

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

SENT TO D.C.

6-28-06

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

Historic name First Congregational Church of Western Springs

Other names/site number _____

2. Location

street & number 1106 Chestnut Street _____ not for publication

city or town Western Springs _____ vicinity

State Illinois code IL county Cook code 031 zip code 60558

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant nationally statewide locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

William C. Wheel 6-28-06
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register.
 See continuation sheet
- determined eligible for the National Register.
 See continuation sheet
- determined not eligible for the National Register.
- removed from the National Register.
- other (explain:)

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

Category of Property

(Check only one box)

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Number of Resources within Property

(Do not incl. previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Non-Contributing	
2	1	buildings
0	0	sites
0	0	structures
0	0	objects
2	1	Total

Name of related multiple property listing:

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

0

6. Functions or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

Religion / Religious Facility

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

Religion / Religious Facility

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

Late Gothic Revival
Prairie School
English Country

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Lannon Stone
walls Lannon Stone
roof Slate
other Stained and Leaded Glass Windows

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property.)

SEE CONTINUATION SHEET

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
x C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- x A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
B removed from its original location.
C a birthplace or grave.
D a cemetery.
E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
F a commemorative property.
G less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

Architecture

Period of Significance

1929 - 1930

Significant Dates

N/A

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Elmslie, George Grant, architect

Soderholm and Bodett Contractors, builder

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property.) SEE CONTINUATION SHEET

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
previously listed in the National Register
previously determined eligible by the National Register
designated a National Historic Landmark
#
recorded by Historic American Engineering Record#

SEE CONTINUATION SHEET

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
Other State agency
Federal agency
Local government
x University
Other

Name of repository:

University of Minnesota

10. Geographical DataAcreage of Property 1.62**UTM References**

(Place additional UTM References on a continuation sheet.)

1	<input type="text" value="16"/> Zone	<input type="text" value="424"/> Easting	<input type="text" value="993"/> Northing	3	<input type="text"/> Zone	<input type="text"/> Easting	<input type="text"/> Northing
2	<input type="text"/> Zone	<input type="text"/> Easting	<input type="text"/> Northing	4	<input type="text"/> Zone	<input type="text"/> Easting	<input type="text"/> Northing

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property.)

See continuation sheet.

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

See continuation sheet.

11. Form Prepared Byname/title Elizabeth R. Trail, preservation architectorganization N/Adate 03-01-06street & number 4205 Clausen Ave.telephone 708-246-4411city or town Western Springsstate ILzip code 60558**Additional Documentation**

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets**Maps**A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.**Photographs**Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.**Additional items**

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items.)

Property Owner (Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)name First Congregational Church of Western Springs, Dr. Richard Kirchherr, Rev.street & number 1106 Chestnut Streettelephone 708-246-1900city or town Western Springsstate ILzip code 60558

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First Congregational Church of Western Springs
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7. Description

The First Congregational Church of Western Springs was designed by the renowned architect George Grant Elmslie, and constructed by Soderholm and Bodett Contractors of Oak Park. Situated in the Chicago suburb of Western Springs, the church is located in the heart of a residential area. Positioned on a corner bordered by three streets, the church is substantially set back from the street with an expansive lawn. This spacious property of approximately 42,000 square feet incorporates two buildings and an addition. The sanctuary, constructed in 1929, is located in the east portion of the property. The Education Building that was completed in 1930 is located to the west of the sanctuary, and is attached to the sanctuary by a covered arched colonnade. An addition adjacent to the north of the Education Building was built in 1959, and designed by Herbert Brand and William Brand Architects.

Exterior Description of Sanctuary

The sanctuary is approximately 110 feet long, 60 feet wide and 40 feet high. The building is cross-shaped in plan, a typical gothic detail, with a small chancel to the north and two small transepts to the east and west. The sanctuary has a gable roof with two lower gables over the transepts. The exterior is constructed of sand colored Lannon stone masonry, quarried outside of Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

The gabled slate roof is relatively shallow, with a 13/12 rise over run pitch, a typical feature in an English Country church. Two small gables cover the transepts, and a smaller gable projects out over the southeast corner. The roof also incorporates copper gutters, decorative scupper boxes, downspouts, and flashing. A 12' tall, pyramid shaped cupola sits on top of the primary gable directly above where the roofs of the transept and nave intersect. This cupola is clad in slate and incorporates decorative copper louvers on all four sides. A 3 1/2' tall decorative copper cross finial sits on top of the cupola. A masonry chimney that vents the boiler in the basement projects from the roof in the northwest corner.

On the south, or front, end of the church, beneath the peak of the gabled roof, is a carved stone cross. Taking inspiration from the Celtic cross, the cross is surrounded by a circle symbolizing eternal life. Four doves flying toward the center represent the ever presence of the Holy Spirit. In the center are vines symbolic of Jesus Christ. Decorative carved stones are located in the corbelled corners where the vertical walls meet the roof, forming a triangular shape, resembling returns on the eaves. Below the cross is a 12' high, pointed arch stained glass window. The window depicts Christ and prominent men in

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Christian history, and was installed by Hauser Studios of Winona, Minnesota, in the 1960s. A square, carved stone is located on either side of this window where the arch begins to spring. Many Christian symbols are depicted in the stone carvings throughout the exterior including doves, vines, intertwined fish, apostles, grapes, quatrefoils, serpents, eagles, winged lions, and the fleur de lis. Below the stained glass window is the main entrance to the sanctuary that projects slightly from the main body of the church and incorporates a flat roof. Constructed of dressed stone and crowned with a fleur de lis patterned carved stone coping, the entry has a pointed carved stone arch featuring a rose pattern that leads to a small alcove. Within the alcove are a set of double oak doors. Each rectangular door has a pointed arch window in filled with wood tracery and a grid of leaded glass. Above the doors is a leaded glass transom in a diamond pattern. To the east of the entry at the base of the angled wall is the cornerstone, designed by Elmslie, that reads "First Congregational Church 1887 - 1928," which was laid on November 25, 1928. Flanking the entrance are two carved Bedford stone figures representing Moses with the Old Testament to the east, and the Apostle with the New Testament to the west. Under each statue is a square stone depicting birds. Also on the south elevation are five rectangular leaded glass casement windows with a gold stained glass pattern down the center and translucent glass on either side. The three windows on the second story are wider than those on the first floor, and the yellow glass forms a V-pattern. In the smaller windows on the first floor, the yellow glass down the center is a small, repetitive square.

