

# Sustainable Site Management Assessment Report

## First Baptist (Brick-a-Day) Church

Partner Organizations - CPCR, TU, AAACRHSC  
Pilot Project - Summer 2022



"The Old Historical First Baptist Church, Montgomery, Ala., Rev. J. D. Harris, Pastor." Postcard  
Alabama Department of Archives and History postcard collection. LPP45, Box 2, #798.

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## 1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This Assessment Report supports the efforts of the Alabama African American Civil Rights Heritage Site Consortium to advance the sustainable site management of partner sites. Individual heritage site assessments are intended to support site stewards by quickly researching, summarizing, and helping prioritize next-step measures to protect, preserve, and maintain each site.

This document conveys the assessment of sustainable site management of First Baptist Church in Montgomery, AL. The short report identifies key factors for the successful development and management of the site studied through three lenses:

- First Baptist benefits from active and engaged leadership, though it is on the verge of generational change. To be sustained, an influx of professional capacity is needed to support fund-raising, grants management, and site management more generally, as a next generation of church leaders are cultivated from within the congregation. The creation of a nonprofit foundation -- or partnership with an allied heritage site -- should be explored to build professional capacity, which is needed before additional partnerships, revenue, or programming can be activated.
- Materially, the First Baptist Church building is in fair condition. Repairs to correct water infiltration are priorities. Rehabilitation of the other church-owned properties should be considered to accommodate programming.
- The story of First Baptist Church is complex and highly significant, and extends beyond the extraordinary events connected directly to the events of May 1961. Current public interpretation of the long history and cultural significance of the site is quite limited. Connections to the surrounding neighborhoods and the broader histories of Montgomery present unrealized opportunities to tell the nationally significant stories of 20th-century Civil Rights struggles.

*The Assessment Report is meant to serve as an overall "check-up" as opposed to a detailed examination -- prioritize a site's needs in terms of repairs, partnerships, and resources, and identifying next steps. Assessment projects are carried out quickly by a small, interdisciplinary team of professionals. This Assessment is not a substitute for the detailed, professional studies needed to implement changes to the heritage place -- namely, historic structures reports (HSRs), feasibility studies for foundations or capital campaigns, or interpretation-exhibition or plans for tourism, programming, and visitor engagement.*

## 2. ASSESSMENT GOALS

This project addresses the challenges faced by managers of highly significant civil rights heritage places by identifying key challenges facing current site management and how to face them. The Assessments directly address the typical challenges identified by the Consortium's ongoing work and advocacy, including scarce financial resources for historic preservation and maintenance work, extraordinary demands on volunteer managers, and access to professional advice for technical preservation and design. The Assessment project was therefore designed to quickly study and clarify priorities and next steps, in contrast to the exhaustive studies that are more typically undertaken in preservation practice (such as historic structures reports, preservation plans, capital campaigns, etc.).

More specifically, the Assessment process aims to:

- (1) study the status of, and connections between, three key site management factors (management structure and capacity, interpretation of stories and spaces, physical condition of buildings and sites;
- (2) use the site stewards' time efficiently and respectfully, and
- (3) minimize the professionals' time needed to carry out the Assessment.

The Consortium's 2021 survey of its 20 member sites directly informed this initiative. Having asked all site stewards to express their priority issues and needs in varied ways, a picture of their collective needs emerged. Though the priorities of individual sites vary, of course, the need for both physical preservation and developing greater management capacity were identified as high priorities across the Consortium sites. The difficulties of prioritizing public engagement through interpretation and public programming also stood out. (Please see Appendices for additional detail.) The survey data suggested that assessing and addressing physical preservation, management/financing, and interpretive/programming needs holistically would be the most valuable approach for site stewards.

Over time, civil rights heritage sites have been created, preserved, and sustained by heroic efforts of pioneering preservationists. As a group, the sites bear long legacies of public indifference, hostility, and erasure of the places and narratives; under-resourced management; and an under-supply of professional expertise and other resources (including funding, political capital, etc.). The specific challenges faced by each AAACRHSC sites vary, including, but not limited to: compromised physical conditions and deferred maintenance, small audiences, lack of connection to heritage tourism markets, limited management capacity, and lack of financial and human resources. The organizations running the sites are varied, too—some have established entities (501c3's, church polities), some have no formal organization and are guided by volunteers. Our site assessment is designed to be useful no matter what kinds of challenges are faced and how serious they are.

This project was carried out by a project team of Penn/CPCRS and Tuskegee University professionals and students, in close collaboration with AAACRHSC, which leads and coordinates efforts across 20 heritage sites. The Assessments are part of a larger,

coordinated effort to advance the sustainable site management of Black heritage sites related to civil rights histories.

Consortium leadership identified two sites in its network with whom the team worked in Summer 2022 -- First Baptist Church and Trinity Lutheran Parsonage, both located in Montgomery. The CPCRS-TU team conducted pre-visit conversations, a short site visit, and follow up tasks post-visit for each assessment. (Note that these two summer 2022 Assessments were regarded as pilot studies, the first iteration of a process that will be evaluated and revised before being implemented further.)

## What is sustainable heritage site management?

“Sustainable” can mean a lot of different things. Preservation professionals tend to think first (and pretty exclusively) about sustaining physical resources and making decisions based overwhelmingly on architectural integrity. This is important, but not an end in itself. As preservationists, we should foremost be concerned with sustaining *cultural significance* – which draws on architectural integrity *as well as* the effectiveness of interpretation and social processes that reproduce notions of value. To make our sustainability assessments practical for AACRHSC members, we use a broader notion of sustainability that specifically accounts for the organization that actually carries out management. Fixing the buildings and interpreting the stories won’t by themselves sustain the place – the stewarding organization and the story of the site must also be sustained.

For these Assessments, “sustain” is defined more holistically than the norm in the field of preservation. Sustaining a site includes:

- (1) The functions and capacity of a site’s management structure.
- (2) Repairing or conserving the physical conditions of buildings and site.
- (3) Interpreting histories to the public.

To gauge the capacity of sites in each of these three factors of sustainability, the project team looked carefully at each factor and how they are connected in practice. This is a departure from typical professional assessments, which evaluate one of these factors at great depth, require considerable resources, and offer recommendations for one aspect of the site.

This sustainability assessment is meant first and foremost to meet the needs of the owning/stewarding organizations themselves. Our model looks to support the managers in making well-informed decisions for the present/future of their site holistically. Therefore, the work centers on the people doing the managing, and adopting their perspective as stewards of the whole site and organization. In this report, our team weighs the entire range of physical, financial, human-resource, interpretive, and other needs of the site, and proposes priority measures to find for and allocate resources, carry out repairs, make partnerships, create experiences, etc.

### 3. UNDERSTANDING THE SITE

#### 3.1 Overview

The First Baptist Church (also known as the “Brick-A-Day Church” and The First Baptist Colored Church) is a Romanesque style church located in the northeastern section of Downtown Montgomery, Alabama, only four blocks from the Alabama State Capitol, seven blocks from Dexter Avenue King Memorial Baptist Church, and eight blocks from the Civil Rights Memorial on Washington Ave. The current building was designed by architect W. T. Bailey, the first licensed Black architect in the state of Illinois and head of the Mechanical Industries Department at the Tuskegee Institute, and constructed from 1910-1915. Members of the congregation were asked to each bring a brick a day to help build the church — hence the church's nickname, the “Brick-A-Day Church.”<sup>1</sup>

The building is rectangular in plan and extends approximately 60-feet in the north-south direction and 90-ft in the east-west direction and is two stories in height (Figure 1). The lower level consists of a large fellowship hall, kitchen, Pastor's office, administrative rooms, toilets, and storage rooms. The second level consists of the sanctuary, pulpit and choir areas, and a toilet. A balcony is located on the east side of the sanctuary space and is accessed from the bell tower staircase.

Black Montgomery's First Baptist congregation was founded in the basement of the city's all-white First Baptist Church building in the 1850s.<sup>2</sup> With tensions high between Black and white members of the original First Baptist congregation on Perry Street, the Black members officially broke off to form their own congregation in 1866, moving to a new location on Columbus Street in 1867.<sup>3</sup> The first independent Black congregation in Alabama, the First Baptist Church Colored —as it was then and now officially known — served several hundred members under the leadership of Reverend Nathan Ashby.<sup>4</sup> In 1868, the Colored Baptist Convention of Alabama (now the Alabama State Baptist Convention) was formed at the church. The church's Rev. Ashby served as the convention's first president.<sup>5</sup> In 1877, growing rifts among the congregation led to the formation of the Second Baptist Church, known today as the Dexter Avenue King Memorial Church.<sup>6</sup> Despite the congregational split, the

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<sup>1</sup> Townsend Davis, *Weary Feet, Rested Souls: A Guided History of the Civil Rights Movement*. (New York, NY: W. W. Norton & Company, 1999) 66.

<sup>2</sup> Houston Bryan Roberson, *Fighting the Good Fight: The Story of the Dexter Avenue King Memorial Baptist Church, 1865-1977*. (New York, NY: Routledge, 2005), page 3.

<sup>3</sup> Charles Octavius Boothe, *The Cyclopædia of the Colored Baptists of Alabama, Their Leaders and Their Work*, (Birmingham, AL: Alabama Publishing Company, 1895).  
[https://archive.org/details/cyclopediaofcolo00boot\\_0/page/n39/mode/2up](https://archive.org/details/cyclopediaofcolo00boot_0/page/n39/mode/2up)

<sup>4</sup> Andrew J. Yawn, “150 Years: The Legacy of the First Baptist Church,” *Montgomery Advertiser*. November 4, 2016. <https://www.montgomeryadvertiser.com/story/news/2016/11/04/150-years-legacy-first-baptist-church/93198378/>; Roberson, *Fighting the Good Fight*, page 3.

<sup>5</sup> Boothe, *The Cyclopædia of the Colored Baptists of Alabama, Their Leaders and Their Work*.

<sup>6</sup> It's rumored that those leaving to form what would become the Dexter Avenue King Memorial Baptist church were the more privileged of the original congregation, wanting a more “dignified” space of worship and a practice based less on emotion. Roberson, *Fighting the Good Fight*, page 8.

congregation at First Baptist grew to several thousand by 1880. The church would go on to host the first baccalaureate service for Alabama State University in 1890 and the National Baptist Convention in 1880, cementing its importance on the local, regional, and national levels to the Black and Baptist community. By 1916 the church — then led by Rev. Andrew J. Stokes — had 5,000 congregants, making it the largest Black Baptist congregation in the nation.<sup>7</sup>

From 1952 to 1961, Ralph Abernathy served as the pastor of the First Baptist Church, befriending Martin Luther King Jr. when King arrived in Montgomery and starting the Montgomery Improvement Association with him in 1955 to support the Montgomery Bus Boycott. Working side by side with Dr. King and other Civil Rights leaders, Abernathy's church played a crucial role in the Civil Rights Movement. Owing to its large size relative to other Black churches in Montgomery (for a membership of 5,700 in 1915), the church was one of the major gathering spaces for Civil Rights Movement activities, including bus boycott meetings in the 1950s and student protest workshops led by Abernathy in the early 1960s.<sup>8</sup>

On the evening of Sunday May 21, 1961, the church hosted 1,500 Black residents and community leaders for a service in support of the Freedom Riders, who had been met with violence a day earlier when arriving at Montgomery. Attendees of the service were trapped by an angry white mob of about 3,000 people surrounding the church, threatening to burn it, throwing bricks at the windows, and burning and flipping over cars.<sup>9</sup> Those attending the service sought refuge along the pews and basement of the church. Over 200 churchgoers lined up at the church telephone to call their families, each allowed one minute.<sup>10</sup> Martin Luther King Jr. made a call to U.S. Attorney General Robert Kennedy urging him to mobilize the U.S. marshals to control the violent rioters. The U.S. marshals eventually turned up to disperse the mob early the next morning, though spurts of violence continued all through the night.<sup>11</sup> This event is referred to as the "Siege of First Baptist."

Since the 1970s, the church has continued to use and conserve its beloved sanctuary building, while expanding its campus to encompass additional property in the surrounding area. In 1977, the church purchased an adjacent property on Ripley Street, that was once a bail bonds building. A lot acquired in 1974 west of the church became the church parking lot in 1998. In 1992, the church purchased a two-story building on the south side of Jefferson Street between Union and Ripley, which has mainly been used for storage.

In 2001, the church was officially designated an historic site on the Alabama State Register of Landmarks and Heritage. In recognition of its designation, the state erected an historic plaque

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<sup>7</sup> Boothe, *The Cyclopedia of the Colored Baptists of Alabama*.

<sup>8</sup> Daniel, Roosevelt and Howard Davis. "CPCRS Site Assessment Meeting." Interviewed by Randall Mason, Sarah Lerner, and Calvin Nguyen. Montgomery, July 8, 2022.

<sup>9</sup> "Dr. King, Besieged, Voices Confidence." *New York Times*, May 22, 1961, Page 27.

<https://timesmachine.nytimes.com/timesmachine/1961/05/22/101464251.html?pageNumber=27>

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

<sup>11</sup> "Montgomery Under Martial Law," *New York Times*, May 22, 1961, Page 1.

<https://timesmachine.nytimes.com/timesmachine/1961/05/22/101464245.html?pageNumber=1>



on Ripley Street in 2001. The church is also listed on Montgomery's local historic designation.<sup>12</sup> A team from Middle Tennessee State University, led by Dr. Carroll Van West, is currently writing the National Register of Historic Places nomination for the building.

See Appendix C for a more detailed site history and context.

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<sup>12</sup> City of Montgomery Alabama, *Local Historic Designation List*.  
<https://www.montgomeryal.gov/home/showpublisheddocument/11929/637232467968400000>

### 3.2 Timeline

<b>1866</b>	The Black congregation of the First Baptist Church is officially formed.
<b>1867</b>	The congregation moves to Columbus Street; a wooden Gothic style church is built. <sup>13</sup>
<b>1868</b>	The first convening of the Colored Baptist Convention of Alabama (now Alabama State Baptist Convention) occurs at First Baptist Church. <sup>14</sup>
<b>1877</b>	A rift in the congregation brings embers split off into separate congregation of what is now Dexter Avenue King Memorial Baptist Church. <sup>15</sup>
<b>1880</b>	National Baptist Convention formed at First Baptist Church. <sup>16</sup>
<b>1910-1915</b>	Current Romanesque structure built, designed by Walter T. Bailey. <sup>17</sup>
<b>1915</b>	Membership reaches 5,000 people, making it the largest Black Baptist church in the nation. <sup>18</sup>
<b>1952-1961</b>	Pastorship of Reverend Ralph Abernathy.
<b>1956</b>	Reverend Ralph Abernathy named vice president of the Montgomery Improvement Association.
<b>1957</b>	<b>January 10:</b> Church bombed by Ku Klux Klan. <sup>19</sup>
<b>1961</b>	<b>May 21-22:</b> Freedom Riders welcoming service at First Baptist besieged by angry white mob of 3,000; federal troops called in and martial law declared in Montgomery. <sup>20</sup>
<b>1972-2021</b>	Pastorship of Reverend Edgar Baxter Morris.
<b>1974</b>	Acquired property on Columbus Street acquired, which would become the parking lot.
<b>1977</b>	Acquired adjacent property on Ripley Street (formerly bail bonds).
<b>1988</b>	Sold 0.8 acres south of the church building on E. Jefferson to Alabama Power Co.
<b>1992</b>	Acquired two story building on Jefferson Street, between Union and Ripley
<b>1998</b>	Church parking lot constructed.
<b>2001</b>	Designated on the Alabama State Register of Landmarks and Heritage.

<sup>13</sup> Roberson, *Fighting the Good Fight*, 3.

<sup>14</sup> Boothe.

<sup>15</sup> Roberson, *Fighting the Good Fight*, 8.

<sup>16</sup> Boothe.

<sup>17</sup> Melissa Mitchell, "Research project spotlights African-American architects from U. of I.," University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign News Bureau, Feb 9, 2006, <https://news.illinois.edu/view/6367>.

<sup>18</sup> Boothe.

<sup>19</sup> "Negro Ministers Here Blame 'White Hoodlum' For Blasts" *The Montgomery Advertiser*, January 11, 1957, Page 3.

<sup>20</sup> "Guardsmen, U.S. Marshals At Strife-Torn Area." *The Montgomery Advertiser*, May 22, 1961, Page 15.

