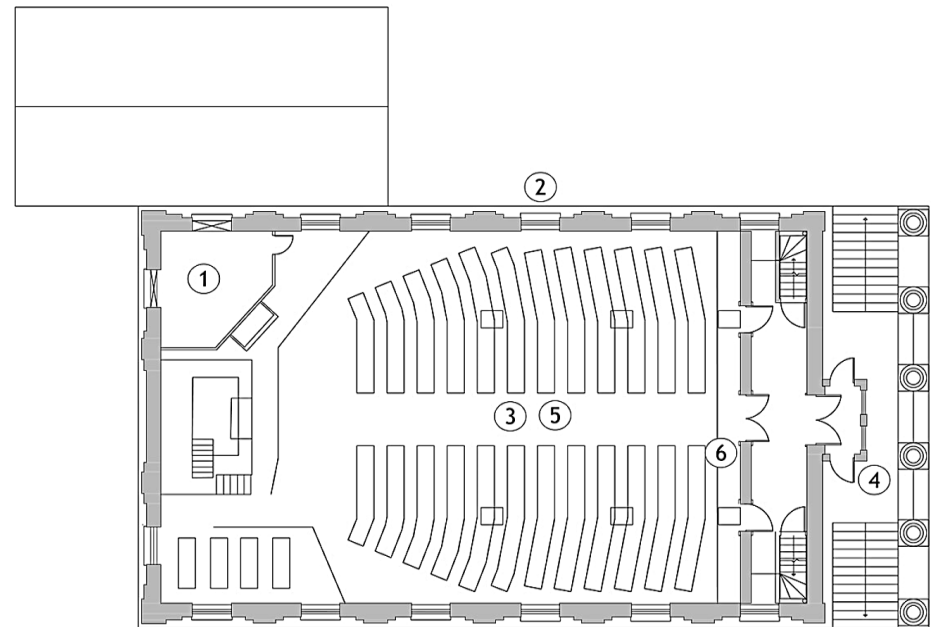
Appendix 4: Sanctuary Change Over Time



*CONJECTURAL LAYOUT BASED ON SAMUEL SLOAN'S DESIGN AND RECORDS

1852 - 1896

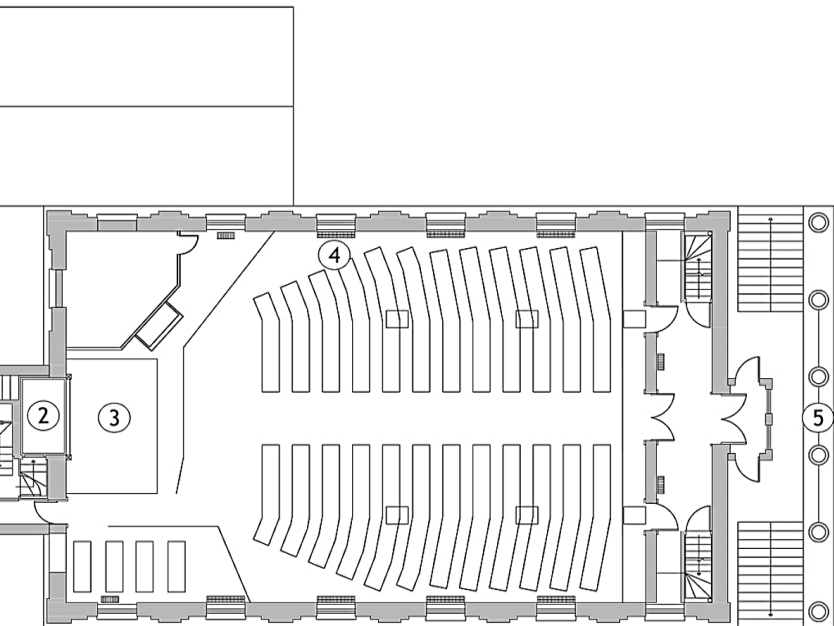
- PRIMARY CHANGES:
 1) STEEPLE(1862)
 -REMOVED (1887)
 2) ANNEX (1873)



