

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Registration Form

SEE SITE FILE STAFF FOR  
ORIGINAL PHOTO(S) OR MAP(S)

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in *Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms* (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

1. Name of Property

historic name Greater Bethel A. M. E. Church  
other names/alt. number 8DA2367

2. Location

street & number 245 N.W. 8th Street N/A  not for publication  
city, town Miami N/A  vicinity  
state Florida code FL county Dade code 025 zip code 33136

3. Classification

Ownership of Property	Category of Property	Number of Resources within Property	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	Contributing	Noncontributing
<input type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input type="checkbox"/> district	<u>1</u>	<u>0</u> buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> public-State	<input type="checkbox"/> site	<u>    </u>	<u>    </u> sites
<input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<u>    </u>	<u>    </u> structures
	<input type="checkbox"/> object	<u>1</u>	<u>0</u> objects
			<u>1</u> Total

Name of related multiple property listing:  
Downtown Miami Multiple Resource Area

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register     

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, 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.  See continuation sheet.

Suzanne P. Walker (Deputy) 2/25/92  
Signature of certifying official State Historic Preservation Officer Date  
Florida Dept. of State, Division of Historical Resources  
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria.  See continuation sheet.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of commenting or other official Date  
\_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal agency and bureau

5. 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

**6. Function or Use**

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)  
RELIGION: religious structure

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)  
RELIGION: religious structure

**7. Description**

Architectural Classification  
(enter categories from instructions)

LATE 19th and 20th CENTURY REVIVALS:  
Mediterranean Revival

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation concrete

walls stucco

roof asphalt

other \_\_\_\_\_

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

Please see continuation sheet.

See continuation sheet

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United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 1 Greater Bethel A. M. E. Church

### DESCRIPTION

The Greater Bethel A. M. E. Church, 245 N.W. 8th Street, is a rectangular, two-story Mediterranean Revival style building clad in stucco. Designed by architect John Sculthorpe, it has a front gable roof with parapets. Construction of the building was begun in 1927 but was not completed until 1942.

The principal (south) elevation contains most of the building's stylistic details. It features the sanctuary's south wall which is decorated with a stylized quatrefoil window set in the gable and corner pilasters topped with finials. Projecting symmetrical square towers flank the shed roof, second floor entrance to the sanctuary. A double set of steps leads from the street level to the entrance which is highlighted by triple doorways set beneath corresponding fanlights. The towers are embellished with a cast masonry band cornice of stylized arches that continue across the facade above the shed roof. A street level entrance, located beneath the steps, accesses a ground floor auditorium and meeting rooms.

The building's remaining elevations are less ornate than the main (south) facade. The side elevations are six bays long and contain multi-pane windows. Side entrances provide access to the ground floor meeting rooms. Window openings are set within a deep masonry surround, and stylized pilasters flank door openings. A projecting choir gallery is located at the rear of the building.

The interior of the church is very austere with a circular altar set in front of the choir gallery. The sanctuary seating is divided by two aisles leading to the altar. A simple masonry frieze containing stylized classical decoration wraps around the upper portion of the choir gallery recess. A cross section of the sanctuary reveals a flat ceiling delineating a simple cubical space. A triple window set at the rear of the choir gallery echoes the arrangement found at the main entrance to the sanctuary.

Modifications to the church building have been minor. Despite the replacement of windows and blocking up of spandrel openings, the Greater Bethel A. M. E. Church maintains its historic integrity of location, design, materials, workmanship, location, and feeling.

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**8. Statement of Significance**

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

nationally     statewide     locally

Applicable National Register Criteria     A     B     C     D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions)     A     B     C     D     E     F     G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)

Architecture  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Period of Significance

1927-1942  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Significant Dates

1927  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Cultural Affiliation

N/A  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Significant Person

N/A  
\_\_\_\_\_

Architect/Builder

John Sculthorpe (architect)  
H. S. Bragg (builder)  
\_\_\_\_\_

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

Please see continuation sheet.

See continuation sheet

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National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 1 Greater Bethel A. M. E. Church

### SIGNIFICANCE

The Greater Bethel A. M. E. Church is a Mediterranean Revival style religious structure built in downtown Miami during the historical period of the Bust and the Great Depression (1927 to 1942). It is significant at the local level under Criterion C as one of the few examples of Mediterranean Revival style architecture in Overtown, a historically black section of downtown Miami.

The exterior of the church embodies the distinctive physical characteristics of a tapered-down Mediterranean Revival style of architecture. The visual composition of the building is adapted to Miami's warm climate: high ceilings, thick walls, and small windows keep the interior cool with little or no air-conditioning. The building is one of the few historic buildings with any degree of architectural style remaining in Overtown. The scale of the building gives it a sense of permanence and makes it one of the most imposing structures in Overtown's built environment.

Miami's oldest black congregation, Greater Bethel A. M. E. Church was organized in 1896, several months before the city was incorporated. The church's first building was constructed prior to 1899 and was dubbed "Little Bethel." Nothing more than a simple frame structure with a dirt floor, the building was moved to N. W. 8th Street in 1899. The present church was begun in 1927 with a building fund of \$7,000. Construction of the building was not completed until 1942, at an approximate cost of \$150,000. The "pay-as-you-go" policy adopted by the congregation accounts for the delay in completion.

