

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service
National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

1. Name of Property

Historic Name: Chapel for the Children

Other name/site number: All Faiths Chapel of the Austin State Supported Living Center

Name of related multiple property listing: NA

2. LocationStreet & number: 2203 W. 35th Street

City or town: Austin

State: Texas

County: Travis

Not for publication: ☐Vicinity: ☐**3. State/Federal Agency Certification**

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, 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 at the following levels of significance:

☐ national ☒ statewide ☒ localApplicable National Register Criteria: ☒ A ☐ B ☒ C ☐ D

Signature of certifying official / Title

State Historic Preservation Officer

Date

Texas Historical Commission

State or Federal agency / bureau or Tribal Government

In my opinion, the property ☒ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of commenting or other official

Date

State or Federal agency / bureau or Tribal Government

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

☐ entered in the National Register☐ determined eligible for the National Register☐ determined not eligible for the National Register.☐ removed from the National Register☐ other, explain: _____

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

Chapel for the Children, Austin, Travis, Texas

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

<input type="checkbox"/>	Private
<input type="checkbox"/>	Public - Local
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Public - State
<input type="checkbox"/>	Public - Federal

Category of Property

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	building(s)
<input type="checkbox"/>	district
<input type="checkbox"/>	site
<input type="checkbox"/>	structure
<input type="checkbox"/>	object

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1	0	buildings
0	0	sites
0	0	structures
0	1	objects
1	1	total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register: NA

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions: RELIGION: Religious Facility

Current Functions: RELIGION: Religious Facility

7. Description

Architectural Classification: MODERN MOVEMENT: A-Frame

Principal Exterior Materials: Foundation: CONCRETE
Walls: BRICK
Roof: ASHPALT
Other: GLASS

Narrative Description (see continuation sheets 7-6 through 7-10)

Chapel for the Children, Austin, Travis, Texas

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria: A,C

Criteria Considerations: A (Religious Properties)

Areas of Significance: Social History: Disability History (*state level of significance*); Architecture (*local level of significance*)

Period of Significance: 1961-1972

Significant Dates: 1961

Significant Person (only if criterion b is marked): NA

Cultural Affiliation (only if criterion d is marked): NA

Architect/Builder: Graeber, David C. (architect); King, William Robert (engineer); Yeaton, Z.D. (builder)

Narrative Statement of Significance (see continuation sheets 8-11 through 8-24)

9. Major Bibliographic References

Bibliography (see continuation sheet 9-25 through 9-26)

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 (*Texas Historical Commission, Austin*)
- ☐ Other state agency
- ☐ Federal agency
- ☒ Local government
- ☐ University
- ☐ Other -- Specify Repository:

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): NA

Chapel for the Children, Austin, Travis, Texas

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property: 1.33 acres

Coordinates

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates

Datum if other than WGS84: NA

1. Latitude: 30.306713° Longitude: -97.760086°

Verbal Boundary Description: The nominated area is a 1.33-acre portion of the Austin State Supported Living Center (AuSSLC). From the intersection of Canal St. and Valley Dr., the boundary follows Valley Dr. southwest approximately 214 feet; then follows the sidewalk 247 feet south; then 238 feet east (the northern edge of the parking lot) to Canal St., and 405 feet north to the starting point. The boundary is sketched on **Map 3**.

Boundary Justification: The nomination includes all property historically associated with the building.

11. Form Prepared By

Name/title: Bonnie Tipton Wilson (Historian, THC) and Rev. Dr. Paul D. Kraus (Director of Pastoral Care Services, Austin SSLC) based on a draft by Karen Kincaid Brady (2017)

Organization: Texas Historical Commission

Street & number: 1511 Colorado St.

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Date: May 1, 2021

Additional Documentation

Maps (see continuation sheets MAP-27 through MAP-28)

Additional items (see continuation sheets FIGURE-29 through FIGURE-42)

Photographs (see continuation sheets PHOTO-43 through PHOTO-52)

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 100 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.

Chapel for the Children, Austin, Travis, Texas

Photograph Log

Chapel for the Children

Austin, Travis County

Photographer: Bonnie Tipton Wilson, Rev. Dr. Paul D. Kraus, BCC, and Karen Kincaid Brady

Date: January 7, 2022 (unless noted otherwise)¹

Photo 1: The modernist Chapel for the Children (right) stands out against the AuSSLC's Beaux Arts institutional buildings. Camera looking southwest.

Photo 2: Chapel for the Children, east elevation. Camera looking southwest.

Photo 3: North elevation, camera looking south.

Photo 4: North elevation oblique showing reentrant corners and corbeling, camera looking southeast.

Photo 5: West (rear) elevation, camera looking east.

Photo 6: South elevation, camera looking north.

Photo 7: Detail of south elevation gable end window and eaves.

Photo 8: Courtyard entrance with office window wall in background. Camera looking northwest.

Photo 9: Chapel, north elevation. Camera looking south.

Photo 10: Hand-wrought copper handles.

Photo 11: Chaplaincy office interior. Looking south at window wall. (Brady, 8/22/2018)

Photo 12: Chapel interior, looking south. (Kraus, 9/22/21)

Photo 13: Chapel, looking north through nave entrance. (Brady, 8/22/2018)

Photo 14: Chapel interior view of skylight. (Kraus, 9/22/21)

Photo 15: *Miracle in the Sky*. Camera looking south. (Kraus, 9/22/21)

¹ AuSSLC restricted access to its buildings during the Covid pandemic 2020-2022. Interior photos were taken in 2018 and 2021 and accurately reflect the nominated building's current appearance and integrity.

Chapel for the Children, Austin, Travis, Texas

Narrative Description

The 1962 Chapel for the Children (now All Faiths Chapel) is a modest-sized A-Frame brick ecclesiastical building on the 95-acre campus of the Austin State Supported Living Center (AuSSLC) in Austin, Travis County. Mature oak trees surround the nominated building, and the site is flat and grassy. Designed by Austin architect David C. Graeber, Chapel for the Children has a triangular elevation and rectangular plan. The nominated property is a single building with three functional parts—chapel, meditation (courtyard) garden, and a one-story office—enclosed by the chapel's continuous exterior knee wall. The self-contained building is a retrospective and insular retreat from the larger AuSSLC campus. The sweeping A-Frame roof has identical fully glazed gable ends featuring artist Blossom Flowers Ford Burns' stained-glass composition *Miracle in the Sky*. On the interior, a dramatic glulam beam ceiling thrusts upward and terminates in a full-length skylight giving the chapel uninterrupted height. Hand-wrought copper door handles, interior pendant lights, altar, pulpit, and dimensional narthex wall—conceptualized and/or designed by Graeber—repeat the exterior's angular motif. Across the meditation garden, chaplaincy staff work in the low-slung office that retains its historic plan, materials, and garden-facing window wall. Built in 1962 to give AuSSLC's young residents an interfaith house in which to worship, Chapel for the Children retains excellent integrity to communicate its architectural and historical significance.

Setting

Chapel for the Children is on the 95-acre campus of the Austin State Supported Living Center (hereafter AuSSLC), formerly the State Colony for the Feeble-minded and later Austin State School. Established in 1917, AuSSLC is on the west side of MoPac Expressway in Central Austin, Travis County, Texas. It is bound by W. 35th Street (North), Exposition Boulevard (West), and Westover Road (South). Camp Mabry, the Texas National Guard Headquarters established in 1892, is just north of AuSSLC. The surrounding area was considered Austin's outskirts when the State School opened, but today the area is an affluent residential neighborhood that reflects the city's mid-20th century suburban sprawl.

Surveys of AuSSLC show that the entire campus may be eligible for listing as a historic district, but these resources are excluded from this nomination's boundary for an individually significant building. Dozens of resources—dormitories, ice plant and workshop, facility director's house, infirmary, instructional buildings, a tubercular cottage, administration building, gym, auditorium, outbuildings, and a cemetery—reflect the institution's century-long development and popular 20th century architectural styles. Austin architect Hugo Kuehne and the firm of Giescke & Harris designed most of AuSSLC's built environment, but David C. Graber, Page & Sutherland, Fehr & Granger, and E.V. Manning also designed eligible buildings on the large campus. The earliest resources are red brick Classical Revival-style while later buildings, like the chapel, are postwar modern styles. At its height, AuSSLC housed more than 2,000 residents, and today it is home to less than 200 residents with 900 employees. Some of the campus buildings are vacant, but AuSSLC has plans to re-purpose them.

Chapel for the Children is centered on the campus' north side, 0.2 miles from the AuSSLC entrance at W. 35th Street. The nominated boundary is a 1.33-acre triangular parcel drawn closely around the chapel and that starts at the Y-intersection of Valley Drive and Canal Street. It is surrounded by a line of mature oak trees planted around the time of its construction. Large, grassy lawns and parking lots separate the nominated building from several early 20th century Classical Revival administration buildings and dormitories.

Chapel for the Children, Austin, Travis, Texas

Chapel for the Children

The 1962 Chapel for the Children (now called All Faiths Chapel), designed by architect David C. Graeber, is an A-Frame (or tent form) brick masonry interfaith ecclesiastical building with a triangular elevation and rectangular plan. It is of concrete frame construction, and the A-frame chapel's nine-foot-tall continuous knee walls enclose three functional spaces: chapel, central garden courtyard, and a 950-square-foot, one-story flat-roofed chaplain's office. The nominated building is 171-feet (east-west) by 41-feet (north-south) with the chapel at the south side of the structure and office on the north. The chapel's sweeping grey asbestos tile tent-form roof (now replaced by textured plastic tile roof) is 52-feet-tall. Rather than joining at its apex, the roof terminates with a 5.5-foot-wide vertical chimney creating a skylight that runs the length of the roof. As architect Jason John Paul Haskins observed, tapered X-shaped braces that support the skylight mirror the 60° line of the gable glazing.² North and south gable ends are fully glazed and feature stained glass composition *Miracle in the Sky* under broad eaves clad in white pine planks.

Red brick walls of running bond with patterned brickwork details characterizes the self-contained building's exterior and are exposed on the interior. The brickwork pattern—horizontal rowlock laid fifth from the soldier coursing that distinguishes the top of the walls—repeats on all elevations. The architect also used protruding headers in vertical alignments to articulate openings, corners, and structural piers on the building's southern half. Although the masonry façade presents as a continuous brick wall, vertical seams at intervals ranging between nine and fifteen-feet-wide show these were built in sections.

The primary entrance is to the meditation garden through an opening on the **eastern elevation**. A wood lintel spans the 4-foot-wide courtyard entrance. The lintel is two red-painted redwood beams bolted on either sides of the exterior wall and is inscribed, "MINE HOUSE SHALL BE CALLED AN HOUSE OF PRAYER FOR ALL PEOPLE," from the Book of Yeshayahu (Isaiah) 56:7.³ The lintel rests on a horizontal rowlock, which juts out from the walls that border the entrance. Below, a vertical line of protruding headers, alternate between flush-laid bricks, discreetly articulate the sides of the opening. Right (north) of the entrance, Chapel for the Children's exterior east wall extends 39 feet north with gutters that span across the office's flat roof line.

South (left) of the east elevation entrance is the chapel. Ten, concrete piers clad in white stucco punctuate the chapel's knee walls on its east, south, and west elevations. These structural columns help support the A-frame bent roof, which overhang the exterior walls. Copper-capped wooden beams are exposed under the eaves. A solid wood door leading to the nave is at southern end of the east elevation between the eighth and ninth structural columns. The chapel's knee wall extends south approximately ten feet past the roof line and encloses one of two small mechanical rooms, which one accesses from the interior.