*BASED ON RECORDS AND PHOTOS

1897 - c.1910

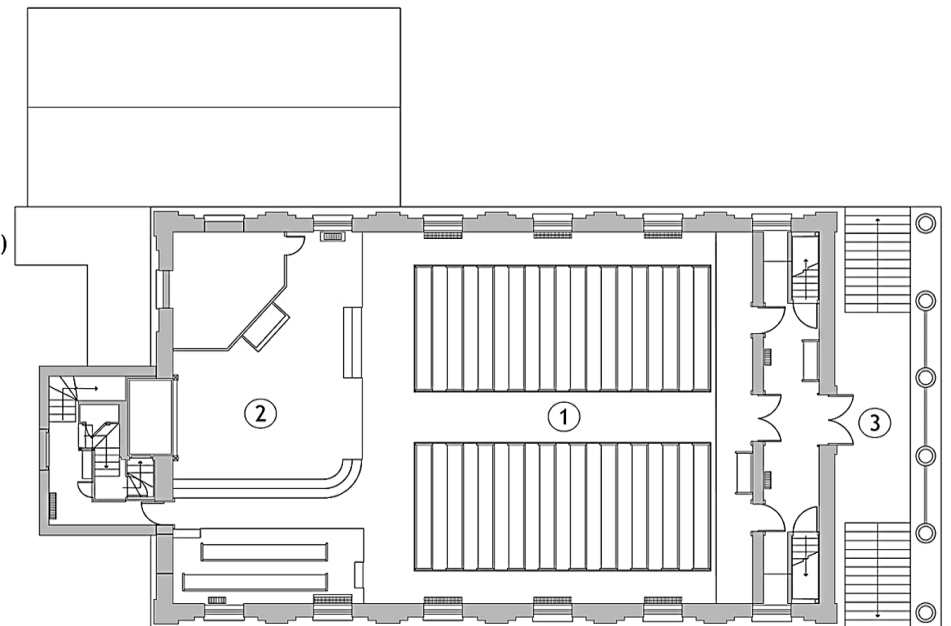
- PRIM
 1) PR
 2) S
 G
 3) M
 PI
 4) T
 VI
 5) C
 A
 6) C
 D



*BASED ON PHOTOS AND MATERIAL EVIDENCE

c.1910 - 2010

- PRIMARY CHANGES:
 1) STAIRS ADDED (c. 1910)
 2) BAPTISTRY MOVED (c. 1910)
 3) CHANCEL RENOVATED (c. 1910)
 4) RADIATORS ADDED (c. 1930)
 5) COLUMN FLUTING AND BASES REMOVED (b. 1973)

