

ST. PETER'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH



This report was written on December 7, 1987

1. Name and location of the property: The property known as St. Peter's Episcopal Church is located at 339 North Tryon St. in Charlotte, North Carolina.

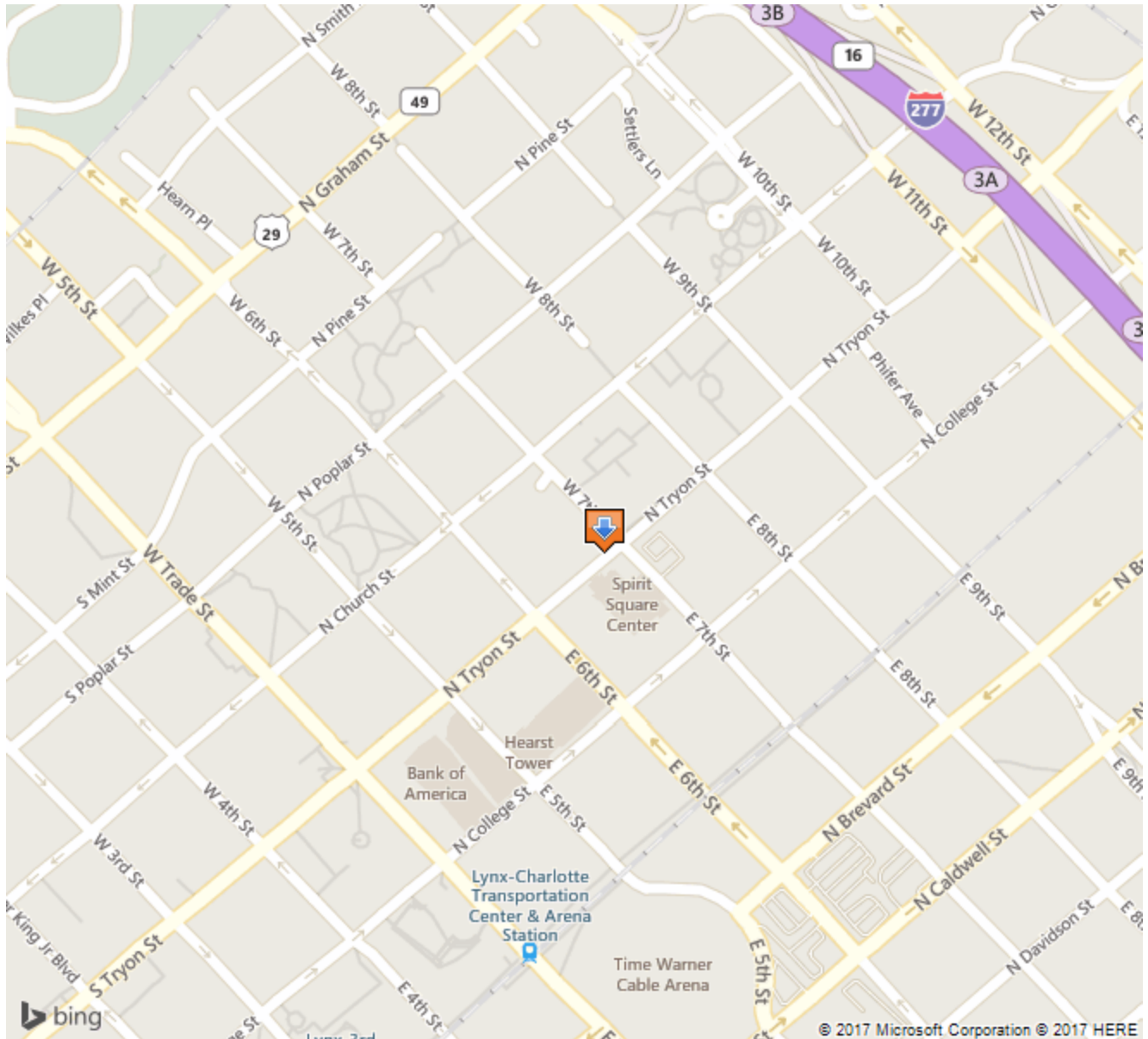
**2. Name, address and telephone number of the present owner of the property.
The owner of the property is:**

