

NPS Form 10-900  
(Rev. 8-86)

OMB No. 1024-0018

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service



**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
REGISTRATION FORM**

**NATIONAL  
REGISTER**

**1. NAME OF PROPERTY**

*Historic name:* First Presbyterian Church

*Other name/site number:* 1552; First Central Presbyterian Church

**2. LOCATION**

*Street & number:* 402 Orange St.

*not for publication:* N/A

*City/town:* Abilene

*State:* TX     *County:* Taylor

*code:* 441     *zip code:* 79601

**3. CLASSIFICATION**

*Ownership of Property:* Private

*Category of Property:* Building

|   |                     |                         |
|---|---------------------|-------------------------|
| <i>Number of Resources within Property:</i> | <i>Contributing</i> | <i>Noncontributing</i>  |
|   | __ 1 __             | _____ <i>buildings</i>  |
|   | _____               | _____ <i>sites</i>      |
|   | _____               | _____ <i>structures</i> |
|   | _____               | _____ <i>objects</i>    |
|   | __ 1 __             | __ 0 __ <i>Total</i>    |

*Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register:* 0

*Name of related multiple property listing:* Historic and Architectural Resources in Abilene, Texas

4. STATE/FEDERAL AGENCY CERTIFICATION

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this x 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 x meets    does not meet the National Register criteria.

   See continuation sheet.

*Curtis J. Jernell*

2-12-92

Signature of certifying official  
State Historic Preservation Officer, Texas Historical Commission

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

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

   See continuation sheet.

Signature of commenting or other official

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

5. NATIONAL PARK SERVICE CERTIFICATION

I, hereby certify that this property is:

entered in the National Register  
   See continuation sheet.

Autoniette Place

3/23/92

   determined eligible for the  
National Register  
   See continuation sheet.

   determined not eligible for the  
National Register

   removed from the National Register

   other (explain):

*[Signature]*

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

**6. FUNCTION OR USE**

*Historic:* Religion

Sub: Religious facility

*Current:* Religion

Sub: Religious facility

**7. DESCRIPTION**

*Architectural Classification:* Late Gothic Revival

|                              |            |
|------------------------------|------------|
| <i>Materials: foundation</i> | concrete   |
| <i>walls</i>                 | brick      |
| <i>roof</i>                  | stone      |
| <i>other</i>                 | cast stone |

*Describe present and historic physical appearance.  See continuation sheet.*

**8. STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE**

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

*Applicable National Register Criteria:* C

*Criteria Considerations (Exceptions) :* A

*Area(s) of Significance:* Architecture

*Period(s) of Significance:* 1924

*Significant Dates:* 1924

*Significant Person(s):* N/A

*Cultural Affiliation:* N/A

*Architect/Builder:* unknown

*State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.  See continuation sheet.*



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Section number 7/8 Page 5

Historic and Architectural Resources  
of Abilene, Taylor County, Texas

Description:

The First Presbyterian Church is a 2-story masonry, late Gothic Revival ecclesiastical building with a U-plan and a primary gable roof over the nave with lower cross gable roofs at the rear of the building. Utilizing load bearing masonry construction, the foundation is concrete while the exterior walls are brick and the roofs are covered with composition shingles. The building is prominently sited on a corner facing east onto Orange Street.

A decorative low relief stone surround enhances a recessed double door entrance, set in a Tudor arch, on the front (east) elevation. The front elevation is dominated by a large pointed arch opening with stained and art glass panels that are set in four lancets with batement lights in the tracery above. Flanking the window are paired buttresses and beyond are single lancet windows. A 3-story embattled tower with belfry rises on the southeast corner. The belfry of the tower is elaborately detailed with coupled lancet openings of stone that low relief stone panels surround.

Smaller pointed arch windows, similar to the one on the front elevation and capped by a similar hood mold, pierce the 5-bay south elevation. Wood 1/1 windows in the basement level are flat arched with a rectilinear hood molding.

