

RECEIVED

DATE ENTERED

VLR: 05/16/78 NRHP: 05/24/79

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORMSEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

1 NAME

HISTORIC Lexington Presbyterian Church

AND/OR COMMON

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

SE corner of Main and Nelson Streets

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY TOWN

Lexington

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

Sixth (M. Caldwell Butler)

STATE

Virginia

VICINITY OF

CODE

51

COUNTY

(in city)

CODE

678

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY

 DISTRICT
 BUILDING(S)
 STRUCTURE
 SITE
 OBJECT

OWNERSHIP

 PUBLIC
 PRIVATE
 BOTH
PUBLIC ACQUISITION
 IN PROCESS
 BEING CONSIDERED

STATUS

 OCCUPIED
 UNOCCUPIED
 WORK IN PROGRESS
ACCESSIBLE
 YES RESTRICTED
 YES UNRESTRICTED
 NO

PRESENT USE

 AGRICULTURE
 COMMERCIAL
 EDUCATIONAL
 ENTERTAINMENT
 GOVERNMENT
 INDUSTRIAL
 MILITARY
 MUSEUM
 PARK
 PRIVATE RESIDENCE
 RELIGIOUS
 SCIENTIFIC
 TRANSPORTATION
 OTHER:

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

Board of Trustees c/o Pastor

STREET & NUMBER

Lexington Presbyterian Church

CITY TOWN

Lexington

STATE

Virginia 24450

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC

Lexington City Hall

STREET & NUMBER

CITY TOWN

Lexington

STATE

Virginia

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS (2) (See Continuation Sheet #1)

TITLE (1) Historic American Buildings Survey Inventory

DATE

1965

 FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCALDEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

Library of Congress

CITY TOWN

Washington

STATE

DESCRIPTION

CONDITION

EXCELLENT
 GOOD
 FAIR

DETERIORATED
 RUINS
 UNEXPOSED

CHECK ONE

UNALTERED
 ALTERED

CHECK ONE

ORIGINAL SITE
 MOVED DATE _____

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Located at the corner of Main and Nelson Streets in downtown Lexington, the Lexington Presbyterian Church is a monumental, temple-form structure of stuccoed brick with wooden detailing. Designed by Thomas U. Walter in 1843 and completed by 1845, the building has evolved through numerous additions into its present T-shape plan, with a Sunday School built adjacent to the church in 1906.

Approached by massive granite steps, the building is fronted by a Greek Doric pedimented peristyle portico consisting of six wooden columns and a full entablature. The main (west) facade contains a high double doorway capped by a wooden pediment and entablature, above which is a paired window with a simple wooden architrave trim. Corner pilasters frame the otherwise unpierced facade. The side elevations (north and south) consist of two bays; the original bays towards the rear were engulfed in an addition of 1859. A pedimented side entrance similar in execution to the front doorway is found in the first bay of the north and south elevations. A window with a simple wooden architrave is in the second bay. Triangular pedimented windows fill the second story and are connected visually by the tenia, running the entire perimeter of the building.

The rear wing, which dominates the side elevations, is one bay wide on each side of the church and contains three bays on the north elevation. The south elevation of the wing was altered by a connection to Murray Hall, the Sunday School building. The window treatment in the rear addition is identical to that found on the original section, with the hung-sash windows containing elliptical leaded panes of translucent glass. This is a modification of the original fenestration which contained hung sash with clear glass panes on the first story, with small rectangular casement windows within the frieze lighting the second story. The present windows date from an 1899 renovation. The church is fortunate in preserving its tower with louvred belfry and spire. The first stage has the belfry louvres framed by paired pilasters, and the second stage is ornamented with wreaths in relief on each of its four sides. The spire is capped by a finial.

The interior of the church has undergone considerable alterations, the most notable in 1899 when the building was completely renovated and refurnished. The improvements included the installation of the present pews and a new staged pulpit. A church museum preserves examples of the original pews and the original pulpit as well as architectural artifacts associated with the early church. The adjoining building, Murray Hall, was erected in 1906 and handsomely complements the church in its classical simplicity. A clock was added to the steeple in 1977.

RCC

SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW				
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> RELIGION	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)	
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION			

SPECIFIC DATES 1843-1845

BUILDER/ARCHITECT Thomas U. Walter

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Conspicuously located in the heart of this historic Valley community, the Lexington Presbyterian Church, completed in 1845, is a distinguished example of Greek Revival ecclesiastical architecture. Designed by one of the foremost 19th-century American architects, Thomas Ustick Walter of Philadelphia, the church is one of his finer Virginia works, which include the Tabb Street Presbyterian Church in Petersburg and the Old First Baptist Church in Richmond. Although Walter worked in a number of historical styles, his proficiency in the Greek is evident in these Virginia churches. In the Lexington Presbyterian Church, as well as in his other Virginia commissions, Walter clearly demonstrated how classical forms could be adapted for Christian purposes to enhance the dignity of worship.

Lexington's Presbyterians first worshipped with the members of Hall's Meeting House, later named New Monmouth Church, five miles west of the town. The Lexington element grew, so that by 1789 the Presbytery authorized the formation of a Lexington church, at which time the congregation began holding services in a tent; a church was erected in 1797. By 1843 the thriving congregation had completely outgrown its old building and decided that it needed a more commodious structure nearer the center of town. The site was purchased, and Thomas U. Walter was engaged as the architect.

In 1859 the church added a rear wing to accommodate continuing growth and activity. By 1880 the original sandstone facing had worn so as to require the application of stucco as a protective finish. The church was enlarged and renovated again in 1899, at which time the present pews and pulpit were installed. According to a "Manual of the Presbyterian Church", of April 3, 1900, the church served a total of 2,357 members. A Sunday School building was erected in 1906, and by 1922 it was necessary to make another addition to the building. Through the generosity of 457 families, the hall was enlarged and renovated in 1953. The last improvement of the building was the installation of a clock in the church steeple in 1977.

RCC

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

FOR NPS USE ONLY
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DATE ENTERED

Lexington Presbyterian Church, Lexington, Virginia

CONTINUATION SHEET #1

ITEM NUMBER 6

PAGE 1

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

- (2) Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission Survey
1967, 1968 State
Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission
221 Governor Street
Richmond, Virginia 23219

MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

- Harrison, I. Randolph. "Lexington Presbyterian Church - A Brief History of Our Building, 1798-1978". Pamphlet dated March, 1978.
- Murray, Joseph James. "History of the Lexington Presbyterian Church". Sermon delivered by Dr. Murray on April 13, 1969 in Lexington Presbyterian Church, Lexington, Virginia.

GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 1 1/2 acres

UTM REFERENCES

A	1 7	6 3 7 1 0 0	4 1 8 2 7 6 0	B			
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
C				D			

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The one and one-half acres comprising the Lexington Presbyterian Church property are bounded on the NE for approximately 200' by Nelson Street, on the SE for approximately 300' by the alley between Main and Randolph Streets, on the SW by a line extending from said alley to Main Street and located approximately 300' SW of Nelson Street, and on the NW for approximately 300' on Main Street. The boundaries encompass both the church building and the Sunday school building.

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission Staff

ORGANIZATION

Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission

DATE

March 1978

STREET & NUMBER

221 Governor Street

TELEPHONE

(804) 786-3144

CITY OR TOWN

Richmond

STATE

Virginia 23219

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL

STATE

LOCAL

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

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

Tucker Hill, Executive Director
Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission

DATE MAY 16 1978

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION
ATTEST:

DATE

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

