

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 National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. 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 certification comments, entries, and narrative items on continuation sheets if needed (NPS Form 10-900a).**

1. Name of Property

historic name First Congregational Church of Long Beach

other names/site number N/A

2. Location

street & number 241 Cedar Avenue

N/A	not for publication
N/A	vicinity

city or town Long Beach

state California code CA county Los Angeles code 037 zip code 90802

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, 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 meets does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:
 national statewide local

Signature of certifying official/Title Date

State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

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

Signature of commenting official Date

Title State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register determined eligible for the National Register
- determined not eligible for the National Register removed from the National Register
- other (explain:)

Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

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5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply.)

Category of Property
(Check only **one** box.)

Number of Resources within Property
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

- private
- public - Local
- public - State
- public - Federal

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1	1	buildings
0		sites
0		structures
0		objects
1	1	Total

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

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

N/A

N/A

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions.)

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions.)

RELIGION/religious facility

RELIGION/religious facility

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions.)

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions.)

LATE VICTORIAN/Romanesque Revival

foundation: Concrete

walls: Brick

roof: Ceramic Tile

other: Terra Cotta, Glass

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Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance of the property. Explain contributing and noncontributing resources if necessary. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, setting, size, and significant features.)

Summary Paragraph

First Congregational Church of Long Beach, California, built in 1914, is an example of a large auditorium-type Romanesque Revival church building constructed of red brick with white glazed terra cotta trim and decorative details. It features a one hundred and ten foot tall corner tower, a green mission tile roof, patterned tapestry brickwork and leaded and stained glass windows, including three large rose windows. The church consists of a large sanctuary auditorium with a three-sided balcony, a groin-vaulted foyer, a two story Administration Wing, and a full basement. The interior features carved furniture and paneled natural wood finishes, stenciled and painted surfaces, and a richly detailed choir. First Congregational has dominated the downtown neighborhood for nearly one hundred years and throughout that time the historic integrity of the building has been retained and protected.

Narrative Description

Location

Just two blocks from the heart of downtown Long Beach, and less than a half mile from the city's south facing beach front, the church property is bordered by Cedar Avenue on the east (running north/south), West Third Street on the north (running east/west), Del Rey Court on the west, and West Maple Way on the south.¹ The building's primary street façades face north and east and its main entrance is through the corner tower at the intersection of West Third Street and Cedar Avenue. The non-contributing new Education Building and the courtyard are both to the south of the church and fill the remainder of the property. A tall wall separates the courtyard from Cedar Avenue.

The church's immediate neighbors include the historic 1927 Willmore Apartment Building at 315 West Third Street, a fifteen story, Italianate Revival listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1999;² a 1970s senior housing apartment complex with a parking lot west of Del Rey Court; two late twentieth century buildings with parking lots south of West Maple Way; and a large parking lot across Cedar Avenue to the east. The Church is located within the Downtown Redevelopment District, and immediately adjacent to the Willmore/Drake Park Local Historic District.

Building Plan and Overview

The church building consists of two discrete components, the sanctuary auditorium and the Administration Wing, to create one large rectangular-shaped building. The auditorium rises 25 feet above the roofline of the two-story Administration Wing. The layout of the auditorium worship space is based on the shape of a Greek cross, and this design element is also used throughout the building in smaller decorative details. The intersection of the arms of the cross creates the center of the auditorium and the four equal branches create space for the foyer to the north, the auditorium extensions to the east and the west and to the south the choir loft. An aerial view clearly shows the Greek cross layout with the intersecting gabled roofs.³

The Administration Wing, designed for offices and classrooms, is located west of the sanctuary auditorium and accessed through the foyer and north entrance. It is two stories tall with a raised basement that features glass block windows, original to the construction. Its hip roof terminates below the western facing rose window, but its central section is flat with three leaded and stained glass skylights. The roof of the entire building is sheathed with green mission tiles accented by copper gutters and drainage pipes.

Exterior Elevations

Tower and Main Entrance

The one hundred and ten foot tall tower, supported by a steel frame, visually anchors the church and dominates the surrounding streetscape.⁴ The four corners are chamfered creating four wide and four very narrow planes. Down both

¹ See Sketch map – Exterior, Additional Documentation (AD)-1.

² National Register of Historic Places Database. "The Willmore." Accessed May 10, 2012.

³ See Sketch map – Exterior, AD-1.

⁴ See Photograph #1.

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sides of the tower's outer faces are additional layers of brickwork that create thicker walls with recessed centers. Within this area the brick is laid in a traditional Flemish diagonal bond pattern. The tower terminates in a belvedere with a low-pitched, pyramidal hip roof supported visually by a white terra cotta bracketed cornice. On each side of the belvedere is a tall arched opening filled with three slightly recessed arches with terra cotta trim and slender columns. The major decorative accent of the tower is the eight horizontal bands of white terra cotta alternating with wider bands of red brick. These terra cotta bands follow the brick pattern and terminate at the edges of the large arches. Around the tower, directly under the arched openings, is a white terra cotta belt course separating the upper stage from the rest of the tower below.

On the tower sides facing the street three distinct sets of windows visually connect the open belvedere to the main entrance doors at the base while providing light to the interior. Though identical on each side, the three window groups vary in shape and design. The number and size of the windows in each set decreases the lower the group's position is on the tower. The signboard at the base of the tower appears in historic photographs, but a more recently installed sign using painted wood tiles is hung along the tower's outermost plane.

At the base of the tower are the two main entrances each with a pair of paneled, mahogany doors inset with leaded glass windows.⁵ Each set of doors is surrounded by identical, decorative, white terra cotta architectural elements and trim. Semi-circular, blind arches curve high over the doors with running ornamentation in bas-relief, the acanthus leaf theme is carried around the archivolt, across the entablature and filling the area surrounding the encircled Greek cross at the center. Directly framing each pair of doors are blocks with bas-relief medallions in a stylized floral design. To either side of each set, are twisted columns, entwined with molded flowers and finished with foliated capitals. The original lantern-style, amber glass light fixtures are still intact on either side of the doors. A granite cornerstone at the base of the bell tower bears the 1914 dedication date.

North and East Elevations/West Third Street and Cedar Avenue

The major street side façades that are immediately adjacent to the tower are nearly identical. It is the addition of a secondary entrance and connecting courtyard wall on Cedar Avenue and the north entrance and the Administration Wing on West Third Street that make each side unique.

Each primary façade on either side of the tower consists of a low-pitched end-gable brick wall with a wide expressed band of brickwork that outlines the shape of the wall. Applied to the gable end band on the Cedar Avenue façade is an arcaded corbel table. The lower edge of the gable wide band on both primary façades is edged with a stepped brick pattern that follows the slope. Although the north façade lost its arcaded corbel table in the 1933 Long Beach Earthquake, the stepped brick pattern, cornice, and wide expressed band were rebuilt.⁶

Centered within the gable end is a seventeen-foot diameter rose window with sixteen petal-shaped spokes radiating out from a central lozenge.⁷ Sixteen lozenges, each shaped in a modified Greek cross form, circle the outer edge of the petals. The rose window is framed with a wide, deep, simple molding. White terra cotta tracery outlines the stained glass panes that incorporate biblical references as well as simple linear, geometric designs. In each window three of the outer panes are operable, opening to allow for ventilation.

Below the rose window on each side is a prominent white terra cotta blind-arcaded belt course with foliated capitals on small columns alternating with the Greek cross design. This belt course is at the level of the auditorium balcony. Centered below the belt course on each wall is a set of three large, arched, stained glass windows, each window represents a biblical theme or story.⁸ Each of the arched windows is individually set within a three-step, compound arch. The two outermost steps are white terra cotta arches made with a narrow impost block, haunch, and crown. Each of these arches rests on unembellished, narrow columns with a foliated cushioned capital. Directly framing the window is a simple, brickwork arch accented with white terra cotta crown and impost blocks.

