

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form**

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Third Baptist Church

other names/site number _____

2. Location

street & number 1546 5th Street, N.W. not for publication N/A

city or town Washington vicinity N/A

state District of Columbia code DC county District of Columbia code 001 zip code 20001

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, 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 X meets does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant nationally statewide X locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of commenting or other official

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

I, hereby certify that this property is:

entered in the National Register See continuation sheet. _____

determined eligible for the National Register See continuation sheet _____

determined not eligible for the National Register See continuation sheet _____

removed from the National Register _____

other (explain): _____

Third Baptist Church
Name of Property

District of Columbia
County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply)

- private
 public-local
 public-State
 public-Federal

Category of Property
(Check only one box)

- building(s)
 district
 site
 structure
 object

Number of Resources within Property
(Do not include previously listed resources)

Contributing	Noncontributing
1	
1	

buildings
sites
structures
objects
Total

Name of related multiple property listing

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed
in the National Register

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

Category: RELIGION

Subcategory: Religious facility

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

Category: RELIGION

Subcategory: Religious facility

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

LATE 19TH AND 20TH CENTURY
REVIVALS: Late Gothic
Revival

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation granite
walls brick
roof slate
other granite, limestone, wood, pressed metal

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

Third Baptist Church

Name of Property

District of Columbia

County and State

8. Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing)

- A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "X" in all the boxes that apply.)

- a owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- b removed from its original location.
- c a birthplace or a grave.
- d a cemetery.
- e a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- f a commemorative property.
- g less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

Ethnic Heritage: Black

Period of Significance

1893

Significant Dates

1893

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

Cultural Affiliation: N/A

Architect/Builder

Calvin T. S. Brent; Isaiah T. Hatton

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.
- previously listed in the National Register (date)
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey

- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository:

Third Baptist Church

Name of Property

District of Columbia

County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property less than one acre

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

Zone	Easting	Northing	Zone	Easting	Northing
1	<u>18</u>	<u>324895</u>	3	—	—
2	—	—	4	—	—

See continuation sheet.

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Marilyn M. Harper

organization: Consultant in History/Historic Preservation

street & number 7400 Lakeview Drive, #408

city or town: Bethesda, MD, 20817

telephone: (301) 365-3541

date: October 8, 2008

Additional Documentation

Maps

A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative black and white photographs of the property.

Additional items (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

Name Third Baptist Church

street & number 1546 5th Street, N.W. telephone (202) 332-8610

city or town Washington state DC zip code 20001

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. 470 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including the 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 Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, 1849 C Street, NW, Washington, DC 20240; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Third Baptist Church
District of Columbia

Section number 8 Page 5

Description

Summary:

The Third Baptist Church is a large basilican-plan two-story, gable-fronted brick church building measuring roughly 50 feet wide by 93 feet deep. It is located at the southwest corner of 5th and Q streets, N.W. in Washington, D.C. and is a dominant presence in its neighborhood of small two-story row houses. Constructed with dark red brick, the church is covered with a gable roof sheathed in what is likely the original slate, some of which appears to retain its polychrome pattern. The church's most prominent feature is a tall projecting corner bell tower, though a smaller hexagonal tower on the opposite corner is also architecturally notable. The east (front) elevation of the building, facing 5th Street, is asymmetrical; the Q Street elevation is divided into eight bays, including the tower. The church is a good example of the Gothic Revival style preferred by its African American architect, Calvin T. S. Brent. Significant features include traceried Gothic stained glass windows and elaborate corbelled cornices. The building is in fair condition. In 1981 a plain two story Modern brick education and office addition was built; it is attached to the south elevation of the church by a small hyphen containing an entrance and elevator lobby.

The church is basilican in plan, with the main entrance located in the gable end. The entrance, on the lower level, leads through a vestibule into what was originally a single large fellowship hall; small enclosed rooms were created at the east end of the space in the 1960s. Staircases at either end of the vestibule lead to the impressive, two-level sanctuary that occupies the upper level of the building. The sanctuary focuses on the pulpit and organ loft centered on the west wall: a horseshoe shaped gallery occupies the other three sides of this space.

Detailed Description:

The asymmetrical front elevation of the church is dominated by the bell tower, located at the corner of 5th and Q. The tower is balanced by a shorter hexagonal tower on the opposite corner, set behind the plane of the broad gable-front entrance bay. A belt course of rusticated granite creates a horizontal division across the facade and marks the location of the sanctuary on the church's upper level. The belt course continues around the corner onto the Q Street elevation of the tower. It also forms the sill for a very large Gothic window with elaborate tracery and a central rose motif. The window is centered below the peak of the asymmetrical front gable roof. There is a small quatrefoil window set high in the gable end. Two 1/1 lancet windows flank the upper level of the Gothic window and others are located elsewhere on this entrance bay. All the windows of the church are filled with their original stained glass, although many are somewhat obscured by protective plastic coverings and some of the smaller panes are broken. The window heads are trimmed with rows of header bricks, the frames are wood, and the sills appear to be limestone. The raking gable ends of the entrance bay rest on deep brick corbelling and are covered with what appear to be a pressed metal bargeboard. The two principal entrances (containing replacement double glass doors) are grouped below the Gothic window and are topped with smaller versions of it. Brass light fixtures, which may be original, are located on either side of the entries. There is a small yard surrounded by the original iron fence and the entrance is reached by three broad granite steps.

