

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

STATE: Nebraska	
COUNTY: Sarpy	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE

1. NAME	
COMMON:	Presbyterian Church
AND/OR HISTORIC:	

2. LOCATION			
STREET AND NUMBER: 2002 Franklin Street			
CITY OR TOWN: Bellevue			
STATE: Nebraska	CODE 68005	COUNTY: Sarpy	CODE 153

3. CLASSIFICATION			
CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
<input type="checkbox"/> District <input type="checkbox"/> Site <input type="checkbox"/> Object	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Building <input type="checkbox"/> Structure <input type="checkbox"/> Public <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Private <input type="checkbox"/> Both	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Occupied <input type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress	Yes: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Restricted <input type="checkbox"/> Unrestricted <input type="checkbox"/> No
PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)			
<input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural <input type="checkbox"/> Commercial <input type="checkbox"/> Educational <input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> Government <input type="checkbox"/> Industrial <input type="checkbox"/> Military <input type="checkbox"/> Museum	<input type="checkbox"/> Park <input type="checkbox"/> Private Residence <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Religious <input type="checkbox"/> Scientific	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) _____ _____

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY			
OWNER'S NAME: Mrs. Harold D. LeMar			
STREET AND NUMBER: 3807 Burt Street			
CITY OR TOWN: Omaha	STATE: Nebraska	CODE 26	

5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION			
COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.: Register of Deeds, Sarpy County Court House			
STREET AND NUMBER: 122 East Third Street			
CITY OR TOWN: Papillion	STATE: Nebraska	CODE 26	

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS			
TITLE OF SURVEY: Historic American Building Survey			
DATE OF SURVEY: 1934	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> State	<input type="checkbox"/> County
DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS: Library of Congress			
STREET AND NUMBER: Washington			
CITY OR TOWN: Washington	STATE: D.C.	CODE 08	

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

STATE:

COUNTY:

ENTRY NUMBER

DATE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

## 7. DESCRIPTION

CONDITION	(Check One)					
	<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> Good	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Fair	<input type="checkbox"/> Deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> Ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> Unexposed
	(Check One)			(Check One)		
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Altered	<input type="checkbox"/> Unaltered	<input type="checkbox"/> Moved	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Original Site		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

This building is located in the northeast quarter of Block 174 of the original plat of Bellevue. As originally constructed in the late 1850's, the church was a low, 30 by 40 foot, masonry structure with a gable roof. The building was entered (as it is today) through the east gable end of the structure. The building may originally have had both a low vestibule extending eastward from the main entrance and, less likely, a cupola projecting upward from the east half of the roof. When the building is eventually restored, close examination should throw light on these questions.

The four exterior walls of the original building are composed of a rubble stone and grout mixture which was probably faced originally (as it is today) with a smooth layer of stucco or grout. Various sections of the present stucco layer clearly date to various periods. Some older sections have horizontal and vertical grooves etched into the stucco surface to give the appearance of smooth-faced ashlar, and this ornamentation may originally have been applied to all four walls of the church.

Greek Revival stylistic influence is revealed through further examination of the original church exterior, including the low pitch of the roof and the design of the windows and cornices. However, the large, triangular, bracketed window hoods suggest Italianate as well as Greek Revival influence. These heavy frame window hoods, some of which have been removed in recent years, formerly capped all original windows and may be original to the structure.

While much of the interior and exterior of the original edifice is intact, several additions have been built since the 1850's. In 1869 a tower was constructed which may have incorporated a vestibule that was original to the church. This tower was crowned by a spire which projected well above and to the east of the original roof ridge. Around the turn of the century, this tower was severely damaged during a tornado and replaced by the present tower, which retains the old front doors and, again, may possibly incorporate a vestibule that is original to the church. The present crenelated tower (10 by 10 feet at its base) clashes with the original styling of the church and is to be demolished once restoration begins.

Other later additions that will presumably be razed eventually are the west and south wings appended to the original structure. In 1904 the church doubled its seating capacity to 500 and assumed a modified cruciform plan. The original sanctuary was enlarged through the construction of a 27 by 56 foot addition to the west and by an 8 by 20 foot choir extension to the west of this addition. In 1924 the present Social Hall, a frame structure faced with stucco, was appended to the south elevation of the 1904 addition. While the stucco facing of the entire building is in poor condition, the walls themselves as well as the church interior still appear to be in good condition.