Also notable on these major elevations is the selected use of patterned and tapestry brickwork, and a corbelled cornice that adds to the overall ornamentation on the exterior. Along the sidewalk of the two street sides are original black wrought iron fences with a delicate filigree design. These short fences align with the outer edge of the tower, creating a flush visual line with the tower's extended outer wall.

⁵ See Photograph #2.

⁶ N. W. Thiele, *Architectural plans traced from Original blueprints with hand written notes describing repair following 1933 earthquake*, compare Photographs #4 and #8.

⁷ See Photograph #4.

⁸ See Photograph #5.

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East Elevation/Cedar Avenue/South Entrance

Unique to the Cedar Avenue side is the south entrance wall immediately adjacent to the main gable end wall. This shorter and smaller wall repeats on a smaller scale the shape and ornament of the main gable end, including the arcaded corbel table. Centered within the wall is a shallow arched portico with a gabled tile roof, supported by terra cotta columns encircled with abstract flowers topped with a closed leaf, foliated capital.⁹ Directly above the portico is a band of decorative brickwork and three narrow, rectangular, leaded glass windows. The heavy paneled mahogany doors are similar to those at the main entrance and access a small vestibule leading to an upstairs office and doors leading into the sanctuary auditorium.

A new brick-faced wall constructed at the same time as the new Education Building, continues the line of the church from the south entrance. It provides two arched entries into the courtyard, and serves as the east wall for the building.

North Elevation/ West Third Street/Administration Wing

Just to the west of the north gable end façade, which is identical to the east gable end façade, is the north entrance with eight wide steps leading to three sets of mahogany double doors four feet above the sidewalk level. The four-foot height variance of the building's main floor, from the north to the south side of the building, creates the slanting floor in the auditorium. This entrance leads to a vestibule between the main foyer of the auditorium and the Administration Wing.

Each door has a leaded clear glass window with the central pane of pale amber and white opaque glass in a shield design. This design element is repeated again in the second floor windows above. Between the pairs of doors, brick pilasters, with white, terra cotta impost blocks, are used to accentuate the spring point of the brick compound false arches above. Dark blue marble inlays, abstracting again the Greek cross form, are centered within the arch. The two original, amber glass, lantern-shaped, light fixtures are still in their original position on either side of the central doors.

A third set of pictorial, stained glass windows is on the West Third Street side of the Administration Wing. Here there are four sets of arched double windows. The windows are each set in a wood casement and paired within a larger arch. Highlighted with white terra cotta details, a simple, narrow column separates the two windows and a decoratively molded spandrel fills the space between and a simple sill finishes the lower edge.

On the second floor, directly above the north entrance doors are double casement windows made from leaded, clear glass and arched leaded glass windows separated by simple terra cotta columns. These windows all have an opaque central shield element. Above the windows, the corbelled brick cornice is continued along the eave line and wraps around to a short section on the west elevation.

West Elevation/Del Rey Court/Administration Wing

The west elevation consists of the outer wall of the administration wing. Except for the short red brick section near the corner, this utilitarian side is finished with stucco. The exposed brick section of the wall features a pair of arched leaded glass windows with white terra cotta window surrounds. The rest of the windows are translucent, leaded glass double hung windows with expressed window sills at both the first and second floors. The 1914 church building abuts but does not communicate with the new Education Building along the west.

Rising above the Administration wing is the gable end of the western wall of the auditorium sanctuary with the third rose window framed with a plain frame and simple tracery that matches the other two rose windows. Currently it is covered with protective rigid plastic and glass panels that allow light to enter.

South Elevation/Courtyard Side

This unadorned brick wall and gable end is the back wall of the choir/pulpit area of the church. Its unfinished appearance is due to the construction of Pilgrim Hall in 1925 that directly abutted this wall.¹⁰ The hall was demolished in 1977 creating the courtyard space. A feature of this sizable, uninterrupted brick wall is a large circle of brick, the same diameter as the rose windows, inset as if framing for a fourth rose window. According to the original plans, there is no evidence that this was ever intended to be a space for a window.¹¹

⁹ See Photograph #6.

¹⁰ See Figure 5.

¹¹ Henry M. Patterson, *Architectural Plans for First Congregation Church of Long Beach*, 1913.

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New Education Building

The new 2005 Education Building is a two-story non-contributing separate building that abuts the Administration Wing to the north with an el and abuts the courtyard wall to the east. A second story balcony overlooks the courtyard and the main church's south exterior wall. This new hall is finished simply with straightforward lines and designed to complement the original building.

Interior

Main Entrance

The church's two main tower entrances open into a shallow and simple vestibule. Within the vestibule are six marble steps that are gracefully curved outward to make access easy from either doorway. To the left of the stair landing is a wide staircase with a heavy, dark wood newel post and balustrade that leads to the balcony level then narrows and continues up to the tower rooms.

Foyer

On the first floor on the north side of the auditorium is the foyer accessed through two pairs of mahogany doors from either the main or the north entrance vestibules. Each door is inset with leaded glass. The dark wood paneled walls contrast with the Romanesque-style groin-vaulted ceiling, painted and decorated in a light color.¹² Polished wood pilasters define the spaces between the three arched stained glass windows designed by Joseph Evan Mackay. Under the windows are two low wood benches, present in the historic photographs. Along the south wall are two decorative interior windows and three sets of glazed mahogany doors that lead into the sanctuary auditorium.

Along the edges of the intersecting shallow ceiling arches are stenciled designs that combine geometric and organic forms. What is present today is different from the original vault decoration, but it is remarkably similar in its color value and type of design.¹³

Sanctuary Auditorium

The expansive sanctuary auditorium is the centerpiece of the church building. The choir and pulpit area is directly opposite the foyer doors, and the three large rose windows are clearly visible above the balcony floor along the east, west, and north sides. The central Greek cross plan is evident in the configuration of this large central space with the three arms of the balconies under a lower flat ceiling and the fourth arm created by the outwardly curving choir area with its own ceiling. The choir area is further delineated by a centrally located shallow barrel-vaulted niche for the organ pipes.

A low-rise stenciled arch, similar in function to a proscenium arch, spans the choir loft and organ area that is further marked by paneling that partially separates it from the pulpit platform. On the back wall of the choir are two vertical full-height fabric and wood screens and two small balconies symmetrically placed on each side of the barrel vaulted niche. The screens and balconies were new additions for organ pipes along with the reconfiguration of the paneling. This is discussed in more detail at the conclusion of this section.

The pulpit platform is located forward of the panels within the main section of the auditorium and is accessed by two side stairways with a decorative balustrade. Original to the church building are the carved dark wood pulpit and three carved mahogany, high-backed chairs that share the platform. In front of the platform, on the main auditorium floor, is the carved altar table. A baptismal font, built and dedicated in 1919, is to the right of the platform.

Natural light enters through the three stained glass rose windows in the upper level, the three lower stained glass windows on the east wall of the lower level and a skylight of stained and leaded glass inset into the ceiling forty-eight feet above the floor.¹⁴ The shallow vaulted ceiling is emphasized by exposed wood beams and trusses (wood encased riveted steel beams). These architectural elements are constructed using either a series of open wooden arches centered between two beams or a series of an open cross-bracing with a Greek cross set at the central point—also centered between the longer beams.

The original Arts and Crafts light fixtures, made of amber glass inverted domes with brass fittings and suspending hardware, hang evenly spaced across the ceiling. Gas outlets for the original interior lighting system are still intact, though

¹² See Photographs #11 and #12.

¹³ Compare Photograph #12 to Figure 6.

¹⁴ See Photographs #16, #17, and #18.

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never used due to the availability of electricity as the building was completed. The original brass security rail extends around the balcony's outer edge.

The auditorium seats about 1000 people today, but in 1914, the capacity was reported to be 1425 people.¹⁵ Four sections of mahogany pews gently curve to bring focus to the central raised platform. The aisles slope toward the front of the auditorium accommodating the elevation change noted on the building's exterior.

