

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

For NPS use only

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

received

date entered

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic Franklin Presbyterian Church

and or common

2. Location

street & number 45 Church Street

N/A not for publication

city, town Franklin

N/A vicinity of

state North Carolina

code 037

county Macon

code 113

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational	<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government	<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
	N/A	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name Franklin Presbyterian Church c/o Rev. W. Tyler Martin

street & number 45 Church Street

city, town Franklin

N/A vicinity of

state North Carolina 28734

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Registry of Deeds

street & number Macon County Courthouse

city, town Franklin,

state North Carolina 28734

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Western Ten Counties Reconnaissance Survey has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date 1979

federal state county local

depository for survey records N.C. Division of Archives and History, Western Office

city, town 13 Veterans Drive, Asheville,

state North Carolina 28805

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved date _____
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Presbyterian Church of Franklin, North Carolina, is a well-proportioned, red brick church building constructed in the mid-nineteenth century on the highest of several ridges rising north of the Little Tennessee River in Franklin. The building looks southwestward over the town toward the Smokies and the plain of the Little Tennessee. The brick building, at the corner of Church Street and Harrison Avenue, one block removed from Main Street, forms one arm of a C-shaped complex which includes a contemporary sanctuary and church school buildings and offices. Clipped lawn and azaleas unite the old structure with the new brick buildings. A broad flight of concrete steps leads from Church Street to the porch of the old church building.

The present brick church building is the second structure used by the Presbyterian congregation in the town of Franklin but the first building on this site. A number of repairs have been made over the years since its construction about 1856, but the building presents an appearance little changed from its original design. The building, approximately fifty feet by thirty-six feet, is a modest, vernacular Greek Revival temple form structure, constructed of hand-made brick laid in American bond. According to local sources, the bricks were made by slave labor on the banks of the river in Franklin. The building's simple gable roof extends on the front or southern facade to form a grand portico of vernacular Greek Revival character. Two doors, double leaf and of pine with eight panels in each leaf, lead from the porch to the sanctuary. Above each door is a transom of four small panes. The church is three bays deep, having a broad, sixteen over twelve window in each bay. Old glass remains and where necessary has been replaced with old glass. Shutters were added to the exterior during renovations in the 1940s.

The floor of the porch on the main facade is at present of concrete, replacing a wood floor. There is a fieldstone foundation for the porch. The pedimented portico is supported by four, eight-sided wood columns on plain bases. The pediment is plain with boxed cornice, which with a narrow frieze carries around the building. The tympanum is made of flush, horizontal boards. Pediment, tympanum, columns, all doors and trim have been painted white. Shutters are dark green with iron "dogs", which were made by John A. Bulgin, lifelong member of the congregation. The present belfry was constructed in the 1940s to replace damage to the original belfry. The belfry is square, with louvered panels set into each side. A pyramidal roof with lightning rod covers the belfry. The bell is original, and was shipped to Charleston from England in the 1850s and brought by wagon to Franklin. According to Mr. Bulgin, the original belfry was copied by the builders of the Masonic Temple and the copy can be seen on that building on Church Street adjacent to the new Presbyterian sanctuary. It is octagonal, with louvered panels in each of the eight sides, and is topped with a copper, octagonal cap, now green with patina.

The interior of the church contains a center aisle leading to the pulpit in the north end of the building. The original pews were removed in the 1940s and have been replaced by oak pews with raised panel on the exposed end. At the same time, flooring was replaced with a new floor of poplar and pine. The north end of the sanctuary contains the pulpit and communion table in the center, flanked on the left and right by choir pews. Originally there were windows on the north wall on each side of the pulpit, similar to windows on the buildings' sides; these windows have been replaced by paneled doors which lead to a church school building adjoining the old structure to the north. The north end of the interior is paneled to the height of the doors. All walls, which are of plaster, and trim are painted white.

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DESCRIPTION

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From the second floor of the adjoining church school building, the hand-hewn and pegged rafters of the roof structure can be seen, as well as a fifty-foot hand-hewn beam, twelve inches by twelve inches, which acts at the ridge pole.

When originally built, the building had no provision for heat. At the turn of the century, stoves were introduced into each side wall; these were removed during the renovations in the 1940s. At that time, heating equipment was added in the wall behind the pulpit, causing that wall to project into the room approximately two feet. During the renovations, an iron chandelier, constructed by John Bulgin, was hung in the center of the church. An iron and glass hurricane lamp hangs beside each window. Church furniture is not original to the building.