An education wing, creating an ell, was added to the north side of the building in 1952. A new sanctuary, creating a U-plan, was completed in 1976, north of the education wing.

Statement of Significance:

The 1924 First Presbyterian Church (now the First Central Presbyterian Church) is nominated under Criterion C in the area of Architecture, as an exceptional example of the Gothic Revival style in Abilene. The building is associated with the historic context "The Railroad and Abilene's Development into a Wholesale and Distribution Center in West Texas, 1881-1939." One of Abilene's oldest churches it is the only historic church that retains its integrity to a high degree.

The First Presbyterian Church congregation, which erected this building, organized on February 27, 1881, two weeks before the city's official founding, and originally met in a tent at North First and Pine streets. They later met in a frame building, also used as a school, at North Third and Cedar streets.

Meanwhile, a local group of Cumberland Presbyterians organized their own church in 1885 and met in the Baptist Church building. The first services were held on October 4, 1885. They acquired the Methodist Church building in 1888 but sold it the following year when they constructed their own sanctuary at South Third and Elm streets.

In 1916 the two congregations merged but the union lasted only four years.

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Section number 8 Page 6

Historic and Architectural Resources  
of Abilene, Taylor County, Texas

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Abilene's boom of the 1920s brought about many changes to the city. Neighborhoods were developed to provide housing for the large influx of new residents to the city. Religious organizations ascertained the boom and undertook to meet community spiritual needs by instigating new building programs. The major religious groups in the city, Methodists, Baptists and Presbyterians, built facilities for their congregations. In 1924 the First Presbyterian Church erected this sanctuary.

The church features design elements typical of late Gothic Revival architecture such as a steeply pitched roof with a primary gable over cross gables, tracery, battlements, and elaborate fenestration components.

The Central Presbyterian Church (formerly the Cumberland Presbyterians) met, presumably, in their 1909 building at North Second and Beech until 1950 when a new sanctuary was built at North Fifth and Grape streets. On October 4, 1970 the two Churches again united to form the First Central Presbyterian Church. In 1976 a new sanctuary erected north of the education wing is at the southeast corner of North Fifth and Orange streets (Abilene Preservation League Files).

Both the 1952 and 1976 additions are compatible to the original building.



**9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES**

*\_x\_ See bibliography for associated historic context.*

*Previous documentation on file (NPS): N/A*

- \_ 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:*

- x State historic preservation office (Texas Historical Commission)*
- \_ Other state agency*
- \_ Federal agency*
- x Local government (City of Abilene Planning Department)*
- \_ University*
- x Other -- Specify Repository: Abilene Preservation League*

**10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA**

*Acreage of Property:* Less than one acre

*UTM References: Zone Easting Northing    Zone Easting Northing*

|          |           |               |                |          |           |           |           |
|----------|-----------|---------------|----------------|----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| <i>A</i> | <i>14</i> | <i>430680</i> | <i>3590740</i> | <i>B</i> | <i>__</i> | <i>__</i> | <i>__</i> |
| <i>C</i> | <i>__</i> | <i>__</i>     | <i>__</i>      | <i>D</i> | <i>__</i> | <i>__</i> | <i>__</i> |

*Verbal Boundary Description:*

Abilene Original Townsite, Block 76, Lots 5 and 6

*Boundary Justification:*

The boundary includes the area that has been historically associated with the property and that retains its historic and architectural integrity.