St. Peter's Episcopal Church
115 West Seventh St.
Charlotte, N.C. 28202

Telephone: 704/332-7746

3. Representative photographs of the property: This report contains representative photographs of the property.

4. A map depicting the location of the property: This report contains a map which depicts the location of the property.



5. Current Deed Book Reference to the property: The Tax Office of Mecklenburg County does not contain a reference to the current deed on the property. The Tax Parcel Number of the property is: 078-024-14.

6. A brief historical sketch of the property: This report contains a brief historical sketch of the property prepared by Dr. William H. Huffman, Ph.D.

7. A brief architectural description of the property: This report contains a brief architectural description of the property prepared by Thomas W. Hanchett.

8. Documentation of why and in what ways the property meets the criteria for designation set forth in N.C.G.S. 160A-399.4:

a. Special significance in terms of its history, architecture, and/or cultural importance: The Commission judges that the property known as St. Peter's Episcopal Church does possess special significance in terms of Charlotte-Mecklenburg. The Commission bases its judgment on the following considerations: 1) St. Peter's Episcopal Church, organized as a parish in 1844, has played a central role in the religious and humanitarian life of Charlotte and Mecklenburg County, most notably by fostering the creation of other Episcopal parishes, including St. Martin's, St. Mark's, the Church of the Holy Comforter, St. Michael and All Angels, and by founding St. Peter's Hospital (1876), Thompson Orphanage (1886), and Good Samaritan Hospital (1891); 2) the St. Peter's Episcopal Church, completed c. 1914, is one of Charlotte's best surviving examples of Victorian Gothic style architecture; and 3) St. Peter's Episcopal Church, situated on the southwestern quadrant of the intersection of North Tryon St. and Seventh St., is strategically located in terms of the North Tryon St. streetscape.

b. Integrity of design, setting, workmanship, materials, feeling, and/or association: The Commission contends that the architectural description by Mr. Thomas W. Hanchett which is included in this report demonstrates that St. Peter's Episcopal Church meets this criterion.

9. Ad Valorem Tax Appraisal: The Commission is aware that designation would allow the owner to apply for an automatic deferral of 50% of the Ad Valorem taxes on all or any portion of the property which becomes "historic property." St. Peter's Episcopal Church is exempted from the payment of Ad Valorem taxes. The current appraised value of the improvement is \$483,190. The current appraised value of the .436 acres of land is \$380,160. The total appraised value of the property is \$863,350. The property is zoned UMUD.

Date of Preparation of this Report: December 7, 1987

Prepared by: Dr. Dan L. Morrill
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Historical Overview

Dr. William H. Huffman
November, 1987

St. Peter's Episcopal Church in Charlotte has had an impact on the city and county far beyond its charming but modest appearance. Founded as a mission in 1834 and a parish in 1844, it has served as the sponsoring church of nine other parishes, the state's first private orphanage and two hospitals, one of which was among the first for blacks in the country. Four of its rectors have become bishops. The present building, its third, was started in 1892 and finished about 1894. The architect is unknown. On the first Sunday in November, 1824, the first known Episcopal service in Charlotte was held when the visiting Bishop Ravenscroft preached in the Community Church (on the site of the present First Presbyterian Church), but it wasn't until ten years later that St. Peter's was formally established as a mission (Mecklenburg County had been established as a parish, St. Martin's, in 1768, but had not been actively served). From 1834 to 1844, there were just a few communicants who were occasionally visited by missionary or supply pastors. Charlotte was just a small token, practically indistinguishable from others in the Piedmont, when St. Peter's was organized as a parish on December 20, 1844. ¹ The organizational meeting, of fourteen members, was held at the home of William Julius Alexander, where they adopted a resolution:

Resolved: We, the undersigned, being assembled for the purpose of forming ourselves into a congregation of the Protestant Episcopal church in the United States, do certify that we have consented to be governed by the constitution and canons of the church as set forth in general convention, and by the constitution and canons of the church in this diocese, that we have assumed the name of 'St. Peter's Chapel, Charlotte,' and have elected the following persons vestrymen to-wit: Jeremiah William Murphy, William Julius Alexander, William R. Myers and Miles B. Abernathy. In witness thereof, we have subscribed our names this 20th day of December, in the year of our Lord, 1844. (Signed) Jeremiah W. Murphy, William J. Alexander, William R. Myers, E. Catherine Alexander, Joseph W. Murphy, Mary J. Wilson, Mary Hood Alexander, Martha Murphy, Sarah A. Happoldt, Sarah F. Alexander, Sallie R. Caldwell, Catherine Alexander, E. D. Williamson, Olivia Abernathy. ²

The new church set about right away raising funds for a place of worship of its own, and in 1845-46 put up a small brick building twenty by forty feet on a West Trade Street lot across from the Mint. Bishop Ives consecrated the simple structure on June 28, 1846. ³

For the first few years, there was no minister assigned to the fledgling parish, and so services were conducted by lay readers. From 1847 to 1854, St. Peter's was served

infrequently by pastors from Salisbury or Lincolnton, but in the latter year, the first resident minister, Rev. Horatio H. Hewitt arrived to take charge. ⁴ 1854 was also a fateful year for the city of Charlotte, for it was then that the first leg of the North Carolina Railroad opened to Concord, which in the next two years would reach Goldsboro via Greensboro, Salisbury and Raleigh. Two years earlier, the Charlotte and South Carolina Railroad had linked the city with Columbia, and thus by waterway to Charleston, the Carolinas' largest port ⁵. These rail connections insured that Charlotte was destined to become the Piedmont's major city.

Anticipating rapid growth for the city and its implication for St. Peter's, Rev. Hewitt, in his report to the Convention in 1855, made a plea for a larger building, and asked for contributions.

This large and growing town demands the especial sympathies of every liberal hearted Churchmen in the Diocese. Its population, according to the best and latest estimate, has increased to nearly three thousand souls [1850 population: 1,065]; and yet are have not church accommodation in it for more than one hundred fifty souls. From the interest which is manifested in our services, we have every reason to believe that the growth of the Church is greatly retarded for want of a larger building. There are so few members however, that it would be impossible for them to undertake, alone, the responsibility of erecting one equal to the importance of the wants of the parish...⁶

By 1857, Rev. Hewitt had raised about \$3000.00 from the congregation, contributions from other parishes, and the sale of the lot on Trade Street. ⁷

On May 21, 1857, Bishop Atkinson laid the cornerstone for the new building on ninety-nine-foot square site at the corner of Seventh and Tryon Streets, which had been purchased earlier that year. ⁸ Completed about the middle of 1858, the parish's second church was consecrated September 23, 1862, after the debt was finally paid. ⁹ It was designed by one of the parish vestry, Col. William A. Williams, who was influenced by an 1836 tract by an Episcopal rector (later a bishop) at Trinity Church, Pittsburgh. Pa., Rev. Hopkins. It bore the title, "Essay on Gothic Architecture, designed chiefly for the use of the Clergy", and contained lithographs of Trinity and other English Gothic church designs. It is likely that this essay was influential in the design of the present building as well. ¹⁰

During the Civil War, St. Peter's joined with five other parishes to import Bibles and Prayer Books from England to distribute to Confederate soldiers. In mid-1864, the consortium bought five bales of cotton in Wilmington, which were run through the Union blockade and sold in England, where the money was used to have an edition of the *Prayer Book of the Church in the Confederate States* printed, and buy Bibles. These in turn were run back through the blockade to Wilmington for distribution. and

it is believed that "the only Confederate Prayer Books used in the South during the War were those brought in by this combination of North Carolina parishes. " ¹¹