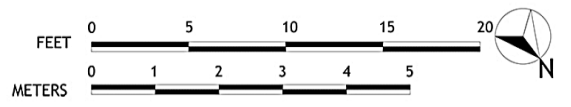
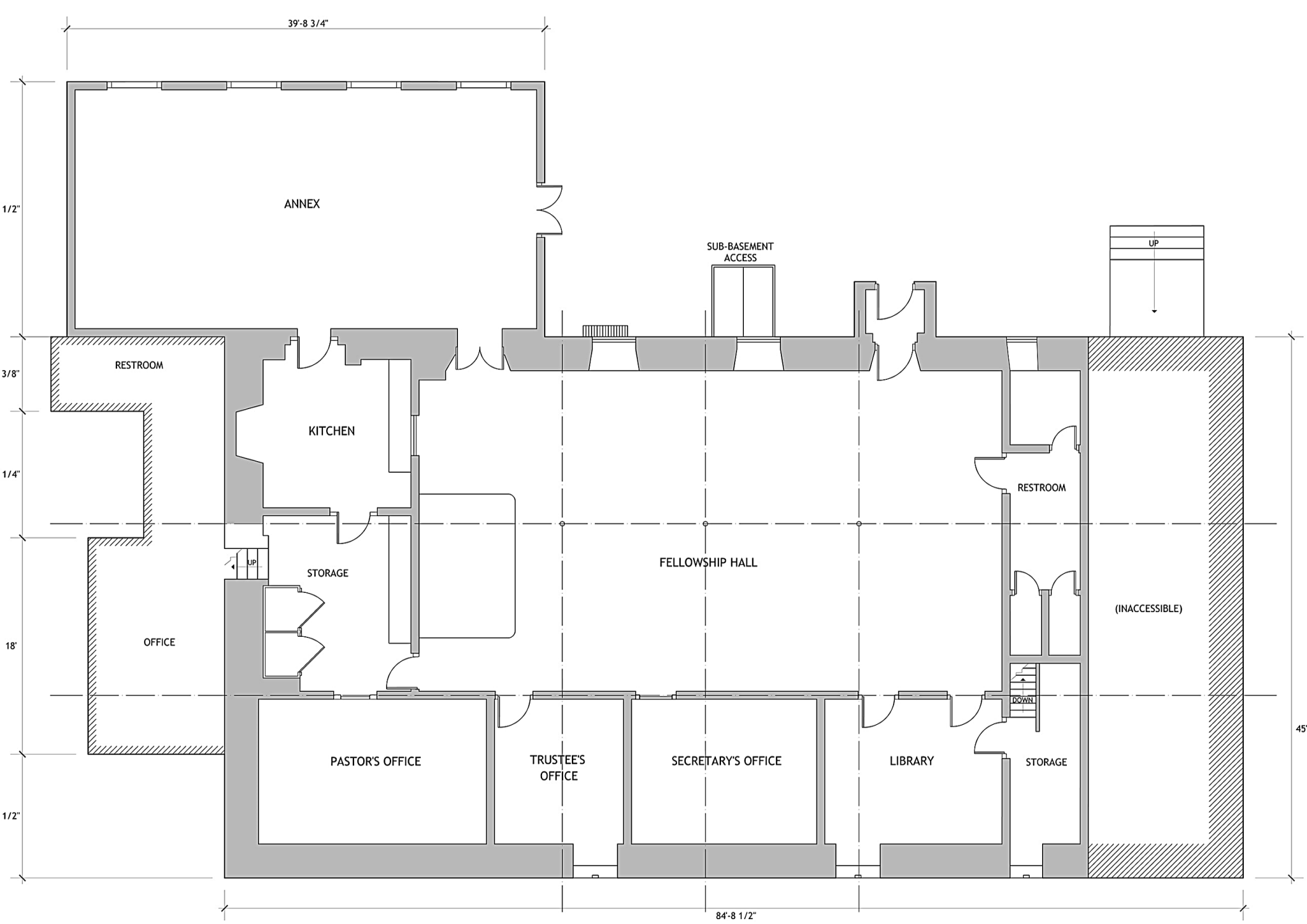