The east elevation includes a small gable roof that projects slightly from the southern end of the building. Two sets of three casement windows are located in this area, one set on the first floor and the other set on the second floor. Just north of this small gable are three 10' high stained glass pointed arched windows. On the vertical mullions of these windows are carved stone statues of various biblical figures. Continuing north past the three adjacent stained glass windows, an original 12' high pointed arched stained glass window is located under the gabled roof of the transept. Cut, fired, fabricated and installed by Temple Art Glass Company of Chicago, this original window integrates a variety of typical Prairie School colors, including various shades of blue, purple, and gold. In the upper portion, the glass forms an inverted V-pattern. In the lower rectangular section, geometric, flower like patterns are formed. All the original arched stained glass windows throughout the sanctuary are alike in color and pattern. The northernmost portion of the east elevation recedes slightly from the projecting transept. This portion has a ribbon window comprised of five leaded glass casement windows. In many instances throughout the sanctuary and the Education Building, the windows are banded together forming a ribbon window, a typical characteristic of the Prairie School emphasizing the horizon.

The west elevation is similar to the east elevation, with the following exceptions. At

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the south end of the west elevation, there is an oak door flanked on either side by a small leaded glass window. These windows have a gold square stained glass patterned down the center and translucent glass on either side. This entrance leads to the covered arched colonnade that connects the sanctuary to the Education Building. The door is divided into rectangular panels, five panels wide by eight panels high, of various shades of gold, green, and purple stained glass. The original drawings indicate the glass panels were three panels wide by seven panels high, therefore, it is believed the glass has been replaced. At the north end of the west elevation, there is an additional entrance protected by a projecting gabled slate roof supported by cantilevered wood beams. The oak door, configured with stained glass on the top and a wood panel on the bottom, has a gold stained glass V-pattern down the center, with translucent glass on either side. One leaded glass window is located to the north of this entrance, and a band of two leaded glass windows are located to the south.

The north elevation features a 12' high, original pointed arched stained glass window, and an enclosed entrance sheathed in wood quirk board. The east elevation of the entrance has a translucent paneled glass door two panes wide by five panes high. This was originally the choir entry that led to the choir vestry. On the north elevation of the entrance there is a three panel wide by three panel high fixed window. The entrance is topped with a slate gabled roof. On the west side of the north elevation, concrete stairs lead to a basement entrance centered on the north wall. In the stairwell is a basement window. An outdoor wood storage area with an overhead door and gently sloping shed roof was added to the east on the north elevation, concealing an original basement window.

A Lannon stone belfry with cast stone details was constructed shortly after the sanctuary was complete. Located in the southwest corner of the sanctuary, the belfry is approximately 50' high. The belfry is covered with a gabled slate roof, with one gable oriented east to west and an equal sized gable running north to south. In the center of the roof is a 2' high copper cross finial, similar to the finial on the cupola. The upper portion of the belfry has a framed opening with a stainless steel screen. There are five windows on the second floor of the belfry, three on the west and two on the north, with square shaped stained glass down the center and translucent glass on either side.

Interior Description of Sanctuary

Cross shaped in plan, the main worship area has a nave with a central aisle and side aisles. Small transepts project slightly from the east and west of the nave. North of the nave, stairs lead to a chancel elevated 1'-3" above the floor of the nave. A vestry, originally used by the choir, is located to the east of the chancel. This vestry maintains the original storage spaces, but the room is now also used as storage. To the west of the chancel is

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another vestry, an entry and preparatory space for the ministers that continues to be used as originally designed. A narthex is adjacent to the south side of the nave. To the south of the narthex is an entry vestibule with two sets of double oak doors, and two restrooms, one on either side of the entry. Wood stairs with a carpet runner, an iron handrail, twisted iron posts and an iron newel post wind from the narthex to the second floor. These stairs lead to a mezzanine that overlooks the nave. Two offices are located to the east and west of the mezzanine. The east office was originally the head minister's study and features built-in 6' high wood bookcases with sliding leaded glass doors. At the north end of the second floor, directly above the two vestries, are two organ pipe chambers, accessible from the first floor through trap doors in the ceiling of the first floor.

The plaster ceiling of the sanctuary consists of three exposed wood trusses, oriented from east to west in conjunction with numerous purlins oriented from north to south. On the ceiling is an Elmslie-designed leaf patterned stencil in deep blue, deep red, and brown. The stencils are 18" high along the horizontal, upper most surface of the ceiling and down the sides of the sloping surfaces on either side of the three beams and at both ends of the nave. A 6" high portion of this stencil continues horizontally at the bottom portion of the sloped ceiling, just above where the sloped roof intersects the vertical wall. The walls are a slightly darker sand color than the ceiling, with the back south wall finished in a darker caramel color.

Decorative plaster elements finished to look like carved stone are found throughout the interior of the sanctuary. The large pointed arch in the chancel has an ornamental leaf pattern applied to the vertical surface and the 3' wide underneath portion of the arch. A decorative rectangular panel of a woman surrounded by four birds in flight further adorns the base of the arch where it begins to spring. The pointed arch that frames the opening to the mezzanine also has applied decorative plaster in a geometric pattern on the vertical wall surface and the 2' deep opening. A 21" plaster frieze depicting bunches of grapes is located on the vertical wall surface where the ceiling joins the walls throughout the sanctuary. This grape motif is found again in the four, 30" diameter, perforated ornamental plaster medallions in the rail of the mezzanine at the back of the sanctuary.