When viewed head-on, the **south elevation** below the gable has the visual effect of a flat wall. From an oblique point of view, however, one can see the rear elevation is comprised of an 22-foot brick wall floated in front of and overlapping the south elevations of the building's two square mechanical rooms. Narrow gates between these two walls on the east and west facades allow AuSSLC staff to access this enclosed outdoor extension. The building's actual south wall is better understood from the interior. Solid doors at the farthest sides of the brick south wall open to the

² Jason John Paul Haskins, AIA, "An Uplifting Mid-Century Chapel for the Children," *Locus Iste*, September 8, 2013. <https://www.locusiste.org/blog/2013/09/chapel-for-the-children>.

³ In Hebrew scripture, called the Tanakh, the Book of Yeshayahu (Isaiah) is in the Nevi'im (Prophets). For Christians, the English translations of the Old Testament Book of Isaiah (56:7) differ slightly from the lintel inscription. Jewish Virtual Library, "Religion: The Tanakh," Jewish Virtual Library: A Project of AICE, <https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/the-tanakh-full-text>, accessed May 20, 2021; "The Book of Isaiah," United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, <https://bible.usccb.org/bible/isaiah/0>, accessed May 20, 2021.

Chapel for the Children, Austin, Travis, Texas

mechanical rooms. A glazed, inverted triangle is cut out from the brick wall and extends down from the stained-glass gable end above it. From their pews, worshippers only see the rear exterior area's plantings and the floating brick wall in the background.

The **west elevation** is identical to the east elevation, but there is no courtyard entrance.

The **north elevation**—the office's exterior wall—has a 40.5-foot-wide and 3-foot-deep extension centered on the façade. The east and west sides of the extension have narrow fixed, single pane windows.

Miracle in the Sky

Chapel for the Children's tent form roof has fully-glazed identical gable ends that feature artist Blossom Flower Ford Burns' stained glass *Miracle in the Sky*, which Graeber commissioned for the project. Supported by large steel beams that can survive a 90-mile gale, the windows were made of 6,000 pieces of hand-blown and hand-rolled glass produced and installed by Austin Art Glass.⁴ According to Haskins:

[T]he mullions form panes of 60° rhombi that follow the profile of the equilateral triangle roof, a motif which Graeber used to unite elements throughout the chapel into a cohesive whole. The mullions are also reduced to the thinnest possible, relying on tension cables and stays to resist deflection...The solar mitigating tint on the lower [glass] was added later, giving [it] a green hue.⁵

Burns' *Miracle in the Sky* is a non-denominational abstract composition in stained glass centered in each gable end and extends up through the chimney. Clear glass around the bottom and sides of *Miracle in the Sky* was intended "so the children can see the clouds and trees" as part of the larger work.⁶ Hundreds of golden doves, which symbolized the state school's young residents, are depicted "wheeling, swirling, and flying aimlessly," amongst shades of orange, yellows, and reds. Shades of turquoise and blue surround some of the birds and guide the eye upwards in a "dramatic swoop." The upward trajectory represents spiritual freedom, and the piece terminates at the skylight with a "blinding patch" of gold glass.⁷

Meditation Garden

The meditation garden is a nearly square (39' x 40.5') exterior courtyard with central-crossing sidewalks that lead to the chapel (south) and office (north) entrances. Currently, the garden is fully landscaped with several types of plants and shrubs with two semi-circle walking paths amongst the garden areas of the courtyard's corner beds. Box hedges that border the sidewalks were likely planted shortly after the building's construction. In the northwest corner, a tall, mature oak tree provides dense shade. A limestone statue *Lazarus* donated in 2015 and produced by David Graeber's son Larry Graeber is in the southeast corner. The sculpture is of a man reclining and looking upwards towards the west.

The courtyard's east, west, and south walls are made of multi-shaded, textured bricks; and the north wall is fenestrated by floor-to-ceiling windows separated by vertical wood mullions. This window wall (the office's south exterior wall), is shaded by the flat roof's overhanging eave, and a solid redwood door is centered between the windows. Solid,

⁴ Marlee Baker, "Chapel at School: 'Miracle in the Sky' Finished," *Austin American*, October 19, 1961.

⁵ Jason John Paul Haskins, AIA, "An Uplifting Mid-Century Chapel for the Children," *Locus Iste*, September 8, 2013. <https://www.locusiste.org/blog/2013/09/chapel-for-the-children>.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Ibid.

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double doors centered on the courtyard's south wall lead to the chapel's nave. The doors and solid wood transom, designed by Graeber, mirror the building's triangular theme with redwood laid diagonally in a diamond pattern. Local artist Horton Wayne Smith hand wrought the sculptural dove handles in copper.

Left (west) of the chapel doors is inlaid a stone plaque:

CHAPEL FOR THE CHILDREN
ERECTED 1961
THRU VOLUNTEER CONTRIBUTIONS
OF THE CITIZENS OF TEXAS

DAVID C. GRAEBER ARCHITECT
Z.D. YEATON CONTRACTOR

Interior

The CoVid pandemic restricted access to the chapel in 2020-2022, which is reflected in the limited number of current photos embedded in the application. Enclosed photographs range were taken by authors between 2017-2022, and all accurately reflect the current interior appearance.

Office

The chaplaincy office is 950-square-feet with a rectangular plan configured for five office rooms and one restroom. The east and west interior walls are exposed brick with interior partitions that are dry wall a wood trim header. Curtains cover the window wall. Grey lineoleum tile floors are throughout designed to accommodate chaplaincy staff and volunteers. The front door opens to a larger greeting room. Two, single doors on the north wall and a door on the west wall were originally designated for a sacrament room, office space, and meeting room. A door in the reception room's east wall leads to a small communal room with a kitchenette original to the building. Graeber designed the kitchen's simple wood shelves and cabinetry with cane-fronted cabinet doors and blue tile counter. There is an original porcelain sink and General Electric two-burner stove. The walls on the east and west of the building are the exposed brick of the exterior walls. The interior walls are drywall. All materials mentioned above are original to the building. It appears the only alteration are new fluorescent ceiling fixtures.

Chapel

Beyond the front doors is the narthex. It is a simple rectangular room with a low ceiling. Doors to the men's and women's restrooms are to the left (east) and right (west) respectively, as well as access to storage. A wood header and footer run along the white painted drywall walls. Along the south wall of the vestibule is a hexagonal opening, framed with wood panels, that leads to the chapel. The sides of the hexagon correspond and run diagonal to the slope of the roof.

The rectangular nave is characterized by the roof's dramatic uninterrupted height. Exposed brick and structural concrete columns support the glulam decked ceiling.⁸ At the ceiling's apex, the roofline curves vertically to create a room-length chimney for the skylight that runs along the longitudinal axis of the chapel. Eight original antique green copper pendants, hand-forged by artist Horton Wayne Smith, provide additional lighting to the sanctuary. These

⁸ Glulam (glued laminated timber) is a structural engineered wood composed of bonded wood laminations. American Plywood Association, "Glulam," <https://www.apawood.org/glulam>, accessed March 17, 2022.

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fixtures drop down from every other beam in the ceiling. Viewed from below, one can see the pendants are comprised of stacked triangles of multiple sheets of copper that wrap diagonally around the fixture, with the slope of the diagonal changing as they go around each corner.

The nave's rear (northern) wall is composed of redwood panels laid in an angular pattern that floats in front of acoustical pegboard wall. Graeber's design is dimensional with the panels laid at varying depths from the pegboard behind it, and triangles and diamonds line the top and bottom. The way the wall was constructed and designed provides quality sound insulation. With the front doors closed, the chapel is insulated from exterior sounds, including those of the MoPac Expressway, which sits less than a tenth of a mile away. The southern wall is incompletely composed of brick. The brick pattern that is present throughout the chapel continues here, but instead of making a full wall, the brick courses end in an inverted triangle, preparing the viewer for the character defining feature of the stained glass above.

Alterations

The chapel has had few alterations, and it is in excellent condition. There appears to be some water damage along the floor on the interior of the chapel, and some metal fixtures display some rust. They have done some work on the ceiling of the chapel, but all work has been done in kind to avoid changing the original design and structure. The skylight was also restored around the same time. Overall however, the chapel is in excellent condition and stands as it did upon completion of construction.

Integrity

Chapel for the Children has excellent integrity to demonstrate its historical and architectural significance. It is at the original site on the campus of Austin State Supported Living Center (then-called Austin State School) in Central Austin, and the historic setting is intact. Spatial relationships between the nominated building and older campus buildings is intact with no adjacent modern intrusions to affect the historical setting. Chapel for the Children retains excellent integrity of design in its architectural style, form, and plan. The building retains its character-defining A-frame roof with terminating skylight and glazed gable ends. Continuous exterior walls form the building's rectangular plan and encloses the central garden court, office, and chapel in a single construction. Historic materials are present throughout the nominated building. This includes exterior brickwork, inscribed entrance lintel, original fixed-pane windows, and diametric chapel door with sculptural dove handles. The chapel interior retains its sweeping 52-foot glulam ceilings, copper light fixtures, shellstone altar, processional arrangement, and geometric nave wall with the wide hexagon-shaped nave doorway. The framework that enabled the ceiling and skylight's construction continue to demonstrate the architect, engineer, and builder's high level of skill in workmanship and design. Burns' artistry and Austin Art Works' workmanship are evident in the beautiful stained glass gable windows. The interior also retains generous-sized entrances and aisles to accommodate the school's children who were in wheelchairs. Chapel for the Children's high integrity of location, setting, design, materials, and workmanship together enable the building to retain its association and feeling as a postwar non-denominational chapel designed by David C. Graeber and built to bring spiritual enrichment to Austin State School's young residents.

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Summary of Significance

The 1961 Chapel for the Children (now All Faiths Chapel) is an interfaith house of worship built for the spiritual education of young residents at the Austin State School, Texas's first public institution for persons with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD). In the postwar era, treatment practices for persons diagnosed with IDD evolved as more compassionate attitudes towards, and activism for, this vulnerable population increased nationwide. Practitioners came to see ministry as a fundamental component in improving these individuals' quality of life. In 1956, Reverend Luther Hollaway joined Austin State School as the institution's first full-time chaplain. Chapel for the Children was built as a result of his advocacy and through the donations of citizens from across Texas. It is nominated to the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A in the area of Social History: Disability History at the state level of significance and Criterion C in the area of Architecture at the local level of significance. The chapel is an excellent example of postwar modern A-frame religious building. Its triangular form, steeply pitched roof, glazed gable ends, and steel-frame supported glulam decked interior ceiling are distinctive characteristics of the tent-form style that enjoyed pervasive, yet brief, popularity in the 1950s-1960s. Built before persons with disabilities had legal rights to equal access, the human scale of the interior plan prioritized accessibility for its young congregation with wide entrances and aisles to accommodate those with wheelchairs. Intentionally designed with excellent acoustics and integrated colorful stained-glass windows of simple abstracted birds reflect the importance of music and graphic arts in teaching religious concepts to persons with physical and cognitive impairments. Chapel for the Children is the only known example of architect David C. Graeber's effort to render spirituality in built form. Expressive of faith, warm, and emotionally powerful, the chapel demonstrates Graeber's architectural ability and enthusiastic dedication to the project for which he donated his services. The nominated building continues to serve as a place for spiritual and religious practices by Austin State Support Living Center's residents/clients, family members, employees, and the public. It meets Criteria Consideration A (Religious Properties) because Chapel for the Children derives its primary significance for its historical association and architectural distinction. The period of significance is 1961 -1972, representing the years it served as an interfaith chapel for AuSSLC's students through the current 50-year threshold for listing in the National Register of Historic Places.