*BASED ON PHOTOS, RECORDS, AND MATERIAL EVIDENCE

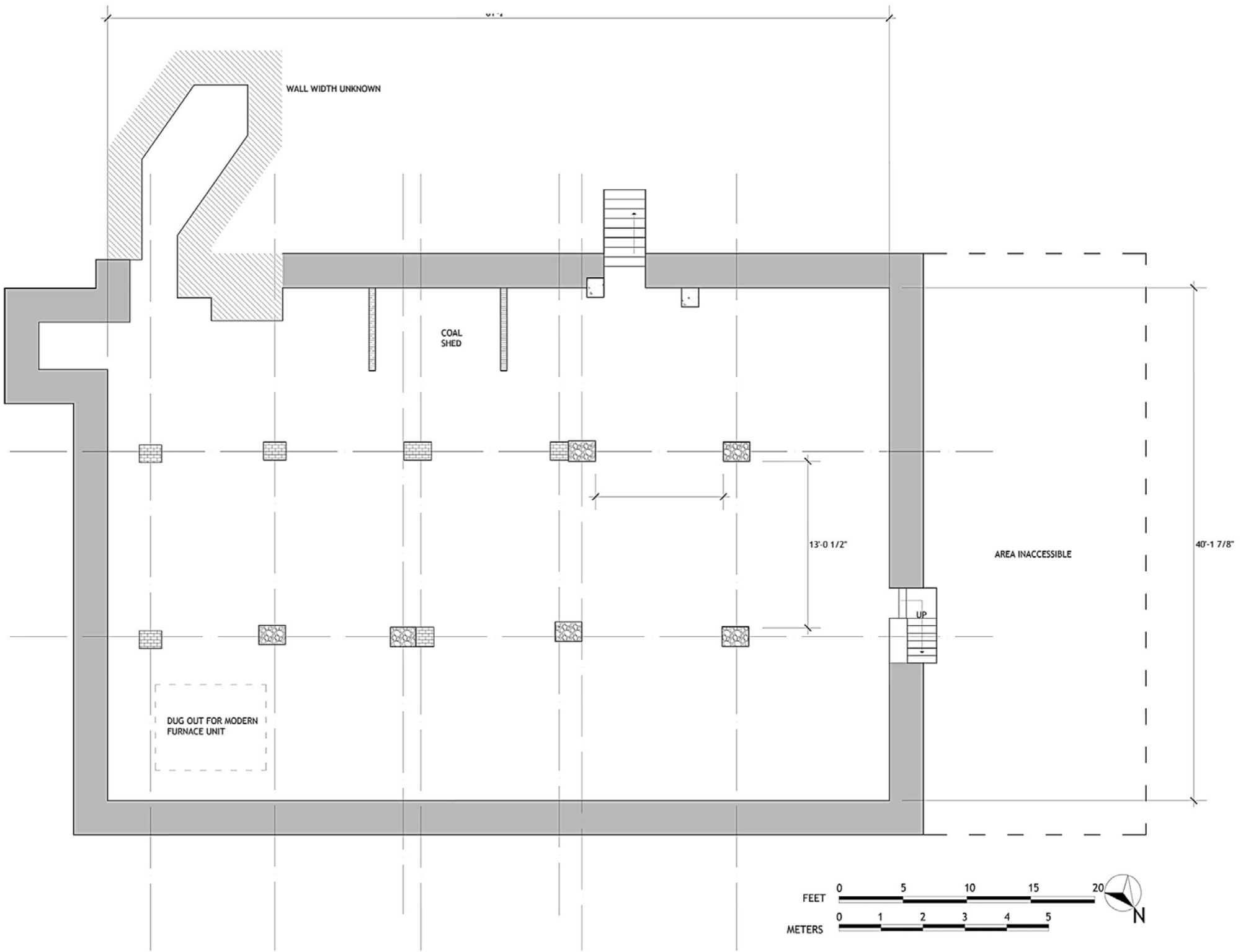
2011 - present

- PRIM
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 2) E
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 3) T
 VI
 R

Appendix 5: Basement Plan



Appendix 6: Sub-Basement Plan



WALL WIDTH UNKNOWN

COAL SHED

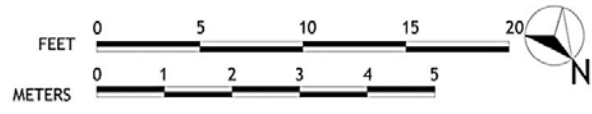
DUG OUT FOR MODERN FURNACE UNIT

AREA INACCESSIBLE

UP

13'-0 1/2"

40'-1 7/8"



Appendix 7: Samuel Sloan's External Rendering from *The Model Architect* (Design XXXV, Plate XXV)