The paneled wall treatment and stenciling used in the foyer continues around all sides of the main room and balcony above. Dark woods are used throughout the space and careful attention is given to the integration of design details. The choir rail and stair banister are made with small, carved arches, the same shape as used in the wood beams above. Pew end caps, alter chairs, baptismal font and alter table are decorated with carved wood quatrefoils or other representations of the Greek cross theme. Continuity of design is therefore maintained throughout the building by repeated use of similar design motifs, stained glass, and painted details.

Administration Wing

The Administration Wing consists of an assembly room, parlors, kitchens, nursery, offices, restrooms, and closets. Access is by the north entrance vestibule that also contains the staircase to the second floor and the balcony. The heavy newel post, handrail, and arched banister repeat the design of the stair units by the choir loft in the sanctuary auditorium.

The northwest room with the stained glass arched windows was known as the Christian Endeavor Room, and today serves as the pastor's study. When the building was originally dedicated the windows were leaded glass and identical with the two remaining windows on the west wall of this room. In 1944 the six windows in this room and the two in the adjacent storage room were created by The Judson Studios of Los Angeles.¹⁶

In the central section of the wing is the Sunday School Auditorium, a sixteen hundred square foot meeting room with an open atrium with stained glass skylights. The second floor balcony and offices above create a partial ceiling on the north, west and south side of the room; the structural posts help define the space.¹⁷

On the second floor the parlor, in the northwest corner, features leaded glass windows, framed in dark wood on the north wall and a small fireplace on the west wall. Set into a large surround of dark blue tile topped with a dark wood mantel, the fireplace is the focus of the room. The room has dark wood details similar to those seen in other parts of the building. The remaining second floor of the wing has a series of small offices off the balcony walkway above the atrium. The balcony's original balustrade still outlines the elegant curve of the walkway.¹⁸

The office at the south end of the second floor was originally the pastor's study. It has a working fireplace with a tile surround and a heavy dark wood mantle. Notable for these functional spaces is that the configuration of the wing has remained much the same since the building was dedicated though space assignments have changed over the years as the needs of the congregation have evolved.

Basement

The raised basement has a large multi-use room (6,786 sq ft), a music room (1,520 sq ft), a kitchen, rest rooms, and various storage rooms. The vestibule at the base of the staircase from the West Third Street landing is paneled with the same dark wood as used in the rooms above. The banister, rail, and newel post match the staircase to the second floor and those in the auditorium. The hallway and other basement rooms, including the multi-use room have paneled walls with a painted finish.

The large multi-use room has a simple linoleum floor over the poured concrete slab foundation. The decorative, structural columns and posts are concrete. The ceiling is reinforced with three wide, curved bands placed concentrically facing the small stage on the south side of the room. It slopes down from north to south reflecting the slope of the auditorium floor above. The room features a fireplace with blue tile surround and a heavy dark wood mantle and built-in storage cabinets built of dark wood all along the western wall.¹⁹

¹⁵ See Sketch map – Balcony Floor, AD-3.

¹⁶ See Photograph #19 and Stewart Leroy Anderson, *Service of Dedication of the Henry Kendall Booth Memorial Chapel*, 4.

¹⁷ See Photograph #20.

¹⁸ See Photograph #21.

¹⁹ See Photograph #22.

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Alterations

The alterations that have occurred over the years were primarily the result of either the Long Beach Earthquake of 1933, the installation of the larger organ in 1956, or the seismic upgrade in 1986-87. They did not result in significantly visible changes to the church design or materials.

In 1933, Long Beach experienced a devastating earthquake, with extensive damage throughout the city, resulting in the loss of many buildings. 120 people died and an estimated \$45 million dollars (\$794 million in 2012) of property damage. First Congregational was well designed and constructed, but there was some damage on the upper third of the north façade above the rose window and some damage to the two-story secondary brick wall along the west side. C.T. McGrew, who had been the contractor for the original construction, oversaw the repairs designated by architect/engineer N.W. Thiele. At this time, the congregation may have repaired some damaged plaster on the interior, because an early 1940s photograph shows the interior decorative painting had been redone, probably shortly after the earthquake. The church quickly repaired both the exterior and interior, but the decorative arcaded corbel table below the gable on the north façade was not replaced after the earthquake.²⁰

The congregation remodeled the interior of the sanctuary auditorium in 1956 when the Moeller organ replaced the earlier 1918 Harris organ. The Moeller organ with twice as many pipes needed more space in the choir loft area at the front of the auditorium. The remodeling not only accommodated the pipes, but also opened the area for the choir and placement of the organ console.²¹

The original design of the choir area had a paneled partition extending the full width of the space, separating the choir from the main auditorium. This paneling was reduced in height and two small balconies were added to the walls. In addition, two small arched windows on the east and west sidewalls were filled to accommodate the present-day full height fabric and wood screens that provide large controllable vanes. This gives the organist a way to control the volume of this instrument. The largest pipes, up to thirty-four feet long and more than sixteen inches in diameter, are located horizontally in the attic space above the choir loft. All of the new panel work matched the historic, and today one needs to see a historic photograph to know that it is slightly different from the original design.²²

The building was not damaged by any of the subsequent quakes in the Los Angeles area; however, new city requirements for earthquake retrofitting were mandated for existing un-reinforced masonry buildings. This was expensive and potentially damaging to historic properties. Fortunately, in the early 1980s, a new technique was developed to retrofit unreinforced masonry buildings and the research test site was two blocks from First Congregational. Known as the 'Center Core System,' the technique involved drilling a four-inch diameter hole through the center of an unreinforced masonry wall from the top of the walls down into the foundation. A steel rod was inserted and the hole was filled with a mixture of polyester resin and sand.

First Congregational Church of Long Beach was the first large building to use this new seismic retrofitting technique with no physical alteration of the appearance of the building after it was completed.²³ During the seismic retrofit, large sections of the wood paneling in the sanctuary were removed and reinstalled, the walls were repainted and re-stenciled, and internal bracing was added to the structure in the basement and at the base of the tower.

Historic Integrity/Historic Design and Materials

First Congregational Church of Long Beach is notable for the extent that its original design and materials have remained remarkably unchanged since its construction in 1914. The original brick building with its historic stained glass windows, the auditorium sanctuary with its carefully designed interior, and the Administration Wing have retained its original design and materials including woodwork, windows, lighting fixtures, and interior finishes.

First Congregational enjoys a high level of historic integrity as defined by the National Register of Historic Places. The building is on its original site, and its setting today, like 1914, is within an urban landscape, in the downtown area of Long Beach. Many other buildings of the early 1900s have disappeared, but the church complex itself continues the tradition of a downtown church. The building materials have been retained and maintained on both the exterior and the interior. The

²⁰ Compare Photographs #4 and #9.

²¹ First Congregational Church of Long Beach, "The Moeller Organ of the First Congregational Church of Long Beach," Accessed May 7, 2012.

²² Compare Photograph #14 and Figure 7.

²³ David C. Breiholz, "Rehabilitation Option for CenterCore Strengthening System for Seismic Hazard Reduction of Unreinforced Masonry Bearing wall Buildings." In *Structure*, May, 2003.

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high artistic design of the architecture and the art glass windows, and the workmanship of the construction, the ornamentation, and the interior finishes have also been retained and maintained throughout the years. The alterations throughout the years have not compromised the integrity of the exterior or interior of the original Romanesque Revival style or church plan. When one views the church or experiences the building, the feeling and associations that had been incorporated into the original construction are retained and protected by the active use of the building as a community and heritage resource.

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8. Statement of 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.)

Property is:

- A Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B removed from its original location.
- C a birthplace or grave.
- D a cemetery.
- E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F a commemorative property.
- G less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Architecture

Period of Significance

1914

Significant Dates

1914

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

Cultural Affiliation

Architect/Builder

Patterson, Henry M., Architect

1914: Mackay, Joseph Evan, Artist

1944: The Judson Studios of Los Angeles, Artist

Period of Significance (justification)

Construction was completed in 1914.