Spirituality in the Care of Persons with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (IDD) at Texas State Schools

Texas legislation established the State Colony for the Feebleminded (now Austin State Supported Living Center) in 1915 as the state's first public institution for persons with intellectual and developmental disabilities. The campus opened in 1917 with 65 females ages six to 49 who transferred from the State Lunatic Asylum to the 96-acre site on the outskirts of West Austin. From 1915-1941, the physical plant's exponential growth reflected the institution's overcrowding—an issue that plagued the state-funded school for much of the 20th century. Architect Hugo F. Kuehne oversaw the design and construction of more than 30 residential, administrative, academic, rehabilitative, training, and maintenance buildings. Designed in the era's popular Classical Revival style, the red brick structures “rose uncrowded amid the sprawling campus' rolling lawns and thick oak trees.”⁹ Renamed Austin State School in 1925, the eleemosynary institution's mission focused on educating its juvenile and adult-aged residents in basic academic and vocational training. The residents' work—cleaning, laundering, groundskeeping, making mattresses or brooms—was critical support for the day-to-day upkeep of the chronically-underfunded institution.¹⁰

⁹ “In their Small World,” *Austin American*, June 5, 1955.

¹⁰ Jason John Paul Haskins, “An Uplifting Mid-Century Chapel for the Children,” *Locus Iste*, September 8, 2013, <https://www.locusiste.org/blog/2013/09/chapel-for-the-children>; “Learn About Our State Supported Living Centers,” *Texas Health and Human Services*, Accessed November 25, 2017, <https://hhs.texas.gov/services/disability/intellectual-or-developmental-disabilities-idd-long-term-care/state-supported-living-centers-sslcs/learn-about-our-state-supported-living-centers#austin-state-supported-living-center>.

Chapel for the Children, Austin, Travis, Texas

Treatment philosophies for individuals diagnosed intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) evolved in the 20th century. In the 1930s and 40s, Austin State School's administrative approach reflected the era's long-held social and scientific attitudes that considered persons with mild or moderate IDD (then, "retardation") as morally suspect. These individuals, it was believed, were susceptible to promiscuous or criminal behavior. Consequently, Austin State School's administration restrictively managed its then-largely female population in locked buildings on a closed campus and "treatment" focused on industrial training.¹¹ Familial visitation, already rare due to the social stigma around disability, was limited.¹² Individuals sent to Austin State School as children often became "wards of the State," institutionalized for their entire lives.

Medical advancements made during World War II improved the life expectancy of infants born with IDD, and a postwar attitudinal shift among parents, advocacy groups, researchers, and practitioners arose alongside practical concerns of caring for this swelling demographic. When demand for enrollment at state schools increased, isolationist treatment paradigms that perpetuated lifelong institutionalization became fiscally untenable. State governments could not afford the successive building programs required to keep up with demand. State agencies, like in Texas, thus began school day programs for children who could remain living at home and concentrating age groups (children, adults, and elderly) in schools around the state. These solutions eased demand for on-campus living and focused budgets for programming and supplies targeted to one age group rather than multiple. Advocacy organizations like the National Association for Retarded Citizens also formed to lobby full human rights and services for this vulnerable population. They promoted "a shift from custodial care in isolated settings to social, occupational, and life-skills training for community integration."¹³ This position was based on the work of researchers in medicine, psychology, education, and theology. Parent groups also formed to become an influential voice in public education about disability, establishing independent training facilities, lobbying to improve institutional care, and campaigning for funding research.¹⁴

Modern research and advocacy contributed to improved care for institutionalized Texans with disabilities in the mid-20th century. Implementing these changes, however, relied on the sympathetic and driven leadership of the Board for Texas State Hospitals and Special Schools and its executive director Raymond W. Vowell (1914-1979).¹⁵ A former schoolteacher, Raymond Vowell earned his MS in Education from the University of Texas and became the agency's education director until 1954. For three years, he was the Superintendent for Austin State School but returned to the Board of Texas State Hospitals and Special Schools as its executive director through 1965. During his tenure, he became a nationally recognized authority on intellectual disability. Vowell was appointed to the President's Committee on Mental Retardation in 1966; was a fellow and former vice president of the American Association on Mental Deficiency; attended the White House Conference on Children and Youth in 1960; and represented the Governor of Texas at the 1963 White House Conference on Mental Retardation.

¹¹ In the mid-1930s, male residents transferred to the newly built Travis State School Farm Colony in far East Austin.

¹² Sherilyn Brandenstein, "Austin State School," Handbook of Texas Online, accessed April 23, 2021, <https://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/entries/austin-state-school>.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Judith Crist, "Not Quite Bright! Have You Ever Thought What You Would Do with a Mentally Retarded Child?" *Better Homes and Gardens* 4 (1950): 148-149, 151-152, 154-156.

¹⁵ Raymond Woodrow Vowell was born in Mississippi to Charles H. and Emma E. Vowell on December 13, 1914. A U.S. Marine, former public-school teacher and principal, Vowell earned his M.S. at the University of Texas at Austin in the late 1940s. From 1951 to his premature death in 1979, he worked for the State of Texas. In addition to his positive contributions to disabled Texans' welfare, he also broadened the state's Medicaid and Food Stamp programs to include all 254 counties. "Two Named to Seton Lay Board," *Austin American*, January 16, 1967; Kenneth Towery, "Vowell Appointed Head of Hospital System," *Austin American*, May 13, 1958; William J. Choyke, "Ex-Official Vowell, 64, dies of heart attack," *Austin American-Statesman*, December 3, 1979.

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Created by the 51st Texas State Legislature in 1949, the Texas Board of State Hospitals and Special Schools was established to oversee 25 eleemosynary institutions transferred from the overburdened State Board of Control.¹⁶ At the time, the Austin State School was one of three special schools that cared for adult and juveniles with intellectual, developmental, and/or physical disabilities.¹⁷ Faced with chronic overcrowding, underfunding, and staff shortages, one of Vowell's first priorities was to consolidate children with IDD, as well as those with cerebral palsy, to Austin from Mexia and Abilene state schools. Located mere miles from the University of Texas, Vowell reasoned the Austin State School would benefit from educated specialists' "modern thinking, training methods and procedures."¹⁸

From 1952 until 1962, Austin State School was the primary state institution for the treatment and education of children with IDD. The 2,000+ student body included African American and Hispanic children.¹⁹ Legislators supported the state's system of hospitals and schools with increased budgets building programs, but demand exceeded expansion efforts. To that end, the state funded the construction of a new state school at Denton (opened in 1960), and two years later thousands of children with IDD were distributed among three campuses: Denton, Mexia, and Austin.

Vowell believed educating the public was key to gaining the requisite support state institutions needed for holistic treatment and educational programs. At speaking engagements and in newspapers, he shrewdly argued for increased fiscal and charitable resources to improve institutionalized care; advocated civil rights for disabled Texans; and reminded audiences of this population's inherent humanity and worth:

These people are citizens. However basic, education is owed to them. However costly, the opportunities of life and happiness are owed to them. It really comes down to whether or not we really believe in democracy.²⁰

Unlike his predecessors, he challenged social stigma around disability by opening the institutions' doors. Importantly, a volunteer association formed for Austin State School. This group initiated recreational, educational, and vocational activities for students; managed quarterly events, like a Halloween Carnival; and organized donation drives. Visitors and volunteers played a vital role for the children as a bridge between the institution and the community. These efforts helped fulfill Vowell's improved education and developmental programs heretofore unfunded due to budget shortfalls. Interactions between students and visitors benefitted the students' psychological wellbeing and fostered outsiders' acceptance for individuals with IDD. State school and hospital staff who experienced the changes were "prone to speak in terms of pre-Vowell and post-Vowell—as though his coming was the turning point."²¹ "To no small measure," a former colleague commented, "increased support of the Legislature in matters relating...to mental health and mental retardation is due to [Vowell's] efforts."²²

¹⁶ "Board for Texas State Hospitals and Special Schools—Creation—Powers and Duties," Texas State Legislature, 51st Regular Session, House Bill 1, Chapter 316 in *General and Special Laws of Texas*. The new agency was specifically charged with providing modern treatment for individuals "who suffer from the impediment of mental and physical ailments." However, institutions placed under its oversight included orphanages, the State Dairy and Hog Farm, Confederate homes, and the Alabama Coushatta (*sic*) Reservation.

¹⁷ The board also oversaw institutions for "juvenile delinquents," (emotional and/or behavioral disorders) and for children with visual and hearing impairments.

¹⁸ "Special School Policy Overhaul," *Austin American*, March 11, 1952.

¹⁹ The Board of Texas State Hospitals and Special Schools began admitting African American students in 1951, and at the time, clarified "that there will be no discrimination at...institutions under its control against admission of" Hispanic (mostly Mexican American) children. "State Moves to Meet Obligation," *Austin American*, September 11, 1951; "Austin State School to Accept Negro Children," *Austin American*, September 11, 1951.

²⁰ Bob Sherrill, "The World of the 'Darklings,'" *Austin American*, July 17, 1960.

²¹ Sherrill, "The World of the 'Darklings.'"

²² "Vowell Leaves Hospital Board for Job at UT," *Austin American*, January 12, 1965.

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Vowell, a devout Methodist, also believed spirituality was a core socio-cultural component to improving the quality of life for individuals diagnosed with IDD. The era's theology scholars also stressed the importance of religious education at state schools in nurturing fellowship, individual self-worth, purpose, security, and joy.²³ Before the mid-1950s, no state schools or hospitals employed full-time chaplains nor did the institutions have dedicated worship space. In 1953, however, the Texas Board for State Hospitals and Special Schools opened its doors to college students enrolled in a 12-week clinical pastoral training program.²⁴ It was the first step to providing full-time religious and spiritual ministry at its institutions. The program—administered through seminaries and universities—matriculated parish clergy, theology students, and prospective institutional chaplains in the practical applications of religious principles in counseling individuals with physical, intellectual, and developmental disabilities.²⁵ Because children had physical and/or cognitive speech impairments, musical and graphic arts was seen as a primary method for teaching religious concepts. Fundamental to spiritual training, however, was relational modeling—communicating acceptance to children vis-à-vis religious leaders, parents, teachers, and caretakers:

A child who has known acceptance by others will know what it means later when he is told in words that God loves him and accepts him...“God” may mean nothing to the severely handicapped child—as a word; but as a relationship between a Creator and his creatures, even the severely handicapped child can be aware, for God reaches us through parents and others who care about him, accept him as a person in his own right, and love him...In the religious life no child needs to be handicapped at all.²⁶

By 1967 the State of Texas had placed a chaplain in every state school, but the law prohibited it from funding chapel construction. Instead, institutional friend groups, denominational and interfaith organizations, public funding drives, and benevolent individuals sponsored these building programs. This effort also included state hospitals for tuberculous and mental illness.²⁷

Chapel for the Children is Texas' first and best example of an interfaith chapel designed and built for the spiritual enrichment of children with IDD during a period (1952-1962) when Austin State School was the state's primary institution for these youngsters. It set the standard on which comparable all-faiths chapels at Denton State School and Mexia State School were later based. Denton State School opened in 1960, alleviating some of Austin State School's overcrowding. For several years, this North Texas institution rigorously developed the campus' physical plant while its Volunteer Council raised more than \$100,000 to build Ivey Chapel in 1967. Their charitable appeals for its construction emphasized the holistic benefit of spirituality in treatment echoed in earlier petitions made for Chapel for the Children:

It is difficult for [the students] to get the idea that the place where they play is also the place where they should pray...The main goal of spiritual training is to let the child 'see his dignity

²³ Miriam Auxilium, “Religious Education for the Retarded,” *Religious Education* 58, no. 3: 293.