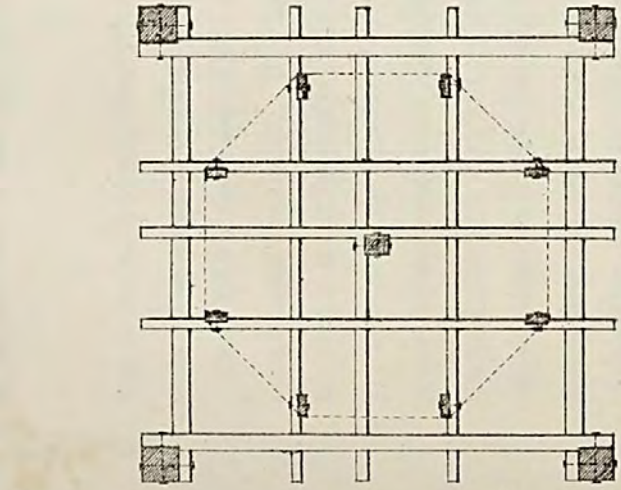


Sam^l Sloan Arch^t

P. S. Duval & Co's Steam lith Press Philad^a

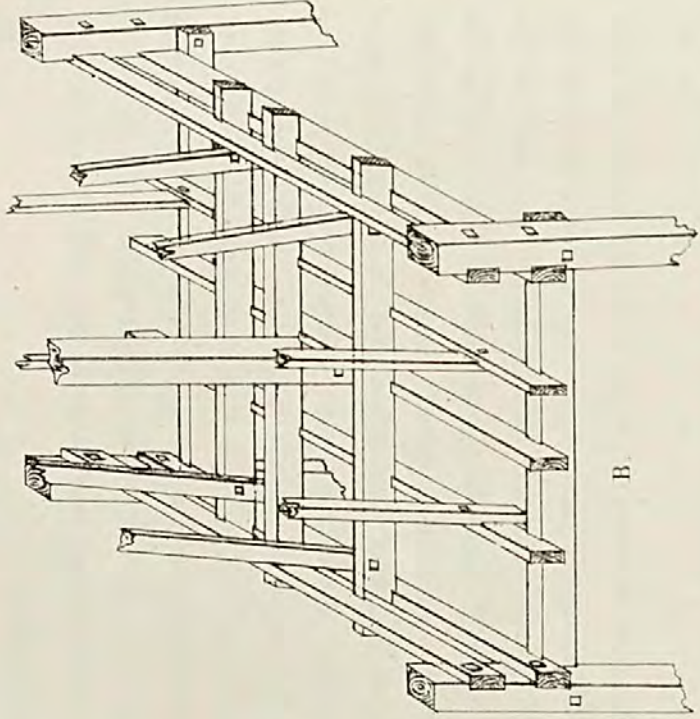
THE CHURCH.

Appendix 8: Samuel Sloan's Tower Design from *The Model Architect* (Design XXXV, Plate XXVIII)