Criteria Considerations (explanation, if necessary)

First Congregational Church of Long Beach is a religious property deriving significance from its architectural distinction.

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Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance and applicable criteria.)

The First Congregational Church of Long Beach, built in 1914, is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places at the local level under Criterion C as an excellent example of an ecclesiastical building type that embodies the distinctive characteristics of the Romanesque Revival style. The master architect Henry Martin Patterson creatively adapted the Romanesque Revival as the envelope for a centralized auditorium plan and integrated Administration Wing, while Joseph Evan Mackay designed the sophisticated interiors and major installations of art glass. Contextually, it relates to the widespread use of the Romanesque Revival style in the United States, particularly for churches during the nineteenth and early twentieth-centuries. First Congregational is an excellent example of the large, well appointed church buildings that were constructed in response to the widespread growth and importance of religious congregations during the early twentieth century. The church retains original materials and design both on the exterior and interior as confirmed by historic photographs and original architectural drawings and contributes to the architectural heritage of the community with its high level of historic integrity. As such, the church also meets the requirements of Criteria Consideration A for its architectural and artistic significance.

Narrative Statement of Significance (Provide at least **one** paragraph for each area of significance.)

Romanesque Revival Style as Exhibited in the First Congregational Church of Long Beach

First Congregational Church of Long Beach is primarily significant for its skillful articulation of the characteristic elements and features of the Romanesque Revival. The major defining feature of the style is the semi-circular arch used for window and door openings and decorative purposes. At First Congregational, the semi-circular arch is a major design feature at the entrances to the church; the major art glass window openings on the north and east façades; and the tall tripartite arches on the tower. This same type of arch is repeated on a smaller scale in the secondary windows throughout the building, the arcaded corbel tables (also known as Lombard bands) at the eaves, and the prominent blind-arcaded belt course incorporated into each of the two main façades below the rose windows.

A typical design feature of the Romanesque Revival church is a gabled front primary façade with a triple arch entrance at the ground level and a large decorative rose window centered within the gable end. The gable end is typically anchored by one or two tall, multi-stage towers, often with a pyramidal roof. Most Romanesque churches with a basilica-type plan have one such main façade, but First Congregational has two nearly identical gabled primary façades each with its own rose window and triple arched opening at the ground level. Instead of three arched doors leading into the church, the three arched openings at First Congregational are decorative stained glass windows, but the typical façade pattern is still maintained.

Another common feature of this style is the use of medieval design elements. Geometric and foliated patterns are used in the columns and capitals; and other ornamental trim at the entrances; and major window surrounds. The interior also exhibits several design features that recall the medieval in an interpretive way. The shallow vaulted ceiling of the auditorium, the open timber frame trusses, and the groin-vaulted ceiling in the foyer all make reference to medieval design, but uses modern materials.

Broad, smooth wall surfaces of red brick can be characteristic of the style with its unfinished surfaces accented by contrasting materials and/or color. Here at First Congregational, the brick is highlighted by two prominent white terra cotta blind-arcaded belt courses, and details in the fenestration surrounds. The addition of alternating white striping at the top of the tower, often associated with the Italian Romanesque, is a distinctive and highly visible accent to the red brick.

As noted above, the church is significant for its powerful Romanesque design and architectural features that make a strong statement within the historic context of the style's use for church buildings. In particular this style was easily adapted to a variety of interior plans and utilization of space. Although the construction did not utilize the arch structurally in the same way it was used historically, the design characteristics were widely associated with the European building of the large churches and cathedrals in Europe. The Romanesque projected an image of stability and credibility of organized religion, a message that was important to the large number of congregations establishing themselves within a community.

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The Romanesque Revival

During the Middle Ages, European builders reclaimed the Roman arch as the structural system and combined it with medieval designs to create the Romanesque (and later the Gothic) styles used for large buildings such as churches. The eleventh and twelfth century Romanesque was actually an amalgam of the late Roman, Byzantine, Islamic, and local traditions in design and construction. Thus the variety of Romanesque that evolved was also based on the geographic areas of Europe.

Common to these Romanesque churches was the use of the semi-circular arch in the masonry vaulting and fenestration, creating strong structural systems that endured for centuries. Many of these European monuments of the Romanesque were still standing in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries enabling architects and visitors to become familiar with them from books, prints, photographs, and travels. These historic buildings thus became the inspiration for this particular picturesque revival that became so popular in the nineteenth century.²⁴

Over time, the regional aspects of the Romanesque blurred, but the characteristics of the style became a common choice for architects and designers beginning in the nineteenth century, not only for churches but institutional and other building types. Freely borrowed was the round arch used in the windows, doors, porticos, corbel tables, and belt courses. Medieval decorative features such as compound arches, geometric and foliate designs on cushion capitals, were also commonly included in the buildings.

The Romanesque Revival had its roots in the nineteenth century German *Rundbogenstil*, appearing there in 1830, ushering in the revival of the modern round-arched style. Although the style was quickly adopted in the United States sixteen years later, the name *Rundbogenstil* was rarely used outside Germany. Other labels such as Romanesque, Byzantine, and Lombard were used instead.²⁵ Over the years, Romanesque Revival became the commonly accepted term.

Not long after its introduction in Germany Richard Upjohn designed what is believed to be the first Romanesque Revival style church in the United States, the Congregational Church of the Pilgrims of 1844 still standing today in Brooklyn, New York. Around the same time, the new building for the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, D.C. was completed, the first large secular Romanesque Revival in the United States.²⁶ These buildings ushered in a long period when the Romanesque Revival was popular not only for ecclesiastical designs, but also for a wide variety of brick or stone municipal buildings, hospitals, schools, commercial, and large residential buildings, well into the early decades of the twentieth century. Many Bird's Eye views of California cities from the late 1800s illustrate the widespread use of the Romanesque Revival in the urban landscape.

Romanesque Revival as a Choice by Congregationalists

In response to the rise and popularity of Gothic Revival in the United States, "...non-liturgical denominations, led by the Congregational Church, began a thoughtful critical search for a style which would suit their own particular modes of worship."²⁷ The American Congregationalists published *A Book of Plans for Churches and Parsonages* in 1853 in which many of the designs were the medieval-inspired Romanesque Revival. The authors of the book acknowledged that the popular Gothic Revival with its side chapels, piers, developed chancels, and elaborate details was not suited for the less liturgical denominations where a premium was placed on being able to see and hear clearly.²⁸

The Romanesque Revival was a logical choice since it was a response to the popularity of the medieval and the picturesque, but it was also simpler than the Gothic in its restrained ornamentation. In addition, the Romanesque style was a departure from the austere exteriors of Puritan meeting halls, but the interiors could still maintain many of the church

²⁴ In addition to the Romanesque, the Gothic was also extremely popular in the nineteenth century and inspired its own Gothic Revival picturesque style.

²⁵ Kathleen Curran, "The German *Rundbogenstil* and Reflections on the American Round-Arched Style," *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians*, VII (December, 1988), 370-73.

²⁶ American Religious Buildings: The Romanesque Revival" NY Landmarks Conservancy, *Common Bond*, Vol 13, no. 1 May 1997.

²⁷ Gwen W. Steege, "The Book of Plans and the Earthly Romanesque Revival in the United States: A Study in Architectural Patronage," *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians*, XLVI (September, 1987), 215-227.

²⁸ Liturgical denominations such as Roman Catholic and Episcopal during that time preferred a developed chancel and long nave for their liturgies.