The 109 foot tall corner tower projects from the wall plane and is divided into four levels. The lowest level contains two lancet windows on the 5th Street side and a double entrance door topped by a Gothic window on the Q Street side. The second level is marked by the granite belt course. The 5th Street and Q Street sides of this level each contain two more lancet windows and a rose window. Three tall louvered lancet vents fill each of the four sides of the third level; there are small projecting rectangular panels above the vents. The corners of the flat-roofed tower are decorated with small Gothic pinnacles with pressed metal caps. The fourth level consists of a tall four-sided steeple topped by a Gothic cross that rises from the center of the tower. A prominent marble cornerstone is located at the foundation level of the tower: it reads "3rd Baptist Church—Organized June 20, 1858—Erected A.D. 1892."

The church extends eight bays along Q Street: the corner tower, six window bays, and a projecting four story bay window, reading from east to west. The window bays contain large lancet windows at the second floor level; the windows are set within slightly recessed panels topped with corbelling at the roof line. Somewhat smaller 1/1 segmental-headed windows are located at the lower level. The octagonal bay window at the east end of this elevation closely resembles the

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

**Third Baptist Church
District of Columbia**

Section number 8 Page 6

projecting bays found on row houses of the period.

The gable end west (rear) elevation is severely plain and may originally have been blocked by an adjacent building (the shell of a building remains). It is divided into three bays. The two side bays have no fenestration but each contains a tall chimney stack. The central bay is deeply recessed and contains a large rose window; tall narrow 1/1 double hung windows are located in the side walls of the recess.

The south elevation, largely blocked by the addition, is not visible from the street. From the inside it is clear, however, that there is a gap between the addition and the church to allow some light to come through the original windows.

The front of the three story side gable 1981 addition is severely plain. Fenestration is irregular. There are three windows centered on the first floor, two windows on the second, and three on the third. The entrance door and two wide windows are located in the recessed hyphen connecting the addition to the church. The south elevation has no openings except a fire door on the ground level. The east and north elevations are not visible.

On the interior of the church, the entrance doors lead directly into a small vestibule. Double doors lead into the lower level fellowship hall and narrow staircases at either end lead upward to the second floor sanctuary in three flights; there are simple wood posts at the first turnings. The handrails of the stairs and the wainscoting in the vestibule are paneled with beaded board. Both staircases have heavy square decorative newel posts. All the woodwork is stained dark, almost black, contrasting sharply against the white plaster walls. The staircase on the north cuts across the stained glass window above the Q Street entrance door; the second flight of the staircase on this side is supported by another wood post.

The fellowship hall was originally a plain, long rectangular space. Two rows of fluted cast iron columns with simple capitals run the length of this space; each row supports what appears to be a long metal beam. A raised dais at the west end of this space dates from alterations made in 1919; a panel in the top can be raised to access the baptismal pool added at this time. Six segmental-arched 1/1 stained glass windows line the two side walls; a double exterior door is located at the west end of the north wall. All openings are trimmed with original bulls-eye molding and the wainscoting and other woodwork appear to be original as well. The floor is covered with modern asphalt tile. Two small office spaces were partitioned off from the east end of the fellowship hall during the 1960s.

The sanctuary on the upper level is a long rectangle focused on the pulpit, raised seating for church elders, choir loft, and organ on the west wall. The rows of pews are arranged on either side of a central aisle. The walls and the flat coved ceiling are plaster; the wainscoting and trim are dark stained wood. The organ is thought to be original. Its dramatic ranks of pipe are located in a tall arched recess in the west wall. This arrangement probably dates to a 1919 remodeling of the organ and choir loft, which may also have blocked the rose window in the west wall that is visible on the exterior. The sanctuary has galleries on the other three walls. The galleries are supported by cast iron columns with foliate heads and original wood graining. The fronts of the balconies are beaded board trimmed with applied half balusters, all stained dark. The balconies partially block most of the stained glass windows lighting this space, including the large Gothic window on the east end. A deep recessed alcove is located in the center of the east gallery. A recent enclosed space occupies the center of this alcove. It covers the upper part of the Gothic window entirely, though the two flanking lancet windows are still visible. The spaces on either side of the alcove contain the stairs leading down to the main level of the sanctuary and to the lower level. The pews on the main level were replaced at some time, but some original pews appear to survive in the galleries.

Statement of Integrity

The Third Baptist Church is an unusually intact example of a late Victorian church built in Washington by an established African American congregation to the designs of noted African American architect, Calvin Brent. In 1919, the church added a choir loft, organ loft, and baptismal pool, all designed by African American architect Isaiah T. Hatten. In the 1960s the sanctuary was partially carpeted and small office spaces were enclosed in the fellowship hall. Other than these

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

**Third Baptist Church
District of Columbia**

Section number 8 Page 7

minor changes, the original design and materials have been exceptionally well maintained throughout the building.