In 1948 a two-story, brick church school and office building was built to the north of the original structure, connected to it by doors on each side of the pulpit. This addition is square with gable roof and white trim. In 1976 a new brown brick sanctuary seating 400 was constructed on property purchased to the east of the old building. The old original building, the 1948 addition and the new sanctuary are connected by an office-corridor of glass and brick. The 1976 sanctuary is startlingly contemporary in design, distinguished by four skylights on the roof, three of which lie at right angles on the roof and open at the eaves. The fourth skylight rises with considerable force from the north slope of the roof.

8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400–1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500–1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600–1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700–1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800–1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900–	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

Specific dates ca. 1856 **Builder/Architect** Unknown

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Franklin Presbyterian Church is a well-proportioned, red brick church building constructed about 1856 on the highest of several ridges rising north of the Little Tennessee River in Franklin, North Carolina. The building is a modest, vernacular Greek Revival, temple form structure featuring a grand portico on its southern facade created by an extension of the main roof. The church was first organized in 1833 but lapsed between 1842 and 1854. The 1856 trustees Curtis Sanders, Jackson Johnston, Zebulon Thomas, and James G. Gray, purchased the property on which the present structure was erected. Growth of the congregation in the twentieth century has necessitated the addition of an educational wing in 1948 and a larger sanctuary in 1975. The new sanctuary is a strikingly contemporary design. Though joined to these later structures, the ca. 1856 building survives basically intact as the oldest brick building in Macon County and one of the oldest in western North Carolina.

CRITERIA ASSESSMENT

C. The Franklin Presbyterian Church is significant architecturally in its western North Carolina context as a rare Antebellum brick church. It is the oldest brick building in Macon County and one of the oldest in western North Carolina.

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Presbyterianism entered western North Carolina from the Carolina Piedmont, where Scotch-Irish settlers found a stopping place on the Great Road from Pennsylvania to Georgia. By 1796 the Scotch-Irish had organized the Presbytery of Concord, which listed twenty-six established churches in its report to the Synod of the Carolinas in that year.¹ By 1796, also, there were three Presbyterian congregations west of the Blue Ridge, at Reems Creek, Swannanoa and Mills River.² Although the Presbyterians were inflamed by the Great Revivals of the early nineteenth century in much the same manner as their Methodist and Baptist neighbors,³ the Presbyterian insistence on an educated clergy and literate congregations made the spread of Presbyterianism naturally slow in the pioneer country, where learning was little valued. Frequently, nominal Presbyterians joined Methodist and Baptist congregations in areas where no Presbyterian group could be organized. Nevertheless, Presbyterians saw it as their duty to establish congregations on the frontier and the Concord Presbytery regularly sent missionaries to those lands west of the Catawba newly opened to white settlers.

One of the most vigorous of these new missionaries in the west was Christopher Bradshaw, who served first in the southern part of Buncombe County and in 1828 organized the Davidson River Church with three elders and twenty-seven members. In 1829 Bradshaw is listed in the Minutes of the Concord Assembly as Stated Supply pastor for the Davidson River and Swannanoa churches.⁴ In March, 1833, Bradshaw organized the Presbyterian Church of Franklin, in Macon County, by sending a petition with twenty-eight names to the Presbytery. In an accompanying letter, he advises the Presbytery that he had "... ordained one Elder and installed one formerly ordained and administered the Sacrament of the Supper (sic) to the Church and Baptized three Children."⁵

In 1833 Franklin was the county seat of Macon County, which in 1830 had 5,333 residents.⁶ Franklin was the site of the Sacred Town of the Cherokees, called Nikwasi. The village was established on four hundred acres granted by the State of North Carolina at the junction of Indian paths leading south and west. Town lots were sold according to a plat surveyed in 1820 and copied in 1833 by Jacob Siler.⁷ In 1830 a State land grant awarded three acres of land to the Baptist congregation and in 1831 ten acres were set aside from the original four hundred as the site of the Franklin Male Academy.⁸ In 1835 a grant of three acres was awarded to the Methodist congregation.⁹ These eleemosynary grants were located north of Main Street, between present-day Harrison Avenue and White Oak Street. The town boasted a hotel and several "houses proper," including the house, still standing, built by Jesse Siler "at the foot of the hill."¹⁰ While the Methodist and Baptist congregations had church structures, there is no record of a Presbyterian church building for this earliest period. It was a general practice of early congregations to meet in private homes for worship.