The War also brought many prominent Confederates to Charlotte who worshipped at St. Peter's. Already the temporary refuge for many of the wives and children of military and government officials by 1865, during April 19-26 of that year the city became the temporary capital of the dying Confederacy. Charlotteans struggled to house and feed the beleaguered Jefferson Davis, his Cabinet and staff, one thousand cavalry, numerous lesser officials and straggling soldiers. The Attorney General stayed with William Myers, one of the vestry of St. Peter's. On Friday, April 14th, President Lincoln was shot, and died the next day. Jefferson Davis found out the afternoon of Tuesday, April 18th not long after he arrived in town and was addressing a welcoming crowd at the Bates home on South Tryon Street. The following Sunday, April 23rd, he and a number of other Confederate officials were at the service in St. Peter's. where they heard a sermon by Rev. George Everhart lamenting the tragic event. ¹²

With the end of Reconstruction and the advent of Near South industrialization in the late 1800s, the population and prosperity of the city, and the work of the church all grew at an increasingly rapid pace. In 1872, the rector, Rev. Benjamin S. Bronson, received a gift from the family of Lewis Thompson, a deceased parishioner from Bertie, for his new St. Peter's School. Renamed the Thompson Institute, a hall eras constructed on eighty acres on the southern edge of the city purchased for the project. The institute eventually failed, but in 1886 was turned into an orphanage, the state's second, and the first to be established by a religious organization and completely funded by private donations. It is presently the site, among other things, of St. Mary's Chapel, and forty of the acres were leased to the developers of Charlottetown Mall, the city's first indoor shopping mall (now Midtown Square). ¹³

The parishioners of St. Peter's were also responsible for the establishment of two hospitals in the city, one for whites and one for blacks. The first was [St. Peter's Home and Hospital](#), opened on January 20, 1876 in two rented rooms on 7th Street with two patients, a Baptist and a Methodist. In 1877, Miss Hattie Moore's "Busy Bees," from her Select School for Girls, raised money for the purchase of a lot at Poplar and 6th Street (for \$273.12), and later that year Bishop Atkinson laid the cornerstone for a four -room hospital that was completed the following year. Money was raised for the building by the vestry and the St. Peter's Church Aid Society, of which Jane Smedberg Wilkes (1827-1913), who had cared for Civil War wounded and was an early advocate for a hospital, was secretary-treasurer and chief fund-raiser. Serving alternatively as president, secretary or treasurer of the board of managers for the hospital, she was also instrumental in raising the funds for expansions of St. Peter's in 1898 and 1907. She later became known as the "Godmother of Charlotte Hospitals."

The home and hospital, which provided temporary care for "destitute and sick persons as could not be otherwise provided for," closed and its patients were transferred to Charlotte Memorial in 1940. ¹⁴

In 1881, Rev. Joseph Blount Cheshire (later Bishop of North Carolina) became rector, and was quite interested in extending the religious ministry of the church. The following year, he started a mission to the black population of the city, which became the Church of St. Michael and All Angels at Mint and Hill Streets in Third Ward. Mrs. Wilkes began raising money for a [companion hospital](#), and in 1887 property was bought on Hill Street between Mint and Graham for the building. At the cornerstone laying in 1888, clergy from both the black and white communities attended, and Dr. Matoon, president of Biddle Institute (now Johnson C. Smith University) was one of the speakers. When it opened in 1891, under the board of managers who were all women of the church led by Mrs. Wilkes, a hospital exclusively for blacks was not only unique to Charlotte, but perhaps to the state and one of the few in the nation. Major additions to the hospital were made in 1925 and 1937, and in 1959 it too was taken over by Memorial Hospital. Expanded again in 1961, it operated as Charlotte Community Hospital until 1982, when it was renovated for housing for the elderly. ¹⁵ [It has since been demolished.]