### 3.3 Property Map



Properties owned by First Baptist



Buildings owned by First Baptist

## **4. CONDITIONS REPORT**

### **4.1 Management Conditions**

#### **Management Structure:**

The church management is composed of a fourteen-member trustee board, who make decisions on behalf of the whole congregation. There is no specific subcommittee or funds dedicated to preservation. Reverend Freeman Ray recently assumed leadership of the congregation. Currently, Sunday is the only day the church is open for public visitation (though church leaders expressed interest in having someone present at the church to answer calls or inquiries during weekdays (a proposed 9am-3pm time window).

#### **Finances:**

There are little to no funds available for preservation (and no dedicated budget for preservation) beyond the budget for basic maintenance and upkeep of the church. This budget has been mainly used for routine repairs and maintenance in the building, with little left over for large preservation projects.

#### **Properties Owned:**

The church owns several properties in the immediate vicinity of the church building; these additional properties are not actively used. In 1974, the church acquired a lot west of the main building, which became the church parking lot in 1998. In 1977, the church purchased an adjacent bail bond building on Ripley Street south of the church for \$16,000.<sup>21</sup> In 1992, the church purchased a two-story building with operational restrooms on the south side of Jefferson Street between Union and Ripley that has mainly been used for food storage and is currently in the repair stage. At an unknown date, a lot on Ripley Street between Jefferson and Madison Avenue was acquired, which is currently an empty lot of grass, positioned between Wright's Automotive Services to the north and Capitol Inn & Suites to the south.

#### **Restoration/Maintenance Procedures:**

Minor facility repairs are done through contracted work. There is no specific person dedicated to maintaining the church or the presence of an established relationship with a contractor. While the church has an architect in its congregation, the individual is not actively involved in the church and has not been involved in building stewardship. In the past, the congregation has worked with various architecture firms and structural engineers (most from Montgomery or elsewhere in Alabama) to document and perform condition assessments of the church building.

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<sup>21</sup> The building was owned by Sonny Kyle Livingston Jr., a Klansman who was tried among four people for their involvement in the Jan 10, 1957 bombings of four Black churches and two of their parsonages, including the First Baptist Church and Reverend Ralph Abernathy's house.

## 4.2 Building Conditions

Overall, the First Baptist Church is in fair condition. Most of the conditions observed are due to the church's age, exposure to the elements, damage due to the bombings, and lack of appropriate maintenance and repairs. Evidence of past and present water infiltration was observed when on site at the exterior walls, roof level, interior ceilings and interior walls.

During the visual survey of the property a number of condition issues were noted. These are detailed, illustrated, prioritized, and associated with estimated costs in the report by architect Tiffani Simple (included in full in Appendix B). Conditions are grouped by overall building elements (Figure notations refer to Simple's report):

### Exterior Walls

- Displaced and loose brick units (Figure 36)
- Cracked, eroded, and spalled brick masonry (Figure 37-Figure 40)
- Cracked and spalled masonry (Figure 40-Figure 42)
- Cracked and spalling cement parge coating and underlying masonry at the exterior walls, stairs, and foundation walls (Figure 43-Figure 48)
- Deteriorated mortar joints (Figure 49-Figure 51)
- Water staining and efflorescence at exterior walls (Figure 52-Figure 53)
- Biological growth and vegetation at exterior walls (Figure 53-Figure 56)

### Windows and Doors

- Boarded up window openings (Figure 57)
- Peeling paint at wood and steel-framed windows (Figure 58 - Figure 59)
- Deteriorated wood-framed windows (Figure 60 - Figure 61)
- Deflection and minor corrosion of framing at metal-framed windows (Figure 62 - Figure 66)
- Deteriorated putty at stained glass windows (Figure 67 - Figure 68)
- Corrosion and deflection of steel lintels (Figure 69)
- Cracked masonry headers (Figure 70)
- Cracked masonry window sills (Figure 71)
- Failing parge coating at sills and headers (Figure 72 - Figure 74)
- Deteriorated perimeter sealant (Figure 75)

### Roofing Systems

- Detached copper finials at belltower and southeast tower (Figure 76 - Figure 77)
- Cracked and deteriorated stone spires and finials at belltower (Figure 78)
- Deflection at standing seam roof ridge (Figure 79 - Figure 80)
- Previously patched areas at standing seam roof (Figure 81 - Figure 82)
- Detached flashing at standing seam roof (Figure 82)
- Corroded gutters and leaders (Figure 83)

### Interior

- Water staining and damage at interior walls and ceilings (Figure 84 - Figure 92)

### **4.3 Interpretation Conditions**

First Baptist's cultural significance as a civil rights landmark is minimally interpreted for public consumption. A single state historic marker is located on outside the front entrance of the church on Ripley Street. There are two small, curated displays of historical artifacts pertaining to the church's history inside the building, however, they are not accessible to the public. A team from Middle Tennessee State University, led by Dr. Carroll Van West is currently writing the National Register nomination for the building. On the web, there are a few limited resources for those searching for an understanding of First Baptist's significance. There is a great deal of potential to tell a fuller story of the place and its history using digital media.

#### **Getting There:**

The church is partially surrounded to the south and west by a large parking lot, nearly empty on days that the church doesn't hold events. The lot has two entrances for cars, one on Columbus Street and the other on Ripley. A double-sided electronic marquee sits at the Ripley Street parking lot entrance, bracketed by concrete towers imitating the church's bell tower. The main entrance into the church on Ripley Street has steep steps with railing on either side that leads to double doors. The church has an ADA accessible ramp on its southern side that leads into a side entrance; a similar entrance exists on the northern side, with steep steps and no installed ramp. There are two bathroom facilities in the building: one in the basement and one adjacent to the sanctuary and on the same level. The basement is accessed by the stairs from the narthex, or from a back entrance on its western side. The sanctuary on the first floor serves as the worship space, the basement serves as a multipurpose space equipped with a full industrial kitchen, a small children's library, office space, storage, exhibit cases, and a communal dining area. The dining area contains a number of collapsible tables and chairs, as well as a TV and speakers.

#### **Visitor Experience/Tours:**

There are no regular public tours of the church. Any tour groups that do come to the church contact church management ahead of time; these tours are given with no required fee. Mr. Howard Davis is the current point person for tours, though his contact information is not on their website or any other public-facing platform. At least three groups make routine visits to the church as visitors: a choir group from University of Washington; a group from University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign (W.T. Bailey's alma mater); and a Congressional delegation that stops by every spring for Sunday service and lunch, coming from Selma to Montgomery (a tradition established by John Lewis).

There are also third-party civil rights history tours that visit the exterior, though there is no coordination with the church. The third-party tours that include the First Baptist church as a destination are Michelle Browder's "More Than Tours," Jake Williams' tour through "My Montgomery Tours" in Montgomery, and Wanda Battle's "Legendary Tours," among others.



### **Visitor Experience/Interpretive Signage and Exhibits:**

The signage erected by the Alabama Historic Commission details the church's history since its separation from the First Baptist Church on Perry Street, emphasizing the building's significance to the southern Baptist and Montgomery communities. The sign notes the present structure's dedication in the early twentieth century, and also details the church's importance in the Civil Rights Movement. The description ends its chronological history with the Siege of the First Baptist, its final line reading "U.S. Attorney General Robert Kennedy federalized the Alabama National Guard to ensure their safe exit the next morning."

### **Narthex Exhibit:**

A small exhibit is located in the narthex of the church. The exhibit was originally curated in 1980 for the National Baptist Convention in Birmingham. It consists of numerous historic photos of both the original and current structure, photos, posters, and portraits of former pastors. The exhibit commemorates the church's history and significance to the National Baptist Convention — which was first organized at the church in 1880 — and its history.

### **Visitor Experience/Web Based Interpretation:**

The church's web based interpretation exists predominantly through work stewarded by the AAACRHSC. AAACRHSC's [main website](#) includes a history of the church and historic photographs. The [Voices of Alabama](#), an oral history project commissioned by the AAACRHSC and funded by the World Monuments Fund, includes an oral history of Dorothy Posey Jones, who played the church's organs for 43 years, recalling her experience in the church during the Civil Rights Movement. The Voices of Alabama project exists on a separate url, but can be accessed through the AAACRHSC's main site. There's also a virtual exhibit on the site on Google Arts & Culture called "[Places that Changed the World: Montgomery, Alabama](#)" which features the First Baptist Church. This virtual exhibit has identical information presented as the AAACRHSC website. These webpages — the AAACRHSC site, the Voices of Alabama site, and the Google Arts & Culture Site — are among the first to pop up on a Google search for "First Baptist Church Brick-a-Day."

In addition to the platforms stewarded by the AAACRHSC and WMF, the First Baptist Church also runs its [own website](#). While the site currently has some incomplete pages — empty staff, service time, and events pages — the website has a lengthy history page which goes into great detail about the night of the Siege of First Baptist that the AAACRHSC and Voices of Alabama websites don't.

In addition, the church maintains an active [Facebook page](#) that posts recorded services and photos of church events. [Wikipedia](#) has a webpage for the First Baptist Church, with a comprehensive history on its history from 1866 to the First Baptist Church Siege. A Google search of "First Baptist Church North Ripley Street" will lead to the church's Facebook page and its own website on the first page of results; however, more general searches such as "First Baptist Church Montgomery" or "Brick-a-Day" will lead to results about the First Baptist Church on Perry Street in Montgomery, the Wikipedia page, or to the AAACRHSC page.

### **Existing Collections and Archives:**

There are several online databases with pictures of the First Baptist Church, as well as online articles writing about the First Baptist Church's history, often with a focus on the Siege of the First Baptist.

While the church has no other public-facing interpretation apart from those mentioned above, there is plenty of existing historic material in the church that can be used to tell its stories. A guided tour of the interior would be a rich experience for a dedicated heritage tourist audience. In the basement, portraits of every pastor of the church lined a wall. The church's office, also in the basement, was the place where Martin Luther King Jr. called attorney general Robert Kennedy during the Siege of the First Baptist, and the original desk and telephone remain in the church. Ralph Abernathy's tenure as pastor links the place even more centrally to civil rights activism. The building itself has many features that relate to the church's history: its pews, in which congregation members slept and found shelter during the Siege of the First Baptist; the choir chairs where John Lewis sat pretending to be part of the church choir during the same night; and the sanctuary stained glass windows that were designed with portraits of important people from the church's history. There is sufficient research on architect Walter T. Bailey, an accomplished practitioner and Tuskegee teacher, to interpret the building's design in a compelling way.

## **5. RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **5.1 Management Recommendations**

The Church's predominately volunteer leadership team would benefit from professional expertise and greater capacity in a few particular areas of site management. These include grant writing, grants management, interpretive planning, programming and management, and architectural conservation/maintenance. This expertise needs to be continually and proactively available (not just called on as-needed). It could be procured through additional volunteers, through connecting with other sites in Consortium or Montgomery networks, or, eventually, by hiring consultants with funding generated or raised.

There are currently no income streams to maintain the physical building or interpret the heritage of the Church. This can be addressed through grant writing, admission-fee tours led by volunteers, donation campaigns, and evaluating the Church's extensive property portfolio. These actions have the potential of generating income while also increasing the profile of the site, fostering beneficial partnerships, and engaging with appropriate consultants to protect and improve the physical condition site.

Volunteer leadership needs to be diversified. Generational diversity is the most immediate issue; the current stewards and coordinators can't be expected to continue indefinitely and additional activities will require more hands and proficient digital literacy. Diversity of volunteers beyond the Church community should also be contemplated, recognizing the cultural significance of First Baptist and its stories to the local, state and national Civil Rights history. Engaging volunteers from the wider community, perhaps through the vehicle of a Friends group (see below), is one way of moving toward supporting the site by a network of partnerships and reducing its isolation.

Some more specific management recommendations:

#### **Real-Estate Property Assessment**

The church owns several parcels that currently are under-utilized. It is recommended that the church consider the efficacy of realizing the value of the its non-religious properties, and the potential benefits of marketing non-essential property to create an endowment. An evaluation of these properties current and future potentials, constraints and opportunities, and economic value could inform a strategy for realizing revenue in some way. Potential sales, development, leasing, programming, and other options should be on the table for purposes of the study. A local real-estate firm would likely have the most insight into current property values; however, a university- or association-based group might bring a broader perspective to evaluating the future potentials of the properties.

#### **Grant Writing**

Moving forward, grant writing should be a priority to secure the necessary funds to carry out plans for sustainable management. The National Trust for Historic Preservation makes

available several types of grants, open to different purposes. (Please see the appendix for a list of relevant grant opportunities). Presuming that the current (as of this writing) effort to list First Baptist on the [National Register of Historic Places is successful, the church will be eligible to apply](#) for [National Park Service Civil Rights grants](#).

### **Partnering with third party historic tours**

Working with third-party historic tour groups/companies that already visit First Baptist occasionally (or would like to) could provide revenue on a per-tour basis. Part-time volunteers could lead in-person admission-fee tours of the grounds and interior of the church to plug into with Montgomery's heritage tourism popularity and connect the story of the church to the local and national civil rights story.

### **Donation Campaign**

Increased (though carefully managed) traffic through the site is an opportunity to reach more possible donors. The donation information on the Church's website should be redesigned as a click-through button (and perhaps a QR code on an exterior interpretative panel or banner). In the medium term, appeals to Baptist organizations -- near and far -- is another sort of campaign that could be considered by Church leadership.

### **Management Structure/Legal Status**

Establishing a 501c3 friends group or foundation would enable much-needed grant-seeking and, in the longer term, a capital campaign. It would also dovetail with efforts to broaden volunteer support and the network of organizations engaged with sustaining the site and its story (through board representation, for instance).

Meanwhile, to explicitly address the financial and planning needs of a sustainable management plan for the site, the governing members of the church should consider having a dedicated preservation subcommittee. This formal body would focus on managing both the rich history and physical structure of the church, overseeing and presenting to the board present and future preservation projects.

### **Local Partnerships**

There is significant potential for additional partnerships in Montgomery and elsewhere in Alabama to help satisfy some of the immediate needs of First Baptist and move the site toward greater sustainability. Among the community institutions our Assessment was aware of:

- The Freedom Rides Museum, managed by the Alabama Historic Commission, could be a valuable intellectual partner. The museum in part focuses on the Siege of the First Baptist as the Freedom Riders came to Montgomery, with well-researched documentation and interpretation on the events of that night. Communication and coordination with the Freedom Rides Museum could lead to (1) an updated exhibit at the church that speaks to the history of the Freedom Riders at the church in partnership with the Freedom Rides Museum, and/or (2) increased connection at the

museum between the Freedom Rides and the church, weaving the First Baptist Church more tightly with the more “advertised” part of Montgomery’s civil rights history. This can be the first step to increasing visitor interest to the church —and if unscheduled visits to the church are not yet possible, increased attention to the church’s history and presence in Montgomery.

- Dexter Avenue King Memorial Baptist Church, which, while still serving a congregation, has an interpretive center, and manages a parsonage museum. Being able to exchange ideas with leadership from another Consortium-partner church similarly rooted so deeply in Montgomery civil rights history could give insight to the opportunities, obstacles, and logistics of running secondary interpretive centers as an operating church.
- Tour guides/operators already active in Montgomery's heritage tourism sector.

## **5.2 Building Recommendations**

Based on the expected useful life, effective age, and current conditions, suggested repairs have been prioritized into Immediate (to be completed within 1 year), Short-Term (to be completed within 2 to 4 years) and Long-Term (to be completed within 5 to 7 years).

Given the building’s age, any work related to the existing paint, sealant or putty, roofing system and any waterproofing material should be tested for hazardous materials prior to the work commencing including lead, asbestos, and mold.

Evidence of past and present water infiltration was observed when on site at the exterior walls, roof level, interior ceilings and interior walls. Following the visual survey, SDS performed a non-destructive assessment at select areas at the interior of the sanctuary utilizing a FLIR E8 thermal imaging infrared camera. (Infrared thermography is a non-destructive testing method that can assist in identifying thermal patterns by measuring the transfer of heat at targeted surfaces.) The infrared survey was completed in an effort to identify thermal anomalies that would possibly reveal the presence of moisture within the ceiling and wall assemblies. At locations where moisture staining was observed, thermal variances were picked up with the infrared camera, confirming the presence of moisture. See Figures 93-101.

Given the patterns of the staining and the infrared imagery, it appears that the damage at the interior ceilings is primarily located at the copper roof valleys and roof-to-exterior wall junctures. From our review, it appears that previous repairs to the roof did not fully address the water infiltration. Additional water damage was noted primarily at the interiors adjacent to window and door openings.

Based on the conditions observed on site and noted by the Church personnel, a consultant should be retained to complete a leak investigation to determine where the roofing system is actively leaking and whether it is an issue primarily centered at the roof valleys, or if there are additional issues within the roofing system. The window and door assemblies should also be tested to determine if they are leaking due to openings within the frames, due to deteriorated perimeter sealant, and/or due to the current intersection of the headers and footers.