**11. FORM PREPARED BY** (assisted by Amy E. Dase, Historian, THC staff)

*Name/Title:* David Moore, Historian

*Organization:* Hardy Heck Moore

*Street & Number:* 2112 Rio Grande

*City or town:* Austin

*Date:* June 1989; January 1992

*Telephone:* 512/478-8014

*State:* TX *Zip:* 78705

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**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Section number \_\_\_\_\_ PHOTOS \_\_\_\_\_ Page 9 \_\_\_\_\_

Historic and Architectural Resources  
of Abilene, Taylor County, Texas

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James M. Radford Grocery Company Warehouse  
101 Oak  
Abilene, Taylor County, Texas  
Photographed by David Moore  
Winter 1989  
Negative with Texas Historical Commission  
Northwest oblique, camera facing southeast  
Photograph 33 of 48

Ed S. Hughes Company Warehouse  
135 Oak  
Abilene, Taylor County, Texas  
Photographed by David Moore  
Winter 1989  
Negative with Texas Historical Commission  
West facade, camera facing east  
Photograph 34 of 48

1915 Taylor County Courthouse  
301 Oak  
Abilene, Taylor County, Texas  
Photographed by David Moore  
Winter 1989  
Negative with Texas Historical Commission  
Southwest oblique, camera facing northeast  
Photograph 35 of 48

**First Presbyterian Church**  
402 Orange  
Abilene, Taylor County, Texas  
Photographed by David Moore  
Winter 1989  
Negative with Texas Historical Commission  
Southeast oblique, camera facing northwest  
Photograph 36 of 48



2/19/92

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Abilene MPS  
TEXAS

Date Listed

| COVER    | Substantive Review  | Date Listed |
|----------|---|-------------|
|          |   | 12/18/91    |
| 92000225 | 1915 Taylor County Courthouse   | 3/23/92     |
| 92000193 | Abilene Christian College Administration Building                     | 5/23/92     |
| 91001811 | Abilene Commercial Historic District                                  | 12/18/91    |
| 92000200 | Abilene Fire Station No. 2  | 3/23/92     |
| 92000205 | Abilene Street Railway Company Barn                                   | 3/23/92     |
| 92000191 | Abilene and Northern Railway Company Depot <i>owned by</i>            | 3/23/92     |
| 92000214 | Ackers, William and Mary, House                                       | 3/23/92     |
| 92000234 | Blanton, Thomas L., House <u>Substantive Review</u>                   | 3/23/92     |
| 92000229 | Boyd--Hall House  | 3/23/92     |
| 92000206 | Caldwell Hall <u>Substantive Review</u>                               | 3/23/92     |
| 92000195 | Cash, W. A. V., House <u>Substantive Review</u>                       | 3/23/92     |
| 92000218 | Castle, David S., House <u>Substantive Review</u>                     | 3/23/92     |
| 92000211 | Chambers, Samuel A., House  | 3/23/92     |
| 92000237 | Davis, George R., House   | 3/23/92     |
| 92000199 | Dillingham, O. D. and Ada, House                                      | 3/23/92     |
| 92000222 | Dodd--Harkrider House <u>Substantive Review</u>                       | 3/23/92     |
| 92000204 | Evans, J. W., House   | 3/23/92     |
| 92000228 | Federal Building ( <i>now returned</i> )                              | Ret.        |
| 92000210 | Finley, Eugene L., House  | 3/23/92     |
| 92000226 | First Presbyterian Church <u>Substantive Review</u>                   | 3/23/92     |
| 92000215 | Fritz, David C. and Docia, House                                      | 3/23/92     |
| 92000192 | Fulwiler, William J., House <i>owned by</i> <u>Substantive Review</u> | 3/23/92     |
| 92000232 | Goodloe, Albert S. and Ruth, House                                    | 3/23/92     |
| 92000207 | Green, Roland A. D., House  | 3/23/92     |
| 92000236 | Higginbotham, J. G., House  | 3/23/92     |
| 92000196 | House at 1127 Ash Street  | 3/23/92     |
| 92000224 | Hughes, Ed S., Company Warehouse                                      | 3/23/92     |
| 92000212 | Jones, A. T., House   | 3/23/92     |
| 92000221 | Lanius, C. A., House <u>Substantive Review</u>                        | 3/23/92     |
| 92000194 | Luce Hall <u>Substantive Review</u>                                   | 3/23/92     |
| 92000220 | Magee, J. D., House   | 3/23/92     |
| 92000201 | McDaniel, George W. and Lavina, House                                 | 3/23/92     |
| 92000219 | McDonald Hall   | 3/23/92     |
| 92000209 | McMurry College Administration Building <u>Substantive Review</u>     | 3/23/92     |
| 92000198 | Minter, William A., House   | 3/23/92     |
| 92000216 | Motz, Charles, House  | 3/23/92     |
| 92000230 | Parramore, D. D., House   | 3/23/92     |
| 92000223 | Radford, James M., Grocery Company Warehouse                          | 3/23/92     |
| 92000231 | Reading, Jhules, House  | 3/23/92     |
| 92000235 | Roberts, Nathan J. and Nancy, House                                   | 3/23/92     |
| 92000233 | Sacred Heart Catholic Church  | 3/23/92     |