Statement of Significance

Summary:

The Third Baptist Church is significant to the history of the District of Columbia under National Register Criterion A in the area of *Ethnic Heritage: Black* as the most important surviving work of its architect, Calvin T. S. Brent. Born in Washington before the Civil War, Brent appears to have been the first African American in Washington to seek professional training as an architect, the first to call himself an architect, and the first to support himself solely by his architectural practice.¹ He was not an architectural innovator, but was a pioneer. He did not live to interact with the next generation of academically trained African American architects in the city, but they knew of his achievements and saw his success as a model for their own careers. In addition to being significant for its association with its architect, Third Baptist Church is also significant as one of the oldest and most civically active African American congregations in the city. The church strongly promoted temperance and education in its earliest years, and later supported the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). In 1933, then-Reverend, Reverend Bullock, emphasized the importance of educating young people "as leaders of the race and the Christian church."

Historical Narrative:

When the cornerstone was laid for the church at the corner of 5th and Q streets, N.W., in 1893, its congregation was also celebrating its 35th anniversary. The church began in September 1857 with a public prayer meeting at the home of Albert Bouldin near 4th and L Streets. On June 20, 1858, the little group was approved by a specially called Ecclesiastical Council made up of leading Baptist ministers from the area and was formally organized as the "Third Colored Baptist Church of the City of Washington." Bouldin, who had come to Washington from Virginia and was a licensed preacher, was "pastor, collector, treasurer, chief agent and actor in the enterprise." In 1863 he purchased a lot at the corner of 4th and L Streets and built the first church. In 1867 the congregation split. By this time Bouldin was actively involved in Republican Party politics in the District; political meetings were often held at Third Baptist. The dispute between rival boards of trustees, one supporting Rev. Bouldin and the other opposing him, over ownership of the church building eventually reached the Supreme Court. It was decided against Rev. Bouldin and his supporters in 1872, but was not fully resolved until the 1880s. For a number of years there seem to have been two Third Baptist Churches. Because the original church could not be used while it was tied up in litigation, both congregations purchased lots for new buildings. Rev. Bouldin apparently built his church near the corner of 4th and N Streets, N.W. in the late 1870s.²

The other congregation, led since 1867 by Rev. W. B. Jefferson had already purchased a lot on Franklin Street, N.W., between 5th Street and New Jersey Avenue, in 1869. Rev. Jefferson continued as pastor of Third Baptist Church for the next 18 years. Little information is available about the church during this period, but it seems that the congregation grew and prospered. The church began to look around for a "more comfortable and beautiful building out on a main thoroughfare, a place in the sun."³ A nearby lot, at the corner of 5th and Q Streets, was purchased in 1885, but the pastor's death delayed plans for the new building.

¹ Architectural historian Nancy B. Schwartz, who has conducted extensive research on Brent, has been unable to find another African American claiming to be an architect before Brent, though it is possible subsequent research may discover one. Nancy Schwartz e-mail to Marilyn Harper, October 17, 2007.

² *Bouldin v Alexander*, 82 US 131 (1872), found at <<http://supreme.justia.com/us/82/131/case.html>> (accessed October 4, 2007); "Corner-Stone Ceremonies," *Washington Post*, July 15, 1878; "A Bigamist Minister," *Washington Post*, June 20, 1882; "The Colored Knights Templar," *Washington Post*, October 5, 1882. The *Bouldin v Alexander* Supreme Court case is an important precedent in First Amendment case law dealing with relations between church and state. The quotation about Rev. Bouldin is taken from this document. A second Supreme Court case, *Bouldin v Alexander*, 103 US 330 (1880), dealt with financial settlements growing out of the earlier case. Information about Bouldin's association with the Republican Party comes from Dr. Kate Masur, History Department, Northwestern University, e-mail communication, October 7, 2007.

³ 75th Anniversary of Third Baptist Church and the 15th Anniversary of the Pastor, Rev. George O. Bullock, D.D. (Washington, DC: Third Baptist Church, 1933), 6.

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

**Third Baptist Church
District of Columbia**

Section number 8 Page 8

In 1886 James H. Lee was elected pastor. He came from New Bedford, Massachusetts, but had served as church clerk under Rev. Bouldin during the early years of Third Baptist. By the time of his tenth anniversary, Rev. Lee's congregation had grown to 700 people and the church had already begun its long tradition of support for home and foreign missionary work. Rev Lee was active in the First Washington Baptist Association, made up of pastors in African American churches in the District, Maryland, and Virginia.⁴

Little is known about the members of the congregation during this period, but the story of the Johnson family, who moved to Washington from Massachusetts, may be typical. Lucy Lumpkins Johnson joined Third Baptist Church in 1904; her husband joined in 1914. Mrs. Johnson graduated from Dunbar High School in the District and taught school in Washington for eight years until she retired to concentrate on rearing her eight children. Richard H.T. Johnson worked for the Department of Commerce and also taught history at Storer College, in Harpers Ferry, West Virginia. All of the eight Johnson children graduated from high school. Five worked for the government, one was a lab technician at Freedmen's Hospital, one was a professional painter, and one was an elementary school teacher who also taught at Howard University.⁵