²⁴ For more information on the history of clinical pastoral training during the mid-20th century ecumenical movement, see: Albert A. Hertzog, ed., *Disability Advocacy Among Religious Organizations: Histories and Reflections*, New York: Routledge, 2011; Max Maguire, “The Association of Clinical Pastoral Education,” *The Journal of Pastoral Care* 42, no. 3 (1988): 203-208.

²⁵ “12-Week Pastoral Training Program Under Way at Austin State Hospital,” *Austin American-Statesman*, June 19, 1953.

²⁶ Ernest R. Stair, “Religion and the Handicapped Child,” *Religious Education* 62, no. 4 (July-August 1967): 354.

²⁷ The first facility for formal interfaith worship was constructed at McKnight State Tuberculosis Hospital (Tom Green County). Funding raising for its construction began in 1956, and the chapel (extant) was completed in 1958. Blair Justice, “Hospital Starts Bedside Religion,” *Fort Worth Star-Telegram*, November 8, 1958; “New Chapel Pioneers Way,” *San Angelo Evening Standard*, November 7, 1958; “Austin State School Chapel Drive Opens,” *Austin American-Statesman*, December 2, 1956.; Jim Barlow, “Ground Broken for New Chapel,” *Fort Worth Star-Telegram*, October 3, 1967.

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under God—to see that He accepts the child and his limitations just as He accepts all of us without limitations.’²⁸

As a primarily adult facility since 1952, the Mexia State School reintegrated more than 2,000 students with IDD in the late 1960s. At the time, interfaith services were held in a rundown army barrack originally used to house German prisoners-of-war.²⁹ The school’s Volunteer Council managed fundraising and helped hire Conroe architect John Corley to design the 9,000 square foot building (which included two federally funded ancillary buildings connected by walkways) that was completed in 1970. A golden shovel used at Chapel for the Children was also used for groundbreaking ceremonies these later interfaith chapels.³⁰

Chapel for the Children

Chapel for the Children, built in 1961, is a product of the positive changes undertaken at Austin State School in the 1950s-1960s that increased students’ developmental opportunities in alignment with the era’s evolved attitudes toward disability care. When Vowell became acting superintendent in 1954, Austin State School was a community of 1,800 children with varying degrees of intellectual, developmental, and physical disabilities. Within a year, the school gained enhanced medical care, educational, and recreational programs despite staff and funding shortages. Local charitable groups—like the newly organized Volunteer Council for the Austin State Hospital—played a critical role in improving the quality of life of campus residents. They arranged recreational events, organized charitable drives; interacted with and entertained students, and donated money, supplies, toys, and gifts to the school. Because the community-institutional partnership proved fruitful, Vowell sought to hire a full-time liaison; someone to present ideas to church and civic groups interested in helping children at the Austin State School.³¹

In 1955, Dr. Luther Earl Hollaway (1919-2004) became Austin State School’s first full-time chaplain.³² A doctoral candidate from Southwestern Baptist Seminary, Hollaway became acquainted with the institution through Texas’ clinical pastoral training program that aimed to established ministry service at state hospitals and special schools. Vowell hired Hollaway to not only develop a robust religious education program, counsel parents and children, but to also take his place as the institution’s community liaison. Since its founding, worship services and religious education at Austin State Hospital were held in classrooms, outdoors, or in the auditorium. Hollaway observed the children had difficulty grasping religious concepts partly because they associated the secular setting with other activities. Between March and December 1956, he arranged field trips to local churches to show them “buildings built just for the worship of God,” and the students even constructed a model chapel.³³ From that experience Hollaway envisioned an Austin State School Chapel for religious training and specially designed to accommodate individuals who needed wheelchairs and for those with cerebral palsy.

²⁸ Jim W. Jones, “Church for Retarded Children Pushed, *Fort Worth Star-Telegram*, December 20, 1964.

²⁹ Thomas E. Turner, “Rundown Church Scars Showplace State School,” *Dallas Morning News*, April 1, 1967.

³⁰ “Chapel Groundbreaking Time Draws Near,” *Mexia Daily News*, November 5, 1970.

³¹ “Fulltime Chaplain Named for Austin State School,” *Austin American*, September 15, 1955.

³² Luther Earl Hollaway (often spelled “Holloway”), born April 28, 1919, in Jackson County, Alabama and one of John W. and Claudia O. Hollaway 11 children. World War II military service interrupted his studies at Jacksonville State Teachers College, but Hollaway returned to university in 1946. After obtaining a B.S. and M.S. from Alabama Polytechnic Institute, he earned a second M.S. from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth. A clinical pastoral training program for special hospitals introduced him to Austin State School in the early 1950s before Vowell hired him permanently in 1955. In 1956, Hollaway received his PhD in Religious Education. Hollaway, his wife Lucille and daughter Olivia left Austin in 1962. He later returned to Alabama where he passed away on November 11, 2004. “Fulltime Chaplain Named for Austin State School,” *Austin American*, September 15, 1955; “Rev. Earl Hollaway Gets Doctor’s Degree,” *The Progressive Age* (Scottsboro, Alabama) August 9, 1956; Ancestry.com. U.S., Obituary Collection, 1930-Current [database on-line]. Lehi, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operations Inc, 2006.

³³ “Austin State School Chapel Drive Opens,” *Austin American-Statesman*, December 2, 1956.

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Vowell's community-institution model for fulfilling the school's specific needs became the vehicle by which Chapel for the Children evolved from idea in 1956 to its dedication in 1962. Although the Board of State Hospitals and Special Schools had been successful in implementing ministry at its institutions, law prohibited the agency from constructing buildings dedicated to worship. As a state school representative, Hollaway approached the Austin Council of Church Women to propose the group adopt a fund-raising campaign for the construction of an interfaith "chapel for the children."³⁴ Not only was the project adopted by local groups—Volunteer Council for the Austin State Hospital, Austin Council of Church Women, Catholic Ladies of Charity, and the Austin Jewish Community Council—the United Church Women of Texas assisted in a statewide fund-raising campaign. "As residents of Texas," they argued, "we own these institutions, and it is our Christian duty to see that these children have a suitable place to worship."³⁵ On December 16, 1956, the Governor declared it "Chapel for the Children Sunday," and religious centers across Texas rang their bells in support.³⁶ Thanks to small contributions donated by hundreds of Texas over four years of intense campaigning, more than \$100,000 was raised to build and furnish the chapel.³⁷

Local architects David C. Graeber and B. McIntosh "Mac" Summers donated their design services to the Building Committee of the Volunteer Council for the Austin State Hospital. Over a two-month period in 1956, Graeber and Summers produced a preliminary model and plans for a modern interfaith chapel large enough to accommodate 500 children and with offices for a chaplain, priest, and rabbi. The first design reflected how the era's architects applied modern architectural principles to religious architecture. It resembled Frank Lloyd Wright's Unitarian Meeting House (1951) with a stained glass "prow" under a cantilevered roof.³⁸ When the Volunteer Council accepted the finalized architectural plans in 1961, however, Graeber alone had re-designed the chapel as a smaller, A-frame building with fully glazed gable ends. The architect sub-contracted with local engineer William R. King, builder Z.D. Yeaton, Austin Art Glass Co., and artists Blossom Ford Flowers Burns and Horton Wayne Smith to design and construct the red brick chapel, stained glass windows, and dove-shaped door handles.

On Sunday, January 21, 1962, Chapel for the Children was dedicated with a brief and simple interfaith service.³⁹ Observers entered through a framed redwood opening with "Mine House Shall Be Called An House of Prayer for All People," (Isaiah 56:7) inscribed in gold letters above. The chapel's plan provided wide aisles to accommodate children who were wheelchair bound, sat three hundred, and held a choir loft for 20. Vowell opened the program and clergymen representing Catholic, Jewish, and Protestant faiths presided over the invocation, scripture readings, and benediction. The Texas State Legislature's formal response to the dedication recognized:

The State of Texas has received a gift from the church women of this State. Its purpose is the highest and its beauty is equal to that purpose...Whereas, Dedication of the chapel took place Sunday January 21, 1962...no moment of which was more rewarding than when a children's chorus filled the Gothic vaulting with their clear young voices.⁴⁰

Today, the chapel maintains a centripetal role at AuSSLC wherein residents/clients, family members, employees, and the public may practice their religious and non-religious spirituality.

³⁴ "Model of Proposed Chapel," *Austin American*, March 11, 1956.

³⁵ "Texas Church Women Asked to Give Full Support to 'Chapel for Children,'" *Austin American*, March 3, 1957.

³⁶ Mrs. Hugh Leiper and Mrs. Herman Jones, Sample Letter to Churches, December 3, 1956, from Paul Kraus, and the Austin SSLC All-Faiths Chapel papers; "Chaplain States Need of Chapel for Children," *The Austin Statesmen*, February 7, 1957, ProQuest Historical Newspapers; Galvin; Haskins.

³⁷ "State Chapel Coming Alive," *Austin American*, January 19, 1961.

³⁸ Pamphlet for Chapel for the Children donations, c.1956, Austin History Center.

³⁹ The Dedication Plaque and State Resolution Certificate is currently in the Office of the Chaplain.

⁴⁰ 57th Texas Legislature, HRS 157 1962

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Architectural Significance

The Postwar A-Frame Church in Austin, Texas

Chapel for the Children is the product of dramatic innovations in religious architectural design that responded to postwar era's interfaith liturgical and ecumenical movements. As Mark Torgerson writes in the preface of *Architecture of Immanence: Architecture for Worship and Ministry Today*:

An unusual confluence of movements occurred in the twentieth century that changed the face of church architecture across denominational lines in the United States and Europe. A fusion of ideas emerging from the ecumenical movement, the liturgical movement, and the modern architecture movement produced a distinctive approach to church design that was particularly focused on emphasizing the presence of God in people communally engaged in worship and ministry.⁴¹

By the mid-twentieth century, ideas flowed freely between Christian denominations. There was a common desire to redirect church design away from historical revival patterns. Collaborative conferences brought church architecture to the forefront of discussion in most Christian denominations and, as a result, new options for the architecture of the church emerged from multiple denominational sources.

The basic premise of the liturgical reform movement across denominations was to return to a simpler worship style emphasizing the presence of God among the congregation and dissolving lingual, iconographical, and architectural barriers between worshippers and clergy. In architectural design, this translated to an open, honest building made possible by new forms of steel construction; to the removal of barriers between chancel and nave; to placing pulpit, altar and communion table in a way that suggested an equalizing of those rituals and uses; and finally, the use of central-plan naves that situated the congregation equally and in close proximity to the communal celebration.⁴²

Religious buildings, as Texas architect Clovis Heimsath aptly wrote, are "a place set apart" from the architectural landscape.⁴³ Written in the postmodern era, Heimsath's article critiques most Modern Movement ecclesial design as tepid translations of faith that sacrificed meaning for function. However, he praised those master architects—Perret, Candela, Le Corbusier—whose intimate understanding of spiritual meaning systems were manifest in unique masterpieces through the restatements of form, materials, space, movement, and light. These master works foretold the reemergence of meaning and historic reference in mid-to-late 20th-century architectural design.