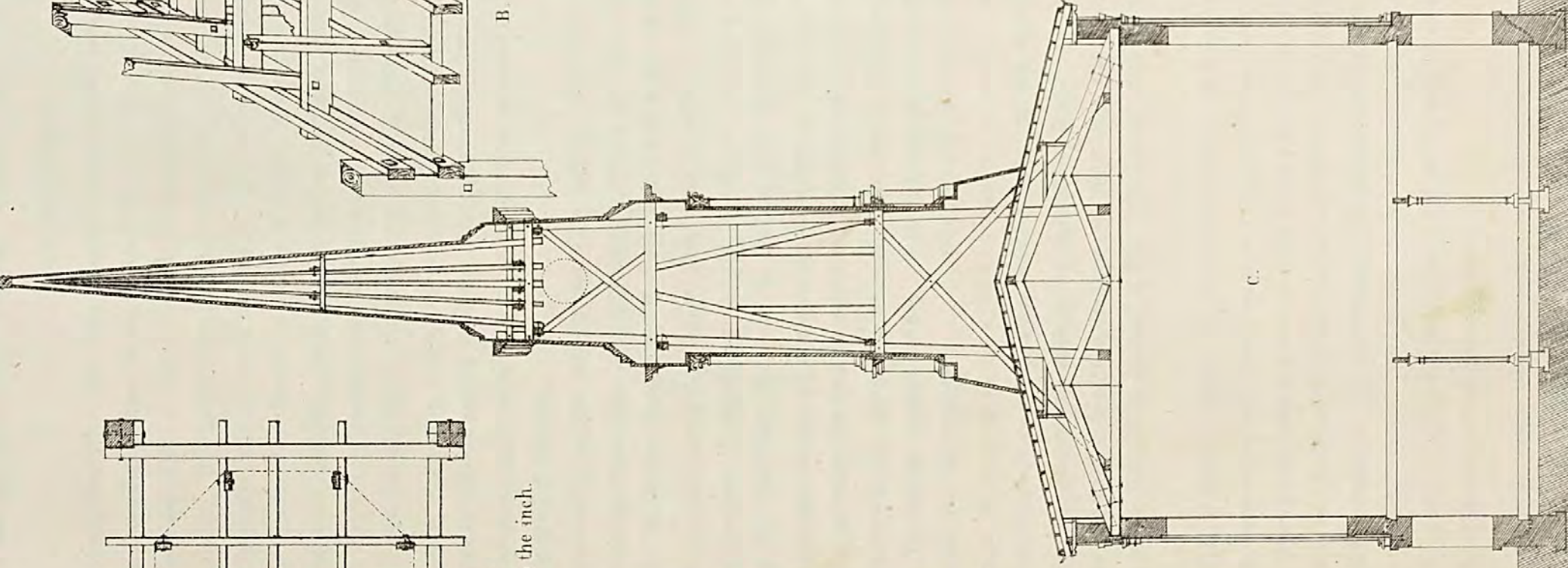


A.

Scale 4 feet to the inch.



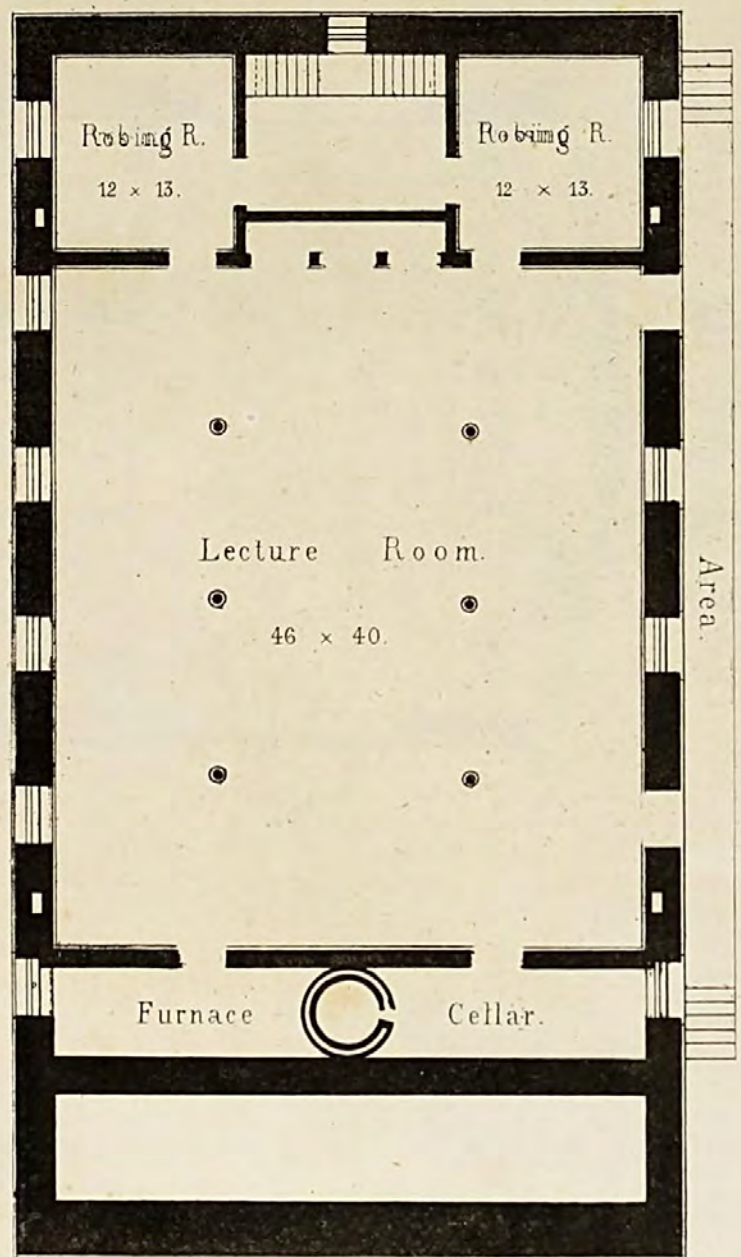
B.