Although it did not include the oldest and wealthiest black families, Third Baptist Church shared many of the concerns of Washington's most elite black churches, such as Metropolitan AME Zion, 15th Street Presbyterian, and 19th Street Baptist. Like them, it was committed to temperance and education and was willing to work with sympathetic white churches. When the Anti-Saloon League held its national convention in Washington in 1895, Rev. Lee and the Rev. Walter H. Brooks, long-time pastor of the 19th Street Baptist Church, addressed a mass meeting held at Third Baptist. The church worked with white churches in a campaign to prevent tuberculosis, the "White Plague." It even participated in a city-wide revival organized by the white, segregationist Southern Baptist Convention in 1915. When the Colored Citizens' School Association held a public meeting to recommend a successor to Mary Church Terrell as a member of the board of school trustees in the District, they met at Rev. Lee's church. Third Baptist also had a literary society, undoubtedly modeled on the famous Bethel Literary and Historical Association, founded at Union Bethel (later Metropolitan) AME Church in 1881. By the end of his 30 year pastorate, Rev. Lee had ordained four ministers, including Adam Clayton Powell, Sr., later long-time pastor of Abyssinian Baptist Church in New York City. Rev. Lee died at Freedmen's Hospital after a short illness in 1916. He was 72.⁶

Rev. Lee presided over the construction of the present church. The building permit was applied for on August 16, 1892. The permit called for a large two story church measuring 50 feet wide by 93 feet deep. It was to be built of pressed brick on a brick and concrete foundation and roofed with slate. The 109 foot corner tower and the octagonal bay window at the west end of the north elevation required a special permit because they projected onto the public right of way. The cost of the building was expected to be \$19,000. This amount was to be financed with a building fund of \$4,000 and a loan of \$15,000. The actual cost for construction, however, came to \$27,000 and was apparently not fully paid off until after World War I. The architect is shown as C. T. S. Brent and the builder as Edward Winslow. Calvin Brent's career is discussed in detail below. Edward Winslow began his career in the 1870s as a carpenter. By the 1890s, he was identifying himself on building permits as "builder," probably indicating that he had become an entrepreneur, hiring others to do the actual work. The stonework was completed by the firm of Watson & Bro. The finished church was dedicated on July 30, 1893, as the congregation was celebrating its 35th anniversary. According to the *Washington Post*, "At all the services the church was crowded to the doors and many were turned away." Dedicatory services continued every night

⁴ "Their Pastor for Ten Years," *Washington Post*, May 11, 1896; "Prosperous Churches: A Baptist Association Which Has Every Reason to Feel Proud," *Washington Post*, September 11, 1890; "Colored Baptists Convene," *Washington Post*, September 12, 1894.

⁵ Georgia Johnson-Herron to Marilyn Harper, letter sent via e-mail, October 9, 2007. Mrs. Johnson-Herron has been a member of the congregation at Third Baptist Church for 83 years.

⁶ "In White Plague War," *Washington Post*, October 27, 1912; "Baptists Open Revival," *Washington Post*, October 15, 1915; "Endorsed for School Trustee," *Washington Post*, September 10, 1898; "Addressed a Literary Society," *Washington Post*, February 15, 1897; "Deaths Reported," *Washington Post*, May 30, 1916.

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

**Third Baptist Church
District of Columbia**

Section number 8 Page 9

for a week.⁷

The Reverend George O. Bullock was elected pastor of Third Baptist Church in 1918 and served until his death in 1959, a total of 41 years. He was born in Henderson, North Carolina, and received his undergraduate and Doctor of Divinity degrees from Shaw University in Raleigh. He was serving as pastor of the First Baptist Church in Winston-Salem when he was called to Washington. When he became pastor, the church had 250 members; by 1933 the number of active members had risen to over 500; numbers on the rolls totaled nearly 2,000. He paid off the outstanding debt of over \$10,000 in 1920 and purchased the lot next door to house the expanding Sunday School in 1924. Under Rev. Bullock's leadership, Third Baptist Church grew to one of the largest and most influential churches in the city, according to later reports. Rev. Bullock and his family became one of the "black first families of Washington." They purchased a house in LeDroit Park, the prestigious black neighborhood just a few blocks away from the church. Rev. Bullock's wife, Rebecca, met her husband at Shaw University and was active in the work of the church. In 1950 she was named "Mother of the Year" by the American Mothers Committee, the first African American to be so honored. Like other members of the black elite, Rev. Bullock placed a high value on education. All of his eight children were well educated and held professional jobs as adults. His four sons were lawyers, psychiatrists, and physicians and professors at Howard Medical School. Two of his four daughters taught in the DC school system, another was a social worker in Philadelphia. The fourth, Benetta, served as principal of Cardozo High School and later as director of the Women's Job Corps, but is probably best remembered in Washington as the first wife of the city's first elected mayor, Walter Washington.⁸

