

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 of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in *Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms* (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

### 1. Name of Property

historic name First Baptist Church

other names/site number (former) Leaksville Baptist Church

### 2. Location

street & number 538 Greenwood Street

N/A not for publication

city, town Eden

N/A vicinity

state North Carolina code NC

county Rockingham

code 157

zip code 27288

### 3. Classification

Ownership of Property

private

public-local

public-State

public-Federal

Category of Property

building(s)

district

site

structure

object

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing

Noncontributing

1

1 buildings

     sites

     structures

     objects

1

1 Total

Name of related multiple property listing:

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously

listed in the National Register 0

### 4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, 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 50. In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria.  See continuation sheet.

Signature of certifying official

State Historic Preservation Officer

State or Federal agency and bureau

Date

1-30-89

In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria?  See continuation sheet.

Signature of commenting or other official

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

### 5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

entered in the National Register.

See continuation sheet.

determined eligible for the National Register.  See continuation sheet.

determined not eligible for the National Register.

removed from the National Register.

other, (explain): \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

**6. Function or Use**

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Religion: Religious Structure

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Religion: Religious Structure

**7. Description**

Architectural Classification  
(enter categories from instructions)

Gothic

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation Brick

walls Brick

roof Asphalt

other Wood

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

The First Baptist Church is a brick structure sited on the crest of a wooded hill bounded by Moncure, Greenwood and Moir streets in Eden, North Carolina. The original Gothic Revival church building, finished in 1886, is a clipped-corner square set on a raised brick foundation and covered with a hipped roof with intersecting gables projecting over the three main facades that are enhanced by Stick style decoration in the gable ends. The primary (southeast) facade faces railroad tracks laid in 1883 and is visible from many points below, in the town. The church was enlarged with a five-room west addition in 1934, again in 1937 with a Sunday-school wing on the northeast corner of the original structure and, in 1960, an educational and fellowship building was constructed to the northwest of the original structure and connected to it with a covered walkway. All three additions to the original Gothic Revival structure are constructed of brick in the Colonial Revival style. The 1886 First Baptist Church is the the only surviving example of the Gothic Revival style dating from the nineteenth century in Eden. The 4.2 acres on which the church building is sited, bounded by Moncure, Moir and Greenwood streets is being nominated to the National Register of Historic Places.

The original 1886 section of the First Baptist Church is one story high, is constructed of solid masonry walls of red brick laid in common bond and rests on a raised brick foundation. The basic shape of the building, a square with clipped corners, gives it a primary (southeast) facade and two main facades (east and west). The primary facade is flat, is three bays wide and rises to the peak of the intersecting roof gable that is filled with wooden Stick style decoration. It is accented by a band of five lancet windows on the main level and three lancet windows on the balcony level. The two main facades are identical in that they are two bays wide with projecting gable ends accented with bands of five lancet windows on the main levels, round windows on the balcony levels and pointed-arch windows in the peaks of the gables that are filled with wooden Stick style decoration. The short main walls are accented with bands of

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two lancet windows. All of the windows feature stone sills and surrounds and are filled with colored art glass that replaced the original glass during the remodeling of the sanctuary in 1937. The colored art glass windows were given in memory of Sallie Elliott Ivie by her husband, Benjamin Franklin Ivie, and their children. The church is entered through double leaf wooden doors set in the clipped corners on either side of the primary facade. The entrances are enhanced by Stick style hoods. The hipped roof with its three intersecting gables is covered with asphalt shingles and is surmounted by a wooden Gothic belfry and pointed steeple set in the center of the roof.

The interior of the Gothic Revival section of the First Baptist Church was completely remodeled in 1937 when the second addition was made to the northeast corner of the building. Since the two additions to the church, built in 1934 and 1937, display the enduringly popular Colonial Revival style, it is safe to assume that the interior features of the sanctuary in the original building were remodeled to conform with that mode.