Following the leak investigation, immediate repairs should be completed as required to mitigate the leaks until large-scale repairs can be implemented.

Specific recommendations detailed in Appendix B are included for the following building elements:

- Exterior Walls: brick masonry veneer, concrete, wood, exterior sealant joints
- Windows and doors: security grilles, perimeter sealant
- Roofing Systems
- Interiors: interior finishes, accessibility and use
- Building systems: mechanical, electrical, plumbing

Eventually, an Historic Structures Report (HSR) should be undertaken, leading to a long-term rehabilitation/restoration plan. This detailed study will deeply investigate issues with the church building; it could also evaluate the pros and cons of adaptive re-use of the additional properties as rental properties, residential units, a museum, or other potential uses, and reconcile architectural conservation and potential changes with a detailed interpretive program. National Park Service and National Trust for Historic Preservation/African American Cultural Heritage Action Fund grants are well-aligned with funding HSRs.

### **5.3 Interpretation Recommendations**

Because First Baptist is in good physical shape, the public should be able to view the interior of the building during occasional, established open hours. Guided tours of the interior and facade could be organized for a small fee. These low-impact, revenue-producing, easily implemented programs should be prioritized. They will bring benefits of visibility, broadening the church's network of supporters, and generating modest revenue -- while, of course, meeting the central goal of elevating the nationally many significant stories related to the church to the public.

In the longer-term, the Church should seek institutional partners (particularly the Freedom Riders Museum and the Southern Baptist Historical Library & Archives) to collaborate on interpretive projects. Additional short-term and long-term recommendations below:

#### Short term:

- Add the church to the National Register of Historic Places (already in process), and explore the possibility of a National Historic Landmark designation;
- Enlist the public historian at the Consortium to connect with archives holding relevant historic documents and conduct oral histories of congregants present during the 1961 siege;
- Establish regular open hours for tourists to visit the interior of the church, donations should encouraged when visiting, but optional
- Invest in documenting the physical church and its historical records. Existing historic material — photographs, newspapers, memoirs, drawings, and the like — should be digitized and archived in a central location.



- Curate small program of guided tours -- a pilot program could set up 2-3 tours per month with the church only needing to be opened during the hours of the guided tours. These tours could also be coordinated with third-party tour guide services, which would help with planning for the optimal touring times. or downloaded by the public as a PDF on the internet as a self-guided walking tour. A comprehensive tour script for the church should be established (so different guides can effectively lead the tour), and could be based on the history in Appendix C.
- Conduct a familiarization tour of First Baptist for other heritage tourism organizations, sites, leaders, and organizations in Montgomery and Alabama.
- Update web presence to advertise and schedule tours; update website with archival images and a more robust history.

#### Long term

- Craft an interpretive plan that expands on the central story of the 1961 siege to connect the church to other contemporary heritage sites and heritage tourism experiences.
- Update narthex exhibit utilizing new poster boards or digital monitors.
- Explore Consortium and Alabama Historical Commission partnerships for younger docents
- Capitalize on the interior and exterior spaces of the other First Baptist properties to support interpretive programming and fund raising events. These events and performances could be hosted in partnership with other civil-rights related sites, arts-and-culture organizations, or other churches to access broader partnership networks and heritage tourism markets.

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## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

*A sincere thank you to our partners and collaborators on this initiative.*

**Project Lead:** Randy Mason

**Lead Advisors:** Kwesi Daniels and Priscilla Hancock Cooper

**Project Manager:** Sarah Lerner

**Preservation Architect:** Tiffani Simple, Simple Design Studios

**Research Assistants:** Jocelyn Johnson (Tuskegee University) and Calvin Nguyen (University of Pennsylvania)

**Site Reps:** Dr. Roosevelt Daniel and Mr. Howard Davis

## **APPENDIX A – Methods and Evaluation**

### **[1] Project Description/Rationale/Overall Design**

#### **What is the project and why is it important?**

- The initiative will address problems faced by under-resourced managers of highly significant heritage places by identifying key gaps and how to fill them. It is part of a larger, coordinated effort to advance the sustainable site management of Black heritage sites related to civil rights histories.
- This project will be carried out by a Penn/CPCRS and Tuskegee University project team in close collaboration with AAACRHSC. The CPCRS-TU team will carry out pre-visit, site visit, and post-visit tasks for each assessment, in close collaboration with AAACRHSC staff, and using the site stewards' time very efficiently and respectfully.
- The initiative will provide:
  - o Additional documentation of sites
  - o A succinct understanding of organizational needs and priorities;
  - o Access to professional expertise for the sites, and connections for stewards to access additional needed resources (such a grant opportunities, National Register nominations, or architectural-engineering consultation).
- The initiative also creates educational benefits for both Penn and TU students, who will participate as members of the project team.
- The project directly serves AAACRHSC and its member sites, and also intends to create a replicable quick-assessment model that can be used by other heritage sites and organizations to prioritize needs.
- CPCRS has consulted several colleagues in the preservation community, all of whom see the value of this approach, do not know of other attempts to undertake fast and holistic site assessments, and see the potential for AAACRHSC's assessment to contribute a new model to the field.
- We anticipate ongoing relationships between the sites and our partnership, continuing to provide technical assistance as appropriate to build capacity for sustainable management.

#### **What we know about the sites:**

The Consortium's effort to survey its 20 member sites in 2021 yielded valuable information for this initiative. By asking site stewards to express their priority issues and needs in varied ways (ranking, listing) a picture of their needs as a collective emerged. Though the priorities of individual sites vary, of course, both physical preservation and developing management capacity were voiced as high priority among the member sites. The need to prioritize engaging the public through interpretation and public programming also stood out.

Highlights from the 2021 member survey (14 member sites participated):

- Organizational Structure/Planning/Training is the area most frequently noted as "Most Needed"

- High-ranking areas of need are: Fundraising/Proposal Writing; Outreach to Public Officials; Improve Visitation/Interpretation; Increased Earned Income; and Public Relations/Community Outreach are all
- 85% of sites described (physical) preservation as a top 3 priority for the next 2 years.
- 43% of sites described preservation as their first priority for the next 2 years.

The survey data suggested to us that assessing and addressing physical preservation, management/financing, and interpretive/programming needs holistically will be the most valuable approach. Each site expressed their intention to address each of these areas in some way.

### **Goals:**

- Advancing the sustainability of the individual, Black-owned, Black-centered heritage member sites of AAACRHSC;
- Understanding the place, stories, and organization/partners holistically;
- Quickly assessing the priorities so preservation resources can be effectively brought to bear – the assessments will be efficient and non-exhaustive studies.
- Since “sustainable management” will mean different things for different sites, each site will be assessed on its own.
- The assessments, taken together, will give the AAACRHSC; an overview of its member sites, their priorities and status, and additional data for monitoring progress;
- Provide educational experiences for advanced historic preservation students and undergraduate architecture students through the assessment process, and the direct work with sites and preservation professionals.
- Test the feasibility of a “circuit rider” professional assistance program to serve all AAACRHSC sites.
- Creating a replicable model for use by other partners in other contexts.

### **[2] Project Schedule:**

#### Spring 2022: Develop the concept

- Discuss project concept with AAACRHSC
- Discuss and workshop the assessment tool within our partnership, which includes a small group of fellow professionals

#### \*Summer 2022: Pilot Phase

- Test the assessment with two AAACRHSC sites
- Penn and Tuskegee Summer internship
- Preservation Architect contracted for building assessment
- One weeklong trip in AL

#### Fall 2022: Report and evaluate

- Complete the pilot assessments and evaluate results with feedback our professionals’ workshop group and site stewards.
- Plan for future work with other Consortium sites.

#### Spring-Summer 2023:

- Identify additional sites to work with over the next year.

#### Fall 2023:

- Develop a version of the Assessment as an “intake” for other categories of Consortium membership created in the future

#### On-going:

- Include assessment data as part of maintaining the Consortium’s database of information on member sites

#### \*Details of Summer 2022

1. Pre-visit work:
  - Collect/consolidate existing documentation
  - Workshop the protocol with a small group of professional colleagues
  - Initial meeting (virtual) with site stewards (including info requests; preview of questions)
  - Prep work/orientation for project team
2. Collect Research & Documentation
  - Graphic documentation from TU, HABS or other sources (drawings, site/plot map)
  - Listing/registration documents (especially NRHP and Alabama register, and local if applicable)
  - Plans and records from site stewards?
  - Other secondary research available (recent preservation surveys, e.g.)
3. One-day on-site visits (Tentatively Wednesday, July 6<sup>th</sup>-Saturday July 9<sup>th</sup> 2022)
  - Half-day interview with site stewards
  - Half-day on-site tours/inspection/data collection (more detail on this below)
4. Synthesize data & generate report in a bullet-point/paragraph format
  - Description of methods
  - Report of findings in each of the three areas of assessment
    - o **Physical/site conditions**
    - o **Interpretation/programs**
    - o **Resources/partnerships**
    - o Identify priority opportunities and needs
    - o Areas for further investigation
    - o Appendix with site documentation
5. Debriefing on results with Consortium & stewards
  - Circulate draft report for review
  - Virtual meeting/call to collect feedback/answer questions
  - Finalize report

### **[3] Site Visits Conditions Assessment Check List**

#### **Management**

#### Goals



1. Build a picture of the management entity's overall capacity to sustain the site physically, interpretively, and economically.
2. Understand current and future strengths and challenges through the eyes of the stewards

#### Questions:

- Organization: describe the makeup and workings of the organization(s) that owns and cares for the site
- Partners: are there other organizations with whom you regularly collaborate or share?
- Volunteers: What is the volunteer structure?
- Funding: what are the sources of revenue (grants, donations, endowment, earned income, etc.); what are the main costs of sustaining the site? [looking for relative amounts, not specific measures]
- What do you see as the biggest issues regarding management of this site (in the near future, in the distant future)?

#### Capture:

- Narrative notes

### **Interpretation**

#### Goals

1. Understand how the significance of this place and its stories are conveyed to audiences
2. Determine how and why the site is used for non-heritage based activities.

#### Questions:

- Audiences: Who visits the site? What do they do when they visit (walk-through)?
- Narratives: What stories are interpreted for visitors?
- Media: What are the means of interpretation (personal tour, interpretive signs/panels, exhibits, website (apart from Consortium))
- Artifacts: Are there collections present?
- Programs: What kinds of events, programs or other activities are related to this place?
- What other plans are you talking/thinking about now?

#### Capture:

- photos and video
- Narrative notes

### **Physical / site conditions**

#### Goals

1. Assess overall fitness (weathertightness, structurally sound, service life expectations)
2. Identify actual and potential building and site pathologies – especially more serious, immediate
3. identify any safety concerns re public visitation

#### Working list of questions to explore/data to collect

- Basic description of materials and building systems
- Functional integrity of main building systems: roof, walls and other enclosures, windows and doors, surfaces;
- Structural issues;
- Site issues (erosion);

- Mechanical, electrical and plumbing/sewer issues;
- Interior conditions;
- Who performs maintenance for the site?
- Any plans for repair, additions, other work?

#### **Capture**

- Photos
- Notated drawings
- site map

#### **[4] Outcomes**

##### For individual member sites

- Prioritized and phased list of needs, addressing all aspects of site sustainability
  - o Physical and architectural issues;
  - o Interpretation and programming;
  - o Management, fostering partnership and financing
- A basic documentation package (if it doesn't already exist)
- Action steps for addressing priority needs (including expertise needed, potential partners and funders)

##### For AAACRHSC

- A living data base documenting site conditions and needs
- Analysis of priorities, needs, potential partner across the entire consortium
- A foundation for considering other potential "member" categories in the future

##### For CPCRS/Tuskegee

- Training opportunity for students
- Opportunity to develop a staff position with responsibilities to help implement priority site needs under AAACRHSC direction/partnership
- Co-publishing research on best practices for rapid site assessment

#### **[5] Project Team**

##### **Project team:**

- AAACRHSC: Priscilla Hancock-Cooper
- AAACRHSC Site Stewards
- Penn CPCPS: Randy Mason, Sarah Lerner, and a graduate student intern
- Tuskegee: Kwesi Daniels, and a student intern
- Preservation Architect: Tiffani Simple, RA

##### **Professionals Workshop participants:** (to help refine the project design)

- Will Raynolds, Program Director, Heritage Conservation at the J.M. Kaplan Fund
- Charles Lawrence, Heritage Conservation Specialist with Lord Aeck Sargent, Atlanta
- Brett Sturm, Restoration Specialist at North Carolina Department of Natural and Cultural Resources
- Laura Keim, Curator at Stenton Historic Site, Philadelphia

## [6] Interns Scope of Work

### CPCRS hired two interns to the project team for 8 weeks

	Public History (UPenn)	Architecture (TU)
<b>Site Visit Prep (Weeks 1-3)</b>	<p><u>General research and documentation:</u> Collect all secondary source material to get an wholistic sense of how the heritage of the site is consumed by the public (Academic and nonacademic resources)</p> <p>Understand and document the significance of each building (National, Regional, and Local)</p> <p>Understand how the surrounding landscape has changed over time, and how this could affect the sustainability of the site</p> <p>Understand and document the recent history of the heritage sites (What documentation/research material can be accessed online? If it is not all digitalized, we might need to budget in time to visit an archive)</p>	<p>Visit site to record building measurements</p> <p>Produce measured drawing of floorplans on AutoCAD</p> <p>Develop a general understanding of how the buildings have changed over time (Additions, damage, demolition?)</p>
<b>Site Visit (Week 4)</b>	<p>Take notes during conversations</p> <p>Photographs during walk through</p>	<p>Assist Preservation architect with conditions assessment</p>
<b>Produce Deliverables (Weeks 5-8)</b>	<p><u>History and Context</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. History of heritage site</li> <li>2. Context of heritage site</li> <li>3. Bibliography</li> </ol>	<p><u>Site Documentation</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Measured floorplans of heritage site</li> <li>2. Photographs of sites</li> <li>3. Site plans</li> </ol>

	<u>Conditions Assessment</u> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Management Conditions Assessment</li> <li>2. Interpretation Conditions Assessment</li> </ol> <u>Sustainable Recommendations</u> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Management Recommendations</li> <li>2. Interpretation Recommendations</li> </ol> <u>Supplemental Documents</u> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3. List of Useful Archives</li> <li>4. Relevant Grant opportunities</li> </ol>	
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## APPENDIX B – Simple Design Studio Report and Cost Estimate



### FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH

#### Property Condition Assessment

#### DRAFT REPORT

September 9, 2022  
SDS Project Number 22.023

#### Prepared By

Simple Design Studio-Architects, P.C.  
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## INTRODUCTION

In partnership with the University of Pennsylvania and the Alabama African American Civil Rights Heritage Sites Consortium, Inc, Simple Design Studio-Architects, P.C. (SDS) completed a condition assessment of the architectural systems including the exterior facade, appurtenances, window and door elements, the roofing system and associated flashing and drainage systems, and the interior finishes of the First Baptist Church located in Montgomery, Alabama.

The purpose of the assessment was to gain a general understanding of the building facade, roofing, and interior architectural components and their current condition and to provide anticipated repair and maintenance recommendations, with projected costs and established priorities.

## PROPERTY DESCRIPTION

The First Baptist Church is a Romanesque style church designed by architect W. T. Bailey that was constructed from 1910-1915. The building is rectangular in plan and extends approximately 60-feet in the north-south direction and 90-ft in the east-west direction and is two stories in height (Figure 1). The lower level consists of a large fellowship hall, kitchen, Pastor's office, administrative rooms, toilets, and storage rooms. The second level consists of the sanctuary, pulpit and choir areas, and a toilet. A balcony is located on the east side of the sanctuary space and is accessed from the bell tower staircase.

The church's main facade (east) is broken up into three sections with a tower at the left (south end), the central portion with the main entrance stair, and a belltower at the right (north end). The exterior walls are constructed of brick masonry and stone masonry. Bricks at the east facade are placed in a running bond and bricks at the north, south and west facades are laid in a common bond. Cement parging has been applied to the brick masonry at locations throughout the building, predominantly at the west facade. Stone elements are located at the base of the building in ashlar blocks and in ornamentation throughout the facades.

The church has nine (9) entry/exit points: two at the east facade, three at the north facade, three at the west facade and one at the south facade. The historic main entrance is located on the east facade and is constructed of large masonry stairs that lead up to the main level. This staircase used to lead to a central portico space that had doors leading into the sanctuary and towers. At some point, the portico was enclosed and large wooden and stained glass doors were installed. At the south facade, there is one entrance to the sanctuary via a ramp which provides the only accessible route to the second level.