Rev. Bullock was active in the District Baptist Convention and was strongly committed to missionary work. He held a variety of senior positions in the Lott Carey Foreign Missionary Convention; in the late 1930s and 40s he served as national chairman. The Lott Carey Convention separated itself from the National Baptist Convention in 1897 to focus entirely on missionary activity. For many years Third Baptist Church sponsored its own individual missionary working in Africa and proudly led the nation in its contributions to Lott Carey's missionary work.⁹

Rev. Bullock continued his predecessor's commitment to temperance and education, but added a new element of political activism. He strongly supported the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) in its early years. In 1922, Third Baptist was one of seven black churches in the District that played host to speakers seeking new members for the local chapter of the NAACP, one of the largest in the nation. In the 1930s, Rev. Bullock supported groups seeking voting rights for the citizens of the District of Columbia. When the Negro National Educational Congress organized a mass meeting in 1923, it took place at the church. A highly educated man himself, he emphasized the importance of educating young people "as leaders of the race and the Christian church."¹⁰

The relationship between Third Baptist Church and the white community continued to be relatively amicable, in spite of its support for the NAACP. In 1930 Rev. Bullock served on a special committee of the interracial Community Chest charitable fund raising organization to solicit a hundred contributions of \$100 or more from wealthy African Americans in the District. Third Baptist also continued to participate with white churches in evangelism campaigns. Third Baptist was one of the black churches that received regular coverage in the columns of the *Washington Post*, which frequently reported the topics of Rev. Bullock's Sunday sermons, his departure for and return from vacation, and his travels to attend

⁷ "Ushers Give an Excursion," *Washington Post*, August 19, 1905; Application for Permit to Build, No. 380, August 16, 1892 (microfilm, Washingtoniana Collection, Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial Library); "Their Pastor for Ten Years"; Melissa McLoud, "Craftsmen and Entrepreneurs: Building is Late Nineteenth-Century Washington, D.C.," PhD. diss, (Washington, DC: The George Washington University, 1988), 293; "Colored Baptists Dedication," *Washington Post*, July 31, 1893.

⁸ 75th Anniversary of Third Baptist Church; "Legal Record," *Washington Post*, May 25, 1924; LaBarbara Bowman, "Mayor's Neighborhood in LeDroit Park Has Seen Better Days, Now Improving," *Washington Post*, September 8, 1978; Milton Coleman, "Mayor Determined to Retain Office He Considers His Own," *Washington Post*, September 8, 1978; "Rebecca Bullock, 82, Dies Here," *Washington Post*, December 8, 1968; V. R. Montanari, "Shun Appeasement, Mothers Told," *Washington Post*, May 15, 1950.

⁹ "Will Plan for Convention," *Washington Post*, October 20, 1923.

¹⁰ "Drive for 25,000 Members in City," *Washington Post*, April 23, 1922; "Finch Predicts District Suffrage At an Early Date," *Washington Post*, January 9, 1939; *Third Baptist Church, 5th and Q Streets, 1858-1968* (Washington, DC: Third Baptist Church, 1968), 4.

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

**Third Baptist Church
District of Columbia**

Section number 8 Page 10

the annual meetings of the Lott Carey Convention.¹¹

Rev. Bullock appears to have had a special relationship with Howard University, where he was often asked to give the blessings at baccalaureate and other ceremonies. This relationship apparently was reflected in his congregation. Many people associated with Howard or with Miner Teachers College, both located only a short distance to the north of the church, were attracted to the church. The congregation at Third Baptist appears to have been made up largely of educated middle class men and women, often teachers in the public school system or employees of the federal government. When the church became "the mecca of great numbers of those migrating from the South," this influx did not cause the conflict that it did in other established black churches. Most of the new members were much like the old ones—educated middle class people, often coming to work for the federal government during the exciting days of the New Deal. During Rev. Bullock's pastorate the church attracted its members from all quadrants of the city and the suburbs; it was not a neighborhood church. Georgia Johnson-Herron remembers that she and her family took a big green church bus from their home in Kenilworth, D.C., to church. The bus also picked up families from the Deanwood and Kingman Park neighborhoods in Northeast Washington, and children from nearby LeDroit Park.¹²

The only substantial alterations to the church took place during this period. In 1919 the congregation hired Isaiah T. Hatton to add a new choir loft, organ loft, and baptismal pool. Hatton was a major African American architect in Washington during the early 20th century. His most important designs include the Industrial Savings Bank, the Whitelaw Hotel, and the Southern Aid Society, all in the historic black commercial area centered around U Street, N.W. Little information is available on his life. He is known to have been born in 1888 in Washington; he died in 1921 at the age of 33.¹³

Rev. Bullock himself died in May 1959, not long after Third Baptist Church marked its 100th anniversary and he celebrated 40 years as pastor. He was succeeded by Rev. Henry Miles. Rev. Miles was a native of Louisiana and a graduate of Morehouse College and the School of Religion at Howard University. Appointed assistant pastor at Third Baptist in 1958, Rev. Miles received a temporary appointment as pastor after Rev. Bullock's death and was elected permanent pastor the following year. It was Miles who carried the church through the turbulent period of the 1960s, when Third Baptist played an important role in distributing aid to people in the neighborhood uprooted by the devastating riots of 1968.¹⁴

Areas of Significance

Ethnic Heritage--Black:

Calvin Thomas Stowe Brent was born in 1854 in Washington into a prominent free black family.¹⁵ His father, John Brent,

¹¹ "\$1,786,737 Set as Chest Goal for Campaign," *Washington Post*, January 16, 1930; "Dr. Kernahan Plans Many Sunday Talks," *Washington Post*, March 29, 1930; "Third Baptist Services," *Washington Post*, August 28, 1926; "Christmas Sermon at Third Baptist," *Washington Post*, December 25, 1926; "Colored Pastors Return to Pulpits," *Washington Post*, September 7, 1929.