An 11 ½" base trim and a 4" wide belt course, located 83" above the finished floor to the bottom of the trim, are located in the narthex and nave. The belt course intersects the top of the reredos on the north elevation, and jets down to partially frame the stained glass windows on the east and west elevations. A 12" high Elmslie designed stencil pattern runs below the wood belt course. The pattern is different from that of the ceiling, and incorporates more curvilinear forms. The color palette is similar to that of the ceiling, incorporating deep blue and deep red. However, the brown in the ceiling is replaced with metallic bronze that creates an optical illusion by appearing different depending on the

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light. Specifically, the metallic bronze may appear brown, may glisten, or even disappear.

Sawed wood details designed by Elmslie are incorporated into the pulpit, choir rails, 6' high reredos, and organ pipe screens. The ornamentation on these elements is derived from organic forms, another Prairie School detail. On the organ pipe chamber screens on the north wall of the sanctuary, musical notes are subtly included. Above the reredos is a Celtic cross carved out of wood, which matches the pattern of the stone cross located just below the peak on the south elevation.

All the interior doors within the sanctuary are original, single paneled solid oak doors. The round, hammered door knobs are intact throughout. The original decorative push plates and pulls remain on the four doors in the vestibule, on the four doors leading from the narthex to the nave, and the vestry door on the north elevation.

The floor of the narthex, the main and side aisles of the nave, and the middle portion of the chancel is the original random rectangular 1" thick slate in various shades of purple and green. Under the wood pews in the nave and transepts, the floor is covered in brown and black flecked linoleum. The original linoleum squares are intact under the pews in the nave. The floor of the transepts and on both sides of the chancel is finished in deep purple flecked sheet linoleum. The chancel originally had an organ pit in the floor along the west wall, just north of the pointed arch, which now has a hatch door over it.

The original wood furniture including lectern, chairs, and pews remain. The pews are dark brown wood with matching dark brown seat cushions.

Exterior Description of Education Building

The Education Building, located west of the sanctuary, is connected to the sanctuary by a pointed arched colonnade, topped with a gabled slate roof with copper gutters. In between each cast stone arch, there is a decorative cast stone medallion.

The Education Building is approximately 110 feet long, 70 feet wide, and 40 feet high. The building is rectangular in plan, with the long axis oriented from north to south. The entrance on the south elevation slightly projects from the main body of the building. Just north of this entrance, on either side, are two flights of stairs leading to the second floor. These stairs also project slightly to the east and west. On the west elevation a wing extends from approximately the middle of the elevation. Like the sanctuary, the Education Building has a gabled slate roof, is constructed of sand colored Lannon stone, and is fenestrated with original steel sash windows. These windows are divided into multiple clear glass panes, and many incorporate a fixed transom window above.

The roof of the Education Building consists of a gabled slate roof oriented from north to south, terminating slightly north of the colonnade where the roof becomes flat. A secondary to

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gabled roof projects out from the west elevation. This smaller gable is penetrated by vents that exhaust the kitchen below. Like the sanctuary, the roof has copper gutters, downspouts, and flashing. A louvered pyramid shaped cupola of copper and slate rises a little over thirteen feet and is topped with a copper finial.

The main entrance projects slightly from the south elevation reminiscent of a bay window. The entry is flanked on either side by cast stone sculptures: a woman to the west and a man to the east. Above each sculpture is a square cast stone carving of leaves. The lintel is also cast stone in a geometric pattern. Similar geometric patterned stones adorn the coping. The two sets of double oak doors have a multi-pane clear glass transom. The blue, gold, red and purple stained glass in the doors form a large V at the top, with a smaller V-shaped pattern running below the larger V to about the middle of the door. Above the entrance at the second floor level is a set of three casement windows with transoms. On either angled wall of the entrance, there is a casement window with a transom on both the first and second floors. A pair of casement windows with transoms is located on either side of the entrance on the first floor.

On the projecting portion of the east elevation, a pair of casement windows with transoms is located at the second floor. On the main body of the second floor, there are five sets of three casement windows with transoms south of the colonnade. North of the colonnade there are two pairs of two casement windows at the second floor. These windows are higher than the others on this floor, as there was originally a stage in this area. On the first floor south of the colonnade, there are three sets of three casement windows with transoms flanked by a set of two casement windows. On the first floor north of the colonnade, there are four sets of two casement windows with transoms.

On the projecting portion on the south end of the west elevation, one window is located on the first floor, and a pair of casement windows with transoms is located on the second floor. On the main body there are three casements windows with transoms on both the first and second floors. Just north of these windows, the building juts out, forming a wing. This wing has two sets of three casement windows with transoms on the first floor and five consecutive casement windows on the second floor on the south elevation. On the west elevation of the wing, there are three sets of casement windows with transoms on the first floor and two sets of two casement windows on the second floor. On the north elevation of the wing, there is one set of two casement windows. Just north of the wing on the main body of the building a flight of five stairs leads to a covered entrance. A pair of casement windows is located on the first floor on the northern end of the west elevation. In between these windows and the entrance there is a casement window that illuminates the stairwell inside.

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Interior Description of Education Building

From the south entrance of the Education Building, a vestibule with two sets of double doors leads to an octagonal foyer with stairs on either side. A central corridor extends north from the foyer, dividing the building in half. Offices, a library, and a classroom are located on either side of the corridor. A secondary corridor runs just north of the classroom, connecting two entrances.

On the east wall of the main corridor, a ribbon of five stained glass windows incorporates various shades of blues, gold, and reds. Each window has a blue stained glass V-pattern down the center, with two gold V-patterns on either side. On the west wall of the corridor are two additional stained glass windows that match the windows on the east elevation.

Most interior doors in the Education Building are original, maintain the historic door knobs, and are labeled with small gold lettering. Five original doors have a solid wood panel on the bottom half, and a stained glass window on the top half. These doors incorporate a blue stained glass V-pattern down the center, with translucent glass on the sides. Four of these doors remain in their original location in Offices E-107, E-110; and at the double doors to Classroom E-108. There was also a door with this configuration called for in the original plans between Rooms E-105 and E-W-11, and at offices E-102 and E-104. One of these doors was relocated to the new opening to the Copy Room E-106, and it is unknown if the other two doors were ever fabricated.