By 1881, Rev. Cheshire started a mission to St. Paul's in Monroe, and in 1884 organized the [St. Mark's congregation](#) in the Long Creek community, both of which he turned over to Rev. E. A. Osborne in 1885. Ten years later, Rev. Osborne was made an Archdeacon and put in charge of all the mission congregations. Also in 1881, Rev. Cheshire started a Sunday school in an unused school building at 10th and Davidson Streets in First Ward, which burned a few years later. It was replaced with what became St. Martin's Chapel in 1887, which is now St. Martin's Church on 7th Street in Elizabeth ¹⁶

During all the activity of Rev. Cheshire's rectorship (1881-1893) that also corresponded with the rapid growth of the city, the need for a new building to replace the 1857 "Little Church" at 7th and Tryon became apparent. In 1888, Harriet "Hattie" Moore, who had run her school in her house behind the church, sold the property to the building committee so there would be more room. ¹⁷ On September 27, 1892, Rev. Cheshire held his last service in the old church, and it was demolished shortly thereafter and construction began on the new. It was partly occupied the following year, and mostly finished about 1894, but work continued on the building for the next ten years. In 1906, the parish house was built, and the following year a new organ installed. The chapel was added in 1912, a gift of Judge William Bynum. ¹⁸

Because of the debt incurred, the church was not formally consecrated until May 29, 1921. By that time, St. Peter's had been instrumental in establishing St. Michael and

All Angels, St. Mark's, St. Martin's, [The Church of the Holy Comforter](#) (Dilworth, 1903), St. Andrew's Chapel (on Central Avenue, built as a memorial to his father and grandfather by Heriot Clarkson), the Chapel of Hope (in the Belmont neighborhood, built as a mission for mill workers at the Highland Park Mills), St. Peter's Hospital, Good Samaritan Hospital, and the Thompson Orphanage.¹⁹

In 1942, Christ Church mission was started on Providence Road to accommodate growth to the south, to which 115 communicants transferred from St. Peter's, which represented ten percent of its communicants, but twenty-two percent of its income.²⁰ After the war, it was clear that the population would continue moving away from the center city, and the vestry considered whether or not to give up the 7th and Tryon site and move out as well. It was decided that St. Peter's would stay where it was for the "foreseeable future," and so extensive renovations were undertaken, which involved putting in new stained glass windows, new altar, and other changes.²¹ Through its Soup Kitchen (started in 1979) and numerous other service projects in the community, St. Peter's remains thoroughly involved in the life of the community, and its presence, both physical and human, continues to play a marital role in the city's ongoing history.²²

On the occasion of the 1921 consecration, Bishop Cheshire wrote the second of his "Historical Addresses" about the history of St. Peter's (the first was given in 1892 at the last service of the 1857 church). In his address, Bishop Cheshire summed up the importance of the parish's history in this way:

The true honor of this parish does not lie in its own handsome church and large, well-equipped parish home and numerous congregation, but in the extension of the life and service of the Church in other churches and congregations and institutions, which have, in whole or in part, sprung from it, and been planted and watered, tended and augmented by the love and service of its people.²³

Notes

¹ Joseph Blount Cheshire, Bishop of the Diocese of North Carolina, *St. Peter's Church: Historical Addresses: From Colonial Days to 1893* (n.p.: 1921); *St. Peter's Episcopal Church, 1834-1984* (n.p., n.d.) [Commemorative Booklet, 1984].

² *Charlotte Observer*, May 30, 1921, p.7.

³ Cheshire, cited above, pp. 9-10.

⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 10-11.

⁵ LeGette Blythe and Charles Brockmann, *Hornet's Nest: The Story of Charlotte and Mecklenburg County*(Charlotte: Public Library of Charlotte and Mecklenburg County, 1961), pp. 260-261.

⁶ Cheshire, p.12.

⁷ Ibid., p.13.

⁸ Ibid.; Deed Book 4, p.549.

⁹ Cheshire. pp. 13-14.

¹⁰ Ibid., pp. 15-18; Bishop Cheshire owned a copy of the essay, and took a great interest in English Gothic church architecture.

¹¹ Ibid., pp. 23-24.

¹² Blythe and Brockmann, p. 404; *Charlotte Observer*, November 3, 1984, p. 14A.

¹³ Cheshire, p.25, 39-40; Blythe and Brockmann, p.329.

¹⁴ Cheshire, pp. 25-26,29-30; William H. Huffman, "[A Historical Sketch of the Good Samaritan Hospital](#)," Charlotte Mecklenburg Historic Properties Commission, 1983.