Indeed, there is a vast degree of depth and variety to midcentury ecclesial buildings across the United States. Similarities, however, become clear when viewed in the framework of modern architectural theory's guiding principles: "integrity and articulation of structure, respect for function, and modern technology."⁴⁴ Experiments in form often focused on single geometric shapes, like triangles or cylinders, and were used to reinterpret past forms—like expansive naves, vaults, or traditional ordering of space.⁴⁵ Modern applications of concrete and innovations in laminated wood

⁴¹ Mark Torgerson, *Architecture of Immanence: Architecture for Worship and Ministry Today*. (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans's Publishing, 2007), xi.

⁴² The above context was reproduced with author's approval: Emily Koller, "Gethsemane Lutheran Church (1962)," National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 2011): Section 8, 10-11. Jennifer Komar Olivarez, "Churches and Chapels: A New Kind of Worship Space," in *Eero Saarinen: Shaping the Future* ed. Eeva-Liisa Pelkonen and Donald Albrecht. (Hartford, CT: Yale University Press, 2006), 267.

⁴³ Clovis Heimsath, "Architecture as a Metaphor for Faith," *Texas Architect* (July-August 1983): 32.

⁴⁴ quoting Eero Saarinen in "The Case for the Pitched Roof," *Architectural Forum* (December 1954):134.

⁴⁵ Sarah Allaback, "Modern Religious Architecture," Essays on Modern Architecture, Special Study for the National Historic Landmarks Program (National Park Service, Washington, DC., 32-41): 32.

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(glulam) enabled the execution of such forms.⁴⁶ Architects also filtered natural light through roof-length skylights, clerestories, glass prisms, and other unusual ways that brought drama and warmth to interior worship rooms.⁴⁷

Precedent-setting examples manipulated space, light, and form to produce the intangible spiritual experience that parishioners expected from religious buildings. Examples include: Eero Saarinen's Kresge Chapel at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (1953-58), Frank Lloyd Wright's First Unitarian Church in Wisconsin (1946-51) and Beth Shalom Synagogue in Pennsylvania (1953-1959), Le Corbusier's Chapel of Notre Dame de Haut at Ronchamp (1950-55), Felix Candela's Church of La Virgin Milagrosa (Mexico City, 1955), and SOM's chapel for the United States Air Force Academy (1956-1962).

Diverse examples of modern religious architecture in Texas include Temple Rodef Shalom (MacKie and Kamrath, 1962), Milton Ryan's First Church of Christ Scientist (1952) in Victoria, Temple Mount Sinai (1962) by Sidney Eisenshtat in El Paso, St. Martin's Evangelical Lutheran Church in Austin (1960) by Robert Mather of Jessen Millhouse and Greeven; and the 1955 St. Stephen's Episcopal School Chapel by Fehr and Granger.

Lay building committees, who represented congregations across the U.S., drove religious architecture's shift away from early 20th century Academic Eclectic tradition. Ordinary folks, however, did not easily accept progressive takes, abstractions, or restatements hailed by the architectural field. When asked by a journalist in 1961 for a local's perspective on the changes to the city's religious buildings, one Austinite drawled:

First, the Presbyterians say they would not mind joining up with the Episcopalians, and then the Methodists say, 'all right, it might be a good idea,' and now they're all choosing sides to see who can build the weirdest church house. I just don't understand it.⁴⁸

For Austin architect Eugene Wukash, a prolific designer of Modern Movement ecclesial buildings, public acceptance for modern religious architecture required two simple things: "there must be no question that the building represents a church to society...And the public must be able to find the entrance."⁴⁹

Pragmatism ultimately drove congregations toward the progressive styles. Congregational building committees cited economy of construction—made possible by advancements in building technology—as a major motivating factor. One local clergyman noted, "For the same amount of floor space it would have cost us from 30 to 50 per cent above our new building's cost if we had built an Early American church."⁵⁰ Modernist churches made of brick, wood, and stone evidenced that high-style and cost-efficiency were compatible concepts. Economical considerations of style and materials, furthermore, produced religious buildings that reflected a new era of liturgy that prioritized equalizing rituals and space for a variety of programmatic community uses.

In the diverse array of postwar modern religious architecture, the A-Frame (or tent form) stands out as the most common church type built in the 1950s and 1960s. Its structural clarity, economy of construction, and traditional religious roots lent it mass appeal. *Architectural Forum* praised the triangular silhouette "as a symbol of stability, shelter, and prayer—[that] conveys the idea 'church' so universally and so strongly that elaborate bell towers, steeples, and sculpture can often be omitted."⁵¹ The A-frame prioritized interior height in the Christian tradition of Gothic

⁴⁶ American Plywood Association, "Glulam," <https://www.apawood.org/glulam>, accessed March 17, 2022.

⁴⁷ Allaback 32.

⁴⁸ Qu anonymous Austinite in Marilyn Prud'homme, "Church Design: A New Face," *Austin American*, May 28, 1961.

⁴⁹ Prud'homme, "Church Design: A New Face."

⁵⁰ Qu Pastor Archie K. Stevenson in "Church Design: A New Face."

⁵¹ "The Tent Form—Gothic for Today," *Architectural Forum* (December 1954): 119.

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churches, and from the outside the high-pitched roof gave the structure “a symbolic upward reaching.”⁵² Others likened its form to the position of hands in prayer, inverted ark, tent revivals, Holy Trinity, and *ohel moed* (tent of meeting) in Jewish faith.

A triangular elevation and rectangular plan characterized the era’s A-Frame religious buildings. Steeply pitched roofs dominated over low (or no) side walls with clerestory windows, skylights, and glazing in gable ends to lighten dark interiors. Many of these buildings were framed in wood, steel, or laminated glulam trusses that bore the weight of the roof. World War II-era advancements in adhesive engineering improved the durability of glulam (glued laminated timber). The wildly popular material, made of bonded layers of lumber, could produce trusses molded with bents that eliminated the need for complicated joinery. It made the construction of an A-Frame’s steep roofs easier and more cost-efficient. Additionally, architects and builders use exposed tongue-and-groove glulam ceiling decking in tent form religious buildings. Wood, brick, and rough stone are common natural materials in this church type. Quickly built and inexpensive, architect-designed and prefabricated A-Frames dominated the suburban landscape. By the mid-1960s, however, its ubiquity rendered the style “not merely a symbol of religious architecture, but a cliché.”⁵³

Chapel for the Children was one of dozens of A-Frame churches built in Austin, Texas during the postwar period. Prince of Peace Evangelical Lutheran Church, designed by Wukash and built in 1955-1956 (now demolished), was likely the first of its type in the city. St. Luke United Methodist (1958 by Emil Niggli and Barton D. Riley), Windsor Park Presbyterian (Wukash, 1960) are notable extant local examples. However, the nominated building is the only example of an interfaith A-frame religious building and, importantly, reflects the unique needs of its state school congregants.

Architectural Analysis

The 1961 Chapel for the Children (presently called All Faiths Chapel) is an excellent example of postwar modern A-frame ecclesial design. Although built for interfaith religious and spiritual practices, its distinctive triangular form restates a spire from the Christian tradition. When contemporaries described the nominated building as “modern Gothic,” they acknowledged the informality of its historicist symbolism.⁵⁴ The dramatic steeply pitched roof, which prioritized uninterrupted interior height, sets the chapel apart from nearby Classical Revival institutional buildings and clearly communicates to visitors its spiritual function. Nine-foot-tall side brick walls are subordinate to the roof and (unique in the local architectural context) extend past the chapel’s footprint to enclose a meditation garden and flat-roofed office. The roof overhang, punctuated by steel-capped wood beams, makes the side walls appear shorter than they are. Graeber introduced sunlight to the chapel interior through the massive gable-end, stained glass windows and at the roof. According to architect Jason John Paul Haskins:

The full-length skylight is a common element in A-frame churches. Without this element, the acute corner in the ceiling remains particularly dark. Graeber’s design for the apex, however, is a unique solution. Unlike typical tent-form churches, the glulam beams do not meet at the apex, but turn up into a vertical chimney held apart by beautifully tapered steel beams.

At the nominated building, redwood and brick are exposed throughout the interior—later derided by Heimsath as the same honest materials used “to frame the new family room of the same period”—and continue to the exterior under

⁵² “A-Frame Church: Symbol of an Era,” 88.

⁵³ Stephan Hoffpauir and Michael T. Coppinger, “The Texas Church House: A Genealogy,” *Texas Architect* (July-August 1983):

53. Marilyn Prud’homme, “Church Design: A New Face,” *Austin American*, May 28, 1961.

⁵⁴ Jason John Paul Haskins, AIA, “An Uplifting Mid-Century Chapel for the Children,” *Locus Iste*, September 8, 2013.

<https://www.locusiste.org/blog/2013/09/chapel-for-the-children>.

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broad eaves, nearly uninterrupted by the chapel's glazing.⁵⁵ The meditation garden, a central feature, is essentially an enclosed courtyard, and the chaplaincy office window wall provided staff a pleasing view of its landscape. A similar effect was achieved behind the altar where an inverted triangle cut from the rear wall exposed the semi-enclosed rear garden while the stained-glass gable end above exposes treetops and the sky. Integral brickwork patterning is the only decorative element on the broad exterior masonry side walls, and there is minimal fenestration.

Although Christian tradition dominates the chapel's overarching meaning system in form and internal order, Graeber incorporated universal symbols of eternity and peace. Like Gothic churches, the chapel interior is hierarchal: a low volume narthex opens to a nave of dramatic uninterrupted height. The spatial effect choreographs visitors' movement to produce the experiential transition from the mundane (human) to the divine (godly). A central aisle bisects the pews and leads to the slightly raised chancel with wood railing that Graeber designed. The altar is a large block of Texas shell stone with a natural cleavage front and that symbolizes the "manifestation of life over a million years ago."⁵⁶

Chapel for the Children's cohesive design is the result of a triangular symbolism expressed in architectural elements throughout the building. The motif begins with the chapel's double-door entrance made of angular panels of warm, redwood. Graeber also used paneling to decorate the chapel's rear acoustical wall. Here, diagonally laid redwood panels appear to float at varying heights from the pegboard behind it with layers of triangles and diamonds lining wall's top and bottom. Eight sconces of stacked 3-dimensional triangles, hand-forged by Smith in antiqued green copper, hang above the pews. Directly above, X-shaped braces run along the skylight to support the weight of the ceiling. The motif culminates in the diametric pattern of the gable end, stained glass windows where "the mullions form panes of 60° rhombi that follow the profile of the equilateral triangle roof."⁵⁷

Graeber, Blossom Flowers Ford Burns, and Austin Art Glass Company designed and produced the chapel's magnificent windows. Supported by large steel beams that can survive a 90-mile gale, the windows are of hand-blown and hand-rolled glass. The inverted triangle cut into the wall behind the chapel "gives [*Miracle in the Sky*] the appearance of truly being suspended."⁵⁸ Brothers George, Ed, Bog, and Ted Knippa formed Austin Art Glass Company in 1960 after working for a local window installation business. *Miracle in the Sky*, their first commissioned project, took three months to complete, and they "probably didn't make a nickel profit."⁵⁹ Graeber approached several artists before hiring his friend Burns. Although she had never made a design in glass before, Graeber recalled that her concept for *Miracle in the Sky* sensitively considered the student worshippers and evoked spiritual uplift in a simple, rich, and warm way:

The birds reflect the 'spirit of the children.' In the reds of the stained glass, the birds seem confused, even as these children are here on earth. But, in the blue, the birds are free flowing, flying upward, expressing the freedom the children can achieve, even though they may have to spend their whole life at the Austin State School.⁶⁰

Graeber's design prioritized spiritual intimacy and self-reflection tailored to the needs of the State School's residents. A single, central opening on the west side wall is the primary entrance to the house of interfaith worship. The 5,000 square foot building has three functional spaces—chapel, meditation garden, and chaplaincy offices—that supported the school's programmatic needs. Built before persons with disabilities had legal rights to equal access, the human scale

⁵⁵ Heimsath, 32.