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# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

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

### SUPPLEMENTARY LISTING RECORD

NRIS Reference Number: 92000226 Date Listed: 3/23/92

First Presbyterian Church  
Property Name

Taylor County                      TX State  
County                                      State

Abilene MPS  
Multiple Name

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

*for* Autawick D. Lee  
Signature of the Keeper

3/25/92  
Date of Action

=====  
**Amended Items in Nomination:**

**Description:** The roof material is amended to read: asphalt.

This information was confirmed with Amy Daze of the Texas State historic preservation office.

**DISTRIBUTION:**  
National Register property file  
Nominating Authority (without nomination attachment)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION

PROPERTY First Presbyterian Church  
NAME:

MULTIPLE Abilene MPS  
NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: TEXAS, Taylor

DATE RECEIVED: 2/19/92 DATE OF PENDING LIST: 3/06/92  
DATE OF 16TH DAY: 3/22/92 DATE OF 45TH DAY: 4/04/92  
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 92000226

NOMINATOR: STATE

REASONS FOR REVIEW:

APPEAL: N DATA PROBLEM: N LANDSCAPE: N LESS THAN 50 YEARS: N  
OTHER: N PDIL: N PERIOD: N PROGRAM UNAPPROVED: N  
REQUEST: N SAMPLE: N SLR DRAFT: Y NATIONAL: N

COMMENT WAIVER: N

ACCEPT  RETURN  REJECT 3/23/92 DATE

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

*The First Presbyterian Church is significant as a prominent example  
of the Holier Revival style in Abilene.*

RECOM./CRITERIA Amst/c  
REVIEWER Antoniella Bee  
DISCIPLINE History  
DATE 3/22/92

DOCUMENTATION see attached comments Y/N see attached SLR Y/N



CLASSIFICATION

\_\_\_count \_\_\_resource type

STATE/FEDERAL AGENCY CERTIFICATION

FUNCTION

\_\_\_historic \_\_\_current

DESCRIPTION

\_\_\_architectural classification  
\_\_\_materials  
\_\_\_descriptive text

SIGNIFICANCE

Period Areas of Significance--Check and justify below

Specific dates Builder/Architect  
Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

- \_\_\_summary paragraph
- \_\_\_completeness
- \_\_\_clarity
- \_\_\_applicable criteria
- \_\_\_justification of areas checked
- \_\_\_relating significance to the resource
- \_\_\_context
- \_\_\_relationship of integrity to significance
- \_\_\_justification of exception
- \_\_\_other

BIBLIOGRAPHY

GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

\_\_\_acreage \_\_\_verbal boundary description  
\_\_\_UTMs \_\_\_boundary justification

ACCOMPANYING DOCUMENTATION/PRESENTATION

\_\_\_sketch maps \_\_\_USGS maps \_\_\_photographs \_\_\_presentation

OTHER COMMENTS

Questions concerning this nomination may be directed to

\_\_\_\_\_  
Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_







FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH  
402 ORANGE  
ABILENE, TAYLOR CO., TEXAS

PHOTOGRAPH 36 of 48

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

Multiple Property Cover Sheet Reference Number: 64500625