¹⁵ Cheshire, pp. 30-31; Huffman, cited above.

¹⁶ Cheshire, pp. 31-38; William H. Huffman, "[A Historical Sketch of the St. Mark's Episcopal Church](#)," Charlotte Mecklenburg Historic Properties Commission, 1983.

¹⁷ Deed Book 59, p.598.

¹⁸ St. Peter's Episcopal Church. cited in note 1, pp. 13-16.

¹⁹ Cheshire, pp. 41 & 43.

²⁰ *St. Peter's Episcopal Church*, p.22.

²¹ Ibid., p.23.

²² Ibid., pp. 24-25.

²³ Cheshire, p.22.

Architectural Description

By Thomas W. Hanchett

St. Peter's Episcopal Church occupies a prominent corner site near the heart of downtown Charlotte on North Tryon Street, the city's "Main Street." The handsome Victorian Gothic structure, built of brick and brownstone in 1892- 1893, is one of Charlotte's best surviving examples of the Victorian masons art. ¹ A large "U"-shaped two-and-a-half story Parish House addition wrapped around the rear of the church in 1914, new stained glass windows were installed and interior changes were made 1948-51, and a small southside vestibule was enclosed at about the same time. Otherwise the structure remains much as it was built.

St. Peter's congregation formed in 1834 and first erected a sanctuary on this spot in 1857, as Charlotte was emerging as an important railroad junction in the Carolina Piedmont. By the 1890s, cotton trade and new cotton mills were transforming the railroad town into a major city, and several of Charlotte's established downtown congregations built new churches or greatly enlarged their existing buildings. In fall of 1892 the Saint Peter's congregation under the leadership of Rev. Joseph Blount Cheshire demolished their old Gothic Revival style "Little Church," and by 1893 were holding services in the big new sanctuary.

The 1893 Building

The building's red brick and brown sandstone came from Anson County land owned by Colonel William R. Myers, a wealthy lay leader of the congregation (Charlotte's prestigious Myers Park suburb is named for his son J. S. Myers). There is no record of who the architect or builder of the church were, but they were clearly influenced by Rev. Cheshire. Cheshire's hobby was the study of ecclesiastical architecture, particularly the English Gothic, and he took a close interest in the design of the churches he was associated with, both as a rector and later as Bishop. ²

The 1893 building of St. Peter's Church is an excellent example of the late Victorian approach to Gothic architecture. ³ It has a cruciform (cross-shaped) plan and uses the pointed arches that are Gothic trademarks. The front facade is asymmetrical, however, with a tower containing the main entrance at the north corner, and a one-story semi-circular baptistry and a one-story side vestibule projecting at the south corner. The architect chose his materials to achieve ornamental effect: smooth light-red brick, rough dark-red brick, molded ornamental brick, smooth-carved brown sandstone, rough-faced brown sandstone, plus wooden window and door frames. The variety of natural color and texture produce a decoration that is integral to the building, rather than just added on. This concept was made popular by the great Victorian

architectural theorist John Ruskin, whose 1849 book *The Seven Lamps of Architecture* may well have been in Rev. Cheshire's library.

In massing, St. Peter's is shaped like a cross, with the nave forming the main upright and the transepts forming the arms of the cross. The nave has a high **gabled roof**, flanked by a pair of lower **shed-roofed** side aisles. The transepts are a pair of projecting gabled bays. The nave end transept roofs are covered with **slates**, mostly **rectangular** in shape, but with three courses of octagonal slates and three courses of **fish-scale-shaped** slates. A sandstone-colored cresting runs along the ridgelines and a cross surmounts the intersection of the roof gables. Sandstone parapets at the gable ends rise slightly above the roof line. The front parapet is decorated with stone crockets and a cross. Side eaves are very shallow and are boxed with wooden molding. Between the main gable roof and the aisle roofs is a clerestory band of wood pierced by paired trefoil windows.