⁵⁶ Lois Hale Galvin, "Public Invited: Chapel for the Children to be Dedicated Sunday," *Austin American* January 19, 1962.

⁵⁷ Haskins.

⁵⁸ Marlee Baker, "Chapel at School: 'Miracle in Sky' Finished," *Austin American* October 19, 1961.

⁵⁹ Marlee Baker, "Chapel at School: 'Miracle in Sky' Finished," *Austin American* October 19, 1961.

⁶⁰ Galvin, "Public Invited."

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of the interior plan prioritized accessibility for its young congregation with wide entrances and aisles to accommodate those with wheelchairs. The roof's unique shape, said to resemble an upside-down horn, provides excellent acoustics. Colorful stained-glass windows of simple abstracted birds, choir loft, and rear acoustical wall reflect the importance of music and graphic arts in teaching religious concepts to persons with physical and cognitive impairments. Additionally, the insular walls of the meditation garden and interior offices provided intimate space in which chaplaincy and caretakers practiced relational modeling with students.

Artist Blossom Flowers Ford Burns (1926-1999)

Blossom Flowers Ford Burns was a trained artist and philosopher with a lifelong dedication to “beauty, dignity, and compassion.”⁶¹ Born in Oklahoma to Cecil and Lomys Ford on September 11, 1926, she moved to Fort Worth as a teenager and remained in Texas for the rest of her life. In 1948—the same year she married Austinite Dr. Harlan M. Burns—she graduated with a B.A. in Fine Arts from the University of Texas at Austin where she studied under famed sculptor Charles Umlauf. Burns was art instructor and lecturer at the Museum of Fine Arts Houston after graduation. The couple and their young children, Price and Lan, returned to Austin c. 1950 where Harlan established a successful dental practice. She resumed her sculptural studies under Umlauf and graduated from UT with master's degrees in Art History and Philosophy in 1958.

Her professional life and community outreach work centered on teaching art, history, and philosophy. During the 1960s, when Graeber commissioned her to produce *Miracle in the Sky*, Burns lectured at area universities and Laguna Gloria, Austin's contemporary art museum. Research into her life found no examples of Burns' public commissions. Rather, her paintings and sculpture became the backdrop of the family's central Austin home, designed by local architect R. Gommel Roessner. After Chapel for the Children, Burns designed another stained-glass window for the 1963 Redeemer Lutheran Church in North Austin. Designed by Fehr and Granger in the shape of a Celtic cross, Redeemer was larger and more elaborate than the Austin State School's interfaith chapel. Burns' work, executed by Austin Art Glass Company and installed above the altar, was based on the Christian theme of creation, redemption, and sanctification.⁶²

Burns and Harlan divorced in 1974 following the tragic death of their son Lan, and in her depression Burns nearly died from a diabetic coma. Burns later described her brush with death as a spiritual experience of heavenly elation, ecstasy, and rapture. In 1999, she fearlessly faced her cancer diagnosis and joyously prepared for death by surrounding herself with her art and friends. Burns passed away at her home at the age of 72, and her memorial service was at Chapel for the Children.⁶³

Artist Horton Wayne Smith (1912-1966)

Horton Wayne Smith was a native Austinite born to Noyes and Irene Smith on January 12, 1912. Although he earned a business administration degree from the University of Texas at Austin in 1934, Smith was keenly interested in creative arts. Smith met his wife Arthelia “Cookie” Cook (1912-1989) when they were prominent actors at the Austin Little Theater, and they married in 1936. After briefly pursuing acting in New York, the couple returned to the capital city where, for several years, Smith ran an appliance store. During World War II he served in the U.S. Army Air Corps.

Smith pursued a career in art when his military service ended in 1946. He re-enrolled at the University of Texas to study sculpture and design. Austin expert craftsman Peter Mansvendel served as Smith's mentor and inspiration,

⁶¹ “Blossom Flowers Burns,” *Austin American-Statesman*, April 25, 1999.

⁶² “Redeemer Church Dedication Today,” *Austin American*, November 17, 1963.

⁶³ “Lessons Before Dying,” *Austin American-Statesman*, February 7, 1999.

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teaching him methods of sculpture in wood and clay. His first professional commission—what Smith called the “job that kept us eating,”—was designing ornamental iron objects for Tips Engine Works.⁶⁴ Working out of a high-windowed studio in the couple’s West Lake Hills home, Smith designed commemorative bronze plaques, architectural ornament, and church sculpture. Known works from this period include bronze plaques at Pennsylvania State University’s Wagner Hall and Texas State Courts Building; cast iron handles and pendants on the nominated building, and a large sculpture of hands in concrete (extant) that adorn the exterior wall of the Jesus Church for the Deaf. Built for students at the Texas School for the Deaf, Smith’s stone hands sculpture formed the word “Jesus,” in sign language.⁶⁵ For one Austin architect, that piece was an integral link between traditional religious architecture and principles of modern design:

Many of our new buildings have facades so slick they leave the layperson completely cold. We need good art to bring them to life, make them real. The artwork of men like Horton Smith helps to instill the proper character in a church or any other modern building. Every parishioner of this little church knows what those hands say. Here you have the true integration of the needs of a people with a building.⁶⁶

In 1964, Graeber’s firm sub-contracted Smith to produce a 5-foot-wide bronze seal that adorned the U.S. Embassy to Mexico, the design for which the architect’s firm was associated. It is the artist’s last known work before Smith’s tragic death in 1966.⁶⁷

Architect David C. Graeber (1928-2010)

Calvert and Hazel Lawrence Graeber welcomed the arrival of their son David Calvert Graeber on September 14, 1928, in Amarillo, Texas. Within a year the Graeber’s relocated to San Antonio where they raised their sons, David and Peter. After graduating from Brackenridge High School, David married Jeeta Lola Friend in 1949. By 1956, the couple had welcomed three children—Larry, Jeeta Lynn, and Terry—and lived in Austin, Travis County where Graeber began his professional career after graduating from the University of Texas. Graeber remarried in 1970 to Jean Calver Donovan, and the couple remained in Austin until shortly before his passing in 2010.

Graeber’s interest in architecture began in the 1940s with his father’s business, Graeber Lumber at 705 Nogalitos in San Antonio. Eventually, the duo established Graeber & Son Builders constructing *Ranchitas*, single-story spec houses for returning GI’s. Graeber enrolled in the University of Texas School of Architecture (UTSOA) at Austin in 1950 and, between semesters, funded his tuition building houses in Texas’ scorching summer heat. Later, Graeber humorously attributed the lure of “a comfortable, air-conditioned office” as the motivating factor behind his professional aspirations.⁶⁸

He trained at UT’s School of Architecture from 1950 to 1955, an era of significant programmatic change. Between 1951 and 1957, Director Harwell Hamilton Harris and a diverse faculty of architects (later nicknamed “Texas Rangers”) restructured the UTSOA’s pedagogic program to embrace historical precedent, urban context and regionalism, and

⁶⁴ Marj Wightman, “High Artistry on a Hilltop,” *Austin American*, April 18, 1960.

⁶⁵ The church is at 1307 Newton Street, Austin, Texas. Currently, the sculpture is visible on Google Streetview: <https://www.google.com/maps/place/1307+Newton+St,+Austin,+TX+78704/@30.2511941,-97.7508778,3a,75y,105.7h,89.91t/data=!3m6!1e1!3m4!1sQ6fxpt8Mc5xwSOGXM62ZWA!2e0!7i16384!8i8192!4m5!3m4!1s0x8644b4fd6d50a409:0x75eb3b089745b072!8m2!3d30.2511262!4d-97.7505191>.

⁶⁶ Marj Wightman, “High Artistry on a Hilltop,” *Austin American*, April 18, 1960.

⁶⁷ “Horton Smith Dies in Fire,” *Austin Statesman*, April 5, 1966.

⁶⁸ Michael McCullar, “Leaving His Mark,” *Austin American-Statesman*, March 24, 1986.

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emphasized space over form. Graduates of the era studied a progressive design and theory-based curriculum under Harris, Bernard Hoesli, Colin Rowe, John Hedjuk, Robert Slutzky, and Lee Hirsche.⁶⁹ In contrast to the era's other models for architectural education (based on Beaux Arts or Bauhaus), UTSOA produced architects trained to design in an era characterized by modern and postmodern pluralism. Graeber, whose career spanned this theoretical transitional period, recognized "the [modern] architectural revolution of the 1930s, which eradicated static, dusty, formal rules."⁷⁰ For him, it "left in full flower the freedom to create new beauty, uses, ideas, techniques, and research," but Graeber also respected tradition and designed buildings contextually relational "to reflect continuity, not conflict."⁷¹

Upon graduating from UT in 1955, Graeber joined the prestigious Austin firm Kuehne, Brooks and Barr as a participating architect. R. Max Brooks FAIA (1906-1982), Graber's mentor, "was shy, principled, [and] a pure architect," with a 36-year-long practice. His leadership and friendship with President Lyndon B. Johnson earned the firm (and Graeber) prestigious commissions that included the LBJ Presidential Library, Department of Labor Building in Washington D.C., and the U.S. Embassy in Mexico.⁷² In 1965, the firm became Brooks, Barr, Graeber & White after Kuehne's retirement (c. 1960) and with J. Roy White and Graeber becoming partners. They were the consulting architects for the University of Texas system during a period of massive expansion and designed the master plan and buildings for Huston-Tillotson University (NRHP 2022). Graeber completed the Chapel for the Children design during his earliest years with the firm and just a year after his UTSOA graduation.

During an age when Austin's successful professionals moved to the city's growing suburbs, Graeber defied convention in 1968 when he bought a two-part 19th century commercial block in downtown Austin for his future home. Chosen "because it was very simple and a good solid example of Texas commercial architecture," the two-story building had housed a variety of establishments including a saloon and brothel. Graeber meticulously preserved the building's historic façade but gutted the interior, so its redesign met his modern standards of living. The project attracted broad attention to downtown revitalization and spurred future preservation efforts along Austin's famous Sixth Street.

After retirement, Graeber moved back to San Antonio to be closer to his family and grandchildren. In 1998, he completed his final design, the Ai Yin House. On February 28, 2010, Graeber passed away. His memorial service was on March 7 at Chapel for the Children. According to his son, the chapel held a special place in the architect's heart, and in 2013 Terry Graeber dedicated a statue *Lazarus* to AuSSLC in honor of the chapel and in memory of his late father.