¹² "Commencement Week Opens at Howard U." *Washington Post*, June 6, 1924; "Colored Graduates Awarded Diplomas," *Washington Post*, June 6, 1929; 75th Anniversary of Third Baptist Church, 10; Georgia Johnson-Herron and Carolivia Herron, personal interview, Marilyn Harper, interviewer, September 27, 2007; Georgia Johnson-Herron e-mail to author, October 16, 2007.

¹³ Application to Build to Build, #2732, March 26, 1919 (microfilm Washingtoniana Collection, Martin Luther, King, Jr., Library); "Isaiah Truman Hatton (1888-1921)," in Betty Bird and Associates. "Interim Report: Thematic Study of African American Architects and Builders in Washington, DC," Phase II (Washington, DC: prepared for the United Planning Organization, 1994). The building permit shows Edward Winslow as builder, possibly the same man who built the original church 27 years earlier.

¹⁴ "3 Ministers to Preach First Sermons Here," *Washington Post*, December 6, 1958; William R. MacKaye, "Tons of Food Given Needy by Churches," *Washington Post*, April 7, 1968.

¹⁵ The information on Brent relies heavily on research conducted by architectural historian Nancy B. Schwartz and is summarized from her draft chapter "Calvin Thomas Stowe Brent," prepared for a projected study, "—And the Walls Came Tumbling Down: The Early African American Architects in the District of Columbia and Tidewater Virginia," written by Betty Bird, Robie Lange/Bill Lebovich, Glen Leiner, Susan Pearl, Thomas Tyler Potterfield, Jr., Nancy Schwartz, and Dreck Spurlock Wilson (January 1995). A copy of this draft chapter was kindly provided by Nancy Schwartz.

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

**Third Baptist Church
District of Columbia**

Section number 8 Page 11

was a skilled slave, hired out by his owner and allowed to keep part of his earnings. He soon managed to accumulate enough money to purchase freedom for himself and his wife Elizabeth. By the early 1840s John Brent was apparently working for the federal government. He used the money he earned to buy land at 18th and L Streets, N.W., in the still relatively undeveloped West End. In 1842 he signed a contract to build the family house where his eight children were born. The John Wesley African Methodist Episcopal Zion (AME Zion) Church, one of the oldest AME Zion churches in the city, was organized at the Brent home in 1847, and John Brent served as pastor for the first few years. The family was also famous for its association with the attempted escape of more than 70 slaves on the schooner *Pearl* in 1848. When the ship was captured, the escapees, including eight of Elizabeth Edmonson Brent's siblings, were sold to slaveholders in the South. The incident was extensively publicized in the North and enough money was raised to purchase the freedom of some of Elizabeth Brent's brothers and sisters.

The Brent family valued education and six-year-old Calvin already is shown as a student in the census of 1860. Brent's reasons for choosing architecture as a profession are unclear, but Reconstruction was a period when hope was high among African Americans that they could succeed in areas closed to them before the Civil War. Architecture was beginning to be seen as a gentleman's occupation and building and real estate speculation were booming in the District of Columbia for blacks and whites. Brent received his architectural training by apprenticeship, as did most architects of the period, both black and white. In 1873 he reportedly apprenticed himself to Thomas M. Plowman, who had recently dissolved a very productive partnership with N. G. Starkweather. Brent seems to have been the first African American in the city to enter into such an apprenticeship.

By 1875 he was identifying himself in city directories as "architect." This was probably not the most propitious moment to try to establish an architectural practice. The country was just emerging from the severe nationwide depression of 1873 and building was slow in Washington. The first project with which Brent's name is associated is St. Luke's Episcopal Church, built in 1876, when Brent was only 22 years old. The church history notes that "plans for the church were drawn by Mr. Calvin T.S. Brent." This very handsome building resembles nothing else that Brent designed, however. It does follow closely the principles laid out by the Ecclesiological movement in Britain. The center of this movement was at Cambridge University, where Alexander Crummell, the church's black pastor, had been educated. It seems likely that Brent's contribution was limited to turning suggestions or sketches provided by Dr. Crummell into buildable plans.