The remaining interior doors are all original, solid oak with a single panel, with the exception of the doors at Rooms E-102, E-W-11, E-109, and E-112 that have two panels. Doors E-109 and E-112 are horizontally split, enabling only the top half to open if desired.

Throughout the Education Building, the wood base trim is 6 ½". A 5" wide chair rail, including a 1" profiled cap on the top and the bottom, also runs along the corridor at 32" above the finished floor. In addition, there is a 5" wide picture rail in the corridor that has a 1" profiled cap only along the bottom. Another original wood feature in the Education Building is built in book cases along the south wall of Offices E-107 and E-110.

The floor covering in the foyer and corridor is tan carpet with a 1" brown line 6" from the wall. At corners, the brown line loops around forming a square, and the interior of the square is a deep rust color. The offices are carpeted, and the classroom has a tiled floor.

On the second floor is a large assembly space approximately 40 wide and 80 feet long, called Plymouth Hall. A stage is located to the north. The ceiling is finished in acoustic tiles, the walls in painted plaster, and the floor with 9' square tiles of alternating tan and deep red in the center with a brown border. In addition, 10 chandeliers currently illuminate the space. To the west of Plymouth Hall is a kitchen, accessible through two swinging doors. The east wall

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of the kitchen adjacent to Plymouth Hall features built-in wood storage with base cabinets accessible from both the kitchen and Plymouth Hall, and a counter top with a pass through window. Roll down doors enable the kitchen to be completely enclosed.

A chair rail, identical to that found in the corridor, runs around the perimeter of Plymouth Hall, 30 ½" above the finished floor. A picture rail is also included on the east and west walls of Plymouth Hall. However, this trim is only 2" wide and has a more detailed profile.

To the south of Plymouth Hall is a foyer with bay windows and two flights of stairs. The stairs project slightly to the east and west beyond the main body of the building. The west stair continues up another flight to a small balcony overlooking Plymouth Hall. This space is now enclosed with removable panels and is used as storage. In addition, a secondary set of stairs directly accessible from Plymouth Hall and the Kitchen, is located to the north of the kitchen. A small restroom is located at the landing of these stairs.

Addition

The sanctuary and the Education Building are similar in design on both the exterior and interior. The 1959 addition matches the original buildings in materials and proportion and blends nicely on the exterior. However, the interior does not attempt to emulate the original design criteria. Blond oak woodwork, flat panel doors, casement window with no divided window panes, and exposed concrete masonry units in many rooms give the interior spaces of the 1959 addition a different feel. The addition is located on the back of the Education Building and does not detract from the historic buildings but is considered a non-contributing property since it was built outside of the period of significance.

1950s Alterations

Over the years various alterations were made to the First Congregational Church. However, much of the original, historic fabric remains. Changes that have occurred over the years have not affected the property's historic integrity. Several changes took place in the 1950s when structural repairs were made. Specifically, ornamental concrete tracery originally adorned the top portion of the opening in the belfry, which was found to be structurally instable and removed. In addition, there was a 2 ½" thick perforated concrete carving of ivy in the transom above the south entrance to the sanctuary that also suffered from structural damage and was removed. The statues on either side of this entrance are replicas of the cast concrete originals. The original statues were structurally unstable and were therefore relocated to the main stair landing between the first and second floors in the

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addition. The pointed arched stained glass windows also required structural repairs. Originally designed to be constructed of limestone, a change order was made to fabricate the frames of these windows out of cast stone, a relatively new and more economical construction technique at the time. This change in the details later led to the reinforcing bars in the concrete failing. Therefore, the frames and sills were replaced with limestone. The six slightly smaller pointed arched stained glass windows on the east and west elevations of the nave had additional problems. To emphasize the heavy masonry horizontal mullion, a Prairie School technique, the vertical stone mullions did not extend all the way from the sill to the arch above. These vertical stone members were replaced with mullions extended the full height, dividing the windows into thirds vertically. When these repairs were made, the stained glass was also replaced with more contemporary designs.

During the 1950s additional changes were made and some of the original details removed in an attempt to modernize the facility, a popular trend at the time. In the sanctuary, the stencils were painted over, the ceiling was painted light blue, and the walls were painted cream. The reredos and some wood panels on the north elevation of the nave, and the belt course were removed. To provide additional space, the chancel was slightly expanded to the south. Originally, the bottom stair did not project past the pulpit. Acoustic tiles were also applied to the ceiling of the narthex to reduce noise. Historically, there were 6 pendant lights in the nave and one in each of the transepts. The second bay from the south did not have any lights. The lights from the transepts were reinstalled in the second bay from the south in the 1950s, providing more uniform illumination. In addition, a light fixture was installed over the south entry, and the one pendant light hanging from the ceiling over the mezzanine was removed, capped, and two new fixtures installed.

In the Education Building, an exterior entrance on the east end of the foyer was removed and that end of the foyer enclosed for a storage space. The south east office was originally a coat check room, and was converted to an office. Office E-103 was originally part of the library, adjacent to the north. The west wall of Office E-103 and the Library originally had built in book cases and a hinged storage seat under a ribbon of five stained glass windows. Originally, the corridor terminated at the north end into a wall with stained glass windows. This wall connected the south walls of Office E-110 and E-107. To the north of the wall was an open space that now includes offices E-110, E-112, E-107, E-109 and the corridor in this area. This space was converted into office space. Room E-110A was historically a kitchenette with a range, sink, and refrigerator that was changed into a storage room.

The original stage in Plymouth Hall was removed, the hall enlarged, and a new stage constructed in the addition. The hall was originally 40 feet wide by 56 feet long, with a 20 foot deep stage to the north, starting just north of the door to Stair E-3. The four small windows that are 77 1/2" above the finished floor, would have fit in more proportionately

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when the original stage was intact. The original plaster ceiling in Plymouth Hall was covered with acoustic tiles to reduce the noise levels, and soffits were installed along the perimeter of the ceiling on the east and west elevation, concealing light fixtures. Originally, the kitchen adjacent to Plymouth Hall had a sizeable storage area and an entry vestibule with two sets of swinging doors to the east. These separate spaces were removed and the entire space configured into an industrial kitchen.

