

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

FOR NPS USE ONLY
RECEIVED MAR 10 1976
DATE ENTERED OCT 21 1976

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 *Wm* Grace Church (Preferred)

VLR Listed: 2/17/1976
NRHP Listed: 10/21/1976

AND/OR COMMON Grace Church, Cismont

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER Southeast side of Route 231, .5 mile northeast of intersection
of Route 231 and Route 600

CITY, TOWN Cismont VICINITY OF Seventh (J. Kenneth Robinson)

STATE Virginia CODE 51 COUNTY Albemarle CODE 003

3 CLASSIFICATION

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

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME Grace Church Parish Trustees, c/o Senior Warden John Robinson

STREET & NUMBER 1706 Bruce Avenue

CITY, TOWN Charlottesville VICINITY OF STATE Virginia 22903

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC. Albemarle County Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN Charlottesville STATE Virginia

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

(2) See continuation sheet #1

TITLE Historic American Buildings Survey Inventory

DATE 1957 FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS Library of Congress

CITY, TOWN Washington, D. C. STATE

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

Grace Church, Cismont, with its adjacent cemetery, is set in a copse of ancient trees on a hill above Route 231 in Albemarle County. The architect of the Gothic Revival building was recently revealed through the discovery, among the papers of a parishioner, of architectural drawings signed "W. Strickland, Archt./Nashville 19th. April (18)47". Built at mid-century and rebuilt on the interior after a disastrous fire in 1895, the exterior survives intact as Strickland conceived it.

The church is constructed of ashlar masonry with a square tower projecting slightly from the center of the west end, and a one-story entrance "Portal" appended to that. The 1895 chancel is laid in coursed rubble masonry and has an asymmetrical gable roof and four lancet windows of various sizes, with geometrical tracery in the largest one.

Strickland's plans call for a church roughly in the Decorated style, though not of archaeological character by any means. Two-stage clasping corner buttresses with octagonal pinnacles or "minarets" mark the corners of the building and the portal. Buttresses on the side walls divide the building into three bays, each with a two-part lancet window with plate tracery. On the facade, similar windows, but with hood moldings, flank the tower, and raking courses of rectangular machicolations provide further embellishment. The tower itself was designed with a tall lower stage pierced by a lancet window with plate tracery, surrounded with crockets and an elaborate cross at the apex. A deeply cut scotia molding marks the transition to the belfry stage with its triple lancet windows on each facade. Another band of molding supports the corbelled battlements which crown the tower. Strickland designed the portal to have a pointed arch opening and curvilinear machicolations or "pedimental tracery" on its parapeted gable. A small, plain one-story vestry room of about the same size as the portal was planned for the east end. The exterior of the church follows this design closely. For the hood moldings of the east-end windows were substituted voussoirs of slighter projection with prominent keystones. This treatment was also used on the side-wall windows, for which Strickland had intended no exterior embellishment. The side buttresses were omitted and the building was lengthened one bay. Two small flanking setbacks were placed on each side of the tower, rather than the one Strickland drew. Some other changes were made, probably during the 1895 reconstruction. The tower window crockets were excised, and the vestry room was replaced by the present larger chancel. In addition, Perpendicular-style tracery replaced Strickland's Decorated-type plate tracery.

On the interior, Strickland's plans called for an auditorium church with a nine-inch-deep "Recess of the Pulpit" containing a door to the vestry room in the east end. One entered the church through the portal and turned right or left into the auditorium through doors accommodated by the intrusion of the tower into the main room. After the fire, an axial entrance was created, and the rear wall of the auditorium was moved forward and aligned with the east wall of the tower, providing space for small rooms on either side. That on the north is presently used as a choir room, while that on the south contains a stair to the tower. The addition of the new chancel after the fire signaled a change from Low- to High-Church orientation. The depth of the chancel was increased by the creation of small side chapels, delineated by heavy pointed arches and squat octagonal columns, in the northeast and southeast corners of the auditorium. The openwork timber roof and stained-glass windows also postdate the fire.