The front of the church features a large round window above a row of six tall and narrow rectangular windows. The round window is now a "rose window," with spoke-like stone or concrete mullions dating from the 1948-51 renovations. Originally this window had a single large work of stained glass. Most of the front facade is of rough red brick laid in **common bond**. A course of rough sandstone crosses the gable above the rose window. Around the rose window is an arch of smooth brick with a corbeled and molded drip molding, and a circle of the same smooth brick completely surrounds the window. Below the window the rough brick is laid in a **basket-weave bond**, down to a corbelled and molded sandstone course. There the common bond resumes for several courses, down to the heavy lintel shared by the six rectangular windows. This lintel is rough sandstone, but has a blind trefoil arch above each window. At the top end bottom of the window row, courses of rough sandstone extend across the facade. To the left of the window row, the curved wall of the baptistry extends out from the front facade. The one-story baptistry has a conical roof sheathed in slate, and rectangular windows whose colored glass was salvaged from the 1857 church.

The church tower was originally intended to hold a steeple, according to current rector Huntington Williams, Jr., but the steeple was never built and today the two-story brick and sandstone tower rises to a point somewhat below the main roof of the church. Buttresses, capped in sandstone, at the corners of the tower give it a Gothic flavor. Like the front facade, the tower is built of rough red brick laid in common bond. A narrow course of molded sandstone and a wider course of rough sandstone accent the top of the structure. Another rough sandstone course marks the top of the second-story window, and a wide carved sandstone band provides a visual break between stories. The main entrance to the church, located in the front base of the tower, has a **pointed Gothic arch** accented with smooth red brick and carved sandstone. Above the arch are

two "Stars of David" carved in sandstone, a symbol associated with St. Peter. The entrance itself has heavy double doors of wood, with a carved shield above depicting linked keys and an upside-down cross, more symbols of St. Peter. Sandstone steps lead down from the doorway to the churchyard. Next to the entrance is the sandstone cornerstone with the carved notation "St. Peter's Church Built 1857: Rebuilt 1890 - 1892. Domus Dei Ports Coeli." (It was common practice in the period to talk of a church being "rebuilt" even if the congregation constructed an entirely new building, and it was also common practice to carve the cornerstone before construction was completed, and usually even before it was begun).

The sides of St. Peter's Episcopal Church have wide Gothic-arched aisle windows separated by sandstone-capped buttresses. Walls are of dark rough-faced brick laid in common bond, accented by a sill course and base of rough sandstone. The archway above each window opening is of smooth bright red brick topped by a molded and corbelled brick drip mold. The easy curves of the window openings identify them as being of early English derivation, though the triple windows inside each opening have much more sharply pointed arches. With one exception, the stained glass is from Lamb Studios of Tenafly, New Jersey, and dates from the 1951 renovation. These windows depict the life of Christ, from baptism to ascension. The exception is on the north aisle and is quickly identifiable by its cool subtle coloring, which contrasts noticeably with the bright colors of the Lamb Studios. This window, depicting the resurrection, is by the famed Tiffany Studios.

Near the rear of the side facades are the projecting gabled forms of the transepts. Their facades each echo the front facade, with rough brick and sandstone banding, and a big round window above a row of rectangular windows. As with the front, the round transept windows were recently converted to a rose windows, in this case in 1980. Masonry work is similar to, but not identical with the front, with the most notable change being Gothic arches of smooth molded brick above the rectangular windows. Colored glass in the north transept comes from the 1857 church, and was placed in this location during the 1948-51 renovations. On the south side of the church there is a small vestibule, originally a porch, which was sensitively enclosed in wood about that same time.

The Parish House

The rear facade of the 1893 church is no longer visible, for it is covered by the 1914 Parish House addition. This functional yet handsome brick structure is two stories tall on a high basement. It is "U" shaped in massing, to fit around the chancel of the 1893 church, and it has a main gable-roofed wing with two [hip-roofed](#) arms. The red-brick exterior with sandstone accents has an Italianate flavor which blends well with the

original building, though its form and decoration are much less ornate than the sanctuary.