The sanctuary is a square auditorium, the walls of which are smooth plaster that rise above plain wooden panel wainscoting. The focus of the room is a raised platform from which the service is conducted and which faces rows of wooden pews and a wooden balcony across the primary facade. There is a choir loft framed by simple pilasters behind the pulpit on the raised platform. In 1972, the sanctuary was again refurbished and chandeliers, pew cushions, carpet and choir hangings in the Colonial Revival motif were installed.

The additions to the original church dating from 1934 and 1937 are constructed of red brick laid in common bond. The west wing is one story over a basement and the east wing is two stories tall. The gable roofs are covered with asphalt shingles and have plain wooden eaves with returned ends. The double-hung sash windows are set in rows and feature a six-over-six pattern. The gable end of the 1934 (west) addition

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and of the 1937 (east) addition each have a pair of lancet windows that visually tie the addition into the original Gothic church building. Both of these additions are harmonious in scale and design with the original church.

The 1960 (west) annex, a separate building, is considered noncontributing because of its date. The 1960 (west) annex to the original church is of red brick laid in common bond and is built into the side of the hill, making the annex one story tall on the facade nearest the original church and two stories otherwise. The roof of this annex is flat, the windows match those of the 1930s additions and it is connected to main block of the church with a covered walkway supported by paired wooden posts. None of the three additions detracts from the original 1886 Gothic Revival church which retains its exterior integrity and presents a picturesque appearance as one views it from its main approach.

(This Section Seven: Physical Description is taken in part from a description prepared by Claudia Roberts Brown that appears in A Tale of Three Cities published by the Eden Historic Properties Commission, 1986.)

**8. Statement of Significance**

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

nationally     statewide     locally

Applicable National Register Criteria     A     B     C     D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions)     A     B     C     D     E     F     G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)

Architecture

Period of Significance

1886

1934

1937

Significant Dates

1886

1934

1937

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Significant Person

N/A

Architect/BUILDER

Hopper, J. M. (attributed)

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

Summary Paragraph

The First Baptist Church in Eden, North Carolina, was finished in 1886 and was the result of a building program launched in August of 1884. Before the new building was finished, the congregation, established in 1839 by two noted Baptist missionaries, John Robertson (1804-1880) and Elias Dodson (1807-1882), and the first missionary Baptist congregation in Rockingham County, met in two other, smaller sites in Leaksville. The Gothic Revival style of the brick church represents a return to prosperity in the Dan River community that, like many other southern communities, suffered a disruption to its economy during the Civil War. The stylish design of the church and the choice of its site, adjacent to railroad tracks laid in 1883 that linked the community to other commercial centers, is an indication of an interest in the wave of new industrial development that contributed to the expansion of the post-Civil War economy of North Carolina. The 1886 First Baptist Church is the only surviving example of the Gothic Revival style in the community dating from the nineteenth century and is thought to be the work of J.M. Hopper, a son of local contractor R.M. Hopper and later the founder of a contracting firm that built many significant buildings in the state's northern Piedmont counties up to the mid-1950s. Architecturally compatible additions were made to the church in 1934 and 1937.

Architectural Context:

The First Baptist Church of Eden is that city's only surviving example of Gothic Revival style architecture dating from the nineteenth century. It displays fine craftsmanship in its brick construction and Stick Style decoration and is a distinguished example of the group of brick Gothic Revival style church houses in North Carolina; a group that is dwindling as witnessed by the destruction of a very similar building that housed the Temple Baptist Church in Durham,

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North Carolina, to make way for a new building at the turn of the century. The stylish Gothic Revival building cost the Baptist congregation in Eden at least \$1330 more than the original \$3200 budgeted for the construction and about eight times the \$553.75 annual church budget for 1886.(1) It is possible that the traditional Baptist conservatism was at odds with a congregational desire to be fashionable and up-to-date in the construction of the 1886 First Baptist Church. Whatever the reasons for the choice of the more expensive brick construction and the Gothic Revival style design enlivened by fancy Stick style decoration, the First Baptist Church of Eden stands as a solid reminder of the durability of the Baptist faith among the Scotch-Irish settlers of the Dan River valley and as a testament to the growing prosperity of the region in the years following the Civil War.