Although the architect of the church has been identified as John Sculthorpe, research has failed to turn up any biographical information on him.

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**9. Major Bibliographical References**

Please see cover nomination.

See continuation sheet

**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 Buildings Survey # \_\_\_\_\_
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # \_\_\_\_\_

**Primary location of additional data:**

- State historic preservation office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Specify repository:  
Bureau of Historic Preservation

**10. Geographical Data**

Acreeage of property Less than 1 acre

**UTM References**

A 

1	7
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5	8	0	3	1	0
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2	8	5	1	5	8	0
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Zone      Easting      Northing

C 

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B 

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--	--	--	--	--	--

--	--	--	--	--	--	--

Zone      Easting      Northing

D 

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See continuation sheet

**Verbal Boundary Description**

Miami, Lots 14 and 15 of Block 35 of the plat of MIAMI NORTH (PB B-41)

See continuation sheet

**Boundary Justification**

Boundary includes the city lots that have been historically associated with the property.

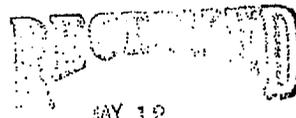
See continuation sheet

**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title Tulie W. Taylor, Historic Sites Specialist Sarah Eaton, Preservation  
organization Division of Historical Resources date 2-18-1992 Planner  
street & number 500 S. Bronough St. telephone (904) 487-2333  
city or town Tallahassee state Florida zip code 32399

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United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service



# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

HISTORIC PRESERVATION  
SECTION

Section number \_\_\_\_\_ Page \_\_\_\_\_

### SUPPLEMENTARY LISTING RECORD

NRIS Reference Number: 88002987

Date Listed: 4/17/92

Greater Bethel AME Church  
Property Name

Date  
County

FLORIDA  
State

Downtown Miami MRA  
Multiple Name

-----  
This property is listed in the National Register of Historic Places in accordance with the attached nomination documentation subject to the following exceptions, exclusions, or amendments, notwithstanding the National Park Service certification included in the nomination documentation.

*Patrick Andrews*  
for Signature of the Keeper

4/17/92  
Date of Action

=====

#### Amended Items in Nomination:

##### Section No. 8

This nomination was amended to add Criteria Consideration A, since the resource is a church.

The amendment was confirmed by phone with the Florida SHPO (4/17/92).

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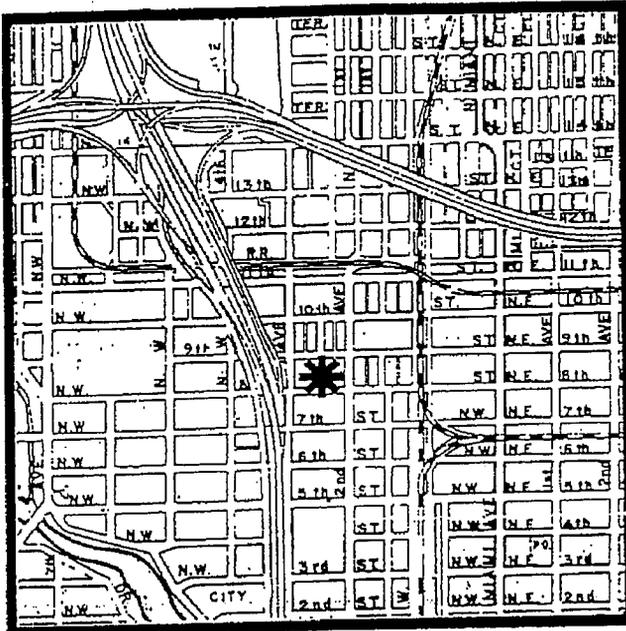
#### DISTRIBUTION:

- National Register property file
- Nominating Authority (without nomination attachment)

# GREATER BETHEL A.M.E. CHURCH

245 N.W. 8 STREET

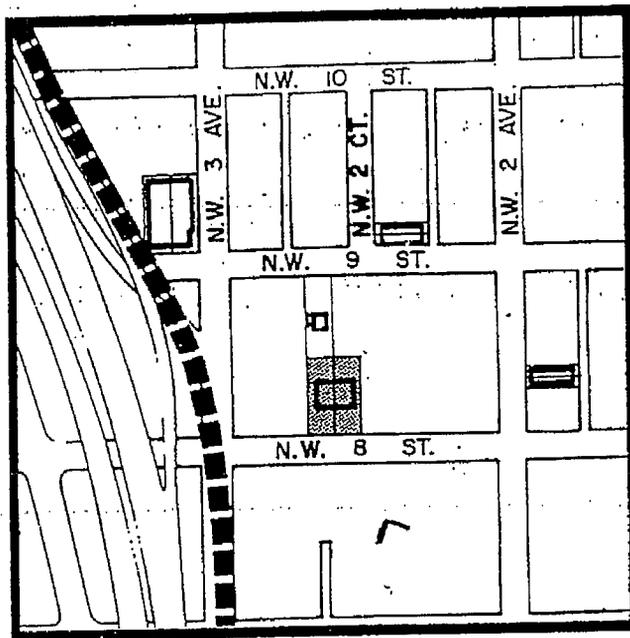
Miami, Florida



MIAMI QUAD.  
T 535  
R 41E  
S 37



location



> = photo angle

SCALE 1/3 inch = 100 feet

Shaded area = nominated property



NORTH

site plan

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