Windows at the building are constructed of wood frame and metal frame. Double-hung, single glazed wood windows are located at the first level of the church. Stained glass windows are located at the main level and at the towers. Small stained glass windows are comprised of a wood frame and single pane glass framed with lead. Large stained glass windows are comprised of a metal frame and single pane glass framed with lead. At select locations, window sashes with stained glass have been replaced with full panes of glass. At select window openings, vents and other mechanical equipment have been installed for ventilation. Ornamental brickwork is used to frame window openings and includes circular brickwork at circular windows, arched headers at arched openings, and rowlock sills below windows. Other windows and door openings have steel lintels or masonry headers above. Stone masonry sills are also located at select windows throughout. See Figure 2 through Figure 22 for typical exterior photos.

The church has several different roof areas. The majority of the church is covered by a cross-gabled roof constructed of standing seam copper. Gutters are located at the perimeter of the copper roof and metal leaders extend down the facade to grade level. At the northeast belltower, there is a central pyramidal spire constructed of terra cotta clay tile with a copper finial. A small flat membrane roof surrounds the pyramid. At the four corners of the belltower roof, there are masonry spires topped with masonry finials. Below the main roof level, a flat membrane roof has been installed in the belfry. The southeast tower is topped with an octagonal roof constructed of terra cotta clay tile with a copper finial. A smaller flat roof is located at the central portion of the east elevation, spanning between the towers at the main entrance. A membrane roofing system has been installed and a brick and stone masonry crenellated parapet wall surrounds the roofing area on the east side. Overflow scuppers are located at the flat roof sections and metal leaders extend down the facade. See Figure 23 – Figure 29.

The walls of the church vary in thickness depending on their location and the interior finish is constructed of plaster. At the belltower staircase, the interior walls are exposed brick masonry at some locations and other locations have been covered with cement parge coat. The ceilings throughout most of the interior spaces is either of painted drywall or plaster. At the sanctuary, the ceiling is clad with pressed tin in a quatrefoil pattern. The floors are constructed of concrete, wood and tile. Carpet has been installed over the wood floors at select room areas and at the stairs adjacent to the sanctuary space. See Figure 30 – Figure 35.

## VISUAL ASSESSMENT

On July 8, 2022, SDS completed a general visual assessment of the church. SDS reviewed the exterior walls, windows and doors, roofing system, interior finishes, and accessibility. The assessment focused on the overall functional integrity of the building systems and the current condition of the building components.

### Exterior Walls

During the visual survey, the following conditions were noted at the exterior walls:

- Displaced and loose brick units (Figure 36)
- Cracked, eroded, and spalled brick masonry (Figure 37 - Figure 40)
- Cracked and spalled masonry (Figure 40 - Figure 42)
- Cracked and spalling cement parge coating and underlying masonry at the exterior walls, stairs, and foundation walls (Figure 43 - Figure 48)
- Deteriorated mortar joints (Figure 49 - Figure 51)
- Water staining and efflorescence at exterior walls (Figure 52 - Figure 53)
- Biological growth and vegetation at exterior walls (Figure 53 - Figure 56)

### Windows and Doors

The following conditions were noted at the exterior windows and doors:

- Boarded up window openings (Figure 57)
- Peeling paint at wood and steel-framed windows (Figure 58 - Figure 59)
- Deteriorated wood-framed windows (Figure 60 - Figure 61)
- Deflection and minor corrosion of framing at metal-framed windows (Figure 62 - Figure 66)
- Deteriorated putty at stained glass windows (Figure 67 - Figure 68)
- Corrosion and deflection of steel lintels (Figure 69)



- Cracked masonry headers (Figure 70)
- Cracked masonry window sills (Figure 71)
- Failing parge coating at sills and headers (Figure 72 - Figure 74)
- Deteriorated perimeter sealant (Figure 75)

## Roofing Systems

During the visual survey, the following deteriorating conditions were noted regarding the roofing system:

- Detached copper finials at belltower and southeast tower (Figure 76 - Figure 77)
- Cracked and deteriorated stone spires and finials at belltower (Figure 78)
- Deflection at standing seam roof ridge (Figure 79 - Figure 80)
- Previously patched areas at standing seam roof (Figure 81 - Figure 82)
- Detached flashing at standing seam roof (Figure 82)
- Corroded gutters and leaders (Figure 83)

## Interior

During the visual survey, the following conditions were noted at the interior:

- Water staining and damage at interior walls and ceilings (Figure 84 - Figure 92)

## DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Overall, the First Baptist Church is in fair condition. Most of the conditions observed are due to the church's age, exposure to the elements, damage due to the bombings, and lack of appropriate maintenance and repairs at the property. Based on our limited assessment, SDS has developed repair recommendations with estimated costs. Based on the expected useful life, the effective age, and the current conditions, repairs were prioritized into Immediate (to be completed within 1 year), Short-Term (to be completed within 2 to 4 years) and Long-Term (to be completed within 5 to 7 years).

## HAZARDOUS MATERIALS

Given the building's age, any work related to the existing paint, sealant or putty, roofing system and any waterproofing material should be tested for hazardous materials prior to the work commencing including lead, asbestos, and mold.

## WATER INFILTRATION

Evidence of past and present water infiltration was observed when on site at the exterior walls, roof level, interior ceilings and interior walls. Following the visual survey, SDS performed a non-destructive assessment at select areas at the interior of the sanctuary utilizing a FLIR E8 thermal imaging infrared camera. Infrared thermography is a non-destructive testing method that can assist in identifying thermal patterns by measuring the transfer of heat at targeted surfaces. The infrared survey was completed in an effort to identify thermal anomalies that would possibly reveal the presence of moisture within the ceiling and wall assemblies. At locations where moisture staining was observed, thermal variances were picked up with the infrared camera, confirming the presence of moisture. See Figure 93 - Figure 101.

Given the patterns of the staining and the infrared imagery, it appears that the damage at the interior ceilings is primarily located at the copper roof valleys and roof-to-exterior wall junctures. From our review, it appears that previous repairs to the roof did not fully address the water infiltration. Additional water damage was noted primarily at the interiors adjacent to window and door openings.

Based on the conditions observed on site and noted by the Church personnel, a consultant should be retained to complete a leak investigation to determine where the roofing system is actively leaking and whether it is an issue primarily centered at the roof valleys, or if there are additional issues within the roofing system. The window and door assemblies should also be tested to determine if they are leaking due to openings within the frames, due to deteriorated perimeter sealant, and/or due to the current intersection of the headers and footers. Following the leak investigation, immediate repairs should be completed as required to mitigate the leaks until large-scale repairs can be implemented.

## **Exterior Walls**

Water staining, efflorescence and biological growth were noted at the exterior walls and were predominantly observed at protruding and rough-textured facade elements, at corner locations where there is additional water runoff from the roof, and at areas that remain shaded for extended periods of time. The exterior walls should be cleaned off to mitigate extensive staining and deterioration of the masonry. A high pressure wash should be completed with a mild detergent to prevent damage to the masonry and mortar joints.

Vegetation growth was also observed and should be removed immediately. Following removal, a biological solution should be used to fully clean the area and any deteriorated joints or masonry should be repaired as described below.

## **BRICK MASONRY**

The brick masonry on the exterior walls was noted to vary in texture and overall quality which is most likely due to its brick sourcing. First Baptist Church is also known as the “Brick-A-Day Church” as members of the congregation were asked to bring bricks to help build the current church building. Individual cracked and damaged bricks were observed throughout the building and loose bricks were also noted at select locations. Bricks at the secondary facades were noted to be more significantly deteriorated than bricks at the main facade. Damaged masonry should be replaced with new. Any new replacement brick should be of Grade SW (exterior grade brick which are more resilient to severe weathering) and should match the existing brick in size and color.

## **STONE MASONRY**

Previous repairs were noted throughout the masonry including crack and patch repairs. New hairline cracks were observed in the masonry at new locations and at previously repaired locations which is an indication of continuous movement. Cracks should be repaired with grout or epoxy. If the cracks become larger, reinforcement should be used to secure any potential loose sections of stone. If the blocks are significantly damaged, they should be replaced with new.

## **MORTAR**

The mortar joints were observed to be in generally good condition. Cracking and loose mortar was observed in select locations and repointing is expected to be an ongoing maintenance item. Deteriorated mortar joints should be repointed with new mortar to match the existing mortar color, texture, and composition.

## CEMENT PARGE COATING

A cement parge coating was applied to a large portion of the west facade, all of the staircases, and at several headers and sills throughout the building. The coating was noted to have significant water staining, cracks, and spalls. At spalled locations, the backup masonry was noted to be deteriorated as well. To reduce ongoing maintenance or address leaks, parge coatings are often applied to exterior masonry. However, it is important that any coatings that are applied are fully evaluated, and the exterior walls maintained to mitigate any moisture infiltration behind the coating. Masonry is a porous material that absorbs and releases moisture. When a non-breathable coating is applied and moisture still migrates into the wall assembly, moisture will become trapped between the masonry substrate and the coating and cause damage to the coating and degradation of the masonry beneath. The existing coating should be fully removed, the masonry substrate prepared and a new breathable parge coating applied.

## EXTERIOR WALL JOINTS

Deteriorated mortar joints were noted at miscellaneous locations on all elevations. Deteriorated mortar joints should be raked out and repointed with new mortar to match the existing mortar joint finish profile, color, and texture. At several locations at the ashlar blocks, joints that were previously repointed were noted to be loose and installed over existing mortar. When joints are repointed, the existing joints should be cut to a depth of 3/4-inch to allow for appropriate bonding. Proper joint preparation is essential to the longevity of a repointing repair.

Additionally, brick masonry mortar was noted to be intact at several locations where the bricks were eroding and experiencing surface loss. This is an indication that the mortar that is being used is harder than the bricks. When completing a repointing repair, it is important that the material properties of the existing brick and mortar are examined. This is to ensure that any new mortar product is of an appropriate compressive strength, to limit potential cracking and deterioration of the adjacent material.

Minor sealant deterioration was noted at select locations such as flashing and wall joints and wall penetrations. Sealant that exhibits signs of deterioration such as cracking and adhesion loss should be removed and replaced with new silicone sealant and backer rod to limit potential water infiltration. Any skyward joints at copings, band courses, or other elements that require replacement should also be replaced with sealant moving forward.

## Windows and Doors

The windows at the building were noted to be in fair condition. Some of the stained glass windows were boarded up and Church personnel stated that they were currently being restored by Birmingham Glass. All windows were noted to have peeling paint at the framing elements. Prior to repairs, the paint should be scraped off and new primer and paint applied after repairs are completed.

Stained glass windows at the building were noted to be in satisfactory condition with minor deterioration observed at the glazing and lead framing. At many of the stained glass windows, the putty between the window frame and the stained glass was noted to be cracked and separating, requiring replacement. At windows framed with metal, bowing was observed at the metal framing and the stained glass. These should be reviewed in-situ to determine if additional support is required for the window size.

Several wood windows were noted to have cracking and split sash and framing elements. The existing window sashes should be restored including scraping the existing paint, completing putty repairs between the sash and the glazing, completing wood repairs with putty and new splices of wood.

The doors were noted to be in satisfactory condition. Painting was noted to be deteriorated as with the exterior window frames, and should be scraped, primed and painted. At select locations where the grade level slopes down, the base of select door frames was noted to be damaged. When the paint is removed, the frames should be repaired as required.

### **LINTELS AND HEADERS**

Steel lintels that were exposed at the building were noted to have minor surface corrosion in various locations. When corrosion gets significant, these should be scraped, painted, and waterproofed to maintain the steel's durability and structural properties. If lintels are significantly deflected and/or deteriorated, they should be replaced with new.

### **SILLS**

Stone sills appeared to be in satisfactory condition at the time of our visit. Minor cracking was observed in select sills and should be repaired with sealant or injection grout. Sills that become extensively damaged should be replaced with new cast stone or masonry sills. Sills that have been coated with cement parging should have the parging removed and the underlying masonry repaired as indicated above.

### **PERIMETER SEALANT**

Deteriorated window and door perimeter sealant was observed throughout the building and should be replaced. Any deteriorated or missing perimeter sealant should be removed, and new sealant installed over a backer rod to limit air and water infiltration into the building envelope.

## **Roofing Systems**

### **COPPER STANDING SEAM ROOF**

According to the church records, the copper roof was installed in 1981. Copper standing seam roofs typically have a service life of 60-75 years. Leaks were reported after the new roof was installed at various locations, predominantly located at the roof valleys, where water collects and runs off the roof. The roof areas were patched at reported leaks locations, however leaks are still occurring at select areas. A leak investigation should be completed as indicated above to determine the exact location of water infiltration in order to complete appropriate patch repairs.

In addition to the water infiltration and deterioration noted at the copper, SDS noted sagging at the main ridge of the roof which can be an indication of deflection of the interior roof ridge beams or trusses. A structural investigation should be completed to determine an accurate scope of repairs for the roof structure. At a minimum, it is expected that repairs will be required at the structure including the addition of new connections and splicing of new wood at the ridge beams and trusses.

Given the roof leaks and obvious structural wear, it is expected that the roof will require replacement within 10 years. Full replacement should include removal of the existing roofing assembly down to the structural deck and installation of a new roofing system including sheathing where required, ice and water shield, and appropriate kickout flashings at exterior wall junctures.

## **TERRA COTTA ROOFS**

At the terra cotta clay roofs, the roof tiles appear to be in satisfactory condition. If tiles become damaged, they should be replaced with new to match existing as soon as possible to limit water infiltration.

## **MASONRY SPIRES**

Masonry spires located at the belltower roof were noted to have cracks and spalling. Appropriate crack and spall repairs should be completed as outlined above. If there is significant deterioration at the underlying brick masonry, the spires should be rebuilt or anchors installed for stabilization.

## **FLAT ROOFS**

Built-up roofing systems typically have a service life of 25 to 30 years, if well-maintained. Leaks were reported at both flat roof areas and were previously repaired. The flat roof over the vestibule was reportedly repaired in 1991 and the roof over the bell tower was reportedly replaced in the early 2000s. The roofs should be monitored for punctures, debris build up and issues with flashing. Additional patching or recover is expected to be required within the next 10 years, if not full replacement.

## **ROOF ACCESSORIES**

Deterioration was noted at the gutters and leaders and they should be replaced as required. Moving forward, the roofing systems, including gutters and leaders, should be maintained on a regular basis to ensure the longevity of the system.

The copper finials which are located at the terra cotta roofs were both detached. The finials should be reattached at the base and secured to the roof structure to limit future breakage.

## **Interiors**

### **INTERIOR FINISHES**

Evidence of water infiltration was noted during our inspection at several locations on the ceiling and walls. As previously mentioned, water testing should be completed to determine the source of water infiltration to outline appropriate repairs. When the source of the leak has been identified and repaired, repairs should be made to the interior ceiling and walls. Repairs should be completed at the interior finishes including completing patch repairs and repainting the interior walls and ceilings throughout.

### **ACCESSIBILITY**

The federal Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) guidelines state that there must be an accessible entrance into the building and that there must be a Building Accessible Route. A ramp was installed at the southeast corner of the building in 2019 which provides access to the sanctuary and meets all requirements of the code. At the rear entrance on the west facade, an accessible route provides entry into the lower level through the kitchen. Although ADA access is provided at each level, there is no accessibility route throughout the building – access is provided through external means only. The requirement for an accessibility route throughout the building may be waived due to the historic significance of the building. If internal accessibility is planned, the scope of work will need to be developed by an Architect and/or Engineer. Upon initial review of the church's layout, an elevator would be feasible to install but would most likely need to be installed at the southeast tower.

## LIMITATIONS

The nature of due diligence reviews is such that it is not possible to investigate each component of each system in detail, thereby limiting the potential to uncover every current or potential future defect in the exterior facade and roofing systems. Our review was focused on items determined to be potentially problematic based on our experience with previous building envelope investigations. Information and opinions in this report are based on a limited visual condition assessment of the building exterior from grade level and from select areas where interior and setback roof access were provided, with close-up observations made only at these locations. No suspended scaffolding or aerial lifts were used for additional close-up observations. Because of the limited nature of our observations, we may not have been able to identify hidden or latent defects for which there are no obvious visible indications. SDS therefore cannot assume responsibility for hidden or latent defects. Similarly, SDS must rely on information provided by others regarding maintenance, leak history, and renovations, and cannot assume responsibility for inaccuracies in this information.