### Historical Background

In 1839, nine townspeople from Leaksville who had commuted to attend services at the First Baptist Church of Danville, Virginia, were dismissed from that congregation in order to start a new church in the growing town of Leaksville. These Baptists wished to worship nearer to their homes and their Church Letter from the First Baptist Church of Danville was the impetus that led to the founding of the Baptist Church of Christ at Leaksville (now the First Baptist Church), the first missionary Baptist Church organized in Rockingham County.(2) The founding pastor was Elder John Robertson, a native of Rockingham County who had recently returned home with his family from Tennessee after an absence of thirteen years. A convert to the Separate Baptist or "New Light" doctrinal teachings, he became pastor of the fledgling church in December, 1839. In 1844, Robertson was assisted in his organizational work by Elder Elias Dodson, a graduate of the College of William and Mary in Virginia and a domestic

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missionary of the Roanoke Association of the Baptist General Association of Virginia. Both men became important Baptist missionaries; Dodson became the director of missions for the Beulah Association in 1844, and Robertson volunteered time during the summers to the the Beulah Association to serve as a missionary in Stokes and Surry counties as well as serving as pastor to four Rockingham County churches.(3)

The first meeting place of the new congregation was the Leaksville Male Academy at 521 Henry Street, and by 1845, the congregation was sufficiently established to build a one room frame sanctuary on the northeast corner of Jay and Hamilton streets. This church building was also used by the Methodist and Presbyterian congregations of Leaksville before those church houses were built. The Baptist congregation grew in the years immediately preceding and following the Civil War, and in 1870, a Sunday School was organized.(4)

In August, 1884, the need for a new church house was discussed among the congregation of the Leaksville Baptist Church, and committees were appointed to locate a site for the building and to solicit funds for the project. By November of that year, \$1,034 had been raised and the building committee "recommended a suitable location for our new house of worship reported by recommending that we put the new house on top of the hill between the residence of Mr. William Trogdon and the railroad."(one and one-eighth acre; Rockingham County Deed Book 4A, p. 197) The choice of a site adjacent to the railroad may have been seen as up-to-date; the community had been awaiting the arrival of rail service since 1858. The 1883 arrival of the first locomotive, the "Lily B. Morehead," was cause for great celebration in Leaksville and heralded an industrial expansion of the region.(5)

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The congregation voted unanimously to accept the building committee's recommendation and in May, 1885, the building committee reversed an earlier recommendation to build a 44'x66' frame structure at an estimated cost of \$2500 and endorsed the construction of a brick building at a cost of \$3200. Again, the congregation accepted the committee's recommendations unanimously and instructed the trustees to sell the old one room frame sanctuary and place the receipts from the sale into the new building fund.(6)

By June, 1885, the solicitations committee had raised \$2700 of the estimated \$3200 necessary to build the new church house. Construction commenced on the brick building in the summer of 1885 and it is thought that James Monroe Hopper, a local builder, contracted to build it.(7) Hopper's father, Richard M. Hopper, had established the building business in 1858 and died in 1882. Since the congregation, although unanimous in its desire for a solid brick church building, was apparently on a stringent construction budget, it is unlikely that they would have hired any out-of town contractor or laborers. And since Hopper was a young contractor, he was probably a competitive bidder on the project. The First Baptist Church bears a remarkable resemblance to the 1888 Temple Baptist Church of Durham, N.C. (destroyed),(8) leading one to believe that the same architect designed both. The name of that architect is presently unknown.