Dr. Harrison Ethridge, Professor of History at Catonsville Community College, searched for Calvin Brent's name in all D.C. building permits issued between 1878 and 1900. Brent is listed as architect on over 100 permits, beginning in 1878. The bulk of these date from the 1880s and early 1890s, when building in the District was booming. Most of his commissions in the mid 1880s were for churches; most of his residential work dates from 1889 to 1893. There were only a few commissions after 1893, when another severe nationwide depression sharply curtailed building in the city. Brent died suddenly in 1899 at the early age of 45.¹⁶

The majority of Brent's projects were residential. Many of these were for middle class blacks building houses for their own use. Others represented speculative housing built for the wealthiest and most socially prominent African Americans in Washington as a way to protect themselves against the increasing discrimination of post-Reconstruction Washington. He also designed some speculative building on lots that he owned himself. On some of these projects he worked as both architect and builder. Many of these buildings were simple two story row houses with projecting bay windows, typical of those built during this period and still lining the street of Washington. Others were larger and somewhat more elaborate, though none of them differed in any essential way from houses constructed by builders elsewhere in the District.

Brent's church commissions gave him a chance to work with substantial budgets and to demonstrate his ability as an architect on large highly visible projects. During the course of his career he worked for 12 different congregations, all African American. Many of the projects involved alterations or the building of parsonages or ancillary structures; only in

¹⁶ Building permits were not required in the District of Columbia until 1877 and were sometimes sketchy for a few years thereafter, so it is possible that Brent designed other projects that do not appear in the permits.

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Third Baptist Church
District of Columbia

Section number 8 Page 12

four cases (excluding St. Luke's) was he able to design entirely new church buildings. The first church definitely known to have been designed by Brent was the Fourth Baptist Church, later known as Metropolitan Baptist Church, at 1225 R Street, N.W.. Completed in 1884, this very large church, measuring 65 by 110 feet, set the pattern for his early churches. It was built of red brick in the Gothic Revival style, with a symmetrical façade—a central gabled entrance bay flanked by two parapeted towers of unequal height. Details included large, symmetrically placed stained glass lancet windows and high relief corbel tables. The interior included a fellowship hall at the lower level. The upper level sanctuary was open to the rafters and featured soaring decorative trusses rising from the galleries. Mt. Jezreel Baptist Church at 5th and E Street, SE, begun in 1883 but not completed until 1888, was a smaller version of essentially the same design.

Brent's next church was begun in 1890. Miles Chapel (later Miles Memorial Colored Methodist Episcopal [CME] Church) at 1110 3rd Street, N.W., marked a departure from the style he had used in his earlier churches. The lower level of this brick church was faced in rusticated stone. A single projecting central tower with a tall hexagonal steeple dominated the entrance façade. The main entrance was in the tower and topped with a lancet stained glass window. A triple arched window was centered above the entrance and the arches were echoed in the louvered vent in the upper level. Smaller lancet windows were located on either side of the tower.

Third Baptist carried this experimentation still further. Here he abandoned symmetry altogether. The projecting square tower was moved to the corner. The octagonal tower on the opposite end of the entrance façade was set behind the wall plan; it balanced, but did not match the corner tower. His windows were larger and more elaborate. He used more Gothic details and combined them in a freer and more idiosyncratic way. The flat coved ceiling of the sanctuary may also have been an experiment. Third Baptist was his last church. Brent was only 45 when he died.

The Third Baptist commission also reflects a change in clientele. In 1884 *The Bee*, one of Washington's black newspapers, urged its readers to use the services of "Calvin T. S. Brent, the great colored architect of our city. . . . Mr. Brent should be well patronized by the public, for his design is not only tasty and beautiful, but his charges are exceedingly low."¹⁷ Although Calvin Chase, editor of *The Bee*, and Andrew Hiley of the Union League, formed in 1892 to encourage black businesses, tried to get African Americans to hire members of their own race, Metropolitan AME Zion, 15th Street Presbyterian, 19th Street Baptist, and the other socially elite black churches established in the 1830s and 40s by free blacks preferred to have their new churches designed by white architects. Brent's own church, John Wesley AME Zion on Connecticut Avenue, organized in 1849, and Union Wesley AME Zion nearby at 18th and L Streets, established in 1848, commissioned Brent only to enlarge and add new brick façades to their existing churches. His first clients, the congregations at Fourth (Metropolitan) Baptist Church, Mt. Jezreel Baptist Church, and Miles Chapel, had all been organized by freed slaves after the Civil War. Third Baptist represents the first and only time Brent was commissioned by a church organized before the Civil War to build an entirely new church.

Brent's designs were not particularly innovative and he did not take advantage of the technological advances of his time. Nancy Schwartz's article on Brent in Dreck Spurlock Wilson's biographical dictionary of African American architects in America concludes with this assessment:

His significance lies in his role as a pioneer who chose to enter a profession previously closed to members of his race and who persevered in that profession despite economic recessions and the growing restrictions of the [post] Reconstruction era. Brent was born into a capital city where slavery was protected and African Americans were restricted by law to a few occupations. When these restrictions were lifted at the close of the Civil War, Brent was positioned through social standing, education, and talent to take advantage of the professional opportunities that were available for the first time.¹⁸

¹⁷ *The Bee*, September 13, 1884, cited in Schwartz, "Calvin Thomas Stowe Brent," 25.