Statewide Significance

Chapel for the Children is one of three extant interfaith chapels built at state schools for children diagnosed with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Ivey Chapel at Denton State Supported Living Center⁷³ (built 1967) and the All-Faiths Chapel at Mexia State Supported Living Center (built 1970)⁷⁴ are A-frame ecclesial structures of wood and brick larger in size than the nominated building. There are few primary, and no secondary, resources that document these buildings' history, and none discuss superior architectural qualities significant in the context of disability history when compared to the nominated building. Newspaper articles do show their construction reflected the continued importance of pastoral care in IDD treatment paradigms that began with Chapel for the Children. Built in 1961, Chapel for the Children is Texas' first and finest example of an interfaith chapel built during a period (1952-1962) when Austin

⁶⁹ Smilja Milovanovic-Bertram, "In the Spirit of Texas Rangers," March 2008, <https://smartech.gatech.edu/handle/1853/29118>.

⁷⁰ Chris Whitcraft, "Austin: City on the High Rise," *Austin American*, July 10, 1965.

⁷¹ Whitcraft, "Austin: City on the High Rise."

⁷² Quoting Graeber in "Leaving His Mark," 1986;" "Austin Architect R. Max Brooks Dies in Austin at Age 75," *Texas Architect* 32 (no.6): 22.

⁷³ 3980 State School Rd, Denton, TX 76210.

⁷⁴ 540 Chapel Dr, Mexia, TX 76667.

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State School was the state's primary institution for students with intellectual, developmental, and physical disabilities. Its design, while similar in plan to the other extant chapels, prioritized the physical and intellectual limitations of its intended congregation in all its physical and figurative features. Of note are *Miracle in the Sky*, a boldly colored stained-glass composition that fill both gable ends, and ceiling and wall treatments that deliver excellent acoustics. Both reflect the importance of music and graphic arts in teaching religious concepts to students at AuSSLC. Expressive of faith, warm, and emotionally powerful, the chapel demonstrates Graeber's architectural ability and enthusiastic dedication to the project for which he donated his services.

Conclusion

Chapel for the Children is nominated to the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A in the area of Social History: Disability History at the state level of significance and Criterion C: Architecture at the local level of significance. Designed by local architect David C. Graeber, it is an excellent example of a postwar A-Frame religious building. It is the only known example of Graeber's effort to render spirituality in built form. Beginning in 1956, religious organizations and citizens across Texas donated funds to construct an interfaith chapel for children living at the Austin State School, Texas's first public institution for persons with intellectual and developmental disabilities. The chapel represents a state facility's implementation of a nationwide shift in the treatment of and attitude towards individuals with IDD, that regarded religious ministry as integral to care. It meets Criteria Consideration A (Religious Properties) because it derives its primary significance for its historical and architectural associations. The period of significance is 1961-1972.

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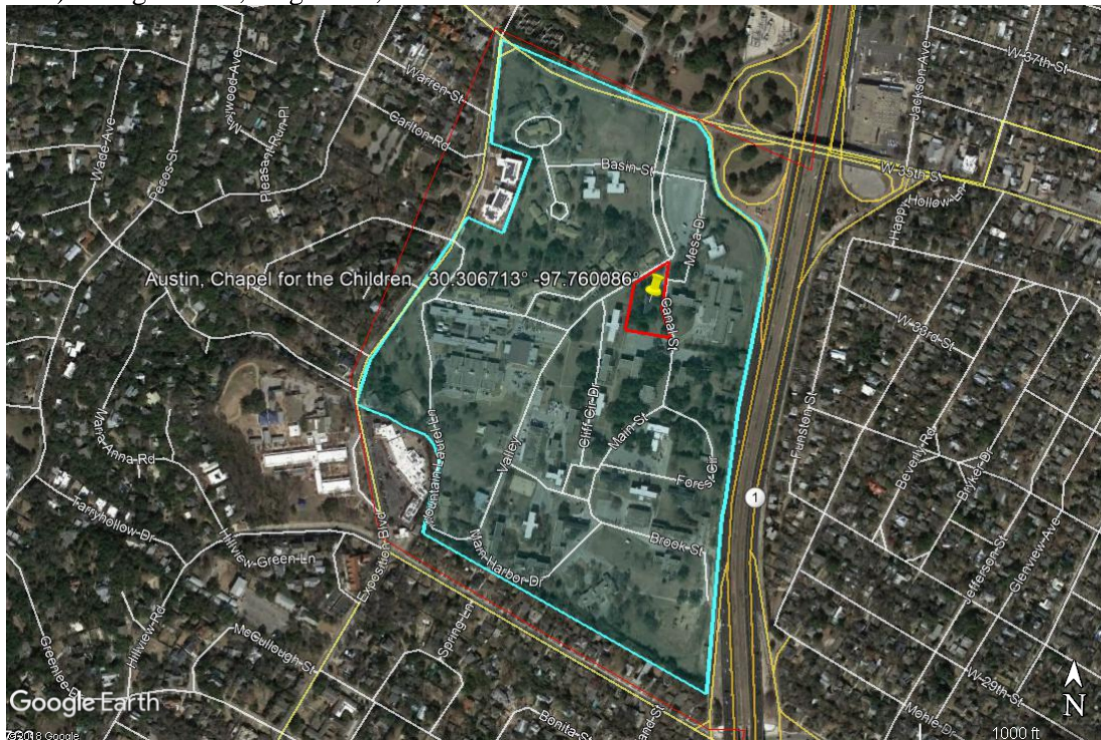
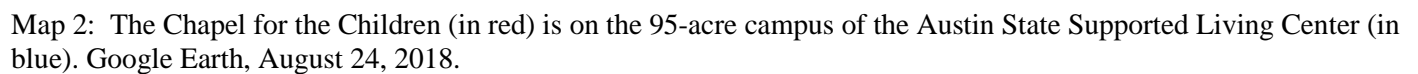
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Map 1: Chapel for the Children (red star) in Austin, Texas. Google Maps, August 24, 2018.

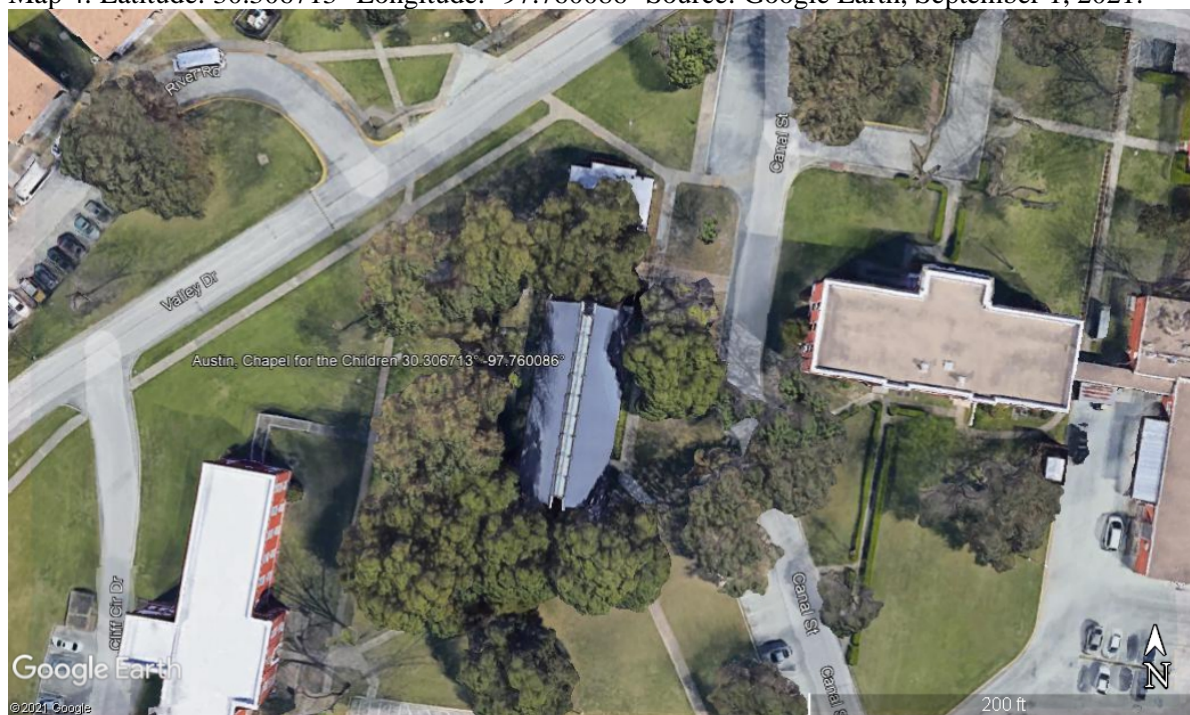


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Map 3: Boundary Map, Google Earth, August 24, 2018.



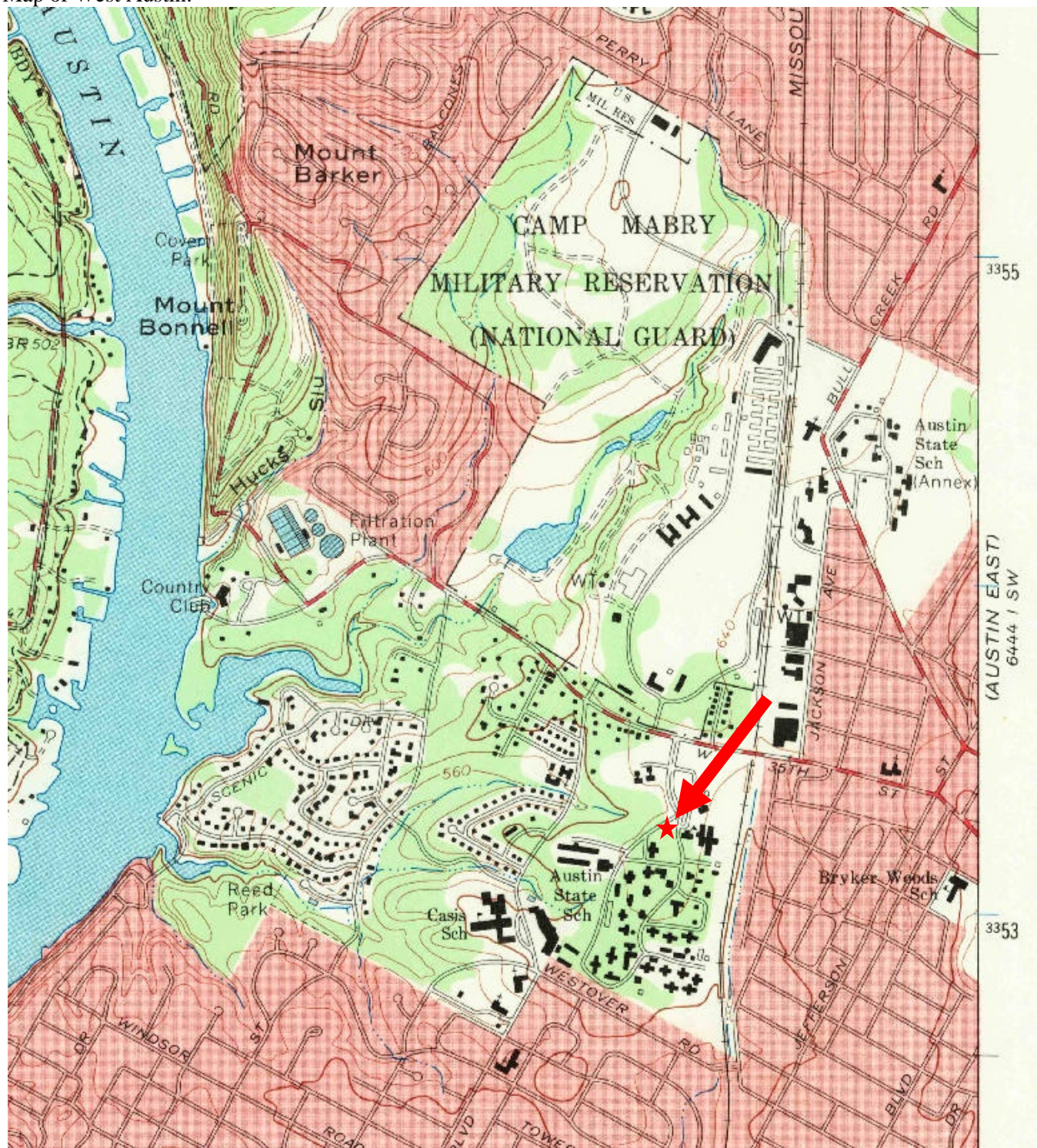
Map 4: Latitude: 30.306713° Longitude: -97.760086° Source: Google Earth, September 1, 2021.