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traditions that emphasized preaching, reading, and the development of a rich choral and musical tradition. Consequently, the Romanesque was also considered more adaptable to a centralized or auditorium plan that supported this kind of worship. There is an 1853 example in the *Book of Plans* that combines a Romanesque exterior with an auditorium plan, reminiscent of interiors of Puritan Congregational meeting houses, with its emphasis on a central pulpit and the omission of a chancel and elaborate altar.²⁹

It is also notable that the Congregational *Book of Plans* of 1853, encouraged the congregations to employ professional architects to promote "...convenience, economy, and good taste..."³⁰ with stained and varnished woodwork, carpeting, cushioned pews, walls with stenciling, and other comforts of the home. There was an emphasis on furnishings that were associated with domestic appointments of the period. There was this dictum that the church interiors were to be as well decorated as the homes of the parishioners. "Good taste was so allied with religion that church membership was thought to be increased or decreased by the quality or appropriate 'taste' of the architecture."³¹ An outgrowth of this emphasis was also the incorporation into the church complex of support and administrative spaces that indeed were also furnished comfortably in "good taste."

As though directly following the recommendations of the *Book of Plans*, the interior of First Congregational exhibits professionally designed spaces, artistic interiors, well-crafted furnishings, and a comfortable and inviting facility. In fact, Henry M. Patterson and Evan Joseph Mackay incorporated many of these recommendations into the church interior. The floors are carpeted, and they sloped downward toward the front. The mahogany pews curve gently toward the central platform. The entire auditorium was designed for the service that emphasized preaching and music as major components. This attention to artistic interiors extended also to the Administration Wing with modern 1914 light fixtures, Arts and Crafts fireplaces with tile work, and polished wood finishes, all crafted to create a highly sophisticated and refined "domestic" space.

Henry Martin Patterson (1856-1928)

Born in Savannah, Ohio, Henry Patterson began his architectural practice in Butte, Montana in 1881. While there, he designed over 35 commercial, institutional, and residential buildings, many of which are now included in the Butte-Anaconda National Historic Landmark District.³² One of these, First Presbyterian Church of 1896, a large red brick Gothic Revival building, is still standing.

In 1902, Patterson moved to Los Angeles and quickly became known for his church designs.³³ One of his first church commissions in the Los Angeles area was the First Christian Church of Rialto in San Bernardino County. This is a small wood frame Craftsman-style church constructed in 1907. Although most of the features are Craftsman, the major church windows are either pointed or Tudor Gothic in style. This church is listed in the National Register of Historic Places.³⁴

Until his death in 1928, Patterson designed at least thirteen more churches,³⁵ including the First Congregational Church of Long Beach, one of his largest commissions and his only one in the Romanesque Revival style. Some of his other commissions included the First Friends Church of Whittier of 1917, the First Presbyterian Church of Hollywood of 1923, the First Congregational Church of Pasadena, an early English Gothic Revival built in 1921, and Immanuel Presbyterian of Los Angeles, built in 1928, designed with Chancey F. Skilling. Among other works, he also designed the Washington Theater of Pasadena, several hotels and apartment buildings in Los Angeles and Long Beach, and the J. B. Merrill Craftsman-style house in the Mount Washington area of Los Angeles, listed as a Los Angeles landmark in 1990.³⁶

Like most successful architects of the early twentieth century, Henry Patterson used the Period Revival picturesque styles for his southern California churches. Although many of his church commissions were the popular simplified Gothic Revival, he was skilled in designing a wide variety of styles, reflecting the popular taste for European-inspired buildings. First

²⁹ Steege, 227.

³⁰ Ibid, 215.

³¹ Ibid, 225.

³² Derek Strahn, USDI/NPS Registration Form 10-900, 24.

³³ "Obituary." *The Architect and Engineer*, The American Institute of Architects, November, 1928.

³⁴ Janet Hansen, USDI/NPS Registration Form 10-900.

³⁵ See Figure 10.

³⁶ "Architects and Builders." (J.B. Merrill House), *Los Angeles Times*, October 10, 1909.

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Congregational Church is a particularly fine example of his ability to evoke the Romanesque Revival while incorporating modern technology and building materials of the day.

First Congregational is also an excellent example of Patterson's architectural skill in adapting the Romanesque Revival exterior to an auditorium-type interior. Patterson cleverly acknowledged the large spacious centralized interior by designing identical north and east gabled façades. At the same time, he also allowed the church to be seen as a typical Romanesque design when viewed from either the north or east. This is made possible by the placement of the tall tower on the corner interrupting the two primary sides. Most of the time the viewer sees one side or the other. Patterson also skillfully avoided making either the north or east side the main entrance. Instead he used the typical Romanesque triple arches to frame the three art glass windows on both sides, retaining the similarity on both sides. The main entrance to the complex is through the base of the tower.

Joseph Evan Mackay (1863-1938)

Joseph Mackay moved to the United States in 1881 from Scotland, and by 1893 was working with Tiffany Glass and Decorating Company. By the late 1890s, he moved to Chicago and worked there as a mosaic window manufacturer. Some of his early commissions included a 1900 floral art glass window for the United Church of Hyde Park and a 1902 memorial window for the Mare Island Naval Shipyard Chapel. By that time he had a studio in San Francisco and is credited with the art glass windows for St. Luke's Church in San Francisco. Around 1904 he designed the art glass windows for the Stanford Memorial Chapel, destroyed a short time later in the 1906 Earthquake. In 1905 he moved his art glass studio to Los Angeles where he lived the rest of his life. In 1914 he received the large commission for First Congregational not only for the art glass windows, but also for the interior decorating as well.³⁷ He died in 1938.³⁸

Growth of Churches in Early Twentieth Century Long Beach

The years around the turn of the century in Long Beach, was a time when religious congregations were experiencing overflowing growth, precipitating the replacement of their earlier smaller and simpler pioneer churches that had been built when the congregations first established themselves. This was a pattern that occurred in most towns and with most mainstream denominations.

The present-day First Congregational Church of Long Beach is a good example of the kind of church building that congregations financed and built after they had transitioned from their early pioneer days with simple frame "boxes". These churches evolved into their mature phase of development with a large population of church-goers and their members often included the wealthy entrepreneurs and businessmen in town. They embarked on ambitious capital campaigns, and invested their resources into making sure the buildings were well constructed, were highly visible in the community, and incorporated the finest materials and artistic components such as exquisite stained glass and awe-inspiring interior spaces.

What also marked this time period was the simultaneous growth of multiple denominations. It has been noted that this is one of the characteristics of the development of ecclesiastical architecture in the United States that differs from other countries with an established state religion.³⁹ Here a variety of congregations built their churches at the same time, resulting in many large capacity churches using different types of programs, spatial plans, and of course stylistic choices. Long Beach was no exception with its proliferation of large church buildings for the mainstream congregations.

By 1914, when the population was 30,000, 37 churches had been built in Long Beach, many of them quite large and like First Congregational, had replaced earlier, smaller buildings.⁴⁰ For example, St. Anthony Roman Catholic Church began in a small building in 1902, but soon needed a larger facility by 1914, so they built a large brick Gothic Revival edifice (no longer standing), similar in size to the present-day First Congregational.

The importance and prominence of churches in the downtown during that time is clearly illustrated in a 1913 annotated map of Long Beach when the population was 30,000.⁴¹ Many churches were densely clustered around City Hall. Of the churches standing in 1914, only four survive today. The former St. Anthony's (1902) and Church of St. John the Baptist,

³⁷ *Minutes of the Building Committee 1913 – 1914*, 24; See Figure 10.

³⁸ H-Net: Humanities and Social Sciences Online. "Network on Architectural Stained Glass." Accessed May 4, 2012.

³⁹ Andrew Dolkert, "Preserving, Protecting Sacred Sites," New York Landmarks Conservancy.

⁴⁰ Louise H. Ivers, *Long Beach, A History Through Its Architecture*, 10-15.

⁴¹ See Figure 1.