¹⁸ Nancy Schwartz, "Calvin Thomas Stowe Brent," in Dreck Spurlock Wilson, *African American Architects: A Biographical Dictionary 1865-1945* (New York: Routledge, 2004), 58.

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

**Third Baptist Church
District of Columbia**

Section number 8 Page 13

Although he did not live long enough to work with the college-educated black architects who came to Washington after his death, he was not forgotten. In a speech to the Negro Business League in 1905, John Lankford reported that he had been "reliably informed that Calvin T. S. Brent, who died some six years ago, at one time was the leading architect and builder in the city of Washington. He not only designed and built for public and private use, but built up squares of vacant ground and used them as real estate investments."¹⁹ Although this overstated Brent's success, it is clear that for Lankford and probably for others, Brent was a role model, an example of what African Americans could achieve.

Most of the properties designed by or associated with Calvin Brent have been demolished. Some residential buildings are still extant, but they are not most representative of his abilities. Of the churches he designed, only two survive, Mt. Jezreel Baptist Church on Capitol Hill and Third Baptist Church. Mt. Jezreel is still in use by a different congregation, but has been covered with Formstone and is not longer intact to its original condition. Third Baptist Church is the remaining intact property most closely associated with his career as Washington's first African American architect.

¹⁹ John A. Lankford, "The Negro as an Architect and Builder," *Proceedings of the National Negro Business League, August 16-18, 1905, New York City* (microfilm, Library of Congress), 163.

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

**Third Baptist Church
District of Columbia**

Section number 9 Page 14

Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

Application for Permit to Build, No. 380, August 16, 1892. Microfilm. Washingtoniana Collection, Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial Library.

Application for Permit to Build, No. 2732, March 26, 1919. Microfilm. Washingtoniana Collection, Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial Library.

Bird, Betty, and Associates. "Interim Report: Thematic Study of African American Architects and Builders in Washington, DC." Phase II. Washington, DC: prepared for the United Planning Organization, 1994.

Bouldin v Alexander, 82 US 131 (1872). U.S. Supreme Court cast. Found at <<http://supreme.justia.com/us/82/131/case.html>> (accessed October 4, 2007).

Johnson-Herron, Georgia, to Marilyn Harper. Letter sent via e-mail, October 9, 2007

-----, to Marilyn Harper. E-mail message. October 16, 2007.

-----, and Carolivia Herron. Personal interview. Marilyn Harper, interviewer. September 27, 2007.

Lankford, John A. "The Negro as an Architect and Builder." *Proceedings of the National Negro Business League, August 16-18, 1905, New York City.*" Microfilm, Library of Congress.

Lincoln, C. Eric, and Lawrence H. Mamiya. *The Black Church in the African American Experience*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1990.

Masur, Kate, History Department, Northwestern University. E-mail communication. October 7, 2007.

McLoud, Melissa. "Craftsmen and Entrepreneurs: Building in Late Nineteenth-Century Washington, D.C." PhD. Diss. Washington, DC: The George Washington University, 1988.

Schwartz, Nancy B. "Calvin Thomas Stowe Brent." Draft. Prepared for a projected study, "—And the Walls Came Tumbling Down: The Early African American Architects in the District of Columbia and Tidewater Virginia," written by Betty Bird, Robie Lange/Bill Lebovich, Glen Leiner, Susan Pearl, Thomas Tyler Potterfield, Jr., Nancy Schwartz, and Dreck Spurlock Wilson. January 1995. Copy provided by Nancy Schwartz.

-----, "Calvin Thomas Stowe Brent," In Dreck Spurlock Wilson, *African American Architects: A Biographical Dictionary 1865-1945*. New York: Routledge, 2004.

----- to Marilyn Harper. E-mail. October 17, 2007.

"75th Anniversary of Third Baptist Church and the 15th Anniversary of the Pastor, Rev. George O. Bullock, D.D." Washington, DC: Third Baptist Church, 1933.

Third Baptist Church, 5th and Q Streets, 1858-1968. Washington, DC: Third Baptist Church, 1968.

Washington Post, July 1878-September 1978.

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

**Third Baptist Church
District of Columbia**

Section number 10 Page 15

Verbal Boundary Description

The Third Baptist Church is located on Lots 55 and 811 in Square 478.

Boundary Justification

The boundaries contain all the property associated with the Third Baptist Church during the period of significance for this nomination.

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

**Third Baptist Church
District of Columbia**

Section number Photos Page 16

LIST OF PHOTOGRAPHS

The following information is the same for all photographs:

1. Third Baptist Church
2. District of Columbia
3. Marilyn M. Harper
4. March 3, 2007
5. Historic Preservation Office, Office of Planning, Washington, D.C.

6. Fifth Street (front) elevation, with 1981 education building to the left, looking northwest
7. Photo Number 1

6. Q Street elevation, looking northeast
7. Photo Number 2

6. Interior of sanctuary, looking west
7. Photo Number 3

6. Interior of sanctuary, looking east
7. Photo Number 4

6. Detail of south balcony, showing original rails and wood-grained columns, looking southeast
7. Photo Number 5

6. Interior of fellowship hall, showing original columns and non-historic enclosed space, looking northwest
7. Photo Number 6