Rev. Christopher Bradshaw, as the Presbyterian pastor for Franklin and Macon County, was active in the formation of the short-lived Morganton Presbytery. He was a delegate to the General Convention of the Presbyterian Church in Philadelphia in 1837, a Convention which changed the direction of the Presbyterian Church and foreshadowed the divisions of the church during the Civil War.¹¹ Bradshaw left western North Carolina in 1837.¹²

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The Presbyterian Church in Franklin continued in operation, but with a struggle. There was no supply pastor regularly assigned to the church, its membership decreased, and, as recorded in the minutes of the Presbytery in 1842, "... the tone of piety in our church is languid."¹³ In August, 1842, the Presbyterian Church in Franklin petitioned the Concord Presbytery to change its name to Ebenezer Church,¹⁴ and the congregation constructed a church building about four miles south of Franklin on the "Georgia Road."

Ebenezer Presbyterian Church, incorporating the Franklin Presbyterian Church, reported forty communicants and a contingency fund worth \$50 in 1843. Rev. John McPherson, the first supply pastor, also served a congregation at Hiwassee, giving him a total of seventy-one communicants in the two churches. He continued to serve until 1853, maintaining a steady number of seventy to seventy-four communicants.¹⁵ McPherson was followed by William S. Moore, a native of Macon County who was educated at Davidson College and Union Seminary. Anxious to keep Rev. Moore as pastor to Ebenezer and Hiwassee, Presbyterians in the area organized a third congregation in Franklin in 1854, thus providing Rev. Moore with eighty communicants and a salary of \$150 per year.¹⁶ As a further indication of their commitment, the Trustees of the Presbyterian Church in Franklin, including Curtis Sanders, Jackson Johnston, Zebulon Thomas and James G. Gray, purchased a parcel of land on June 12, 1856, which was the "...west end of a Lot where the church now stands in the town of Franklin." The lot contained twenty rods, about sixty-four feet by eighty feet in size.¹⁷

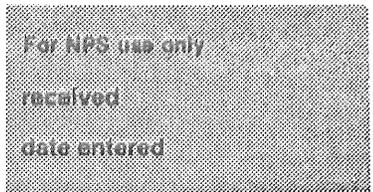
In 1850, Curtis Sanders and James G. Gray were farmers, each having real estate valued at approximately \$2,000. Zebulon Thomas appears as a more prosperous farmer, listing real estate worth \$5,000. At that time, fewer than one hundred persons in Macon County listed real estate valued in excess of \$1,000.¹⁸ Jackson Johnston, who came to Macon County after 1850, owned several parcels in the town of Franklin, including a parcel adjacent to the lot purchased by the church Trustees. In 1859 Johnston married, as his second wife, a daughter of William Siler, a brother of Jesse Siler and one of the first settlers of Macon County. Johnston accumulated a "handsome fortune" as a merchant. Says Arthur, "He was charitable, intelligent and of high character."¹⁹

The lot purchased by the Trustees was part of the land grant property given by the State of North Carolina to the Methodist Congregation in 1835 and the phrase, "... where the church now stands..." may refer to a Methodist structure. On this parcel the Presbyterian Church Trustees erected a well-proportioned church building, approximately fifty feet by thirty-six feet, in Greek Revival style. The building was constructed of bricks made by hand on the bank of the Little Tennessee River.²⁰ It is today the oldest brick structure in Macon County²¹ and one of the oldest in western North Carolina.

William S. Moore served as supply pastor for the Ebenezer and Franklin churches, having a total of seventy to seventy-five communicants.²² In 1859 he became pastor of the Franklin church and the Ebenezer church functioned independently.²³ In 1875 the old Ebenezer building was moved to its present location off Highway 441, where it became the Morrison Presbyterian Church.²⁴ Financial hardships of the post-Civil War period caused both churches to again pool their resources; in 1881 both churches joined to build a manse for the shared minister. In 1890 the pastor of the two churches, Rev. G. A. Sparrow, received a salary of \$125 annually from each church, frequently in produce, and

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preached one Sunday a month at Dillsboro, one at Franklin, one at Morrison and one in the county at the most promising locations.²⁵ The Franklin church and the Morrison Presbyterian Church shared a pastor until 1983.