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(1899) are small and from the first period of church building. First Congregational (1914) and the former First Church of Christ Scientist (1913) are larger from the second period of building. Most of the Long Beach church buildings present during that time of explosive growth in the first decade of the twentieth century have disappeared from the streetscape. Some of the churches that were lost illustrated the multiplicity of design styles: First Christian Church was Neo-Classical, First Baptist Church of Long Beach (1906) was Tudor Revival, First Presbyterian Church was Gothic Revival, and Saint Lukes's Episcopal Church (1900) was Mission Revival. First Congregational is one of the last remaining early twentieth century churches still standing in Long Beach.⁴²

Not yet dwarfed by later multi-story concrete residential and commercial buildings, the large churches of that era dominated the cityscape. These buildings, some referencing medieval prototypes such as Gothic, Romanesque, or Byzantine, or some Neo-Classical or Renaissance Revival, were often located on corners to increase their visibility. They were an important and integral part of the city, offering to the community their services and contributions. Most were large halls with round or pointed arched windows, bell towers, and ceremonial entrance doors. While the exteriors were various styles, the interiors often reflected the early twentieth century in structure, plan, use, and appointments.

To summarize, Patterson designed First Congregational Church of Long Beach in the picturesque Romanesque Revival. Most of the major design elements of that style are present in the church building, skillfully combined with modern building materials of steel and concrete. In fact, this is the style that Congregationalists had endorsed 60 years earlier as a way to distance themselves from the high church aesthetic of the Gothic Revival while retaining that strong association with picturesque ecclesiastical building campaigns.⁴³

Although picturesque, it is simpler, economical, and more restrained than the Gothic Revival, and as such appealed to the congregation's particular needs of a comfortable, modern, facility. This facility was accommodated in one large building that included support services and a worship area that could accommodate a large number of people who could all see and hear the services and be inspired by the program and the artistic and inspiring interior. It was clearly constructed by and for a congregation that figured prominently in the lives of people in Long Beach during the early twentieth century and continues to provide a visual anchor for the community today while contributing to the architectural heritage of that community with its high level of historic integrity.

Developmental history/additional historic context information (if appropriate)

Early Development of Long Beach and First Congregational Church of Long Beach

Long Beach, like any city, has its own timeline of settlement and development, experiencing growth and prosperity at various times, depending to a large extent on natural resources, transportation, and industry. This cycle of growth precipitated the establishment and expansion of institutions and services. Some of the most important community resources during this early settlement and growth era were its churches, as illustrated in the development of Long Beach.

In 1885, there were scattered houses, the Long Beach Hotel, and the settlement's first church building, a Methodist Tabernacle, several blocks from the beach.⁴⁴ The population of the town at that time was less than 500, with the boundaries and speculative lots amounting to 4000 acres carved out of the more than 25,000 acres of Rancho Los Cerritos, owned by Margaret and Jotham Bixby. The members of the Bixby family were among the earliest and most important Long Beach pioneers and were very instrumental in the development of the city, the congregation of First Congregational, and the construction and funding of successive church buildings, culminating in the present one.

The Bixbys lived at the adobe Rancho Los Cerritos from 1867 until 1881 when they moved to Los Angeles. They returned to Long Beach in 1885 to a home overlooking the ocean. They built Cerritos Hall, the town's first public building, where the present church is located today and only four blocks from their new home. It was used not only for Sunday church services presented by traveling ministers, but, in the New England tradition, its use was extended to other denominations and the community for town events. On January 25, 1888, A.J. Wells charged a small committee lead by Margaret Bixby to develop a theology and mission for a new church. On March 21, 1888, The First Congregational Church of Long Beach

⁴² Louise H. Ivers, *Long Beach, A History Through Its Architecture*, 11-15.

⁴³ Gwen W. Steege, "The Book of Plans and the Earthly Romanesque," 215-227.

⁴⁴ Walter H. Case, *History of Long Beach and Vicinity*, 459-61.

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was incorporated, and Cerritos Hall was renamed to reflect that milestone.⁴⁵ During this month of March, Long Beach was also incorporated as a city.

In 1897, the major port for the city of Los Angeles was established at San Pedro, adjacent to Long Beach.⁴⁶ So many jobs were created that the city was unable to construct enough housing. Tent cities were created to accommodate the influx of workers.⁴⁷ The influx of people, land developers, the establishment of hospitality services, businesses, community organizations, and especially churches, defined Long Beach during this period. By 1902 the congregation had grown to a few hundred members and a second church, designed by Henry F. Starbuck, replaced the first church structure previously known as Cerritos Hall. However, the congregation of First Congregational had no idea what the next few years would bring to the city. According to the US Census of 1910, in the first decade of the twentieth century, Long Beach grew 690%, the fastest growing city in the country. Like many other congregations in Long Beach, First Congregational outgrew its church building.

In 1912, the church selected Henry M. Patterson of Los Angeles as the architect.⁴⁸ In October 1913 the building committee, chaired by Henry Barbour, was formed.⁴⁹ C.T. McGrew, a prominent Long Beach contractor, was chosen to manage the construction. The committee chose Joseph Evan Mackay of Los Angeles as the interior decorator, designer and manufacturer of the art glass windows.⁵⁰

Originally the building was expected to cost \$85,000, with \$35,000 pledged by the elderly Bixbys, but the final cost totaled \$165,000 (about \$3.8 million dollars today). The financial contributions and support of the Bixby family enabled the church to engage the services of professional designers with expertise in church design, art glass, and interior furnishings. Honoring his contributions to the church, Jotham was selected to lay the cornerstone on his 83rd birthday, January 20, 1914.⁵¹

When First Congregational Church of Long Beach was completed in 1914, the newspapers called it the largest and finest example of Romanesque Revival in the entire Los Angeles area.⁵² In 1915, the congregation published a booklet of photographs of the church, both exterior and interior, with descriptions that especially showcased the art glass windows designed by Joseph Evan Mackay. In addition, the Church paid particular attention to photographing the Administration Wing, placing value on these support spaces. These spaces were considered very important not only for the congregants but also as a means to attract new members. This is consistent with the ideas set forth in the *Book of Plans* referred to earlier. Not only did the worship area need to be beautiful and well appointed, but the gathering spaces elsewhere needed to be furnished comfortably and tastefully, too.

In 1918, the west rose window was dedicated to Margaret and Jotham Bixby with a new central medallion indicating such (the original medallion of the "eternal knot" was moved to the north rose window).⁵³ The following year, a baptismal font and memorial chimes were dedicated in memory of Richard Loynes,⁵⁴ the founder of the first industry in Long Beach, a brick works.

⁴⁵ See Figure 2 and Faith Annette Sand, editor, *A Tower of Faith in the Heart of the City*.

⁴⁶ Walter H. Case, *History of Long Beach and Vicinity*, 459-61.

⁴⁷ Larry L. Meyer, and Patricia L. Kalayjian, *Long Beach: Fortune's Harbor*, 53.

⁴⁸ "Will Follow Italian Lines: Long Beach Church to Breathe Romanesque Spirit; Graceful Campanile Tower," *Los Angeles Times*, October, 20, 1912.

⁴⁹ Henry Barbour, was an attorney and part owner of the Los Angeles Dock and Terminal. Also on the committee was Jotham Bixby's nephew, Llewellyn Bixby, the restorer of the adobe house of Rancho Los Cerritos (National Register listed, 1970).

⁵⁰ *Minutes of the Building Committee 1913 - 1914*, 24.

⁵¹ "Industrial Progress: Shipping and Grain...", *Los Angeles Times*, Jan 21, 1914.

⁵² "Will Follow Italian Lines...", *Los Angeles Times*, October, 20, 1912; "Largest Church in Southland." *Los Angeles Times*, December 25, 1914; Other notable Southern California Romanesque Revival churches designed by other architects built during the early twentieth century include: St. John's Cathedral, an Episcopal church built in 1925; the Second Baptist Church of Los Angeles, built in 1926 and listed in the National Register of Historic Places; and Wilshire Christian Church built in 1927.