No sidewalks, plaza areas, parking structures, or other site elements were included as part of the inspection other than to identify possible areas of water infiltration as described above. No water penetration testing was performed in an attempt to recreate any leak conditions that may exist. Structural, mechanical, electrical, plumbing, interior, accessibility, and fire protection systems were not inspected by SDS, and are beyond the scope of this assessment. Additionally, testing, detailed analyses or calculations, evaluation of building code compliance, an environmental audit, identification of potentially hazardous materials, or evaluation of air quality and health issues were not completed as part of our assessment.

## COST ESTIMATES

Our cost estimate is written in detail in the allocated chart. The budget estimates are calculated in today's dollars. Opinions of probable costs are based upon our limited visual condition assessment and our experience with similar construction and as such they should be considered preliminary. Actual repair costs may differ depending on the state of the economy, detailed design, and unforeseeable conditions that have not yet revealed themselves at visible exterior or interior surfaces. Assumed repair locations, extents, and methodologies may vary and as such should not be considered final until additional studies are commissioned to fully understand the nature, location, extent, cause of, and appropriate solution to many of the conditions observed. All repairs should be designed by a licensed design professional familiar with the conditions and types of repair work involved.

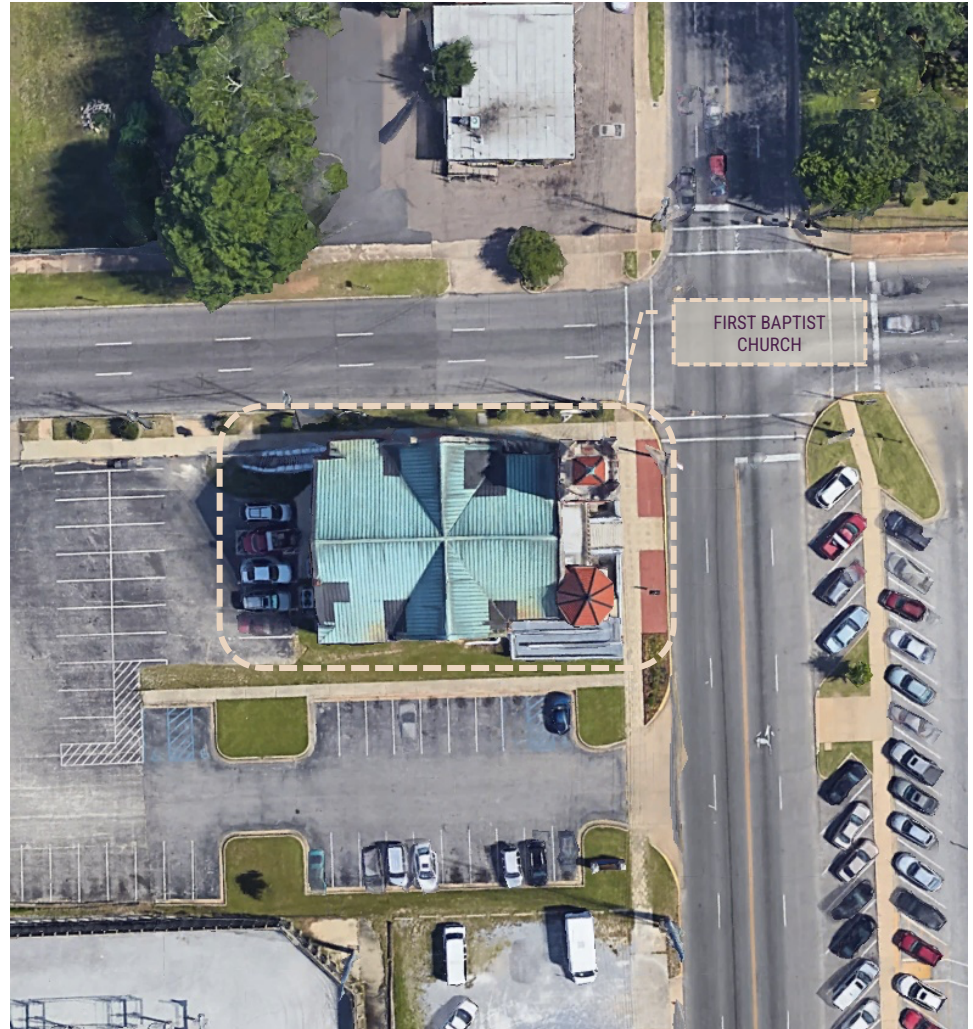
Estimates are derived from remote surveying by counting features in photographs and/or scaling drawings. Unit prices are derived from experience on previous projects that are similar in nature. The purpose of the estimate is to arrive at an estimated order of magnitude for budgetary consideration. If more precise estimates are required, further investigation including additional close-up access from suspending scaffolding or aerial lifts, detailed repair documents should be prepared, and bids should be obtained from qualified contractors.



## FIGURES

**Figure 1.**

Aerial view of First Baptist Church.  
*Image obtained from Google Earth.*



**Figure 2.**  
Overall view of east elevation with  
main building entrance.



**Figure 3.**  
Overall view of north elevation.



**Figure 4.**  
Overall view of west elevation (rear  
entrance).





**Figure 5.**  
Overall view of south elevation.



**Figure 6.**  
Overall view of main elevation  
comprised of three parts: left tower,  
central tower, and right belltower.  
*Image provided by Tuskegee  
University.*



**Figure 7.**  
Typical brick masonry in running  
bond and stone band ornamentation.



**Figure 8.**

Typical brick masonry in running bond, and stone band and foundation wall coated with cement parge coating.



**Figure 9.**

Typical cement parge coating applied to exterior walls.



**Figure 10.**

Typical masonry ashlar blocks at the exterior walls.





**Figure 11.**

Typical wood windows with single pane glazing.

*Image provided by Tuskegee University.*



**Figure 12.**

Typical wood framed windows with stained glass with arched brick headers and stone sills.

*Image provided by Tuskegee University.*



**Figure 13.**

Interior view of wood windows from Figure 13.



**Figure 14.**

Large round wood framed window with stained glass and stone surrounds.

*Image provided by Tuskegee University.*



**Figure 15.**

Small round wood framed window with stained glass and stone surrounds.

*Image provided by Tuskegee University.*



**Figure 16.**

Interior view of wood window from Figure 15.

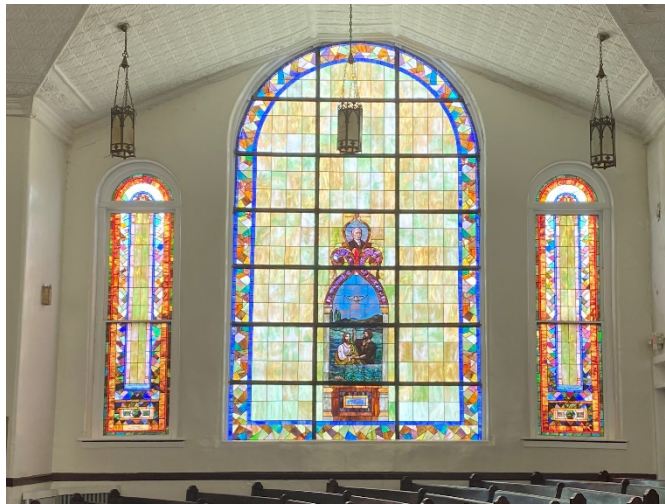




**Figure 17.**  
Stained glass windows in sanctuary.  
Middle window is steel framed and  
side windows are wood framed.



**Figure 18.**  
Interior view of stained glass  
windows in Figure 17.



**Figure 19.**  
Overall view of main entrance door  
and concrete steps.



**Figure 20.**  
Overall view of brick masonry and  
concrete steps at rear.



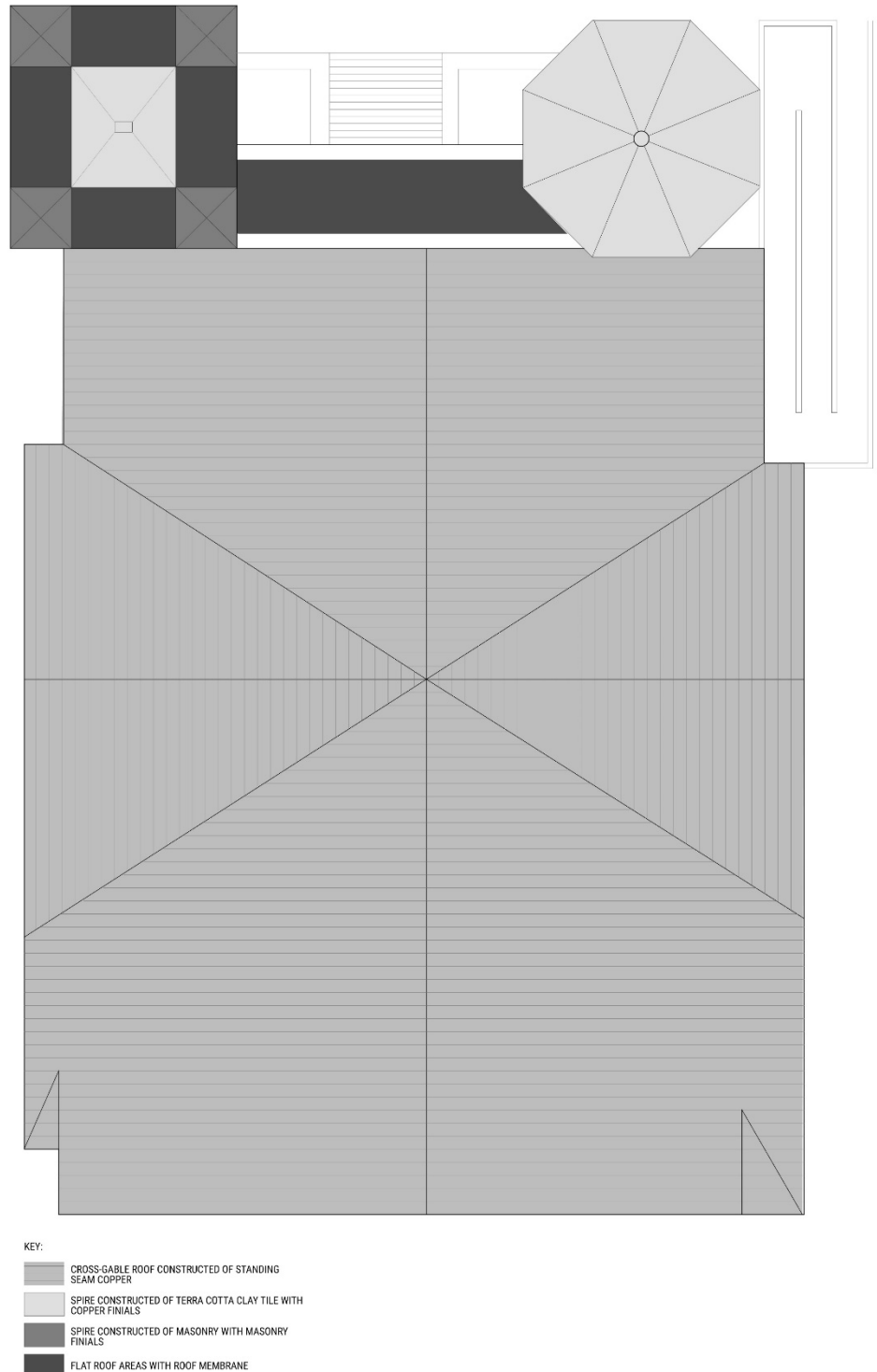
**Figure 21.**  
Overall view of brick masonry and  
concrete steps at north elevation.



**Figure 22.**  
Overall view of ramp at south  
elevation.



**Figure 23.**  
Diagram of roof areas and types.

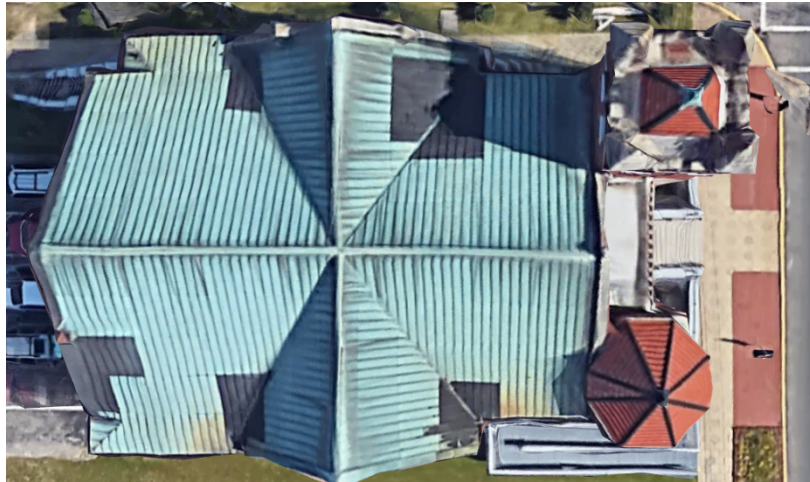




**Figure 24.**

Satellite image of roofing types at First Baptist.

*Image obtained from Google Earth.*



**Figure 25.**

Detail photo of copper standing seam roof.



**Figure 26.**

Closeup view of belltower roof with pyramid spire with copper frame and terra cotta clay tile and copper finial, masonry spires at corners with masonry finials, and flat membrane roof at perimeter.

*Image provided by Tuskegee University.*





**Figure 27.**

Closeup view of southeast tower octagonal roof constructed of terra cotta clay tile.

*Image provided by Tuskegee University.*



**Figure 28.**

Closeup view of flat membrane roof above main entry.

*Image provided by Tuskegee University.*



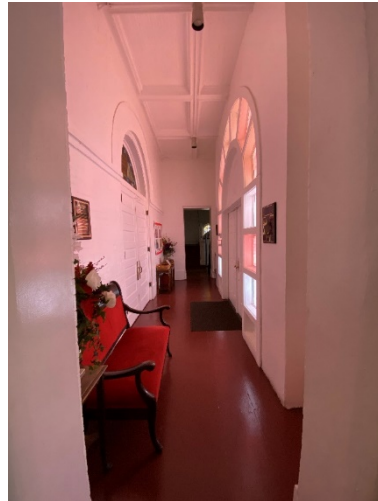
**Figure 29.**

Closeup view of flat membrane roof in belfry at northeast belltower.

*Image provided by Tuskegee University.*



**Figure 30.**  
Main entrance vestibule.



**Figure 31.**  
Overall view of sanctuary.



**Figure 32.**  
Overall view of sanctuary.





**Figure 33.**  
Overall view of fellowship hall at lower level.



**Figure 34.**  
Overall view of kitchen at lower level.



**Figure 35.**  
Overall view of parlor at lower level.



**Figure 36.**  
Displaced and loose brick units.



**Figure 37.**  
Spalled brick masonry units.



**Figure 38.**  
Spalled brick masonry units.





**Figure 39.**  
Eroded and spalling brick masonry.



**Figure 40.**  
Cracked brick masonry and stone masonry.



**Figure 41.**  
Cracked stone masonry.



**Figure 42.**  
Cracked stone masonry.



**Figure 43.**  
Cracked and spalling cement parge coating at exterior walls and deterioration of the masonry beneath.



**Figure 44.**  
Cracked and spalling cement parge coating at exterior walls.





**Figure 45.**

Cracked and spalling cement parge coating and underlying masonry at stairs.



**Figure 46.**

Cracked and spalling cement parge coating and underlying masonry at stairs and foundation wall.



**Figure 47.**

Cracked and spalling cement parge coating and underlying masonry at stairs.



**Figure 48.**

Cracked and spalling cement parge coating and underlying masonry at stairs.



**Figure 49.**

Deteriorated mortar joints at brick masonry.



**Figure 50.**

Deteriorated mortar joints at brick masonry.





**Figure 51.**  
Deteriorated mortar joints at ashlar block.



**Figure 52.**  
Water staining at exterior walls.



**Figure 53.**  
Efflorescence (outlined areas), biological growth (darkly stained areas) and vegetation growth (arrow) at exterior walls.