2005 Renovation

In 2005, a two year renovation of the facility costing nearly \$2.5 million was completed, which restored many of the architectural features back to their original condition. Many of the architectural details that were altered during the 1950s were restored, and various repairs were made. Specifically, masonry was repaired, cleaned and tuck pointed. Various flat roofs were replaced and slate roofs were repaired. Steel sash windows were repaired, painted, reglazed, and fitted with interior storm windows. Stained glass windows that match those in the casement windows in the sanctuary were installed in Office E-107 to provide more privacy to the head minister's office. The cast concrete frames and sills of the steel sash windows in the sanctuary were deteriorating and therefore bonded over with concrete.

The exterior door that was removed from the east of the foyer in the Education Building was relocated to Office E-101. This door matches the entrance doors on the south elevation. According to the original floor plans, the exterior doors at exit E-3 and E-10 originally matched door E-101. However, the original glass was removed, and replaced with transparent wired security glass. In addition, the door to the vestry on the west elevation was in poor condition and was replicated.

Central air conditioning and a fire protection sprinkler system were installed, which required installation of a slightly dropped panel acoustic tile ceiling in the corridor and perimeter soffits in the narthex to conceal piping.

In addition, sound and lighting systems were replaced. Eight original pendant lights in the nave were rewired and restored. The crown of clear bulbs that historically illuminated the top of these fixtures was also reinstalled. New recessed fixtures and spotlights were added, as was a programmable lighting system. A new sound and projection system was also installed at this time. Much care was taken in selecting and installing these new devices to ensure minimal impact on the historic fabric. Several of the original emergency exit signs remain. Two are located in the sanctuary, and an additional two in the narthex. These signs were internally retrofitted and are now code compliant, but maintain their original exterior appearance. In addition, many new light fixtures were

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installed on the interior and exterior in the Arts and Crafts style.

Kitchens and bathrooms were also remodeled. The kitchen adjacent to Plymouth Hall was renovated and received new cabinets, ovens, refrigerator, freezer, microwave, lights, ceiling, and floor. The two restrooms in the sanctuary were remodeled. Each restroom originally incorporated a storage room; these have been removed when the restrooms were enlarged, made accessible, and updated in Arts and Crafts décor. Modern levers were installed on both bathroom doors to meet accessibility requirements.

Interior details and finishes were also restored based on original drawings, historic photographs, and surviving material. Specifically, the reredos, wood panels on the north elevation, and the wood picture rail that were removed in the 1950s renovation, was replicated. The original color and texture of the sanctuary was replicated by using a textured paint on the ceiling and walls, and the stencils were reapplied. All the current colors were determined from an analysis of the original plaster and paint. Originally, the ceiling and walls were finished with a tinted sand coated plaster that provided a subtle texture. The back wall was a slightly deeper shade that was obtained by applying shellac over the finished plaster.

The pews were originally secured with screws that projected from the floor. Polishing the floor was difficult, so the screws were countersunk. Originally the pews did not have seat cushions. Elmslie's design intent for this area was to not distract the eye, but draw attention to the chancel by having the seats and floor appear as one massive dark brown area. However, the pews were uncomfortable and seat cushions were added shortly after their installation. These cushions were replaced with dark brown cushions that closely match the color of the wood pews, and therefore blend in.

In the transepts and on both sides of the chancel, the floor was in poor condition and was replaced with deep purple flecked sheet linoleum that closely matches the existing original slate.

The original organ was replaced in 1980 with the current, larger instrument that has 2,004 pipes. To accommodate these additional pipes, an organ pipe loft was installed on the north elevation of the chancel and the wooden carved organ screens on the side walls of the chancel were removed, enlarged, and replaced with fabric that matches the color of the adjacent wall. New decorative wood trim was added to the face of the organ pipe loft creating a paneled appearance.

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8. Statement of Significance

The First Congregational Church of Western Springs is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion C as an eclectic example of Late Gothic Revival, Arts and Crafts, and Prairie School architecture. The Prairie School was especially popular in the Midwest, and the return to more conservative, traditional architectural styles, such as Gothic Revival, was typical after World War I. The church was designed by the prominent American architect, George Elmslie, and is a fine example of his work. The church meets National Register Criteria Consideration A for a religious property that derives its primary significance from architecture.

Located in Cook County Illinois, 15 miles west of the Chicago Loop, Western Springs was incorporated as a village in 1886. Named for a local mineral springs located in town, Western Springs had a large number of Quakers among its the early residents. After the well dried up in 1890, the village built a waterworks system, including a 112 foot high stone water tower. The tower was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1981, and is the sole structure with such designation in Western Springs.

In 1887 the First Congregational Church of Western Springs was founded. In the early 1920s, the congregation of the First Congregational Church of Western Springs was expanding. The original church was a frame building consisting of a sanctuary on the first floor, and a deep basement that served as both the educational and social hall. In 1921, land was purchased with the intention of building an outstanding edifice for the community, one that was not too expensive and would be practical to maintain. In 1924, the Building and Planning Committee was appointed and seven architects from Chicago and St. Louis were interviewed. Three of the architects submitted sketches. George Grant Elmslie's design was selected, and he was hired in 1926.

George Grant Elmslie was born on a farm near Huntley, Scotland, in 1871. In 1884 he moved with his family to Chicago. Upon arrival in the States, Elmslie started his architectural career as an apprentice in the office of William Le Baron Jenny, who originated steel frame construction used in modern skyscrapers. In 1887, he moved to the office of Joseph Silsbee, one of Chicago's foremost Queen Anne architects. Here he became briefly acquainted with Frank Lloyd Wright before Wright left to work for Adler and Sullivan. In 1889, Elmslie also left Silsbee's office to join Adler and Sullivan.

Louis Sullivan inspired the idea of a new American architecture independent of historical styles, influenced by nature, and suited to the modern age. Common characteristics of Prairie School architecture include low-pitched roofs that are usually hipped, wide overhanging eaves, horizontal emphasis, and geometric patterned, stained glass windows. Sullivan's ideas influenced many young designers who apprenticed in his

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office. Employing his principles of design, Sullivan's followers, including Frank Lloyd Wright, William Gray Purcell, George Maher, and George Grant Elmslie developed the style known as the Prairie School.