⁵³ Henry Kendall Booth, *Vesper Service in Dedication of the Rose Window to Mr. And Mrs. Jotham Bixby*, (Long Beach, CA: FCCLB, March 3, 1918).

⁵⁴ Henry Kendall Booth, *Service of Dedication Richard Loynes Memorial Baptismal Font and Richard Loynes Memorial Chimes*, (Long Beach, CA: FCCLB, November 30, 1919).

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In 1924, First Congregational again expanded. Architect Henry Patterson designed a two story building, designated Pilgrim Hall, attached to the south side of the church. This served the growing congregation with added classrooms and large gathering spaces. By the 1930s, the congregation numbered over 3,000, making it the fourth largest Congregational church community in the country.⁵⁵

Today, the church and the congregation are an important part of the community, offering many programs and facilities for its members and for the Long Beach community at large. Its presence in downtown Long Beach continues to contribute to the streetscape, as acknowledged by its listing as a local historic landmark February 20, 1979.

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First Congregational Church of Long Beach
Name of Property

Los Angeles, California
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First Congregational Church of Long Beach
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Hangen, Emerson G. "The First Congregational Church of Long Beach 1888 – 1988" (unpublished manuscript, 1987).

Church Pamphlets, Printings, Architectural Plans, and Maps Located in First Congregational Church of Long Beach Archives

Anderson, Stewart Leroy. *Service of Dedication of the Henry Kendall Booth Memorial Chapel*. Long Beach: First Congregational Church of Long Beach, June 4, 1944.

First Congregational Church of Long Beach
Name of Property

Los Angeles, California
County and State

Booth, Henry Kendall. *The Congregational Church of Long Beach Anno Domini 1914 (Guidebook) dedicated to Mr. And Mrs. Jotham Bixby, Sr.* Long Beach: First Congregational Church of Long Beach, 1914. Printed by The Neuner Co., Photos by Loryea.

_____. *Vesper Service in Dedication of the Rose Window to Mr. And Mrs. Jotham Bixby.* Long Beach: First Congregational Church of Long Beach. March 3, 1918.

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Thiele, N.W. *Architectural plans for repairs with hand written notes detailing technique.* 1933.

Thurston, Albert G. *Map – Long Beach, The Delight of the Pacific.* Pasadena: Albert G. Thurston, 1933.

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

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

Primary location of additional data:

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

Name of repository: First Congregational Church of Long Beach Archives

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property Less than one acre
(Do not include previously listed resource acreage.)

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1 _____
Zone Easting Northing

3 _____
Zone Easting Northing

2 _____
Zone Easting Northing

4 _____
Zone Easting Northing

First Congregational Church of Long Beach
Name of Property

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Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

Property is situated between Third Avenue to the north, West Maple Way to the south, North Cedar Avenue to the east and North Del Rey Court to the west.

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

Surrounding streets.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Robert Kalayjian, Marianne Hurley, Cara Varnell
organization First Congregational Church of Long Beach date 02/05/2011; Revised May 2012
street & number 241 Cedar Avenue telephone (562) 754-5334
city or town Long Beach state CA zip code 90802
e-mail robkal@me.com (Kalayjian), marianne.hurley@sbcglobal.net (Hurley), carav3@verizon.net (Varnell)

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **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. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Continuation Sheets**
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items.)

Photographs:

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map.

Name of Property: First Congregational Church of Long Beach

City or Vicinity: Long Beach

County: Los Angeles

State: California

Photographer: Robert Kalayjian, MD

Date Photographed: 02/05/2011 and 05/06/2012

Description of Photograph(s) and number:

Photo #1 of 22 (CA_Los Angeles County_First Congregational Church of Long Beach_0001)
East façade (left), north elevation (right) and central tower, camera facing southwest. Photographed 05/06/2012.

First Congregational Church of Long Beach
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Photo #2 of 22 (CA_Los Angeles County_First Congregational Church of Long Beach_0002)
East façade, main entrance, camera facing west. Photographed 02/05/2011.

Photo #3 of 22 (CA_Los Angeles County_First Congregational Church of Long Beach_0003)
East façade, camera facing west. Photographed 02/05/2011.

Photo #4 of 22 (CA_Los Angeles County_First Congregational Church of Long Beach_0004)
East façade, upper section, camera facing west. Photographed 02/05/2011.

Photo #5 of 22 (CA_Los Angeles County_First Congregational Church of Long Beach_0005)
East façade, lower section, camera facing west. Photographed 02/05/2011.

Photo #6 of 22 (CA_Los Angeles County_First Congregational Church of Long Beach_0006)
East façade, south entrance, camera facing west. Photographed 02/05/2011.

Photo #7 of 22 (CA_Los Angeles County_First Congregational Church of Long Beach_0007)
North façade, camera facing south. Photographed 05/07/2012.

Photo #8 of 22 (CA_Los Angeles County_First Congregational Church of Long Beach_0008)
North façade, upper section, camera facing south. Photographed 05/07/2012.

Photo #9 of 22 (CA_Los Angeles County_First Congregational Church of Long Beach_0009)
North façade, camera facing southwest. Photographed 05/07/2012.

Photo #10 of 22 (CA_Los Angeles County_First Congregational Church of Long Beach_0010)
North façade, camera facing south. Photographed 05/07/2012.

Photo #11 of 22 (CA_Los Angeles County_First Congregational Church of Long Beach_0011)
Interior, foyer, camera facing east by northeast. Photographed 02/05/2011.

Photo #12 of 22 (CA_Los Angeles County_First Congregational Church of Long Beach_0012)
Interior, foyer, camera facing southeast. Photographed 02/05/2011.

Photo #13 of 22 (CA_Los Angeles County_First Congregational Church of Long Beach_0013)
Interior, main auditorium, viewed from balcony, camera facing south. Photographed 02/05/2011.

Photo #14 of 22 (CA_Los Angeles County_First Congregational Church of Long Beach_0014)
Interior, main auditorium, viewed from balcony, camera facing southeast. Photographed 02/05/2011.

Photo #15 of 22 (CA_Los Angeles County_First Congregational Church of Long Beach_0015)
Interior, main auditorium, viewed from chancel platform, camera facing north. Photographed 02/05/2011.

Photo #16 of 22 (CA_Los Angeles County_First Congregational Church of Long Beach_0016)
Interior, rose window, camera facing east. Photographed 02/05/2011.

Photo #17 of 22 (CA_Los Angeles County_First Congregational Church of Long Beach_0017)
Interior, ground floor, camera facing east. Photographed 02/05/2011.

Photo #18 of 22 (CA_Los Angeles County_First Congregational Church of Long Beach_0018)
Interior, ceiling skylight, camera facing southwest. Photographed 05/07/2012.

Photo #19 of 22 (CA_Los Angeles County_First Congregational Church of Long Beach_0019)
Interior, administration wing, camera facing northwest. Photographed 05/07/2012.

Photo #20 of 22 (CA_Los Angeles County_First Congregational Church of Long Beach_0020)
Interior, administration wing, camera facing northwest. Photographed 02/05/2011.

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Photo #21 of 22 (CA_Los Angeles County_First Congregational Church of Long Beach_0021)
Interior, administration wing, camera facing northwest. Photographed 02/05/2011.

Photo #22 of 22 (CA_Los Angeles County_First Congregational Church of Long Beach_0022)
Interior, basement, camera facing southwest. Photographed 05/07/2012.

Property Owner:

(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name First Congregational Church of Long Beach, Rev. Jerald Stinson, Senior Minister
street & number 241 Cedar Avenue telephone (562) 436-2256 ext. 230
city or town Long Beach state CA zip code 90802

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.460 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18 hours per response including 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 Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.