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CONTINUATION SHEET Grace Church ITEM NUMBER PAGE 1

- 6. Representation in Existing Surveys
 - (2) Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission Survey
1968, 1970, 1975 State
 - Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission
Richmond, Virginia

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 1847, 1895 ~~Boulder~~/ARCHITECT William Strickland

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Grace Church, a picturesque Gothic Revival building in the Cismont vicinity of Albemarle County, is the only known work in Virginia of William Strickland (1788-1854), one of the nation's leading architects during the first half of the nineteenth century. Strickland trained under Benjamin Henry Latrobe and is responsible for the designs of such noted works as the Philadelphia Exchange, the Second Bank of the United States in Philadelphia, and the Tennessee State Capitol. Most of his architectural works are in a heroic Greek Revival style, his Gothic works are comparatively rare, a fact that adds interest to Grace Church.

Strickland's authorship of Grace Church's design had been forgotten until recent years when his signed drawings (dated 1847) turned up in the Rives family papers at the University of Virginia. The Rives family seat was at the nearby estate, Castle Hill. The building of the church was a project of Mrs. William Cabell Rives, wife of the noted senator and diplomat. Most of the Episcopal churches in the area during the antebellum period were relatively rude structures, simple wooden chapels surviving from the colonial period, thus, Mrs. Rives took special care to have her parish church be a fine specimen of architecture. The use of the Gothic style for Episcopal churches during the mid-nineteenth century was a product of the romantic movement begun in England. Like a number of architects of the period Strickland drew inspiration from the small, medieval parish churches of English villages.

The original interior woodwork of the church was executed by a craftsman named McSparren, an Englishman brought from the North by Mrs. Rives. While he was in the area, McSparren also constructed the woodwork for Cobham Park, a large Georgian-style mansion nearby, built for William Cabell Rives, Jr. Grace Church's woodwork was destroyed when the building was gutted by fire in 1895. Whether or not it followed the designs indicated in Strickland's drawing is not known. The present interior and chancel date from the reconstruction following the fire, and though fairly modest in concept, the design is typical of ecclesiastical work of the period. The exterior survived essentially as Strickland designed it, and the church continues to house an active congregation.

Grace Church is the successor of a colonial chapel, "Walkers," the site of which is marked by a boulder in the front yard of the present building. The chapel took its name from the Walker family who originally established Castle Hill plantation. Grace Church today is known for the colorful blessing of the hounds ceremony that takes place there annually. Fox hunting is an old tradition in the area, being popularized by Dr. Thomas Walker of Castle Hill who introduced the "Walker strain" of foxhounds to Virginia in the eighteenth century.

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Historical Guide to Albemarle County. 1924.

O'Neal, William B., editor. Architectural Drawing in Virginia, 1819-1969. Charlottesville: School of Architecture of the University of Virginia, 1969.

Stanton, Phoebe B. The Gothic Revival and American Church Architecture. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1968.

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY Five acres

UTM REFERENCES

A

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7	3	6	1	4	0
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4	2	1	5	7	7	0
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ZONE

EASTING

NORTHING

C

B

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ZONE

EASTING

NORTHING

D

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

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

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission Staff

ORGANIZATION

Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission

DATE

January, 1976

STREET & NUMBER

221 Governor Street

TELEPHONE

(804) 786-3143

CITY OR TOWN

Richmond

STATE

Virginia

12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL

STATE

LOCAL

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

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

[Signature]

TITLE Junius R. Fishburne, Jr., Executive Director
Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission

DATE FEB 17 1976

FOR NPS USE ONLY

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

[Signature]

