

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form

For NPS use only

received

AUG 29 1985

date entered

OCT 10 1985

Continuation sheet

Item number

Page

1. Name: Saline First Presbyterian Church
2. Location: 143 E. Michigan Ave., Saline, MI.
3. Classification: building, private, occupied, unrestricted, religious
- x  
4. Property Owner: First Presbyterian Church  
143 E. Michigan  
Saline, MI 48176

7. Description

Condition: good; altered; original site

Occupying a sparsely-landscaped corner site fronting E. Michigan on the east edge of the downtown commercial center, the one-and-a-half story brick Presbyterian Church features an irregular plan, gabled roof, and dominant squared corner tower (photo #27). The tower rises from the ground at the building's southeast corner to triple-arched louvers on each face. Its short crowning spire is flanked at the base by four matching miniature spires. The large round-arch stained glass windows on the south and east facades, the raised cut stone foundation, and the small round tower at the southwest corner reveal a Romanesque Revival stylistic influence. "In 1954, new porches and steps were constructed at both front entrances to the church, using stones obtained from Dwight Reynold's property on Textile Road, from which the original foundation stones had come" (First Presbyterian Church of Saline, Michigan, Sesquicentennial Yearbook). In 1976-78, church members began extensive exterior and interior renovation, which included re-roofing, repair of the bell tower louvered screens, repair and re-roofing of the steeple, and construction of classrooms in the basement.

The rounded-arch Romanesque motif is continued on the apsidal plan sanctuary interior, with a triple arch apse at the north end. An undated historic photo of the interior, which appears to predate renovations, reveals stencil work and raised molding articulating the arches and continuing along the sanctuary walls midway between ceiling and floor. Although this stenciling no longer exists, the recent 1978 restoration by church members has reinstated the gold plaster molding lost during previous remodelling, as well as the gold decoration of the Corinthian capitals which support the triple arches of the apse opening. The pews and elegant stained glass windows, with their rose, trefoil, and fleur de lis patterns, are also original. The present altar screen, lecturn, and communion table are not original. The chief alteration to the

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interior has been the 1956 installation of wood paneling halfway up the plaster walls of the sanctuary, and the 1955 carpeting and covering of the sanctuary floor with asphalt tiling. Another carpet has since been installed, as well as new light fixtures.

8. Significance: period--1800-1899; 1900--  
areas of significance--architecture, religion  
specific date--1898  
builder/architect--Spier and Rohns of Detroit,  
architects and builders, Conrad Schaffer and  
Sons of Saline, builders

The First Presbyterian Church derives its significance from its role in local Presbyterian history and as a good example of vernacularly-interpreted Romanesque Revival architecture. The building is one of many southern Michigan structures designed by the Detroit firm of William C. Rohns and Frederick H. Spier. The prolific duo formed a partnership in 1884, the former after training at the Hanover, Germany, Polytechnicum and some time in the office of Gordon W. Lloyd and Elijah E. Myers, the latter after working with the New York architect Cyrus L.W. Eidlitz. In addition to the Saline church, Spier and Rohns designed a number of railroad depots, the Detroit Chamber of Commerce Building (1895), several buildings at the University of Michigan, St. Thomas Roman Catholic Church in Ann Arbor (1899), and Sweetest Heart of Mary Roman Catholic Church in Detroit (1893) (Ferry 1968: 136-37).

Saline's Baptist and Presbyterian churches were the earliest established in the Village--both in May of 1831. The Presbyterians were unique, however, in that they organized their new church in Newark, New York, before the 12 original members and their families left for the Michigan Territory and Saline. Like many pioneer congregations, they held services in homes and schoolhouses until they raised sufficient funds to erect their own building. The first frame Greek Revival house of worship (1842) stood on land donated by Orange Risdon and served the congregation until the completion of the present building on the same site in 1898.

9. Major Bibliographical Sources

(see General Bibliography section for full citation)

Chapman and Co., History of Washtenaw County, 1881.

Ferry, W. Hawkins, The Buildings of Detroit (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1968).

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First Presbyterian Church of Saline, Michigan, Sesquicentennial Yearbook  
with the Church History from 1831 to 1981.

Saline Area Centennial, Inc., A Century of Progress, 1966.

Saline Historic District Commission, Saline Has a Past in Its Future,  
1976.

Saline Historic District Commission Survey Notebook, 1975.

Walsh, Rita, 1979 draft of the Saline Multiple Resource Nomination.

10. Geographical Data

acreage: less than one

Quadrangle: Saline, scale 1:24,000

UTM References: 17/270310/4671870

Verbal boundary description: Lot 15, Assessor's Plat 6

Justification: This is the entire property associated with the  
structure.