## B. SIGNIFICANCE

## PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

☐ Pre-Columbian☐ 16th Century☐ 18th Century☐ 20th Century☐ 15th Century☐ 17th Century☒ 19th Century

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known) 1856-58

## AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

Aboriginal

☐ Education☐ Political☐ Urban Planning☐ Prehistoric☐ Engineering☒ Religion/Phi-☐ Other (Specify)☒ Historic☐ Industry

losophy

☐ Agriculture☐ Invention☐ Science☒ Architecture☐ Landscape☐ Sculpture☐ Art

Architecture

☐ Social/Human-☐ Commerce☐ Literature

itarian

☐ Communications☐ Military☐ Theater☐ Conservation☐ Music☐ Transportation

## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Founded as a fur trading post in the first quarter of the nineteenth century, Bellevue is Nebraska's oldest existing community and was Nebraska's only non-military settlement in existence prior to the creation of Nebraska Territory in 1854. Constructed ca. 1856-58, Bellevue's old Presbyterian Church is believed to be the oldest building erected in Nebraska to house religious services. The Presbyterian congregation which built the edifice was founded in 1850 and is probably the oldest existing church congregation established in Nebraska. Although the building has been enlarged and altered several times over the years, much of the original exterior appearance is intact. Accurate restoration, which is planned, will be possible because examples of most of the original ornamentation are still intact. While only modestly pretentious, the church as originally designed combined Greek Revival styling with some early Italianate elements, and the building is now one of Nebraska's few surviving buildings exhibiting Greek Revival influence.

At least as early as 1834, Presbyterian missionaries were actively evangelizing the Indians of eastern Nebraska. In 1846 Rev. Edward McKinney arrived in Bellevue, where a large Presbyterian mission building (a log structure razed in the 1860's) was erected under his leadership in 1846-48 to serve the Oto and Omaha Indians. During a meeting at the mission building on December 26, 1850, the Presbyterian Church of Nebraska was organized under the care of Rev. McKinney and with five charter members. The worship services of this congregation were conducted at the mission until the late 1850's. In 1853 Rev. McKinney retired from the leadership of the mission and church and was succeeded by Rev. William Hamilton, who continued to lead the congregation until the mid 1860's. In 1856 the church was reorganized as the First Presbyterian Church of Bellevue, a name which it still retains.

Under Rev. Hamilton's guidance, D. E. Reed, a builder who was experienced in grout work, began construction work in 1856 on the Presbyterian Church as well as Father Hamilton's own Bellevue dwelling (a National Register property) and a new Indian mission (not extant) in what is now Thurston County, Nebraska. The walls of all three structures were composed of rubble limestone tied together with grout and probably faced originally with grout stucco--a form of wall construction rarely found in Nebraska outside of Bellevue. These three masonry buildings were not finally completed until about 1858.

(CONTINUED)

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Continuation Sheet)

STATE Nebraska	
COUNTY Sarpy	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE

(Number all entries)

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

8. The old Presbyterian church building continued to serve the needs of the First Presbyterian congregation until early in 1959, when a new and larger church edifice was completed for this organization at 1220 Bellevue Road in Bellevue. In 1961 the congregation sold the old church building and property to the present owner, Mrs. Harold D. LeMar, a local preservationist and president of the Greater Nebraska Historical Foundation. The old building has subsequently been occupied, on a temporary basis, first by the Church of the Holy Spirit (Episcopal) and now, since ca. 1967, by Bellevue's First Assembly of God Church. An official Nebraska historical marker was recently installed on the lawn to the east of the building.

## 9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Files, Nebraska State Historical Society.  
 Kerr, David R., "Semi-Centennial History of the Bellevue  
 Presbyterian Church"  
 (unpublished m.s.), 1904.

## 10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY			O R	LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES		
CORNER	LATITUDE	LONGITUDE		LATITUDE	LONGITUDE	
	Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds		Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds	
NW	° ' "	° ' "		41 ° 08 ' 22 "	95 ° 53 ' 37 "	
NE	° ' "	° ' "				
SE	° ' "	° ' "				
SW	° ' "	° ' "				

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: 1/2 acre

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE

## 11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE: John Q. Magie, Historic Sites Curator		
ORGANIZATION Nebraska State Historical Society	DATE July 10, 1970	
STREET AND NUMBER: 1500 R Street		
CITY OR TOWN: Lincoln	STATE Nebraska 68508	CODE 26

## 12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION

## NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION

As the designated State Liaison Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:

National ☒ State ☐ Local ☐

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Title Director, Nebraska State  
Historical Society

Date \_\_\_\_\_

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register.

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Chief, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

Date \_\_\_\_\_

ATTEST:

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Keeper of The National Register

Date \_\_\_\_\_

SEE INSTRUCTIONS



Exterior view from the northeast.  
NSHS, 1967 (H673.5-1441)