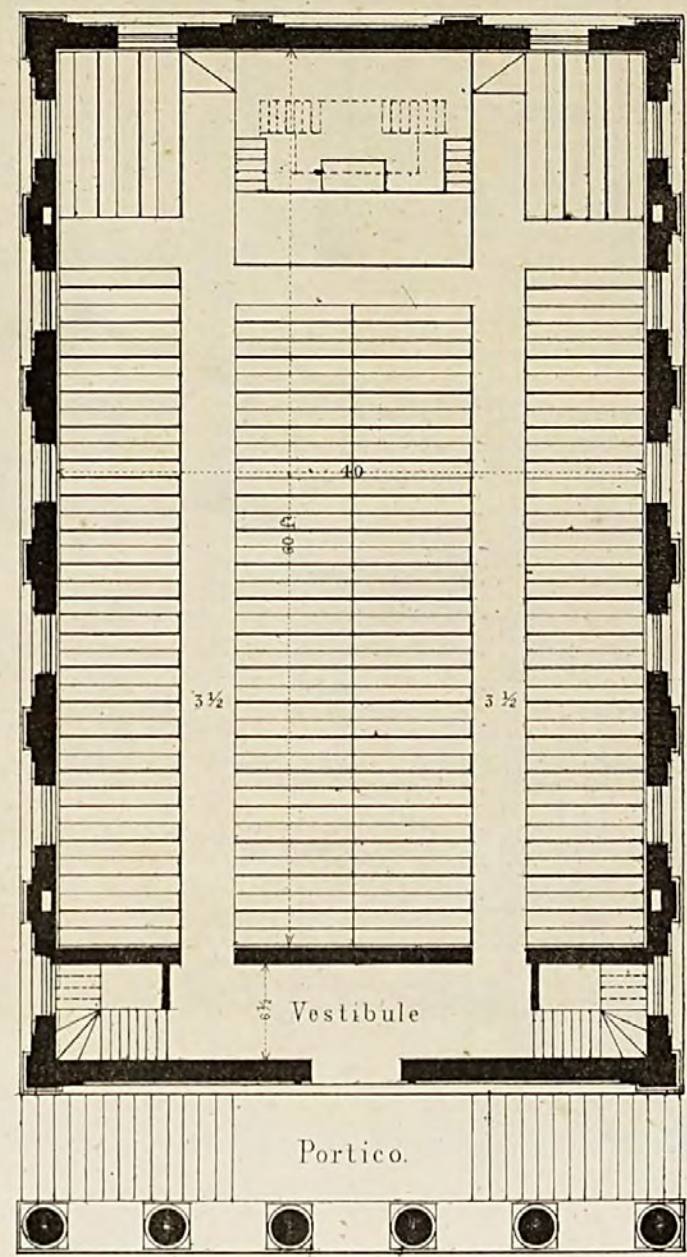
C.

Scale 12 feet to the inch.

Appendix 9: Samuel Sloan's Internal Floor Plan from *The Model Architect* (Design XXXV, Plate XXVII)



BASEMENT.



PRINCIPAL FLOOR.

Scale 12 ft to the inch.

GROUND PLANS.

Appendix 10: Samuel Sloan's Sanctuary Render from *The Model Architect* (Design XXXV, Plate XXVI)



INTERIOR.

Historic Photo 1: 1905 Postcard
(World Post Card Co., Unknown Photographer, 1905, held
by The Library Company of Philadelphia)



*PHILADELPHIA FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH,
GERMANTOWN, (BUILT 1852.)*