Elmslie and Frank Lloyd Wright worked together in a shared office in the Auditorium Building until 1894 when Wright was dismissed for taking on other work for his own account without permission. From then until 1909, Elmslie took Wright's place as chief draftsman and ornamental designer for Sullivan. "Sullivan," Elmslie wrote in his autobiography, "allowed me a lot of freedom and from 1895 to 1909, I did much designing for him and all of the ornamental work besides. I owe an inexpressible debt to him, the great master, and to his teaching."¹ During his tenure, he detailed the façade ornamentation for Sullivan's Wainwright building in St. Louis; the Carson Pirie Scott Department store in Chicago; and the National Farmers Bank of Owantonna, Minnesota.

In 1909, Elmslie left Sullivan's declining practice where he had been employed for 20 years. He joined the firm of William Gray Purcell and George Feick Jr. in Minneapolis, Minnesota. Elmslie met Purcell during Purcell's short stay at Sullivan's office in 1903. Feick, an engineer, left in 1913 and the firm Purcell and Elmslie was formed. The remarkable quality and quantity of their designs attracted commissions for a wide variety of buildings. The firm designed numerous houses, banks, courthouses, churches, stores, and factories. In the decade that Elmslie was with the firm, they executed over 70 buildings, mostly constructed in Minnesota, making them one of the most prolific Prairie School firms.

Elmslie's wife of less than two years died in 1912. Shortly after this tragedy he moved back to Chicago to live with his sisters. The firm continued with the main office in Minneapolis and Elmslie in Chicago. This long distance partnership was successful until 1920 when Purcell moved to Portland, Oregon. The miles between them were too difficult to endure, and thus the partnership dissolved in 1922. For the remainder of his career, Elmslie was a sole practitioner and accepted small commissions.

The vitality of the Prairie School diminished during the First World War, when the country turned conservative, traditional architectural forms were embraced, and new commissions were few. Architects who remained in the Midwest generally found it necessary to compromise their ideals and design in the historical styles. It was during this period that Elmslie designed the First Congregational Church in Western Springs.

The First Congregational Church's Building and Planning Committee was first attracted to Elmslie after a member saw his recently designed Capital Building and Loan Association building in Topeka, Kansas. The building was "so striking in its harmonious beauty that the architect's name was asked for."² The committee stated that Elmslie was chosen because his plan "stood out for its originality, its unusual beauty, and its practicality... We shall have a church plan that will not only be efficient and an ornament to

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the village, but will be a contribution to church architecture in America."³ The Committee originally requested a Gothic style church. Elmslie, to appease their request, first designed a very elaborate gothic complex. This design was too intricate and expensive, so Elmslie proposed a second design more in tune with his own taste. Completed in 1930, the sanctuary and Education Building skillfully integrate popular Late Gothic Revival features and Elmslie's favored Prairie School characteristics into a unique design. In his public writings he condemned revivalism as inappropriate for the modern times, satirizing contemporary "make believe Gothic Churches."⁴ Never copying a work of the past, Elmslie designed in a truly creative sense. "When he used historical forms, he interpreted them freely.... And often embellished them with his distinctive use of ornament."⁵ The resulting combination of styles created a structure reminiscent of a country church in his homeland, Scotland.

Elmslie referred to his creation as "The Church in the Garden."⁶ Elmslie placed the church as far from the two street corners as possible, to provide a place of worship withdrawn from the noise of traffic. In addition, he set the church in a garden of shrubbery and beautiful lawns.

The ten pointed arched stained glass sanctuary windows and the cross shaped floor plans are typical of the Gothic style. These original stained glass windows, three of which remain, were installed by Temple Art Glass Company of Chicago. It is speculated that the renowned artist Edgar Miller designed, selected and painted the original glass, as he was associated with Temple Art Glass at the time. Although these windows are not a typical example of Miller's later work, they would have been designed early in his career. His signature is typically only found on one window within a building, and could have been on a window that was replaced.

The exterior Lannon stone construction, relatively shallow roof, and exposed scissor beams are reminiscent of English Country Churches. Numerous Prairie School features are incorporated into the church including emphasis on horizontal lines, use of natural materials, integrated stencils, art glass, sawed wood ornamentation, and earth tone colors. In addition, there are many applications of Prairie ornamentation. Specifically, organic forms beautifully ornament the exterior facade, pulpit, choir, and reredos of the sanctuary. These ornaments incorporate leaves, vines, flowers, fruit, birds, fish, and other natural subjects into intricate patterns and designs. Some of the ornamentation is derived from ancient symbols from English cathedrals, such as lions, eagles, and serpents. The carved stone statuary and decorative elements throughout the sanctuary and the Education Building were designed and created by Chicago sculptor Emil Robert Zettler. Born in Germany in 1878, Zettler became head of the School of Industrial Arts at the Art Institute of Chicago. Zettler and Elmslie worked on various commissions together for more than

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twenty years.

The First Congregational Church of Western Springs is one of only two religious facilities located in Western Springs in the Illinois Historic Structures Survey; the other, a simple frame church located at 1215 W. Chestnut, has been converted into a Masonic Lodge.

The other religious properties in the community that have Gothic features are all modern. In addition, the survey identified the residences at 1000 W. Maple, 4032 S. Woodlawn, and 4051 S. Central to have Prairie School influences. All of these have the basic form and materials characteristic of Prairie School but none have the ornamentation found on the First Congregational Church.

The First Congregational Church is perhaps the best example of both Gothic Revival and Prairie School architecture in Western Springs, reflective of Elmslie's ability to incorporate both revival and "modern" architectural styles into a noteworthy design. Elmslie achieved high acclaim for his overall contribution to American architecture and was awarded fellowship status by the American Institute of Architects in 1947, a prestigious honor within the architectural profession. His citation read that during very difficult times as new architectural forms made their struggle for recognition in what was called 'American Architecture,' Elmslie was among the vanguard that made a definite and worthwhile contribution to the progress of architecture. He continued to design buildings until his death on April 23, 1952. Elmslie is buried in Graceland Cemetery on the north side of Chicago, with many other notable artists, architects, and prominent figures of the time.