**Figure 54.**  
Biological growth at exterior walls.



**Figure 55.**  
Biological growth at exterior walls.



**Figure 56.**  
Vegetation growth at exterior wall and roof copings.





**Figure 57.**  
Boarded up window openings.



**Figure 58.**  
Peeling paint at exterior of wood-framed windows.



**Figure 59.**  
Peeling paint at exterior of steel-framed windows.



**Figure 60.**  
Cracked and split wood windows.



**Figure 61.**  
Cracked and split wood windows.



**Figure 62.**  
Minor corrosion at stained glass steel framing.

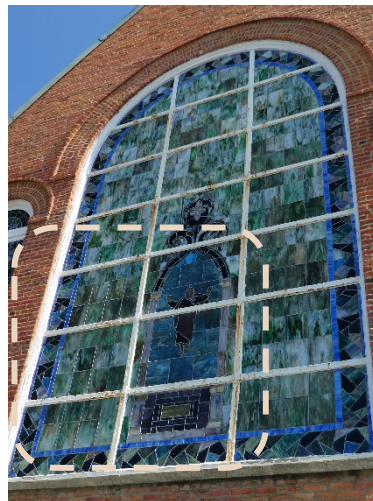




**Figure 63.**  
Minor corrosion at stained glass steel framing.



**Figure 64.**  
Areas of deflection at steel-framed stained glass windows (dashed outline).



**Figure 65.**  
Areas of deflection at steel-framed stained glass windows.



**Figure 66.**

Minor corrosion at stained glass steel framing and separating putty.



**Figure 67.**

Deteriorated putty.



**Figure 68.**

Peeling paint, deteriorated putty and deteriorated perimeter sealant.





**Figure 69.**  
Minor corrosion and deflection at  
steel lintel.



**Figure 70.**  
Cracked window header.



**Figure 71.**  
Cracked window sill.



**Figure 72.**  
Cracked parge coating at window sill  
and spalled masonry.



**Figure 73.**  
Cracked parge coating at window  
sill.



**Figure 74.**  
Cracked and deflecting parge  
coating at header.





**Figure 75.**  
Deteriorated perimeter sealant.



**Figure 76.**  
Detached copper finial at belltower.



**Figure 77.**  
Detached copper finial at southeast tower.



**Figure 78.**

Cracked and deteriorated stone spires and finials at belltower.



**Figure 79.**

Deflection at standing seam roof ridge. Note approximate datum line.



**Figure 80.**

Deflection at standing seam roof ridge. Note approximate datum line.





**Figure 81.**  
Previously patched areas at standing seam roof (black areas).



**Figure 82.**  
Previously patched area at standing seam roof. Note detached flashing at parapet wall.



**Figure 83.**  
Corroded hole in leader.



**Figure 84.**

Cracked and damaged plaster at interior sanctuary wall.



**Figure 85.**

Cracked and damaged plaster at interior sanctuary wall.



**Figure 86.**

Cracked and damaged plaster at north interior wall at belltower staircase.



**Figure 87.**

Water damage at interior sanctuary wall.



**Figure 88.**

Water damage at interior sanctuary walls.



**Figure 89.**

Water damage at interior walls.





**Figure 90.**  
Water damage at interior sanctuary ceiling.



**Figure 91.**  
Water damage at interior sanctuary ceiling.



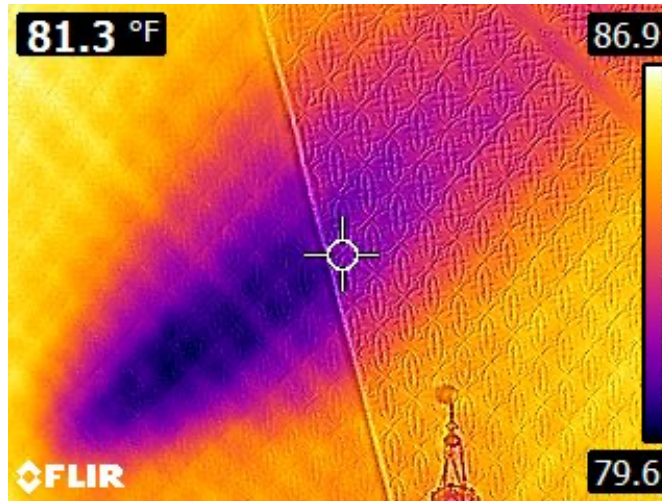
**Figure 92.**  
Water damage at interior sanctuary ceiling.



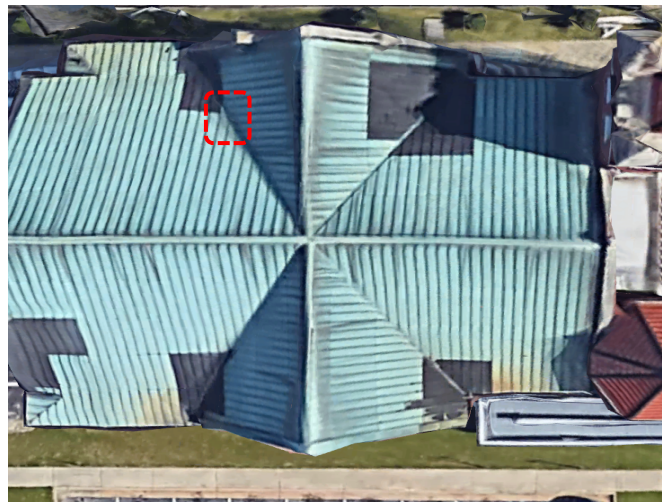
**Figure 93.**  
Interior water damage at quatrefoil tin ceiling in sanctuary.



**Figure 94.**  
Water damage at interior sanctuary  
FLIR image of area in Figure 93  
showing thermal anomalies at water  
damaged area.



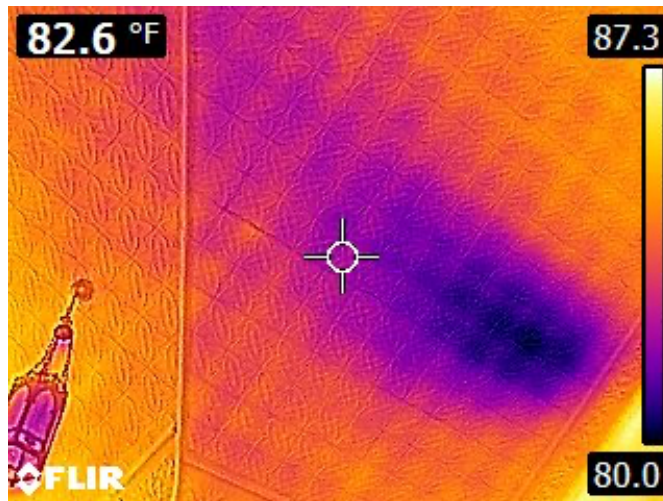
**Figure 95.**  
Exterior view of general area shown  
in Figures 93 and 94 (red dashed  
outline). Note that roof patches have  
been completed previously near the  
location.



**Figure 96.**  
Interior water damage at quatrefoil  
tin ceiling in sanctuary.



**Figure 97.**  
Water damage at interior sanctuary  
FLIR image of area in Figure 96  
showing thermal anomalies at water  
damaged area.



**Figure 98.**  
Exterior view of general area shown  
in Figures 96 and 97 (red dashed  
outline). Note that roof patches have  
been completed previously near the  
location.

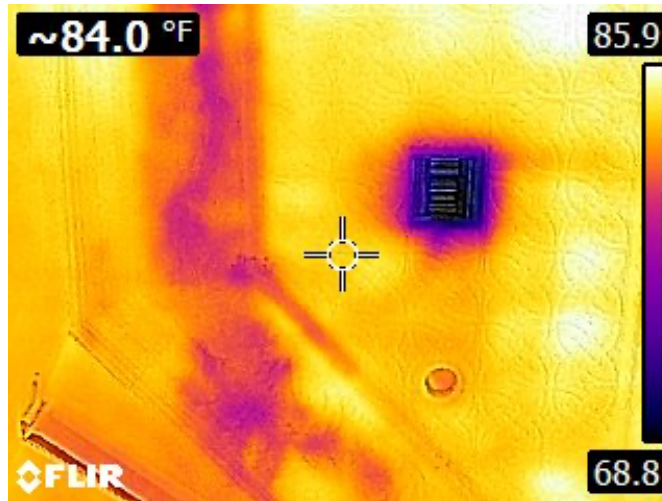




**Figure 99.**  
Interior water damage at quatrefoil  
tin ceiling in sanctuary.



**Figure 100.**  
Water damage at interior sanctuary  
FLIR image of area in Figure 99  
showing thermal anomalies at water  
damaged area.



**Figure 101.**  
Exterior view of general area shown  
in Figures 99 and 100 (red dashed  
outline).



## **APPENDIX C – Site Context**

(Authored by Calvin Nguyen, CPCRS Summer Intern 2022)

### **Historical Context ("Narrative"):**

#### **Reconstruction Era**

More than an historic building, the First Baptist Church on Ripley Street has been an important institution in African American history — locally, statewide, and nationally — since its inception in the basement of Montgomery's First Baptist Church in the 1850s.<sup>1</sup> As the church grew in white elite membership in the 1840s, racial segregation became strictly enforced, no longer allowing Black congregants to participate in church conference meetings, forcing them to worship at different times, and allowing little say in church decisions. Reconstruction provided little change in church dynamics, then Pastor of the church noting that the relationship between whites and their "late slaves" in the congregation should not change.<sup>2</sup> With tensions high between Black and white members of the original First Baptist congregation on Perry Street, the Black members officially broke off to form their own congregation in 1866, moving to a new location on Columbus Street in 1867.<sup>3</sup>

The first independent Black congregation in Alabama, the First Baptist Church Colored — as it was officially known then and continues to carry that name — served several hundred members under the leadership of Reverend Nathan Ashby.<sup>4</sup> In 1868, the Colored Baptist Convention of Alabama (now the Alabama State Baptist Convention) formed at the church. The church's Rev. Ashby served as the convention's first president.<sup>5</sup> In 1877, growing rifts among the congregation led to the formation of the Second Baptist Church, known today as the Dexter Avenue King Memorial Church.<sup>6</sup> Despite this, the congregation at First Baptist quickly grew to several thousand by 1880. The church would go on to host the first baccalaureate service for Alabama State University in 1890 and the National Baptist Convention in 1880, cementing its importance on the local, regional, and national levels to the

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<sup>1</sup> Roberson, Houston Bryan. *Fighting the Good Fight: The Story of the Dexter Avenue King Memorial Baptist Church, 1865-1977*. Routledge, 1st Edition, June 2005. page 3.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Boothe, Charles Octavius. *The cyclopedia of the colored Baptists of Alabama, their leaders and their work*. Alabama Publishing Company, 1895.

[https://archive.org/details/cyclopediaofcolo00boot\\_0/page/n39/mode/2up](https://archive.org/details/cyclopediaofcolo00boot_0/page/n39/mode/2up).

<sup>4</sup> Yawn, Andrew J. "150 Years: the Legacy of the First Baptist Church. *Montgomery Advertiser*. November 4, 2016. <https://www.montgomeryadvertiser.com/story/news/2016/11/04/150-years-legacy-first-baptist-church/93198378/>; Roberson, *Fighting the Good Fight*, page 3.

<sup>5</sup> Boothe, *The cyclopedia of the colored Baptists of Alabama*, 1895.

<sup>6</sup> It's rumored that those leaving to form what would become the Dexter Avenue King Memorial Baptist church were the more privileged of the original congregation, wanting a more "dignified" space of worship and a practice based less on emotion (*Fighting the Good Fight*, page 8)

Black and Baptist community. By 1915 the church —now led by Rev. Andrew J. Stokes — had 5,000 congregants, making it the largest Black Baptist congregation in the nation.<sup>7</sup>

### Civil Rights Movement

From 1952 to 1961, Ralph Abernathy served as the pastor of the First Baptist Church, befriending Martin Luther King Jr. when King arrived in Montgomery and starting the Montgomery Improvement Association with him in 1955 to support the Montgomery Bus Boycott. Working side by side with Dr. King and other Civil Rights leaders, Abernathy's church played a crucial role in the Civil Rights Movement. Owing to its large size relative to other Black churches in Montgomery, the church was one of the major gathering spaces for Civil Rights Movement activities, including bus boycott meetings in the 1950s and student protest workshops led by Abernathy in the early 1960s<sup>8</sup>

In the early morning hours of January 10, 1957, the church was targeted by the Ku Klux Klan in a city-wide bombing of four Black churches — Hutchinson Street Baptist, Bell Street Baptist, Mt. Olive Baptist, and First Baptist — as well as the homes of Rev. Abernathy and Reverend Robert Graetz, a white pastor to the Black Trinity Lutheran Church.

Despite the First Baptist Church's role as the movement's meeting space, community center, and the Ku Klux Klan's bomb target in 1950s, it wasn't until 1961 that the church received international attention. On the evening of Sunday May 21, 1961, the church hosted 1,500 Black residents and community leaders for a service in support of the Freedom Riders, who had been met with violence a day earlier when arriving at Montgomery. The attendees of the service were soon trapped by an angry white mob of about 3,000 people surrounding the church, threatening to burn the church, throwing bricks at the windows, burning and flipping over cars.<sup>9</sup> Those in attendance sought refuge along the pews and basement of the church. Over 200 churchgoers lined up at the church telephone to call their families, each allowed one minute.<sup>10</sup> Martin Luther King Jr. made a call to the U.S. Attorney General Robert Kennedy to urge him to mobilize the U.S. marshals to control the violent rioters. The U.S. marshals eventually turned up to disperse the mob in the early morning, though spurts of violence continued all through the night.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Boothe, *The cyclopedia of the colored Baptists of Alabama*, 1895.

<sup>8</sup> Daniel, Roosevelt and Howard Davis. "CPCRS Site Assessment Meeting." Interviewed by Randall Mason, Sarah Lerner, and Calvin Nguyen. Montgomery, July 8, 2022.

<sup>9</sup> "Dr. King, Besieged, Voices Confidence." *New York Times*. May 22, 1961. Page 27.

<https://timesmachine.nytimes.com/timesmachine/1961/05/22/101464251.html?pageNumber=27>

<sup>10</sup> "Dr. King, Besieged, Voices Confidence." *New York Times*, 1961.

<sup>11</sup> "Montgomery Under Martial Law." *New York Times*. May 22, 1961. Page 1.

<https://timesmachine.nytimes.com/timesmachine/1961/05/22/101464245.html?pageNumber=1>

The event, now known as the Siege of the First Baptist, was depicted on the front page of the New York Times the following day, and provided a national spotlight onto the extreme racial violence in the South.<sup>12</sup> Locally, the Montgomery Advertiser's captions for pictures of the Freedom Riders at the service read, "THESE PIOUS CHURCHGOERS WERE THE CAUSE OF IT ALL / Freedom Riders Caused Violence With Integration Meeting."<sup>13</sup> The First Baptist Church backgrounded a tremendous show of resilience from the Civil Rights Movement and Black Montgomery citizens, an important night of persistence to continue the first Freedom Riders' trip through the deep south.

### **Architectural History**

The original First Baptist Church building was erected in 1867 situated on Court Street and Columbus Street.<sup>14</sup> This was a wooden, Gothic Revival cathedral, with "large windows, a high ceiling, and a tall steeple."<sup>15</sup> By the 1870s the growing congregation needed a larger worship space than the modest church building on Columbus Street. Plans were set out to build a new, larger edifice on the corner of Ripley and Columbus. Contrary to the popular narrative that the present structure began construction in response to a fire destroying the original church, there is photographic evidence that the present church building on the corner of Ripley Street and Columbus Street had started construction before the original building burned down in the first decade of the 1900s.<sup>16</sup>

This second church building was designed by Walter T. Bailey, the first Black graduate in architectural engineering from University of Illinois. Built between 1910-1915, this masonry church took a grander scale than its former building, a Romanesque Revival style structure with a bell tower, two-story tall arched windows, and a cruciform floor plan.

The project, initiated by Reverend Stokes, cost \$65,000.<sup>17</sup> The building has since taken on several alterations; a narthex was added to the Ripley Street side of the church, which added a buffer from the main entrance before reaching the sanctuary.<sup>18</sup> World War II, the church added the current office and a modern kitchen facility to the basement.

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<sup>12</sup> "Montgomery Under Martial Law." *New York Times*. May 22, 1961.

<sup>13</sup> "Guardsmen, U.S. Marshals at Strife-Torn Area." *Montgomery Advertiser*, May, 22, 1961. Page 22.

<sup>14</sup> Boothe, *The cyclopedia of the colored Baptists of Alabama*, 1895.

<sup>15</sup> Roberson, *Fighting the Good Fight*, page 8.

<sup>16</sup> Pictures held at the church reveal construction had already begun before the original church caught fire.

