

VLR: 5-15-79
NRHP: 9-7-79

127-318

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

1 NAME

HISTORIC
Fourth Baptist Church

AND/OR COMMON
Same

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER
2800 P Street

CITY, TOWN
Richmond

STATE
Virginia

VICINITY OF
Third (David E. Satterfield III)

COUNTY
(in city)

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT
Third (David E. Satterfield III)

CODE
51

CODE
760

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE
<input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	PUBLIC ACQUISITION	ACCESSIBLE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT
			<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL
			<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY
			<input type="checkbox"/> PARK
			<input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
			<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
			<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
			<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER:

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME
Fourth Baptist Church, c/o Minister

STREET & NUMBER
2800 P Street

CITY, TOWN
Richmond

STATE
Virginia

VICINITY OF
23223

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.
Richmond City Hall

STREET & NUMBER
900 East Broad Street

CITY, TOWN
Richmond

STATE
Virginia

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE
Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission

DATE
1979

DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS
Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission - 221 Governor Street

CITY, TOWN
Richmond

STATE
Virginia

FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED DATE _____
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Fourth Baptist Church is a monumental, temple-form structure of stuccoed brick located at 2800 P Street in the Church Hill section of Richmond. Erected in 1884 in the Greek Revival style, the building is fronted by a distyle portico in antis elevated on a high podium. The podium is covered by a cast-stone veneer applied in 1964. The porch is approached by a pair of granite steps which turn at right angles to form a central stair. The stair features elaborate cast-iron rails flanked by two cast-iron lamp standards. The front yard of the church is enclosed by a cast-iron fence.

The main (south) elevation consists of two unfluted Doric columns and paired pilasters supporting an unstudied Doric entablature. The portico shelters the main double doorway with paneled wooden doors. The doorway is framed by a ramped architrave. The entrances into the antae contain single paneled doors.

The west elevation consists of six bays. A side entrance is provided in the southwest bay of the basement story. Basement fenestration has 8/8 hung-sash windows and is covered by a cast-stone veneer that replaces the original stucco covering on all elevations. The elevation's first story contains segmental arched openings with stained-glass windows. The second story features semicircular arched openings also with stained-glass windows. Each bay is differentiated by pilasters that support an unstudied entablature.

The east elevation is similar to the west with the exception of a hyphen which connects the church to a modern Sunday School building, erected in 1964. The north elevation contains an apse of one bay. Fenestration consists of segmental arched openings with 6/6 hung-sash windows and basement-story 2/2 casement windows.

Unlike the exterior, the interior largely reflects late Victorian stylistic influence. The sanctuary is dominated by a large oak and metal pipe organ, set between pilasters. The pulpit is also constructed of raised panel oak, and is complemented by the original oak furniture. The altar mirrors the pulpit in execution. The oak scroll-end pews retain their original finish, and the balcony above the main (south) entrances contains simply finished wood pews. Stained-glass windows vary in theme. The four northern-most windows contain portraits of past church notables, including the Reverend Scott Gwathmey, the first pastor.

RCC

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

The Fourth Baptist Church property of one acre is bounded on the south by P Street, on the west by 28th Street, on the north by an alley that runs directly behind the church, and on the east by the Sunday School building which is connected to the church by a hyphen. The north, south, west boundaries are the same as when the church was originally built. The eastern boundary, the Sunday School building of 1964, is a modern intrusion.

8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW				
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input 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 1884

BUILDER/ARCHITECT unknown

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Fourth Baptist Church is significant both as an expression of Richmond's conservative architectural taste during the late 19th century and as a symbol of the social, religious, and economic conditions of blacks following emancipation. Erected in 1884 on the northern edge of the Church Hill neighborhood, the church boasts a stylish Victorian interior behind a plain but dignified Greek Revival facade. The choice of the Grecian mode may have been influenced by the neighboring Leigh Street Baptist Church designed by Samuel Sloan, for it was in the basement of that older Greek Revival building that the Fourth Baptist Church was organized. The facade, with its distyle portico in antis, also closely resembles the Old First Baptist Church by Thomas U. Walter. Old First Baptist was Richmond's parent Baptist church whose design influenced a number of later buildings in the city.