Endnotes

¹ Elmslie, George Grant, *Autobiographical Sketch*, Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Libraries, Northwest Architectural Archives.

² The Western Springs Times, "Architect Explains Ideals", January 29, 1926.

³ The Western Springs Times, "Proposed New Congregational Church: Report of Plan and Building Committee", January 22, 1926.

⁴ "Healy Undertaking Company Announces Opening of the New Healy Chapel" (advertisement), *Aurora Daily Beacon-News*, August 17, 1928.

⁵ Garner, John S., Ed. *The Midwest in American Architecture "George Grant Elmslie and the Glory and Burden of the Sullivan Legacy"*, Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1991.

⁶ *Program of Dedicatory Service May 19 - 26 1929, "The New Church"*, Western Springs, IL: The First Congregational Church of Western Springs, 1929.

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The Western Springs Times, "Architect Explains Ideals: George Grant Elmslie designing Proposed Congregational Church", January 29, 1926.

The Western Springs Times, "Symbolic Designs of Old Cathedrals Built in Church: Biblical Emblems, and Mystic Figures Wrought Into Wall of Congregational Church", March 8, 1929.

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10. Geographical Data

Verbal Boundary Description

Lots 48 to 57 both inclusive in Block 22 in Western Springs, a resubdivision of part of East Hinsdale in the northeast $\frac{1}{4}$ of Section 6, Township 38 North, range 12 east of the third principal meridian, in Cook County, Illinois.

Boundary Justification

The lots are owned in full by the First Congregational Church of Western Springs. Adjacent lots 46 and 47 to the north of the property are also owned by the church and comprise an enclosed children's playground to the west and a parking lot to the east, and are not included in this application.

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Additional Documentation

Photographs - (Photographer, date of photo, description)

1. E. Trail, October 13, 2005 - South Exterior Elevation of Sanctuary
2. E. Trail, October 13, 2005 - South Entrance to Sanctuary
3. E. Trail, October 13, 2005 - East Exterior Elevation of Sanctuary
4. E. Trail, October 13, 2005 - Nave windows on East Elevation of Sanctuary
5. E. Trail, October 13, 2005 - Transept window on East Elevation of Sanctuary
6. E. Trail, October 13, 2005 - West Exterior Elevation of Sanctuary
7. E. Trail, October 13, 2005 - Vestry Entrance on West Elevation of Sanctuary
8. E. Trail, October 13, 2005 - North Exterior Elevation of Sanctuary
9. E. Trail, October 13, 2005 - East Elevation of Narthex
10. E. Trail, October 13, 2005 - West Elevation of Narthex
11. E. Trail, January 31, 2006 - North Elevation of Chancel
12. E. Trail, October 25, 2005 - East Elevation of Transept
13. E. Trail, October 25, 2005 - Southeast corner of Nave
14. E. Trail, October 25, 2005 - Wall stencil in Sanctuary
15. E. Trail, October 13, 2005 - South Exterior Elevation of Education Building
16. E. Trail, January 31, 2006 - East Exterior Elevation of Education Building
17. E. Trail, October 13, 2005 - West Exterior Elevation of Education Building
18. E. Trail, January 18, 2006 - South Elevation of Foyer
19. E. Trail, October 25, 2005 - West Elevation of Library
20. E. Trail, October 25, 2005 - East Elevation of Office E-107
21. E. Trail, February 15, 2006 - Northwest corner of Plymouth Hall
22. 1930 - East Exterior Elevation of Sanctuary
23. 1930 - South Elevation of Sanctuary

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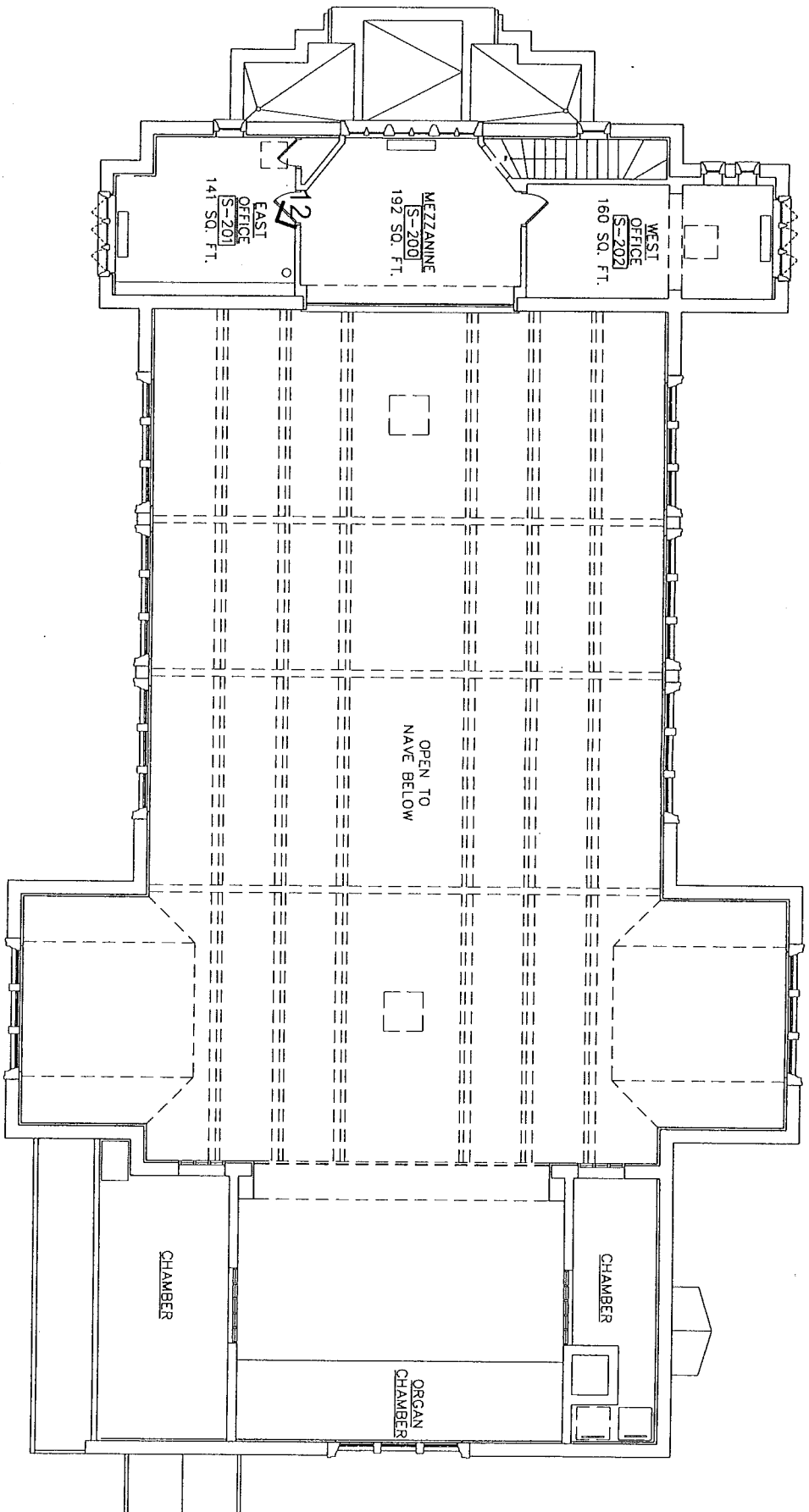
First Congregational Church of Western Springs
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Drawings