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Figures

Figure 1: Although built in 1961, the chapel (red star) is not shown on the 1966 map. Source: 1966 USGS Topographic Map of West Austin.



[illegible]

The floor plan is divided into four main sections from left to right: CHAPEL, NARTHEX, MEDITATION GARDEN, and OFFICE. The CHAPEL section on the left contains a large central space with a 'CONCRETE COLUMN' and 'WOOD STRUCTURAL DETAILS', a 'WOOD STAIR' with 'WOOD STAIR CASE', and a 'WOOD STAIR CASE' with 'WOOD STAIR CASE'. The NARTHEX section is a narrow corridor connecting the Chapel to the Meditation Garden. The MEDITATION GARDEN section is a large open space with a 'WOOD STAIR CASE' and 'WOOD STAIR CASE'. The OFFICE section on the right contains several smaller rooms, including a 'WOOD STAIR CASE' and 'WOOD STAIR CASE'. The plan includes numerous dimensions, such as '17'-0" x 10'-0"', '10'-0" x 10'-0"', and '10'-0" x 10'-0"', and various annotations like 'WOOD STAIR CASE', 'WOOD STAIR CASE', and 'WOOD STAIR CASE'. The plan is oriented with a north arrow pointing towards the top right.

Figure 4: Architectural and engineering details. Source: “Chapel for the Children,” David C. Graeber, William Robert King Drawings (AR.2016.023). Austin History Center, Austin Public Library, Texas.



[illegible]

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Figure 6: “Will you help us build a real chapel at the Austin State School?” Source: “Model of Proposed Chapel,” *Austin American-Statesman*, March 11, 1956.

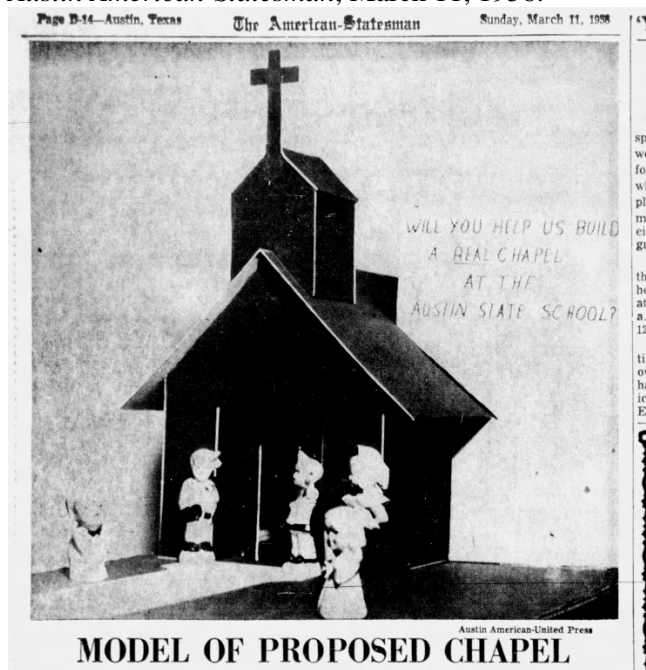


Figure 7: Before the chapel's construction, Rev. Luther Holloway instructed students outdoors or in other AuSSLC buildings. Courtesy of Austin State Supported Living Center.



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Figure 8: Rev. Luther E. Holloway, Austin State School Chaplain at Chapel for the Children, 1961. Source: "Chapel for the Children Nears Completion at State School," *Fort Worth Star-Telegram*, Nov. 12, 1961.

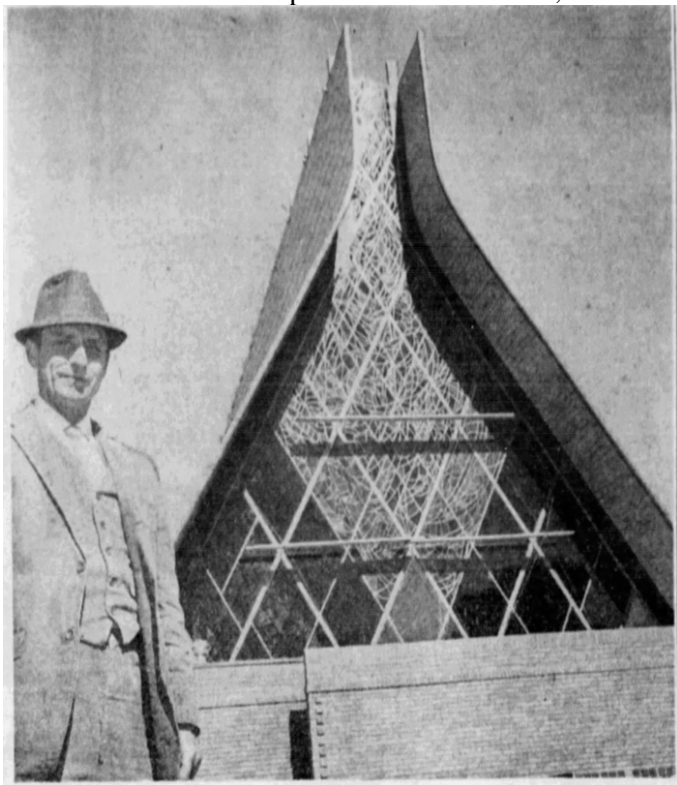


Figure 9: David Graeber (right) initially worked with B. McIntosh Summers on the chapel's design. Source: Lois Hale Galvin, "First a Dream—Next a Chapel," *Austin American-Statesman*, December 16, 1956.



While the chapel was still in the embryonic stages, David Graeber and B. McIntosh Summers, local architects, worked during their off-hours to create the plans

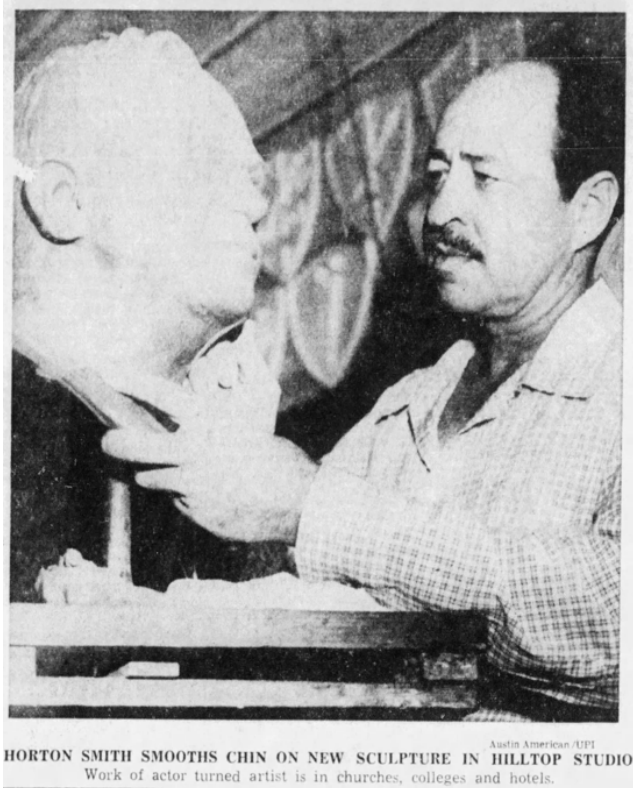
for the chapel. It will be of brick or stone and stained glass, which would be a thing of beauty in the children's lives, designed to fit their special needs.

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Figure 10: Austin artist Blossom Flowers Ford Burns designed *Miracle in the Sky*. Source: "Oklahoma Sees Work of Austinite." *Austin American Statesman*. June 5, 1955.



Figure 11: Horton Wayne Smith executed the chapel's iron wrought dove handles and hanging light fixtures. Source: Marj Wightman, "High Artistry on a Hilltop," *Austin American*, April 18, 1960.



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Figure 12: Austin Art Glass Company's first commission was the installation of *Miracle in the Sky*, which consisted of 6,000 pieces of cut glass. Source: "Bob and Ted Knippa" 10-16-1961 (AS-61-33533) Austin American-Statesman Photographic Morgue (AR.2014.039). Austin History Center, Austin Public Library, Texas.



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Figure 13: Chapel under construction, c. 1961. Courtesy of Austin State Supported Living Center.



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Figure 14: Chapel for the Children, 1962. Source: Dewey G. Mears Photograph Archive (AR.2014.029), Austin History Center, Austin Public Library, Texas.



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Figure 15: Chapel for the Children, 1962. Source: Dewey G. Mears Photograph Archive (AR.2014.029), Austin History Center, Austin Public Library, Texas.



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Figure 16: Chapel for the Children, 1962. Source: Dewey G. Mears Photograph Archive (AR.2014.029), Austin History Center, Austin Public Library, Texas.



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Figure 17: Chapel for the Children, 1962. Source: Dewey G. Mears Photograph Archive (AR.2014.029), Austin History Center, Austin Public Library, Texas.



Chapel for the Children, Austin, Travis, Texas

Photographs

Chapel for the Children

Austin, Travis County

Photographer: Bonnie Tipton Wilson, Rev. Dr. Paul D. Kraus, BCC, and Karen Kincaid Brady

Date: January 7, 2022 (unless noted otherwise)⁷⁵

Photo 1: The modernist Chapel for the Children (right) stands out against the AuSSSLC's Beaux Arts institutional buildings. Camera looking southwest.



⁷⁵ AuSSSLC restricted access to its buildings during the Covid pandemic 2020-2022. Interior photos were taken in 2018 and 2021 and accurately reflect the nominated building's current appearance and integrity.

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Photo 2: Chapel for the Children, east elevation. Camera looking southwest.



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Photo 3: North elevation, camera looking south.



Photo 4: North elevation oblique showing reentrant corners and corbeling, camera looking southeast.



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Photo 5: West (rear) elevation, camera looking east.



Photo 6: South elevation, camera looking north.



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Photo 7: Detail of south elevation gable end window and eaves.



Photo 8: Courtyard entrance with office window wall in background. Camera looking northwest.



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Photo 9: Chapel, north elevation. Camera looking south.



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Photo 10: Hand-wrought copper handles.



Photo 11: Chaplaincy office interior. Looking south at window wall. (Brady, 8/22/2018)



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Photo 12: Chapel interior, looking south. (Kraus, 9/22/21)



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Photo 13: Chapel, looking north through nave threshold. (Brady, 8/22/2018)



Photo 14: Chapel interior view of skylight. (Kraus, 9/22/21)



Chapel for the Children, Austin, Travis, Texas

Photo 15: *Miracle in the Sky*. Camera looking south. (Kraus, 9/22/21)



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