

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

For NPS use only

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

received

date entered

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic First Church of Christ Scientist

DA 1115

and or common First Church of Christ Scientist

Letter of Eligibility 1-3-89

2007/1/11

2. Location

street & number 1836 Biscayne Boulevard

not for publication

city, town Miami

vicinity of

state Florida 33132 code FL

county Dade

code FL 025

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"/> commercial
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military
			<input type="checkbox"/> museum
			<input type="checkbox"/> park
			<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> religious
			<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
			<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
			<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name First Church of Christ Scientist

street & number 1836 Biscayne Boulevard

city, town Miami

vicinity of

state Florida 33132

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Dade County Courthouse

street & number 75 W. Flagler Street

city, town Miami

state Florida 33130

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title FMSF-Miami Multiple Resource
Historic Preservation Survey

has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date June, 1985

federal state county local

depository for survey records Bureau of Historic Preservation

city, town Tallahassee

state Florida 32399-0250

7. Description

Condition excellent good fair deteriorated ruins unexposed**Check one** unaltered altered**Check one** original site moved date _____

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

SEE CONTINUATION SHEET

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 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 type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-1938	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		

Specific dates 1925

Builder/Architect August C. Geiger

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

SEE CONTINUATION SHEET

9. Major Bibliographical References

Please see Bibliography for Cover Nomination

10. Geographical Data

Acreege of nominated property less than 1 acre

Quadrangle name Miami

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UTM References

A 1 7 | 5 8 1 2 6 0 | 2 8 5 2 9 8 0
Zone Easting Northing

B | |
Zone Easting Northing

C | |

D | |

E | |

F | |

G | |

H | |

Verbal boundary description and justification

Miami, Lots 1 through 4 of Block 5 of the plat of MIRAMAR (PB 5-4). Boundary follows historic and legal boundary.

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state N/A code county code

state code county code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Sarah Eaton / Vicki L. Welcher, Historic Sites Specialist

organization Bureau of Historic Preservation date October, 1988

street & number 500 South Bronough Street telephone (904) 487-2333

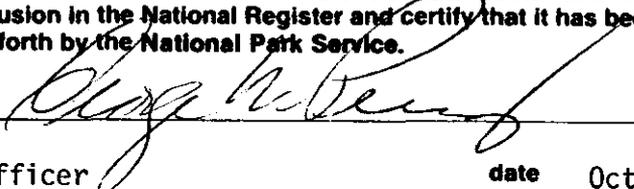
city or town Tallahassee state Florida 32399-0250

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 

title State Historic Preservation Officer date October 17, 1988

For NPS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

date

Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

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National Park Service

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DESCRIPTION:

Condition: Excellent

The First Church of Christ Scientist is a large two-story masonry building executed in the Neo-Classical style of architecture. The church building was completed in 1925 according to plans provided by August C. Geiger.¹ The First Church of Christ Scientist is a rectangular-plan building whose structural system is comprised of terra cotta tile and poured concrete. The exterior walls are clad in Indiana limestone, with the foundation and entrance steps constructed of Mt. Airy granite.²

The exterior of the church is characterized by a classically-inspired facade running parallel to Biscayne Boulevard. The principal elevation is comprised of six colossal Ionic columns dividing a recessed portico into seven bays. There are granite steps leading up to the recessed portico from the sidewalk level. On either side of the principal elevation are end bays without any type of openings. A large entablature unifies the end bays to the central portico. Atop the entablature spanning the portico is a flat masonry parapet that serves to conceal the flat roofline behind it.

The side elevations of the church are characterized by tall multi-pane windows that serve to emphasize the height of the main auditorium. Shorter windows below are indicative of a raised basement under the auditorium. The fenestration of the building is original with the window sash set into metal frames. A granite water table wraps around the entire building. The rear of the church building is characterized by a semicircular extension that follows the external composition of the side elevations. There are seven uniformly spaced bays that comprise the rear elevation.

The main auditorium is entered through five double doors set within the recessed portico. The doors lead to a large vestibule which provides access to the auditorium by way of seven door

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openings. The auditorium is ramped down to the platform altar which is delineated by the casing of the organ pipes above it. There are seven windows on either side of the auditorium containing simple glass panes set within metal frames. A low wall comprised of stylized triglyphs separates the auditorium from the altar.

The interior walls of the auditorium are embellished with stylized classical motifs. The major portion of the auditorium ceiling is embellished with a shallow dome. Ceiling coffers are found between the dome and the exterior walls. A simple entablature serves as a cornice that wraps around the perimeter of the auditorium. There are folding seats set within the pews, and the seating capacity in both the auditorium and rear gallery accommodates 1200 people. The lower story of the church building contains an auditorium and meeting rooms. In all, the exterior and interior of the church building remain virtually unaltered from the day they were completed.

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STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE:

Specific Date: 1925

Architect: August C. Geiger

The First Church of Christ Scientist is architecturally significant because it represents an outstanding example of Neo-Classical styling in Dade County.³ The church building also possesses important associations with its architect, August C. Geiger, as this commission comprises one of his most important designs.⁴

The exterior of the First Church of Christ Scientist embodies the distinctive characteristics of the Neo-Classical style of architecture, a popular design expression for institutional buildings erected in Dade County throughout the 1920s and 1930s. The church building is architecturally noteworthy for such stylistic features as its symmetrical massing, use of classical orders, and utilization of limestone and granite to create a monumental appearance.⁵

The visual composition of the church is also significant because it exemplifies the work of August C. Geiger in South Florida. The building's scale, massing, and stylized decoration make it one of the most outstanding examples of Geiger's institutional designs in Miami.

August C. Geiger was born in 1888 and came to Miami in 1905 from New Haven, Connecticut.⁶ During his career in Miami, he worked for Carl Fisher on various construction projects in Miami Beach and was also appointed architect for the Dade County School Board. He was the tenth registered architect in Florida and one of the most prominent and active architects in Dade County.⁸ His designs are characterized by the stylized use of the classical orders and the adaptation of prevailing national styles to the local climate.

The First Church of Christ Scientist is still using the building for its original purpose. Its physical appearance has been meticulously conserved from the time of its construction. The First Church of Christ Scientist was organized in Miami in

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1916. After meeting at various places throughout downtown, a temporary structure was erected at the corner of N. E. 4th Street and 2nd Avenue.⁹ Due to a rapid increase in attendance, a larger edifice was voted upon by members of the congregation in 1923.¹⁰ The present site was purchased by the church and ground was broken on 2 May 1924.¹¹ Although the church auditorium has been used since 1925, the congregation chose not to formally dedicate the church until all debts were paid. The formal dedication took place on 7 March 1937.¹²

NOTES

1. Joseph Faus, "Churches of Miami," Miami Sunday News Magazine, 29 January 1950, p. 25.
2. See note 1 above.
3. State of Florida, Department of State, Division of Archives, History and Records Management, "Florida Master Site File: Historic Site Data Sheet" for 1836 Biscayne Boulevard, "Statement of Significance."
4. Year Book of Joint Exhibition of the Architectural League of Greater Miami and Florida South Chapter A. I. A. (1930), p. 21.
5. See note 3 above.
6. Metropolitan Dade County, Office of Community and Economic Development, Historic Preservation Division, From Wilderness to Metropolis: The History and Architecture of Dade County, Florida (1825-1940) (Miami, Florida: Metropolitan Dade County, 1982), "Selected List of Architects and Their Work."
7. See note 6 above.
8. See note 3 above.
9. See note 1 above.
10. See note 1 above.
11. See note 1 above.
12. See note 1 above.





FIRST CHURCH OF CHRIST, INC.

WORLD SERVICE