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Multiple Resource Area  
Thematic Group

dnr-11

Name Saline MRA  
State Washtenaw County, MICHIGAN

cover form accept P. Andrews 10/10/85

Nomination/Type of Review

Date/Signature

1. Annin, Joseph, House

Entered in the  
National Register

✓ Keeper

Melrose Byers 10/20/85

Attest

2. East Michigan Avenue  
Historic District

Entered in the  
National Register

✓ Keeper

Melrose Byers 10/20/85

Attest

3. Forbes, Jortin, House

Entered in the  
National Register

✓ Keeper

Melrose Byers 10/20/85

Attest

4. Guthard, Charles, House

Entered in the  
National Register

✓ Keeper

Melrose Byers 10/20/85

Attest

5. Lutz, George R., House

Entered in the  
National Register

✓ Keeper

Melrose Byers 10/20/85

Attest

6. Miller--Walker House

Entered in the  
National Register

✓ Keeper

Melrose Byers 10/20/85

Attest

7. North Ann Arbor Street  
Historic District

Substantive Review

✓ Keeper

accept Patrick Andrews 10/10/85

Attest

8. Oakwood Cemetery Mausoleum

Entered in the  
National Register

✓ Keeper

Melrose Byers 10/20/85

Attest

9. Saline First Presbyterian  
Church

Entered in the  
National Register

✓ Keeper

Melrose Byers 10/20/85

Attest

10. Sturm, Louis, House

Entered in the  
National Register

✓ Keeper

Melrose Byers 10/20/85

Attest

REF #  
85002960

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

Saline First Presbyterian Church (Saline MRA)  
Washtenaw County  
MICHIGAN

Working No. AUG 29 1985  
Fed. Reg. Date: 2-3-87  
Date Due: 9/26/85 - 10/13/85  
Action:  ACCEPT 10-10-85  
 RETURN  
 REJECT  
Federal Agency: \_\_\_\_\_

Entered in the  
National Register

- resubmission
- nomination by person or local government
- owner objection
- appeal

Substantive Review:  sample  request  appeal  NR decision

Reviewer's comments:

Recom./Criteria \_\_\_\_\_  
Reviewer \_\_\_\_\_  
Discipline \_\_\_\_\_  
Date \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ see continuation sheet

Nomination returned for: \_\_\_\_\_ technical corrections cited below  
\_\_\_\_\_ substantive reasons discussed below

1. Name

2. Location

3. Classification

Category Ownership Status Present Use  
Public Acquisition Accessible

4. Owner of Property

5. Location of Legal Description

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

Has this property been determined eligible?  yes  no

7. Description

Condition  excellent  good  fair  deteriorated  ruins  unexposed  unaltered  altered  original site  moved date \_\_\_\_\_

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

- summary paragraph
- completeness
- clarity
- alterations/integrity
- dates
- boundary selection

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**8. Significance**

Period \_\_\_\_\_ Areas of Significance—Check and justify below

Specific dates \_\_\_\_\_ Builder/Architect \_\_\_\_\_

Statement of Significance (*in one paragraph*)

- summary paragraph
- completeness
- clarity
- applicable criteria
- justification of areas checked
- relating significance to the resource
- context
- relationship of integrity to significance
- justification of exception
- other

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**9. Major Bibliographical References**

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**10. Geographical Data**

Acreage of nominated property \_\_\_\_\_

Quadrangle name \_\_\_\_\_

UTM References \_\_\_\_\_

Verbal boundary description and justification \_\_\_\_\_

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**11. Form Prepared By**

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**12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification**

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

\_\_\_\_\_ national \_\_\_\_\_ state \_\_\_\_\_ local

State Historic Preservation Officer signature \_\_\_\_\_

title \_\_\_\_\_ date \_\_\_\_\_

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**13. Other**

- Maps
- Photographs
- Other

Questions concerning this nomination may be directed to \_\_\_\_\_

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

85602960

27

PHOTO: SALINE FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH



55 19

- a. Saline Multiple Resource Nom.  
(143 E. Michigan, Presbyterian Church)
- b. Saline, Washtenaw Co., MI
- c. L. Sommers
- d. fall, 1984
- e. Mich. Bureau of History  
208 N. Capitol  
Lansing, MI
- f. facing NW
- g. photo #27 of 40

80#

INSERT  
PHOTOS

Please refer to the map in the  
Multiple Property Cover Sheet  
for this property

Multiple Property Cover Sheet Reference Number: 64000333