Roofs are slate. The gable end facing Seventh Street rises above the roofline to form a small sandstone-capped parapet. Elsewhere eaves are left with rafters exposed. The Seventh Street gable features a large stained glass window at the second story level, its Gothic arch accented with sandstone. The wooden tracery and stained glass inside this window was restored in the 1980s. Other windows facing Seventh Street are simple rectangular double-hung sash units with sandstone sills and lintels: first floor windows have stained glass while those on the second floor are plain. The main entrance to the Parish house is on the Seventh Street facade. It is a round arched opening containing stairs up to a heavy wooden door. The rear facade of the Parish house is the simplest. Eight bays wide, it features very plain brickwork, except for buttresses between several bays and segmental arches above the paired first story windows.

The Interiors

The interiors of St. Peter's Episcopal Church have seen changes over the years, but most have been done carefully and have not harmed the original architectural character of the complex.

The main body of the original 1893 church remains almost exactly as shown in early photos, except for the stained glass windows already mentioned. A wood-ribbed barrel vault shelters the central portion of the space. Gothic arches of dark wood march down either side, marking the "aisle" areas. The heavy wooden pews are said to be original.

The renovations of 1948-51 included major alterations to the ends of the nave, however. A new screen of oak was added in the narthex. The sanctuary end was completely redesigned with a large carved stone reredos, mosaic, and a new altar, with the woodwork lining this semi-circular space painted off-white. The old altar, a nineteenth century donation by the Myers family, still survives in another part of the church). The south transept holds choir pews, and the Austin pipe organ there dates from 1940. Next to the north transept was the vestry room until 1914 when the Parish House was added. At that time the vestry room was converted to a small chapel. It features paneled wainscoting in a trefoil motif, and over its door is the carved shield and keys of St. Peter.

In the Parish House, one enters from Seventh Street into a large stairhall. A Gothic-arched double door of wood leads toward the 1893 church, through the chapel. The first floor of the Parish House was renovated as offices and meeting rooms in the

1960s and finished in plywood paneling. The stair to the second floor retains its original square newels and heavy square balustrade. The second floor once held two small classrooms at the top of the stair, and a large meeting hall under a soaring gable roof. The meeting hall was later broken up into classrooms, under a dropped ceiling. These rooms feature molded baseboards, and along their outside walls they have beveled tongue-and-groove wainscoting which may date to the building's original construction. The basement of the Parish House is said to have been only partially excavated originally, but is now a high-ceiling space that holds the church's soup kitchen and dining room for street people.

The Churchyard

The small front yard and side yards around the 1893 building of St. Peter's Episcopal Church form a quiet bit of greenery in the midst of the city. In addition to trees and grass, landscaping includes a cast-iron fence along the street (replacing an early wooden picket fence and a later fence of metal pipe, shown in early photographs), brick and concrete walks, and several cast metal plaques with poetic quotes. Much of this work was accomplished in the 1940s and 1950s under the guidance of Edwin and Elizabeth Clarkson, Charlotte naturalists known for their "Winghaven" bird sanctuary in the city.

The Parish House occupies virtually the full width of the lot, and has no side yards. Behind it is an asphalt parking lot.

Notes

¹ Historical information in this essay is drawn from *St. Peter's Episcopal Church. 1834- 1984. A Fond Remembrance* (Charlotte: St. Peter's Church, 1984).

² Joseph Blount Cheshire, "St. Peter's Episcopal Church: Historical Addresses from Colonial Days to 1893," 1921, in the vertical files at the Carolina Room of the Charlotte Public Library. For another local church whose construction Cheshire directed, see Janette Thomas Greenwood, "St. Marks Episcopal Church: Survey and Research Report" (Charlotte: Charlotte Mecklenburg Historic Properties Commission, 1983).

³ A useful work on English church design, and on church architecture in general, is Richard Foster, *Discovering English Churches* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1982). Incidentally, no direct prototype for St. Peter's could be found in several works on English church design consulted in the course of my research. For more on the

Victorian era in America see Marcus Whiffen, *American Architecture Since 1780: A Guide to the Styles* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: M.I.T. Press, 1969).