In November of 1885, the building committee reported that the available construction funds had been expended and that work on the new brick building would have to be suspended. At this time, an anonymous member of the congregation offered an interest-free \$500 loan with a deferred repayment to the

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congregation so that the construction could be completed. In May, 1886, an additional \$1,330 had been pledged to the building fund and another loan with six percent interest had been secured so that the church building could be completed and the first service could be held in the basement of the building on October 6, 1886.(9)

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### Footnotes:

- 1: Brown, Claudia Roberts. A Tale of Three Cities, Eden's Heritage: A Pictorial Survey. (Eden Historic Properties Commission, Eden, N.C., 1986). p.p. 10-45
- 2: Ibid.
3. Original research by Marjorie Tredway Walker, local historian and member of the Church History Committee, First Baptist Church. (copy in Historic Preservation Office file)
4. First Baptist Church, Sanctuary Centennial 1886-1986. (First Baptist Church, Eden, N.C., 1986) no page numbers
5. Butler, Lindley A. Our Proud Heritage, Rockingham County, North Carolina. (Bassett Printing Corp., Bassett, Va., 1971), p.59
6. First Baptist Church, Sanctuary Centennial 1886-1986. (First Baptist Church, Eden, N.C., 1986) no page numbers
7. A Tale of Three Cities, Eden's Heritage: A Pictorial Survey. (Eden Historic Properties Commission, Eden, N.C., 1986). p.p. 51-52
8. West, Ruby. From Glory to Glory: A History of Temple Baptist Church, Durham, North Carolina. (Temple Baptist Church, Durham, N.C., 1988). cover picture
9. First Baptist Church, Sanctuary Centennial 1886-1986. (First Baptist Church, Eden, N.C., 1986) no page numbers

9. Major Bibliographical References

Brown, Claudia Roberts. A Tale of Three Cities, Eden's Heritage: A Pictorial Survey (Eden Historic Properties Commission, Eden, N.C. 1986)

Butler, Lindley A. Our Proud Heritage, Rockingham County, North Carolina (Bassett Printing Corp., Bassett, Va., 1971)

First Baptist Church; Sanctuary Centennial, 1886-1986. (First Baptist Church, Eden, N.C., 1986)

West, Ruby. From Glory to Glory: A History of Temple Baptist Church (Temple Baptist Church, Durham, N.C., 1988)

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 # \_\_\_\_\_
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # \_\_\_\_\_

See continuation sheet

Primary location of additional data:

- State historic preservation office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Specify repository: \_\_\_\_\_

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of property 4.2 acres

UTM References

A 

1	7
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6	1	0	7	2	0
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4	0	3	9	3	8	0
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Zone      Easting      Northing

C 

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B 

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Zone      Easting      Northing

D 

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See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

The parcel #7070 (19)-40-2141, comprising 4.2 acres, is the entire lot occupied by the church building, being the triangular site in the fork of Greenwood, Moir and Moncure streets. It is outlined in red on the enclosed Rockingham County Tax Map.

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

This is the tract associated with the church building. The original 1 1/8 acres was purchased in 1885 and beginning in the 1890s adjacent tracts were added as the church expanded until the present 4.2 acres were assembled. Copies of the deeds are on file in the Historic Preservation Office.

See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Linda Harris Edmisten date September 13, 1988