Between 1820 and 1860, Richmond was one of the country's leading tobacco centers. From its inception, the city's tobacco industry was totally dependent on black labor for its work force. As production demands increased, manufacturers were required to hire slaves and freed blacks to fill their labor needs. The hiring system flourished, and contributed to the city's large antebellum black population. The slaves and freed blacks worked in the factories six days a week and on the seventh day enjoyed freedom of worship. Most Richmond blacks were Baptists and vastly outnumbered the whites within their churches.

Richmond's Baptist churches at first were organized to allow for the active participation of their black constituents. Black deacons, elected by the entire congregation, assisted white pastors and deacons as a liaison within the black congregation. Albeit committed to slavery and calling upon its slave members to be obedient servants, the church viewed slaves as, "persons whose souls God prized, and who, therefore, ought to be sober, properly married, taught Christian truths, and treated humanely by their temporal masters."

The first formal organization of a black church occurred in 1841 when the First Baptist Church decided to build a new church for themselves and sell the old one to the blacks within their congregation. The First African Baptist Church was thus created in 1841 as a separate Baptist congregation. The new First African Baptist Church constitution stipulated that the pastor must be white, nominated by a white superintending committee and approved by the black deacons. The white committee was to oversee the black church's affairs. Robert Ryland, president of Richmond College, was the first pastor. The First African Baptist Church was extremely successful, and served as the model for three successive black churches: Second African Baptist Church, 1845; Ebenezer in 1858; and the Fourth Baptist in 1861.

The black churches followed the precedents established by the First African Church. The pastor and deacons formed the governing body, guided the congregation and enforced a strict moral code. The congregation supported charitable work from monthly contributions.

(See Continuation Sheet #1)

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INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

Fourth Baptist Church, Richmond, Virginia

CONTINUATION SHEET #1

ITEM NUMBER 8

PAGE 1

8. SIGNIFICANCE

From weekly penny collections came the money for church maintenance and expenses. Public concerts by the choir contributed to the church revenue. Richmond's blacks entered the Reconstruction, a "process of creating something new in a slaveless world. . . [with pre-conceived] notions about freedom, moral sensibilities, work habits, familial and communal ties, and modes of collective activity."² While these notions were strongly influenced by their earlier experience as church members, it was only in post-bellum times that blacks gained full control of their churches with the unfettered right to name their own pastors, form Sunday schools, etc.

The Fourth Baptist Church traces its beginnings to the regular assembly of slaves in their quarters for prayer meetings. In 1861 the services were transferred to the basement of the Leigh Street Baptist Church. In June 1865 blacks gained full control of their church institutions. The Reverend Scott Gwathmey, one of the prayer leaders, saw the need for more formal organization, something which was achieved when the Fourth Baptist Church was founded on December 2, 1865 while meeting in the barracks of the Union soldiers on Chimborazo Hill.

The 1875 the congregation was able to erect a frame building on a site purchased on 32nd Street. The present church building was completed in 1884 on a site purchased on P Street.

VDS/RC

¹/₂ O'Brien, Journal of Southern History, p. 522
O'Brien, p. 536.

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

- O'Brien, John T. "Factory, Church and Community: Blacks in Antebellum Richmond." The Journal of Southern History 44 (November 1978): 509-536.
- Sheldon, M. B. "Black White Relations Richmond, Va., 1782-1820." The Journal of Southern History 45 (February 1979): 27.
- Sherer, Lester B. "Slavery and the Churches in Early America." Book Review, The Journal of Negro History 43 (February 17, 1979): 387.
- Wilkins, Bettye G. History of Fourth Baptist Church. Church Archives, Richmond.

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 1 acre

QUADRANGLE NAME Richmond, Va.

UTM REFERENCES

QUADRANGLE SCALE 1:24000

A 18 28,70,6,0 4,15,6,8,4,0
 ZONE EASTING NORTHING

B
 ZONE EASTING NORTHING

C

D

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

Beginning at a point 1250' E of State Route 33; 3100' NNE of the intersection of said route and U.S. Route 60; on E side of 28th Street; thence extending approximately 175' ESE; thence extending about 200' SSW to P Street; thence extending almost 200' WNW along N side of said street; thence extending approximately 200' NNE along E side of 28th Street to point of origin.