<sup>17</sup> Daniel, Roosevelt and Howard Davis. "CPCRS Site Assessment Meeting." Montgomery, July 8, 2022.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

In the 1950s, it was recommended that the building be torn down.<sup>19</sup> However, the congregation put efforts in restoring and preserving the site instead; the church has undergone various preservation and renovation projects since to maintain the historic structure and adapt it to contemporary needs: re-roofing (1965), rebuilding the church organ (1966), installing air conditioning (1968), redecoration of the sanctuary and renovation of pews (1972), a complete restoration project (1980), rebuilding the bell tower (1991), renovation of the south tower (1995), restoration of the exterior (1999), renovation of the church's First Unit (2002), installation of an electric organ (2002), installation of a new marquee sign (2004), and installation of an accessible ramp (2019).<sup>20</sup> In 2001, the church was officially designated an historic site on the Alabama State Register of Landmarks and Heritage. In recognition of its designation, the state erected an historic plaque on Ripley Street in 2001. The church is also listed on Montgomery's local historic designation.<sup>21</sup>

Since the 1970s, the church has expanded its footprint in the surrounding area as well. In 1977, the church purchased an adjacent bail bonds building on Ripley Street south of the church for \$16,000.<sup>22</sup> The building was owned by Sonny Kyle Livingston Jr., a Klansman who was tried among four people for their involvement in the Jan 10, 1957 bombings of four Black churches and two of their parsonages, including the First Baptist Church and Reverend Ralph Abernathy's house.<sup>23</sup> A lot acquired in 1974 west of the church became the church parking lot in 1998. In 1992, the church purchased a two-story building on the south side of Jefferson Street between Union and Ripley and has mainly been used for storage.

### **Neighborhood Context**

In the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, the surrounding neighborhood of the First Baptist Church was mainly residential single-story homes occupied by Black citizens.<sup>24</sup> Another Black church, St. John AME (est. 1880s) was two blocks away on Madison Ave, still congregating in the original building today. The First Baptist Church served a significant post-

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<sup>19</sup> Daniel, Roosevelt and Howard Davis. "CPCRS Site Assessment Meeting." Montgomery, July 8, 2022.

<sup>20</sup> 2019 anniversary celebration timeline

<sup>21</sup> Historic Designation List. Montgomery, Alabama City Government.

<https://www.montgomeryal.gov/home/showpublisheddocument/11929/637232467968400000>

<sup>22</sup> 2019 anniversary celebration timeline

<sup>23</sup> "Two Going on Trial in Bias Violence." *New York Times*. May 26, 1957; Daniel, Roosevelt and Howard Davis. "CPCRS Site Assessment Meeting." Montgomery, July 8, 2022.

<sup>24</sup> Sanborn Map, Montgomery, Alabama, 1900.

[http://cartweb.geography.ua.edu/lizardtech/iserv/calcrn?cat=North%20America%20and%20United%20States&item=States/Alabama/Counties/montgomery/Fire%20Insurance%20Maps/Montgomery1900-map%20index.sid&wid=500&hei=400&props=item\(Name,Description\),cat\(Name,Description\)&style=default/view.xsl&plugin=true](http://cartweb.geography.ua.edu/lizardtech/iserv/calcrn?cat=North%20America%20and%20United%20States&item=States/Alabama/Counties/montgomery/Fire%20Insurance%20Maps/Montgomery1900-map%20index.sid&wid=500&hei=400&props=item(Name,Description),cat(Name,Description)&style=default/view.xsl&plugin=true)



Civil War Black neighborhood to the northeast known as the King Hill neighborhood, Rev. Ashby being an early resident of the neighborhood in 1872.<sup>25</sup> In 1933 Home Owners Loan Corporation Map gave the area the lowest grade possible in residential security.<sup>26</sup>

This redlining in the 1930s and 1940s negatively impacted the residential character south of Columbus Street, making it harder for the predominantly Black residents to receive loans for renting or a mortgage. By postwar, the area was listed under “light industry” in a 1957 land use map.<sup>27</sup> In the 1950s, the Montgomery Housing Authority built a 354-unit public housing project north of the church named George Washington Trenholm Court; in the 1960s, the police headquarters and city jail were built opposite of the church along Ripley, leading to an increase in bail bonds in the area.<sup>28</sup> These two large city projects saw the surrounding area as a “blighted” region of downtown and thus eligible for redevelopment, regardless of the residential community that had existed a generation prior. In 2017, a new low-income public housing project intended to be part of the downtown’s revitalization called Columbus Square Community replaced a demolished Trenholm Court.

Today, the area around the church is dominated by bail bonds and auto services, with surface parking lots occupying a large percentage of adjacent blocks relative to other parts of downtown Montgomery. Sidewalk infrastructure is inconsistent in these blocks and requires maintenance to better accommodate pedestrians. Despite the presence of sidewalks, most use cars for transportation in the immediate area. Madison Avenue, a main artery through downtown, acts as an informal border between a more sparse, low-rise city to the north and a denser, more walkable city to the south.

Despite this division, the church is still only four blocks from the Alabama State Capitol, seven blocks from Dexter Avenue King Memorial Baptist Church, and eight blocks from the Civil Rights Memorial — all southwest of the church. These nearby sites constitute a more concerted effort from the city to express Montgomery’s heritage in public infrastructure (see “Selma to Montgomery Historic Trail” street signs, footsteps on crosswalks to commemorate march), presenting perhaps the densest nine blocks of local historical interpretation in the city. While somewhat geographically detached from this area, the First Baptist Church is a

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<sup>25</sup> “Civil Rights Historic Survey, Planning, Research, Documentation, and Preservation Project, Montgomery, Alabama.” PaleoWest, April 2020. page 30.

<sup>26</sup> “Historical Narrative, Spatial Power and Social Justice: The Role of Memory in Shaping the Urban Landscape of Montgomery, AL.” Columbia GSAPP, 2018. page 52.

<sup>27</sup> Chavers, Taylor et. al. “Montgomery’s Urban Fabric & History.” ArcGIS Story Maps, September 21, 2021. <https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/7730c79e5de54bf6b86bbe92513e2c56>.

<sup>28</sup> “Historical Narrative, Spatial Power and Social Justice: The Role of Memory in Shaping the Urban Landscape of Montgomery, AL.” Columbia GSAPP, 2018. page 92.

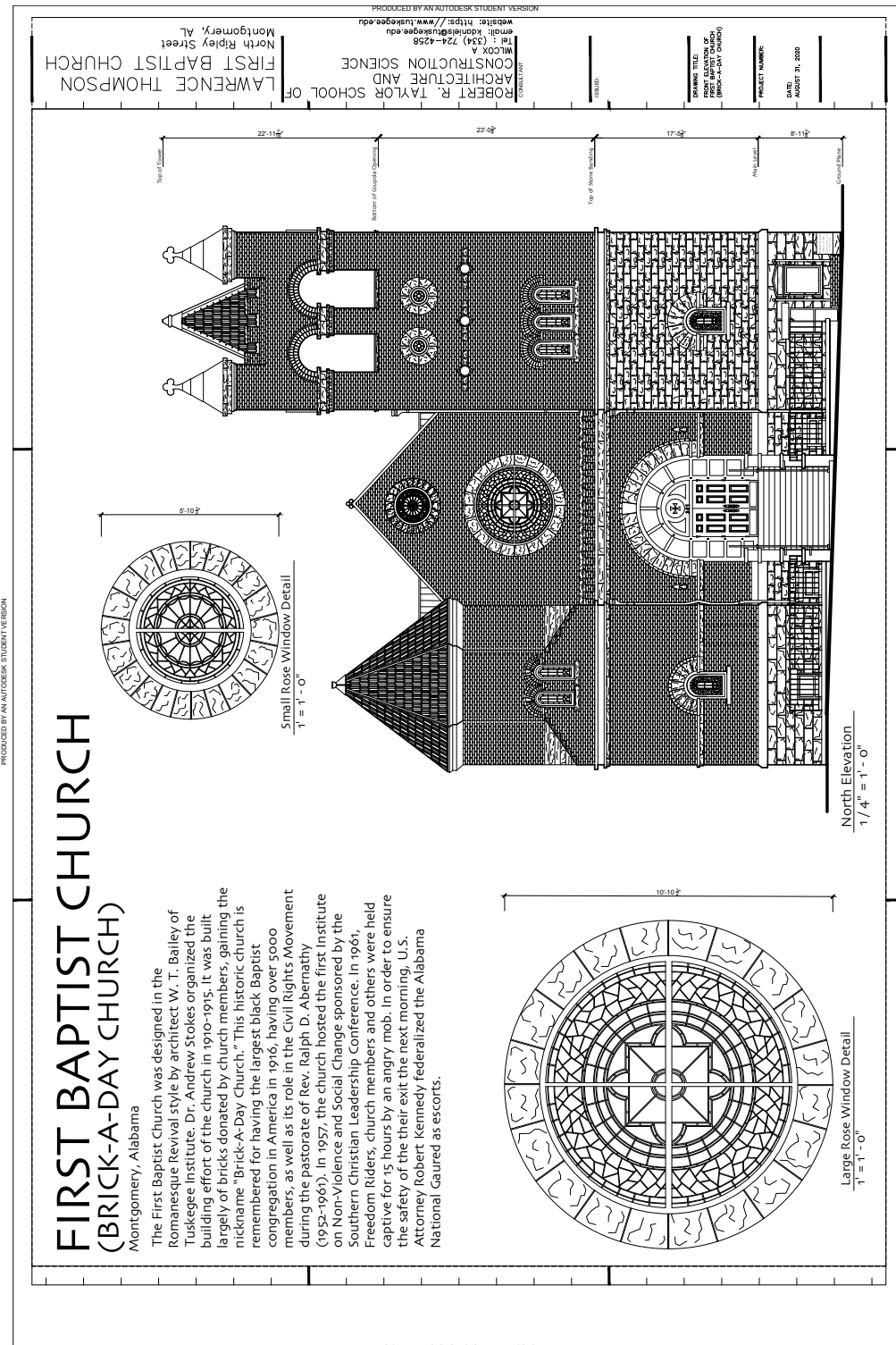
highly significant national Civil Rights heritage site that links directly to the stories represented and told in and about the more accessible and frequently visited places.

## **APPENDIX D – Digitized Archival Resources**

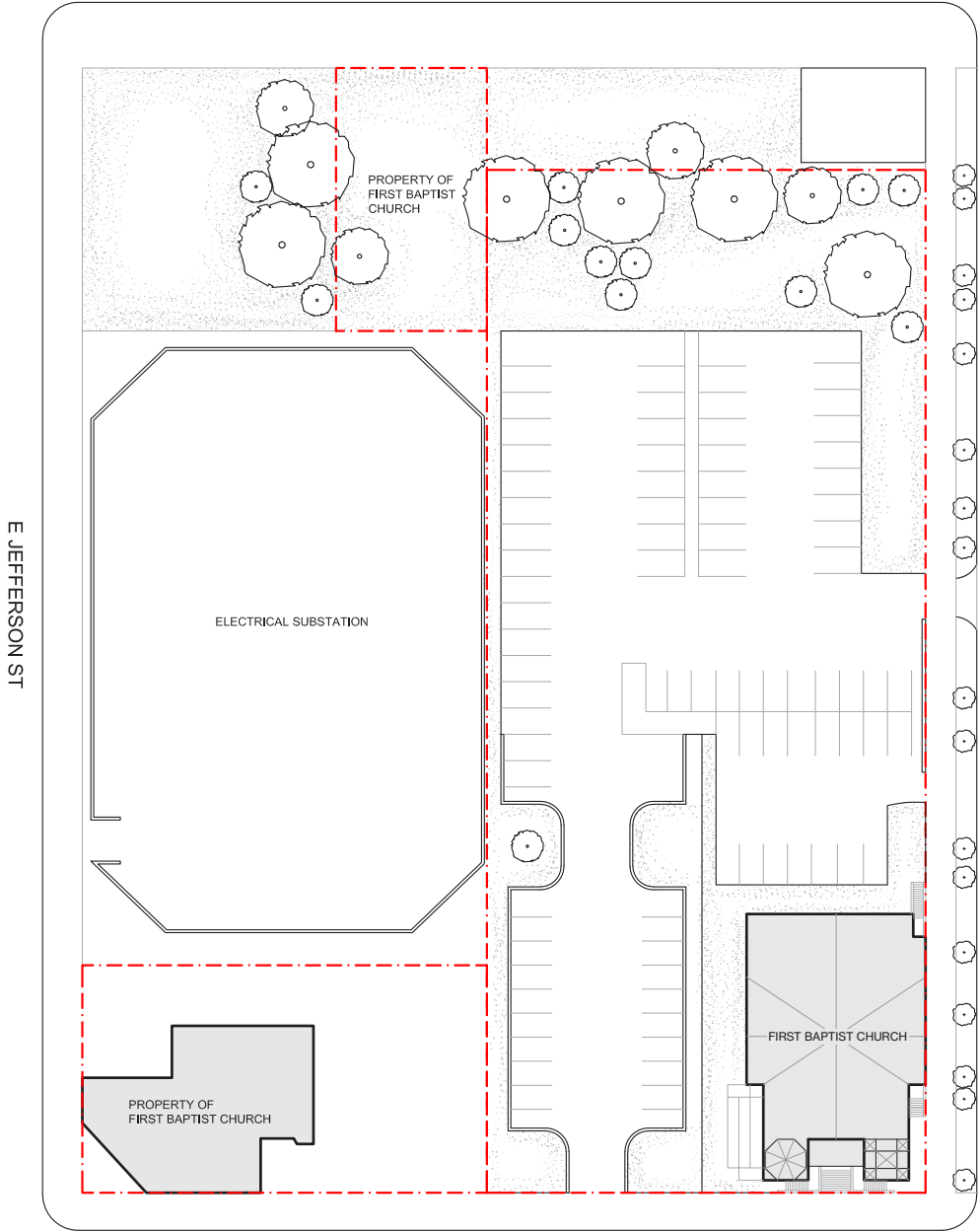
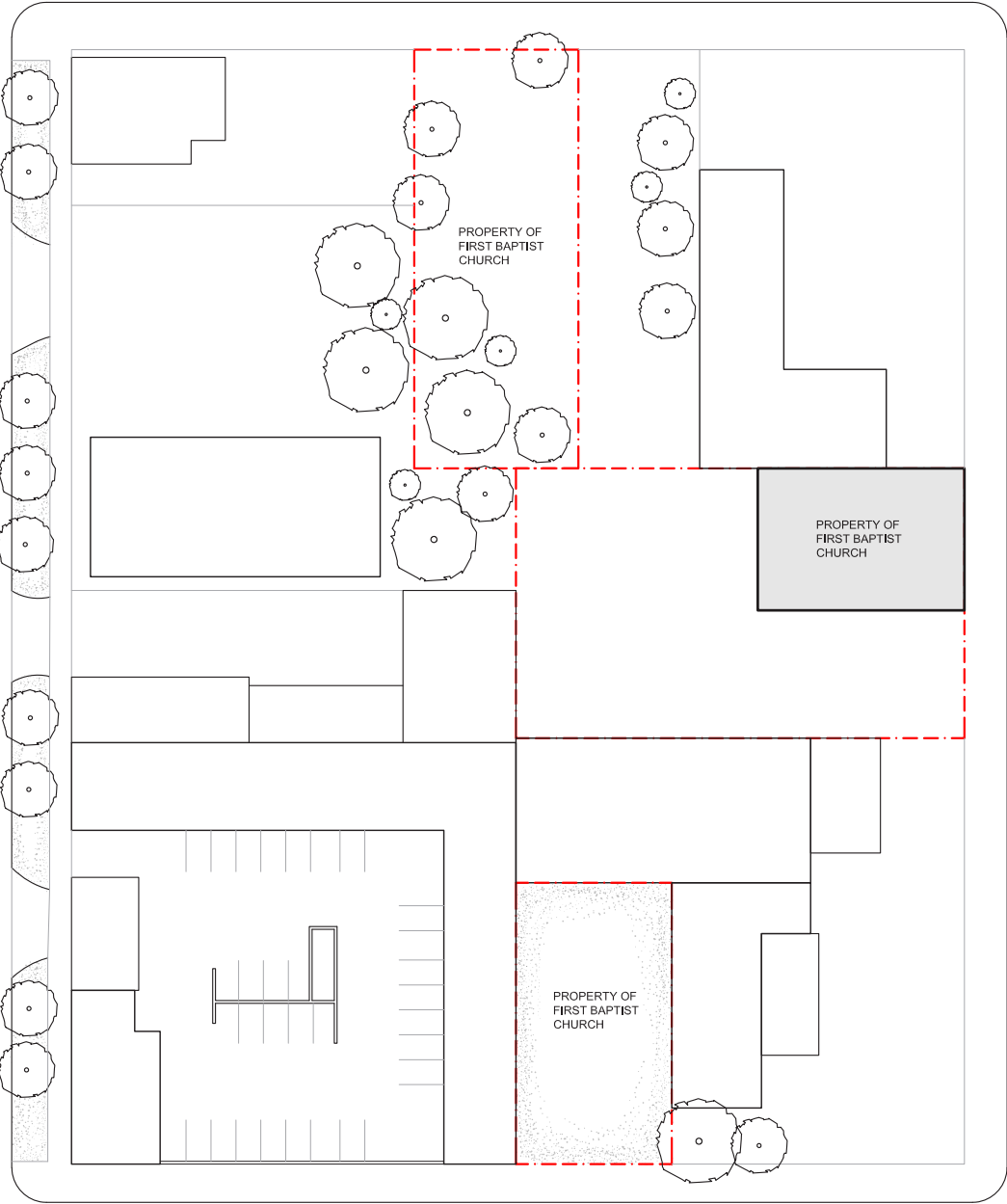
A guide to all digitized resources can be accessed here:

<https://upenn.box.com/s/hokg975jiid2n57ka4q6ok2qh95g3osv>

## APPENDIX E – Drawings and Documentation



**Diagram 1.** Elevation and window details. Produced by Tuskegee University architecture students, 2020. [Download PDF here](#)



--- APPROXIMATE  
PROPERTY LINES



1 SITE PLAN  
1/64"=1'-0"

PROJECT:

# FIRST BAPTIST "BRICK-A-DAY" CHURCH

347 North Ripley Street, Montgomery, AL

COMPANY:

**Weitzman**  
SCHOOL OF DESIGN  
UNIVERSITY of PENNSYLVANIA  
Center for the  
Preservation of  
Civil Rights Sites  
CENTER FOR THE PRESERVATION OF CIVIL  
RIGHTS SITES  
210 S 34th St, Philadelphia, PA 19104  
<https://cpchs.upenn.edu/>

THESE DRAWINGS ARE  
FOR REFERENCE  
PURPOSES ONLY- NOT  
INTENDED FOR  
CONSTRUCTION,  
COST-ESTIMATION,  
PROPERTY  
ASSESSMENT, OR  
OTHER USE.