Records of the Franklin Presbyterian Church during the latter years of the nineteenth century and the early twentieth century are incomplete and in some eras, non-existent. We know, however, that the church continued to maintain a pastor. In 1927 a new manse was built. By 1948, when church membership grew beyond one hundred persons, an educational annex was added to the rear (north) of the original church building. It is a two-story, brick structure containing classrooms, assembly room, pastor's study, kitchen and rest rooms. The rapid growth of Macon County as a tourist and retirement area caused similar growth in the Franklin Presbyterian Church, and in 1975 a new sanctuary, designed to seat four hundred worshippers, was erected, connected to the old structure by a glass and brick hyphen containing offices and library. The new sanctuary is of brick and redwood, contemporary in design.²⁶

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FOOTNOTES

¹McGeachy, Neill Roderick, Confronted by Challenge: A History of the Presbytery of Concord, 1795-1973, page 16.

²Blenthen, Tyler and Wood, Curtis, Jr., From Ulster to Carolina: The Migration of the Scotch-Irish to Southwestern North Carolina, "Presbyterianism in the Mountains," unpagued.

³McGeachy, op.cit., page 28, a description of a tent meeting and revival held by Presbyterians near Mooresville, March 1802.

⁴Ibid., page 18.

⁵Ibid., pages 139-140.

⁶United States Census for 1830, Macon County, North Carolina.

⁷Macon County Deed Book L-3, page 569.

⁸Macon County Deed Book A, page 37; Deed Book A, page 135.

⁹Haynes, Rev. Donald W., History of Franklin Methodism, page 7. Also Macon County Deed Book A, page 284.

¹⁰Arthur, John Preston, Western North Carolina: A History (1730-1913), page 174.

¹¹Minutes, Presbytery of Morganton, March 16, 1837.

¹²Smith, Dr. C. D., A Brief History of Macon County, North Carolina, page 181.

¹³Minutes, Presbytery of Concord, March 31, 1842.

¹⁴Minutes, Presbytery of Concord, August 25, 1842.

¹⁵Minutes, Presbytery of Concord, April 3, 1843, and Annual Report for 1844, 1845, 1846.

¹⁶Minutes, Presbytery of Concord, April 4, 1854.

¹⁷Macon County Deed Book H, page 314.

¹⁸United States Census for 1850, Macon County, North Carolina.

¹⁹Arthur, op.cit., page 177.

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²⁰Modlin, Cynthia, Franklin Presbyterian Church: 1833-1948, unpagued.

²¹Inventory of surviving historical properties, Macon County, North Carolina, North Carolina Division of Archives and History.

²²Presbytery of Concord, Annual Reports for 1855, 1856, 1857, 1858, 1859, 1860, 1861, 1862.

²³Ibid.

²⁴Morrison Presbyterian Church, Franklin, NC, historical paper, unpagued.

²⁵Modlin, op. cit.

²⁶Ibid.

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Haynes, Rev. Donald W., History of Franklin Methodism, Franklin, 1970.

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McGeachy, Neill Roderick, Confronted by Challenge: A History of the Presbytery of Concord, 1795-1973. The Delmar Company, Concord Presbytery, North Carolina, 1985.

Modlin, Cynthia, Franklin Presbyterian Church: 1833-1984, Franklin, NC manuscript.

Morrison Presbyterian Church, Franklin, historical paper, typewritten.

Presbytery of Concord, Records, Vol. 3, 1832-1836; Vol. 4, 1836-1846; Vol. 5, April 1847-October 1854; Vol. 6, April 1855-October 1862, The Historical Foundation of the Presbyterian and Reformed Churches, Montreat, North Carolina.

Presbytery of Morganton, Records, 1835-1840, The Historical Foundation of the Presbyterian and Reformed Churches, Montreat, North Carolina.

Smith, Dr. C. D., A Brief History of Macon County, North Carolina (1890) fourth edition, The Franklin Press, 1955.

United States Census for 1830 and 1850, Macon County, North Carolina.

9. Major Bibliographical References

See continuation sheet.

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property .8 acre

Quadrangle name Franklin, N.C.

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

UTM References

A

1	7	2	8	2	9	2	0	3	8	9	5	6	9	0
Zone		Easting				Northing								

B

Zone		Easting				Northing								

C

Zone		Easting				Northing								

D

Zone		Easting				Northing								

E

Zone		Easting				Northing								

F

Zone		Easting				Northing								

G

Zone		Easting				Northing								

H

Zone		Easting				Northing								

Verbal boundary description and justification

See attached Macon County tax map 6595.17 (portion). Boundary of nominated property outlined in red. That part of tax lot 7306 historically associated with the church is included in this nomination.