DATE 10/21/76

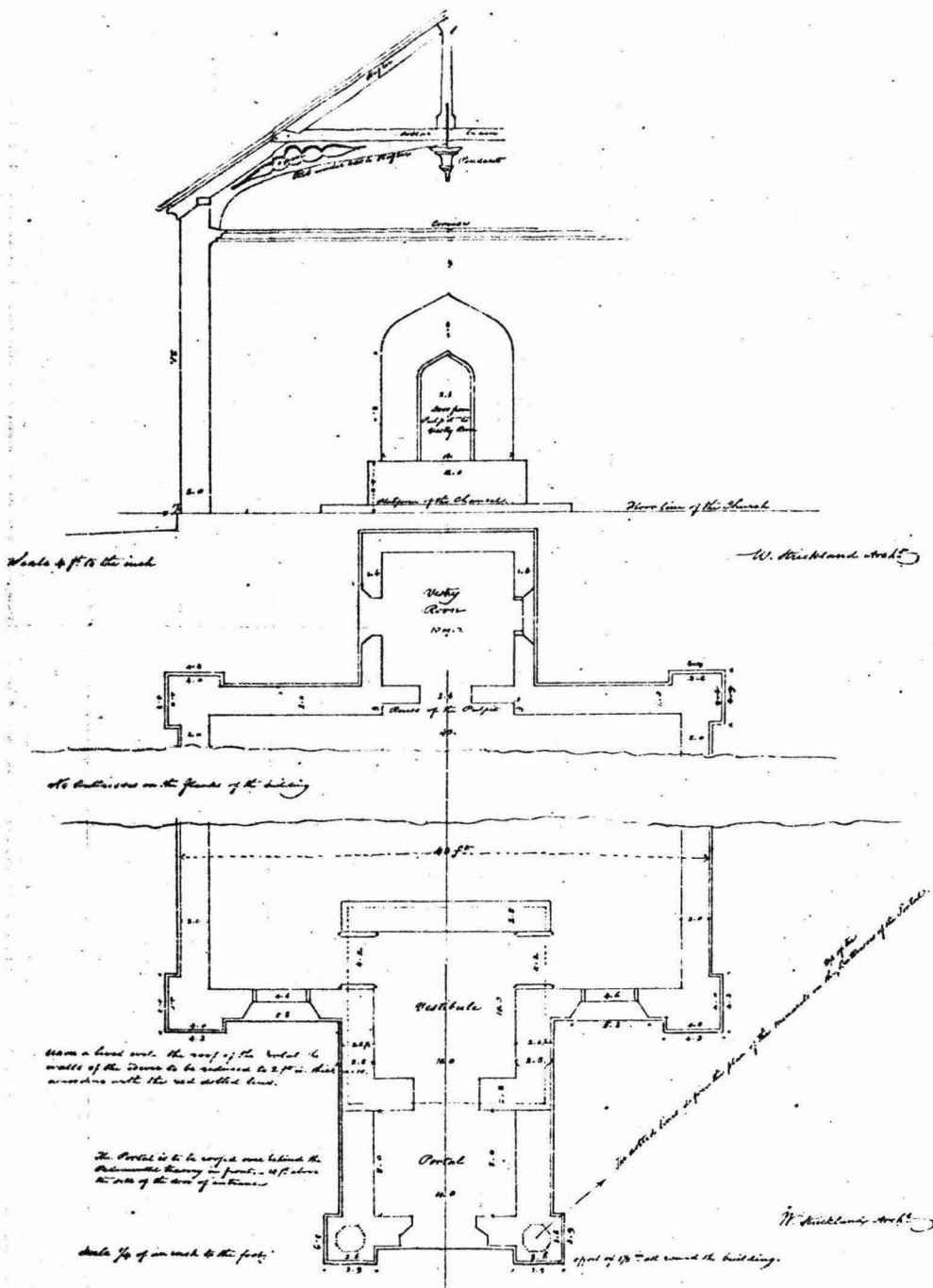
DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

ATTEST:

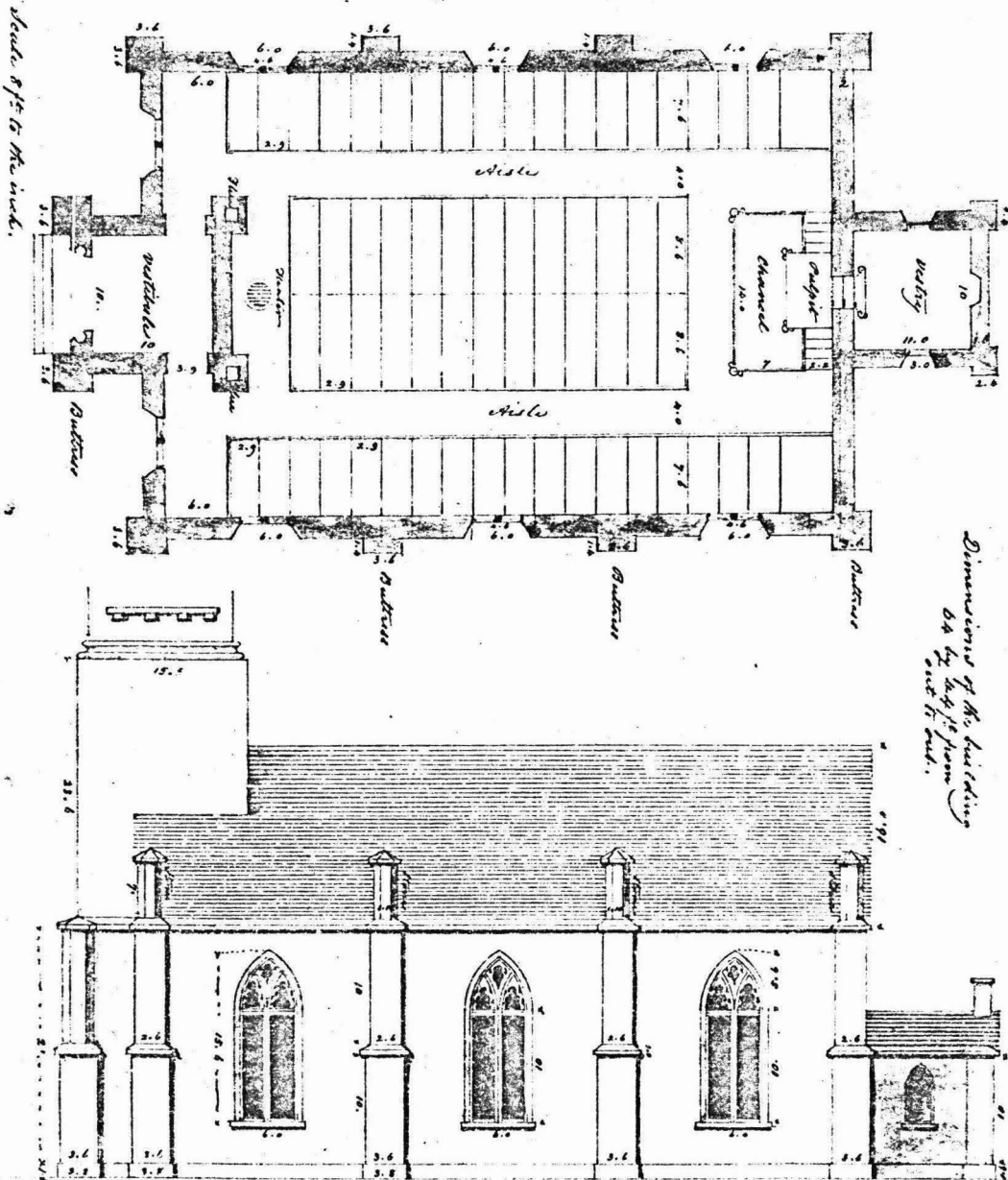
DATE 10/18/76

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

William Strickland's Drawing for Grace Church, Albemarle County, Va.
 copied from O'Neal, William B. Architectural Drawing in Virginia 1819-1969.
 University of Virginia/ Virginia Museum, 1969.



William Strickland's Drawing for Grace Church, Albemarle County, Va.
 copied from O'Neal, William B. Architectural Drawing in Virginia 1819-1969.
 University of Virginia/ Virginia Museum, 1969.



W. Strickland's Archt^y
 Nashville 19th April
 47

USGS 7.5' quadrangle
Keswick, Va.

(scale 1:24000)
1964 (PR 1972)

GRACE CHURCH, CISMONT, ALBEMARLE COUNTY, VA.
UTM References:

A - 17/736140/4215770