Description:

SUSTAINABLE SITE  
MANAGEMENT  
ASSESSMENT REPORT  
IN PARTNERSHIP WITH  
THE ALABAMA  
AFRICAN AMERICAN  
CIVIL RIGHTS HERITAGE  
SITES CONSORTIUM

DRAWING SET

JOB DATE: 10/18/2022  
SCALE: AS INDICATED  
DRAWN BY:  
JOCELYN JOHNSON  
JINGYI LUO  
CHECKED BY:  
SARAH LERNER

TITLE:

SITE PLAN

A1.00



PROJECT:

FIRST  
BAPTIST  
"BRICK-A-DAY"  
CHURCH

347 North Ripley Street, Montgomery, AL

COMPANY:

**Weitzman**  
SCHOOL OF DESIGN  
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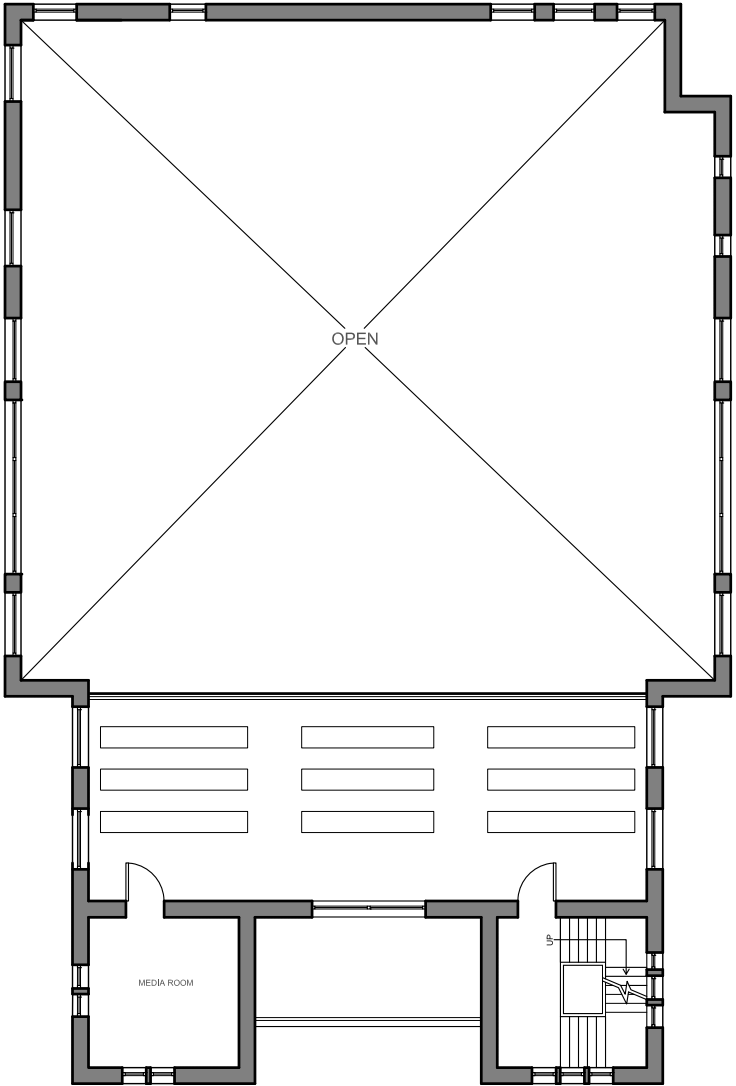
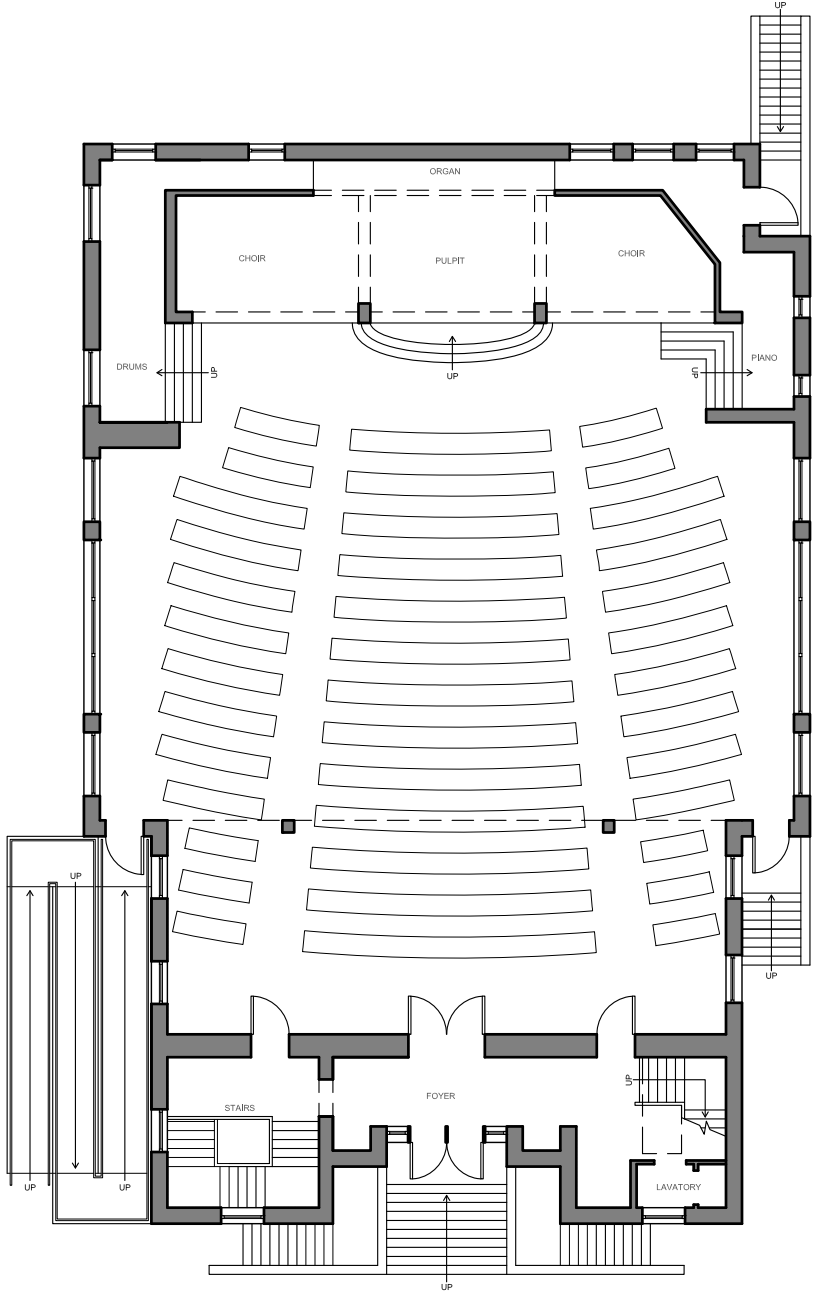
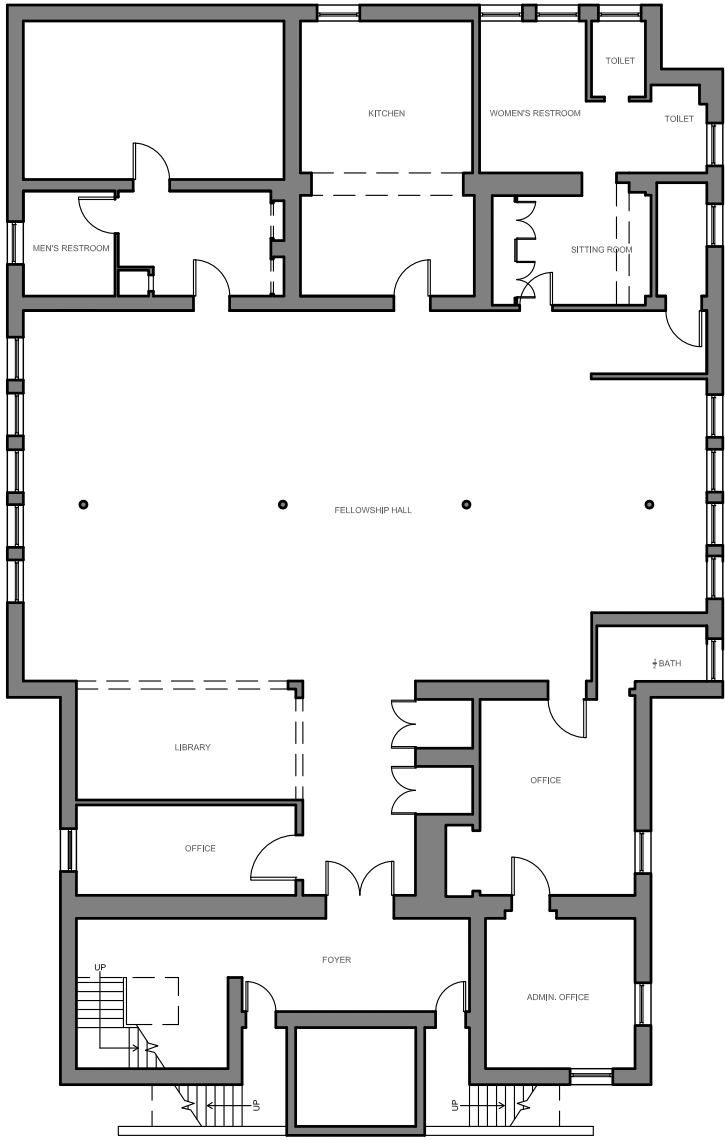
DRAWING SET

JOB DATE: 10/18/2022  
SCALE: AS INDICATED  
DRAWN BY:  
JOCELYN JOHNSON  
JINGYI LUO  
CHECKED BY:  
SARAH LERNER

TITLE:

FLOOR PLANS

A2.00



1

BASEMENT - FELLOWSHIP HALL  
1/16"=1'-0"

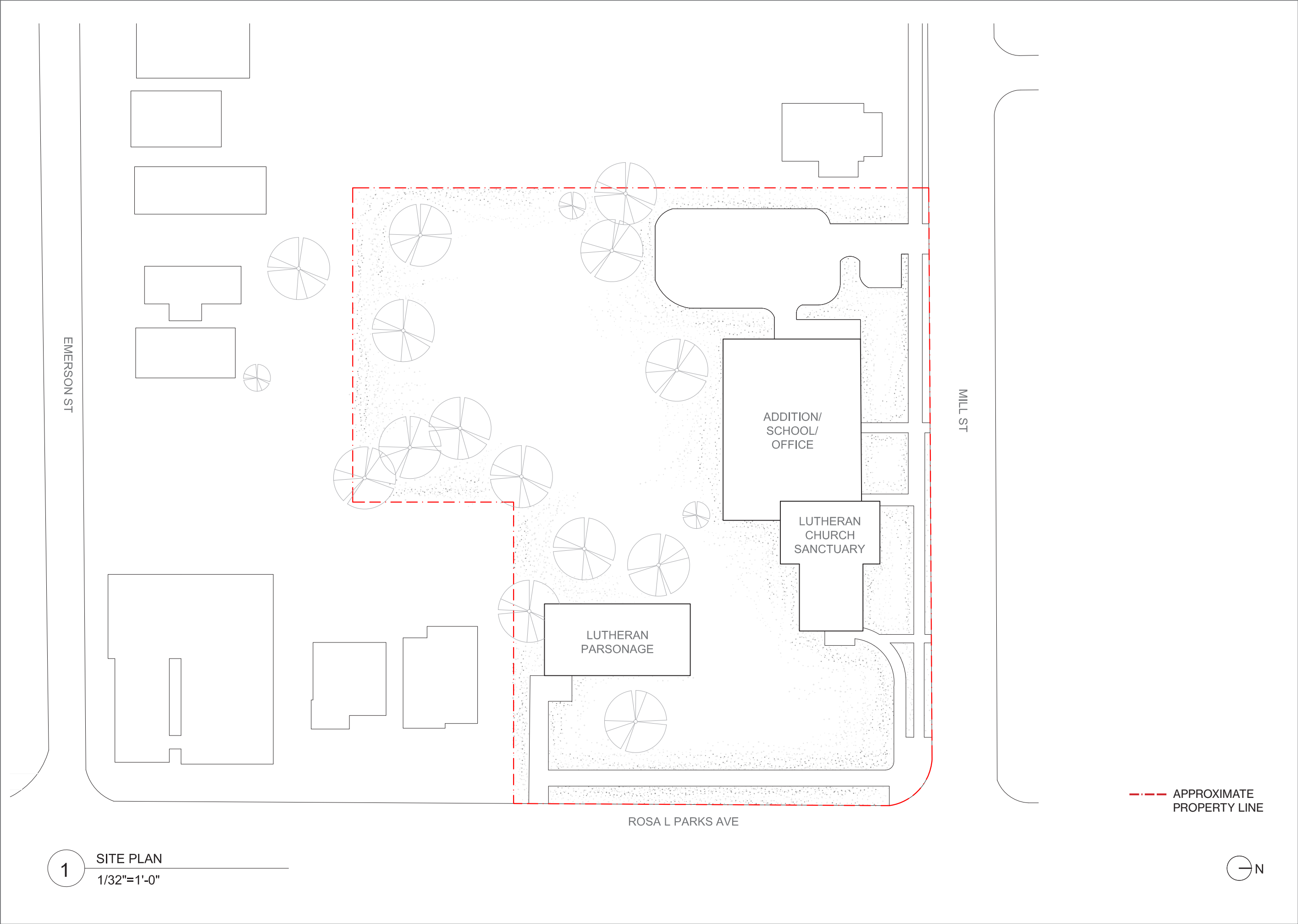
2

FIRST FLOOR - SANCTUARY  
1/16"=1'-0"

3

BALCONY  
1/16"=1'-0"





1 SITE PLAN  
1/32"=1'-0"

PROJECT:

# TRINITY LUTHERAN PARSONAGE

1110 Rosa L Parks Avenue, Montgomery, AL

COMPANY:

**Weitzman**  
SCHOOL OF DESIGN  
UNIVERSITY of PENNSYLVANIA  
Center for the  
Preservation of  
Civil Rights Sites  
CENTER FOR THE PRESERVATION OF CIVIL  
RIGHTS SITES  
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Description:

SUSTAINABLE SITE  
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ASSESSMENT REPORT  
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AFRICAN AMERICAN  
CIVIL RIGHTS HERITAGE  
SITES CONSORTIUM

DRAWING SET

JOB DATE: 10/18/2022  
SCALE: AS INDICATED  
DRAWN BY:  
JOCELYN JOHNSON  
JINGYI LUO  
CHECKED BY:  
SARAH LERNER

TITLE:

SITE PLAN

# A1.00

--- APPROXIMATE  
PROPERTY LINE