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state N/A code county N/A code

state N/A code county N/A code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Mrs. Carolyn Humphries, Consultant

organization N/A

date October 9, 1986

street & number Route 2, Box 175

telephone 704-526-9462

city or town Highlands,

state North Carolina

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national state local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

William S. Fick, Jr.

title State Historic Preservation Officer

date December 16, 1986

For NPS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

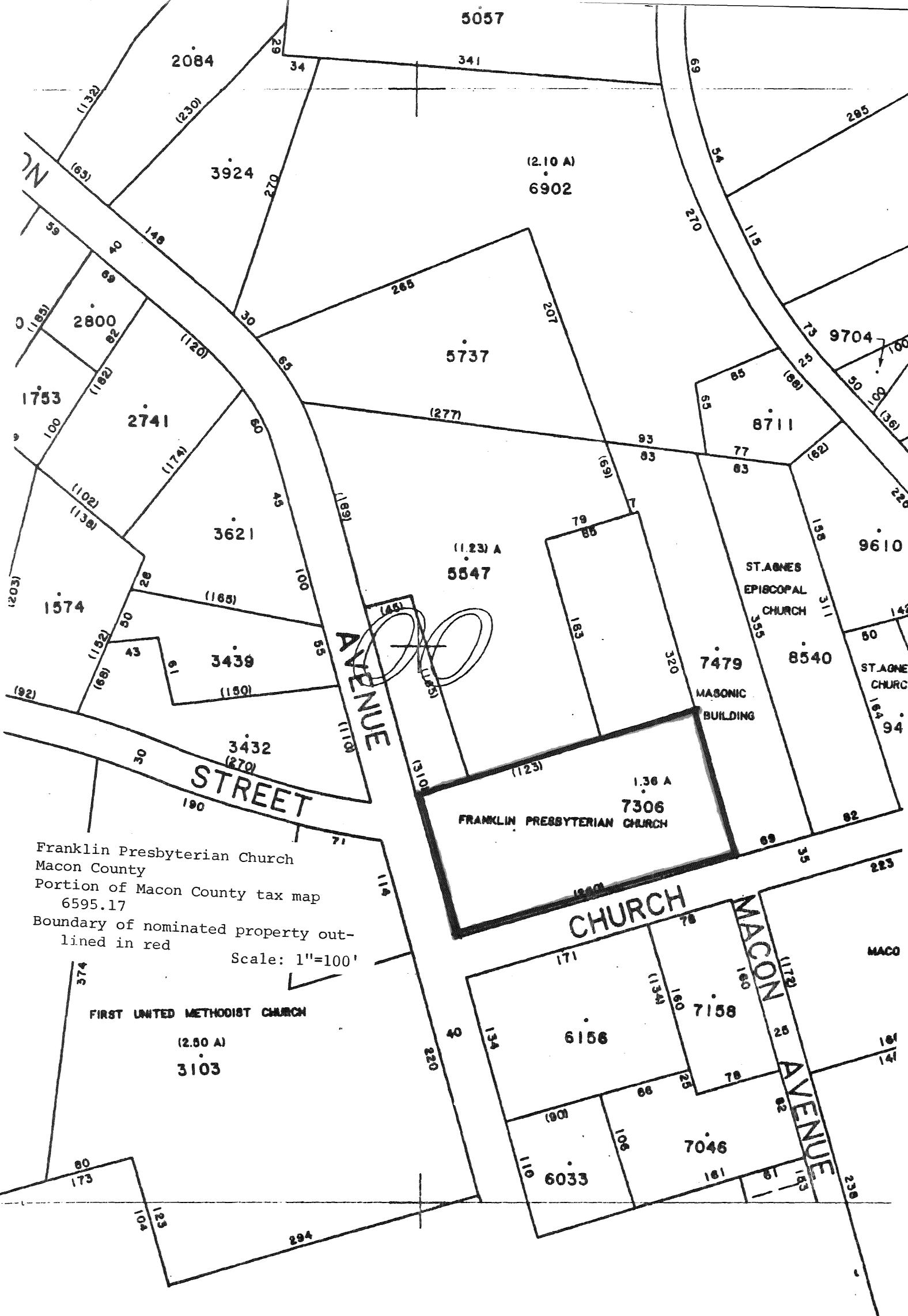
date

Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration



Franklin Presbyterian Church
 Macon County
 Portion of Macon County tax map
 6595.17
 Boundary of nominated property out-
 lined in red
 Scale: 1"=100'

FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
 (2.80 A)
 3103

FRANKLIN PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
 7306

CHURCH

MACON AVENUE

E 690,500