organization \_\_\_\_\_ telephone 919 821-3577

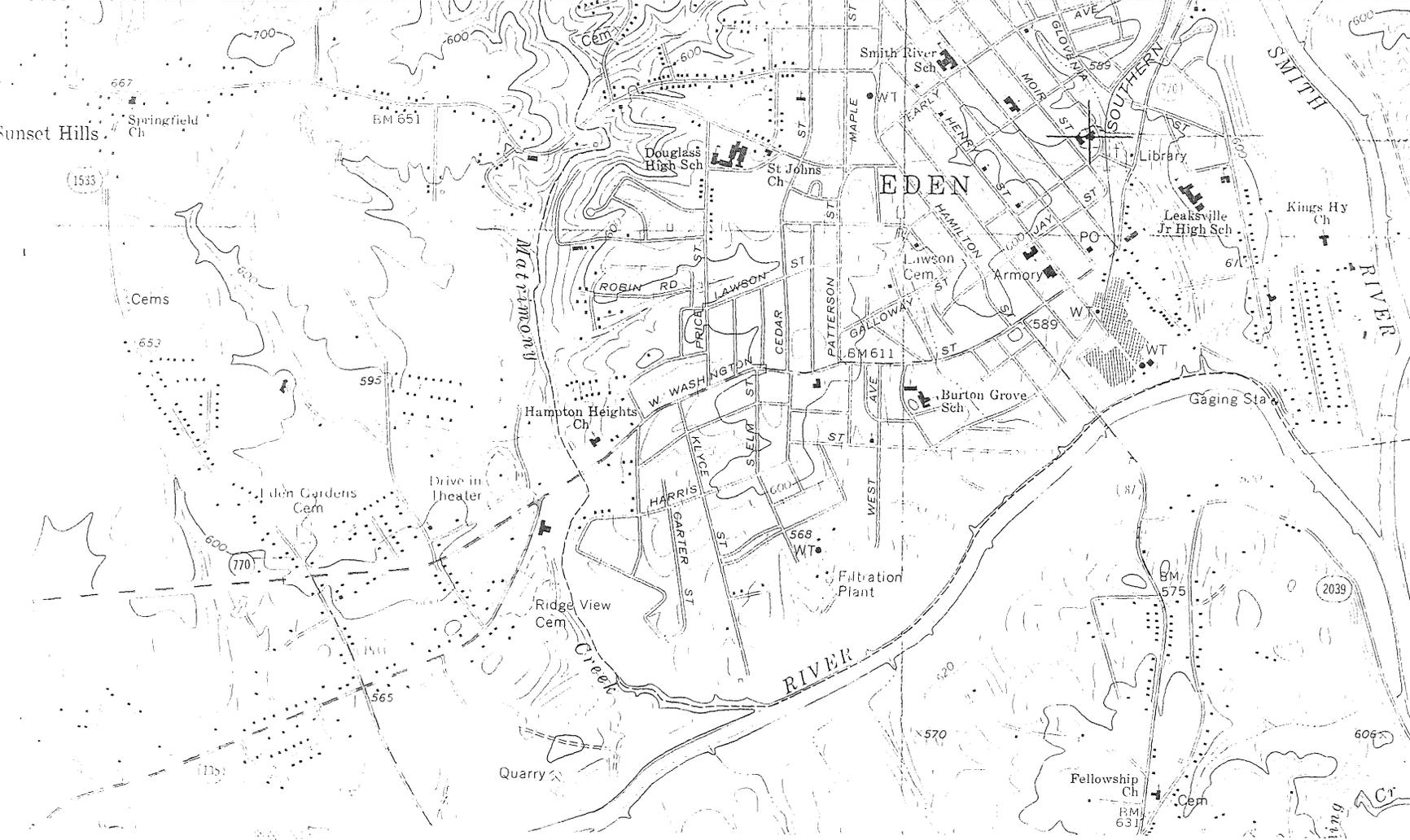
street & number 2121 Lake Wheeler Road state North Carolina zip code 27603

city or town Raleigh

SOUTHWEST EDEN QUADRANGLE  
 NORTH CAROLINA—ROCKINGHAM CO.  
 7.5 MINUTE SERIES (TOPOGRAPHIC)

5057 11 SW  
 (NORTHEAST E.D.F.N.)

EDEN 1'07 40E 47'30" 609 1 770 000 FEET 611 79°45' 36°30'



1 000 000  
 FEET  
 FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH  
 EDEN  
 ZONE 17  
 4039  
 N 4039380  
 E 610720