Site Plan

Sanctuary Building First and Second Floor Plan

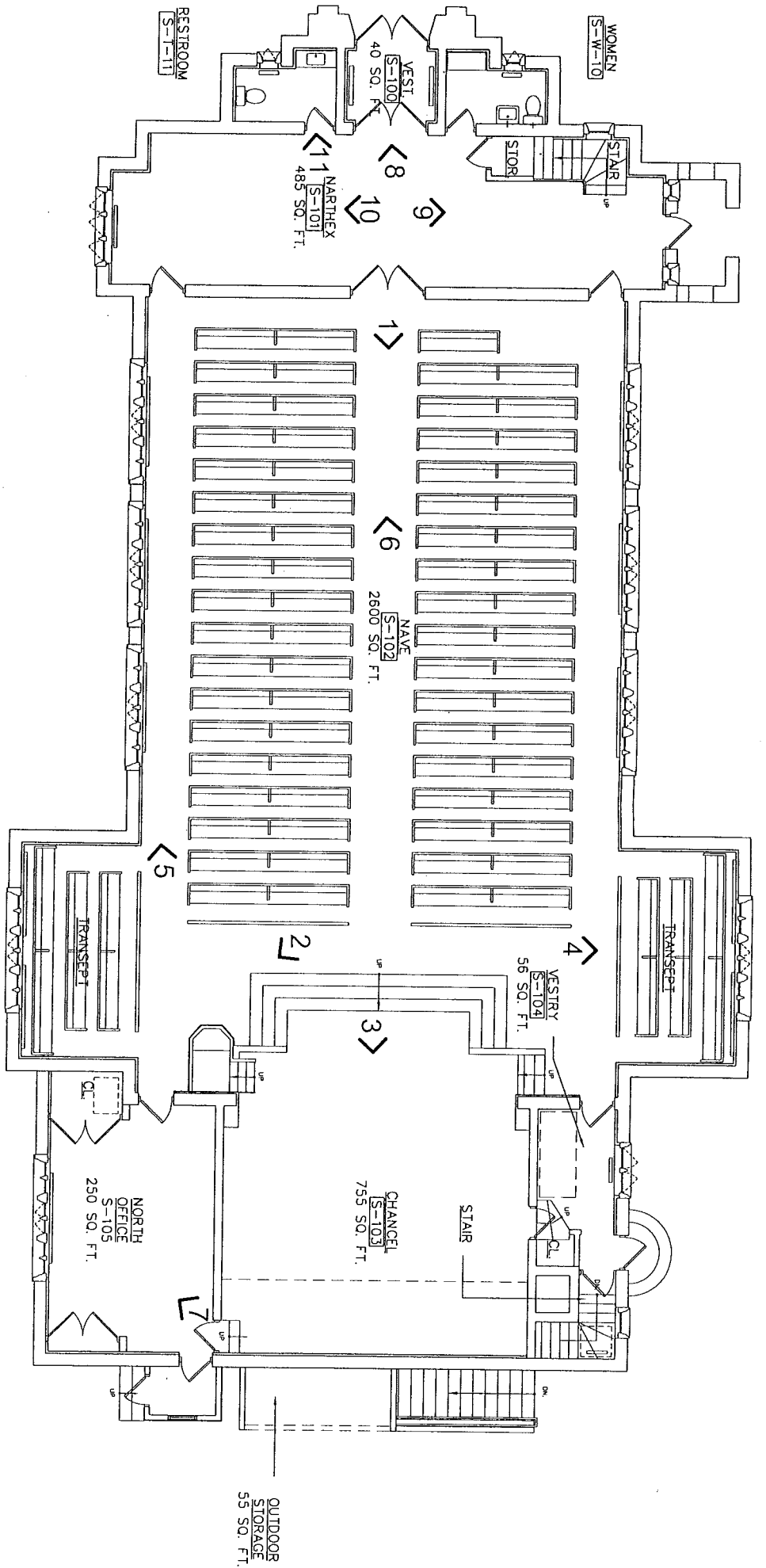
Education Building First and Second Floor Plan



FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH OF WESTERN SPRINGS

SANCTUARY BUILDING - SECOND FLOOR PLAN

Scale: 1/8" = 1'-0"



FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH OF WESTERN SPRINGS

SANCTUARY BUILDING - FIRST FLOOR PLAN

Scale: 1/8" = 1'-0"