**Historic Photo 2: 1972 HABS Perspective
(HABS PA-1688, Jack Boucher, 1972)**



Photo Log

Name of Property: First Baptist Church of Germantown

City or Vicinity: Germantown, Philadelphia

County: Philadelphia

State: Pennsylvania

#	Description	Photographer	Date
1	Perspective view looking southeast showing the northern and western elevations.	Anthony R.C. Hita	Dec. 18, 2021
2	Rectified photo of the northern elevation (principal facade), view looking southeast.	Anthony R.C. Hita	Dec. 18, 2021
3	Photo of the burial marker and monument to J. Newton Brown, the only grave of what was intended to be a churchyard, view looking southeast.	Anthony R.C. Hita	Dec. 18, 2021
4	Photo of the northern elevation (principal facade) of the annex, view looking southeast.	Anthony R.C. Hita	Dec. 18, 2021
5	Detail photo of the capitals of the northern elevation (principal facade) portico columns, view looking southeast.	Anthony R.C. Hita	March 17, 2023
6	View looking northeast from the neighboring roof showing the west elevation of First Baptist Church and the roof and west elevation of the annex. A portion of the nave of St. Vincent de Paul Catholic Church is visible on the left side of the picture, showing its proximity. This location is not safely accessible in 2023.	Noor Jehan Sadiq	April 20, 2017.
7	Photo of the sub-basement, looking southeast. This area is not safely accessible in 2023.	Joseph Elliot	Apr. 12, 2017
8	Photo of the first floor sanctuary looking southeast from the gallery towards the chancel	Anthony R.C. Hita	Dec. 18, 2021
9	Photo of the first floor sanctuary looking northwest from the chancel towards the gallery.	Anthony R.C. Hita	Dec. 18, 2021
10	Photo of the basement fellowship hall looking southeast.	Anthony R.C. Hita	Dec. 18, 2021
11	Photo of the basement fellowship hall's serving window to the kitchen, which is likely a repurposed original opening on what was the original back wall of the structure.	Anthony R.C. Hita	Dec. 18, 2021
12	Photo of one of the basement's office/classroom spaces.	Anthony R.C. Hita	Dec. 18, 2021



ST. MARY'S CHURCH
BAPTIST CHURCH

St. Mary's Church
Baptist Church



OLD BAPTIST CHURCH
ERECTED 1842

Old Baptist Church
1842-1843
1844-1845
1846-1847
1848-1849
1850-1851
1852-1853
1854-1855
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2016-2017
2018-2019
2020-2021
2022-2023
2024-2025















Palm Temple Baptist Church
Celebrating 81 Years 1940-2021

Jesus
Peace
Love
Joy

joy
Do not be afraid.
I will be with you and will
bring you peace and joy for all people.

IN REMEMBRANCE OF ME

WELCOME

WELCOME



hope
The words also speak
of our Lord Jesus Christ.

love
With promises in the face
of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Worship Service for Christmas Eve
8:00 PM
December 24, 2023
St. Paul's Episcopal Church
1000 1st Street, N.E.
Atlanta, GA 30309
www.stpaulsatlanta.org

Prayer Book
Book of Common Prayer
Book of Psalms
Book of Numbers
Book of Deuteronomy
Book of Joshua
Book of Judges
Book of Ruth
Book of 1 Samuel
Book of 2 Samuel
Book of 1 Kings
Book of 2 Kings
Book of 1 Chronicles
Book of 2 Chronicles
Book of Ezra
Book of Nehemiah
Book of Esther
Book of Job
Book of Psalms
Book of Proverbs
Book of Ecclesiastes
Book of Song of Solomon
Book of Isaiah
Book of Jeremiah
Book of Lamentations
Book of Ezekiel
Book of Daniel
Book of Hosea
Book of Joel
Book of Amos
Book of Obadiah
Book of Jonah
Book of Micah
Book of Nahum
Book of Habakkuk
Book of Zephaniah
Book of Haggai
Book of Zechariah
Book of Malachi
Book of Matthew
Book of Mark
Book of Luke
Book of John
Book of Acts
Book of Romans
Book of 1 Corinthians
Book of 2 Corinthians
Book of Galatians
Book of Ephesians
Book of Colossians
Book of 1 Thessalonians
Book of 2 Thessalonians
Book of 1 Peter
Book of 2 Peter
Book of 1 John
Book of 2 John
Book of 3 John
Book of Revelation





peace
He died for you

Table with storage units and papers.

Table with white tablecloth.

Table with chairs.

Table with boxes and papers.



the Bible

BELIEVE FAITH



the Bible

BELIEVE FAITH