4038

Sunset Hills

Springfield Ch

BM 651

Douglas High Sch

St John's Ch

EDEN

Library

Leaksville Jr High Sch

Kings Hy Ch

Hampton Heights Ch

Burton Grove Sch

Gaging Sta

Eden Gardens Cem

Drive in Theater

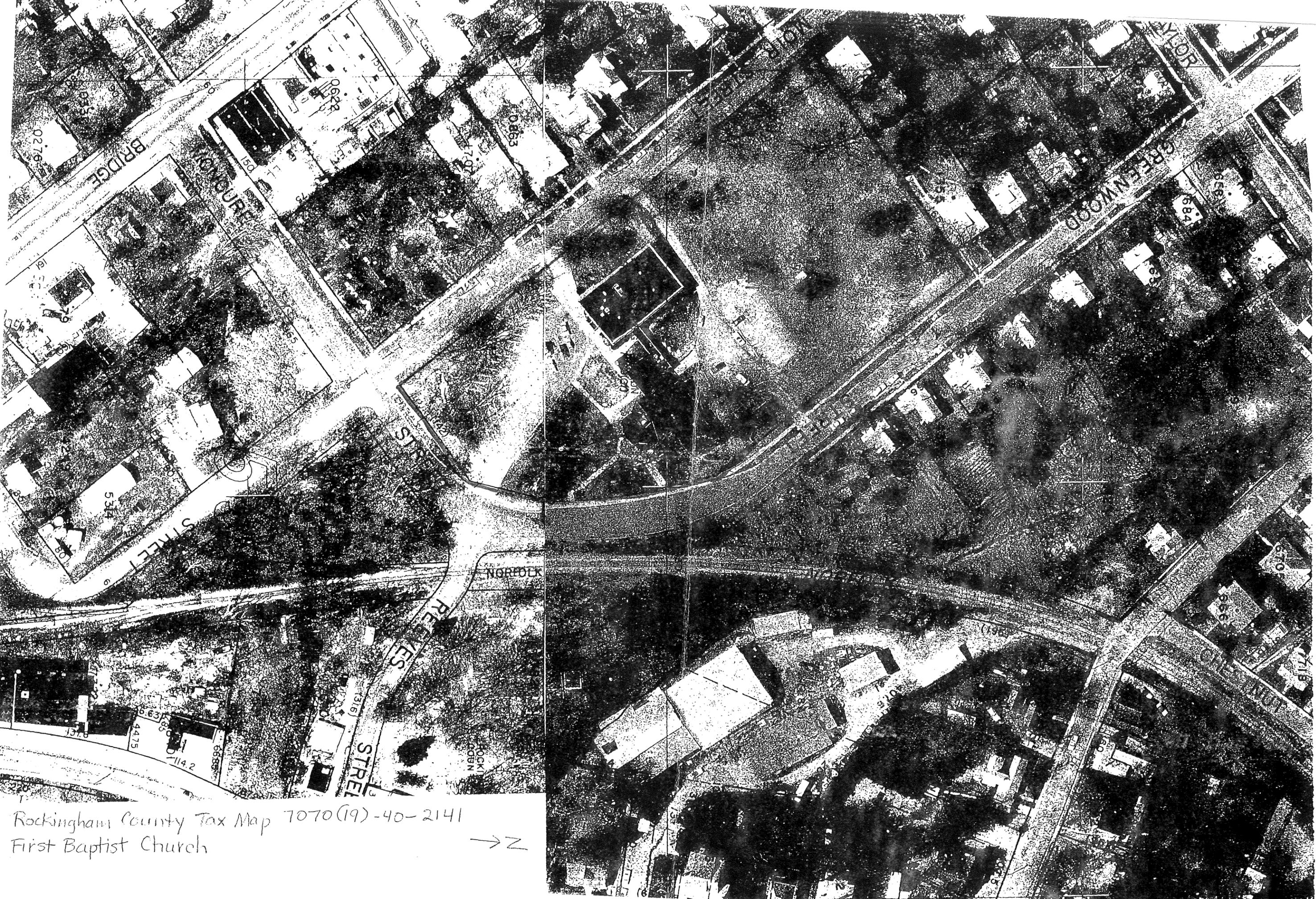
Ridge View Cem

Filtration Plant

Fellowship Ch

BM 631

Quarry



Rockingham County Tax Map 7070(19)-40-2141  
First Baptist Church