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

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission Staff

ORGANIZATION

Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission

DATE

April 1979

STREET & NUMBER

221 Governor Street

TELEPHONE

(804) 786-3144

CITY OR TOWN

Richmond

STATE

Virginia 23219

12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL

STATE X

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

TITLE Tucker Hill, Executive Director
 Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission

DATE MAY 15 1979

FOR NPS USE ONLY

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

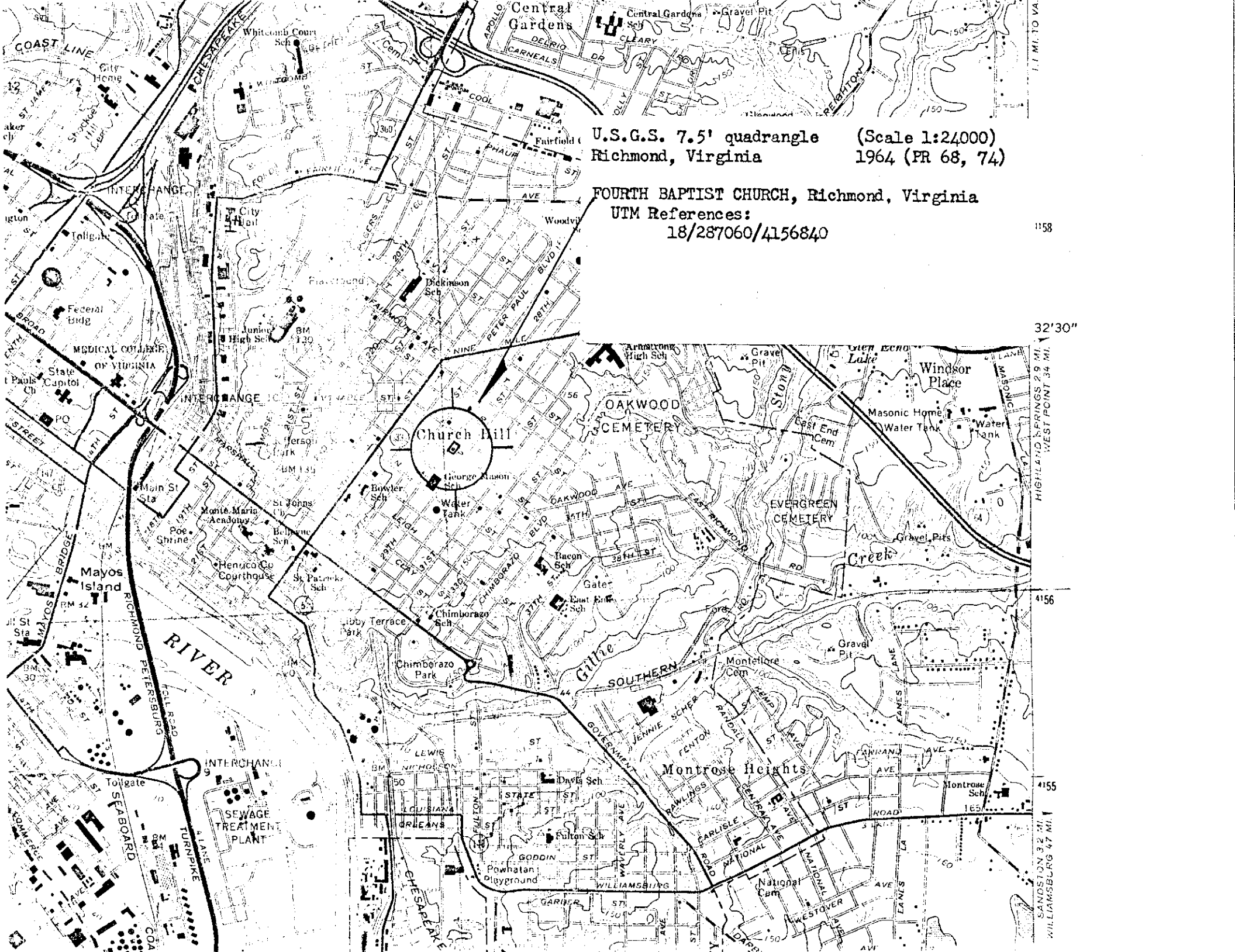
DATE

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

ATTEST:

DATE

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER



U.S.G.S. 7.5' quadrangle (Scale 1:24000)
Richmond, Virginia 1964 (PR 68, 74)

FOURTH BAPTIST CHURCH, Richmond, Virginia
UTM References:
18/287060/4156840

1158

32'30"

HIGHLAND SPRINGS 2.9 MI.
WEST POINT 3.4 MI.

4156

4155

SANDSTON 3.2 MI.
WILLIAMSBURG 4.7 MI.