

Survey Number CH-8
 Property Name United Presbyterian Church
of Canehill
 Original Name Mount Bethel Presbyterian
Church of Canehill
 Location Main Street (Highway 45)
 Construction Date 1891

Owner United Presbyterian Church
of Canehill
 Address c/o Conrad Russell
Box 32, Canehill, AR 72717

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION

Sited on a Main Street lot, the modest scale and proportions of the Presbyterian Church are well suited to Canehill's landscape. The one-story church is built on a modified cross plan comprised of belltower, vestibule and sanctuary; steeply pitched gable roofs shelter the vestibule and the sanctuary. A one-story addition (1960's) projects from the rear (west) of the vestibule. Ashlar blocks of native stone compose the church elevations. The principal (east) elevation of the church features the belltower and the sanctuary. The sanctuary wall projects beyond the belltower and features a pointed-arch window filled with leaded glass framed by tracery in a tripartite arrangement of lancet arches. A pressed tin bargeboard decorated with trefoils and a central quatrefoil embellishes the facade gable. Access to the church is provided through a pointed-arch opening containing double-leaf paneled doors surmounted by a leaded-glass transom. A multiple-pane round window situated directly above the peak of the entrance arch pierces the belltower. The first phase of the tower is capped by a bell-cast hip roof which is surmounted by the tower's octagonal belfry. A series of louvered vents set in pointed-arch openings appear in the belfry. The belltower terminates in a pointed spire capped with a small finial. The south vestibule reiterates the design of the sanctuary wall with its prominent leaded-glass and tracery-filled, pointed-arch window and decorative bargeboard; the north elevation is pierced by four small leaded-glass-filled lancet windows; and the rear (west) elevation features a small three-sided apse with two windows of the same design as those that appear in the north elevation and a bargeboard identical in design to the treatment of the other gable ends of the building.

The interior of the Presbyterian Church is also of architectural note. The simple sanctuary, consisting of a central aisle flanked by long pews, is well lighted by its leaded-glass windows. Inside, the roof appears as a truncated gable and the ceiling is faced with a series of panels constructed of narrow boards in alternating patterns. The richness of the wood ceiling is reflected in the beaded wainscot that articulates the sanctuary wall.

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

As the only ecclesiastical structure still functioning as a house of worship, the Presbyterian Church is an important component of Canehill's rural landscape. Moreover, this congregation's derivation from and affiliation with the Cumberland Presbyterians that founded the Canehill community is of compelling significance in the history of the area's settlement and development. An example of the Gothic Revival vernacular that was deemed appropriate for rural church design throughout the nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries, the 1891 church is also of architectural significance.

Page 2
United Presbyterian Church of Canehill

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE (CON'T)

Members of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church were prominent among the first settlers in the Canehill area and were largely responsible for the initial establishment of the Canehill Township. The first Cumberland Presbyterian congregation organized in 1828. The congregation's history is marked by the construction of a number of structures, including their first log buildings and later frame churches, and a number of philosophical divisions that led to the creation of several branches of the original congregation. The third such branch to form, the Mount Bethel Presbyterian Church, was founded in 1891. The Cumberland Presbyterian congregations reunited in 1905, meeting in this church building. As the only extant house of worship in Canehill reflecting this rich history, the significance of the church is great.

Architecturally, the building is noteworthy for its depiction of the scale, proportions and details often associated with the nineteenth-century rural Gothic Revival house of worship. Of particular interest are its native stone exterior, fine Gothic tracery and leaded-glass windows.

Verbal Boundary Description Block 1 lot 2, Kirby Addition

Acreage less than one acre

Quadrangle Name Lincoln, Ark.

Quadrangle Scale 1:24000

UTM Reference

Zone 15 Easting 374 015 Northing 3974 670