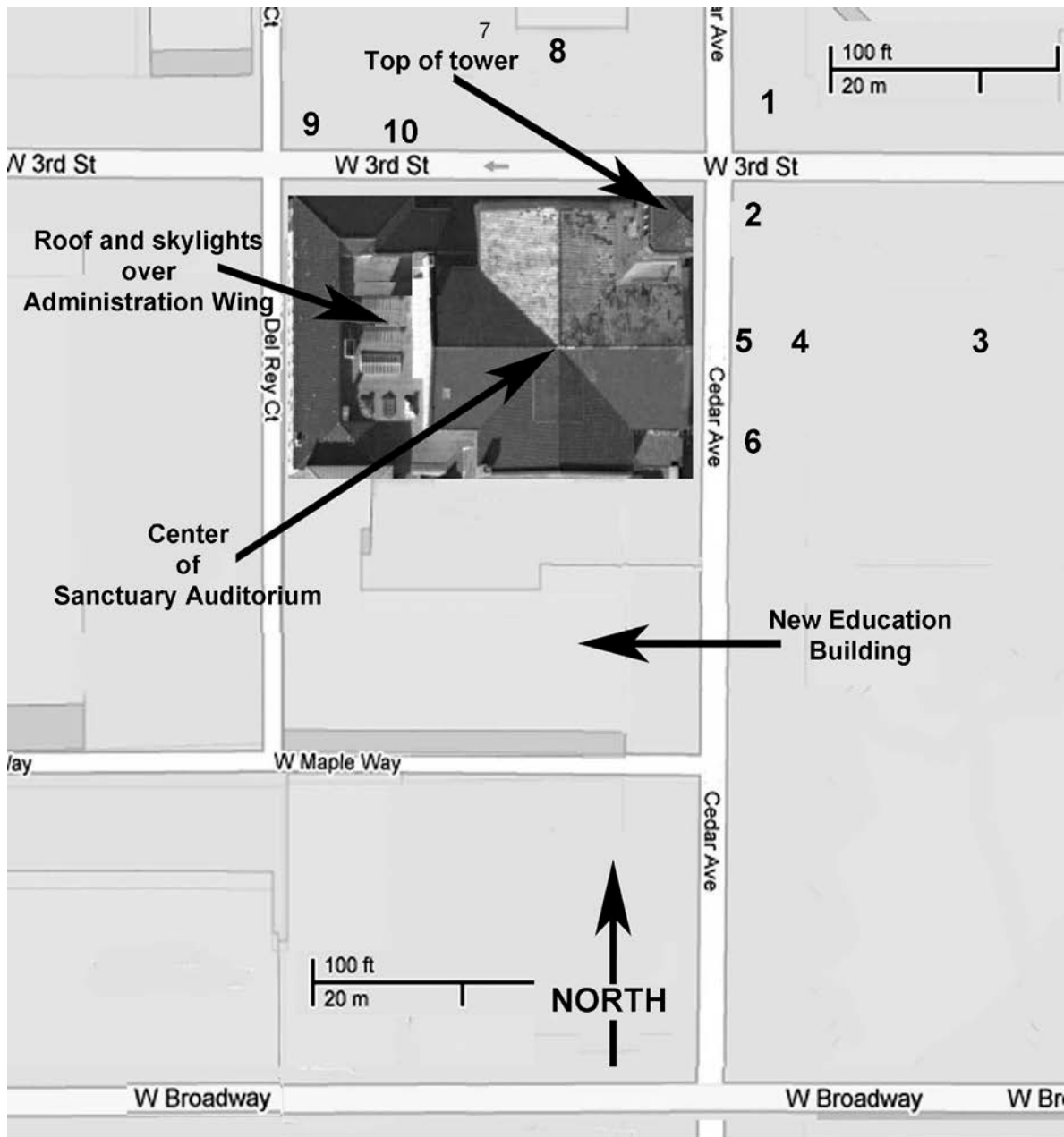
United States Department of the Interior
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Section number AD Page 1

Sketch map – Exterior



Google Maps composite showing location of church.
Numbers indicate location of photographs.

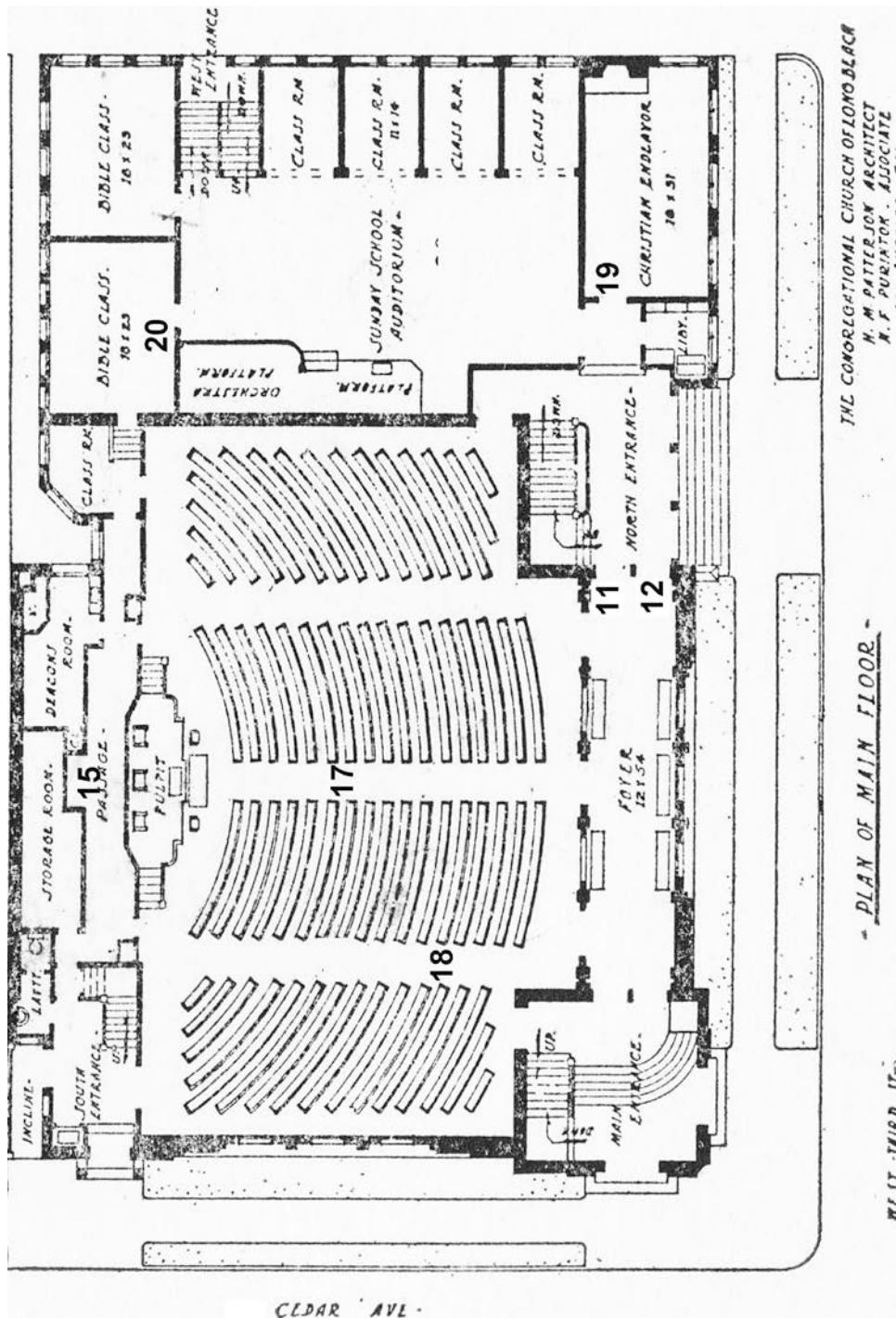
United States Department of the Interior
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Sketch map – Main Floor



Floor plan of Main Floor.
Numbers indicate location of photographs.
Loyea, Photo Album of First Congregational Church, Presented to Margaret and Jotham Bixby, 1915.

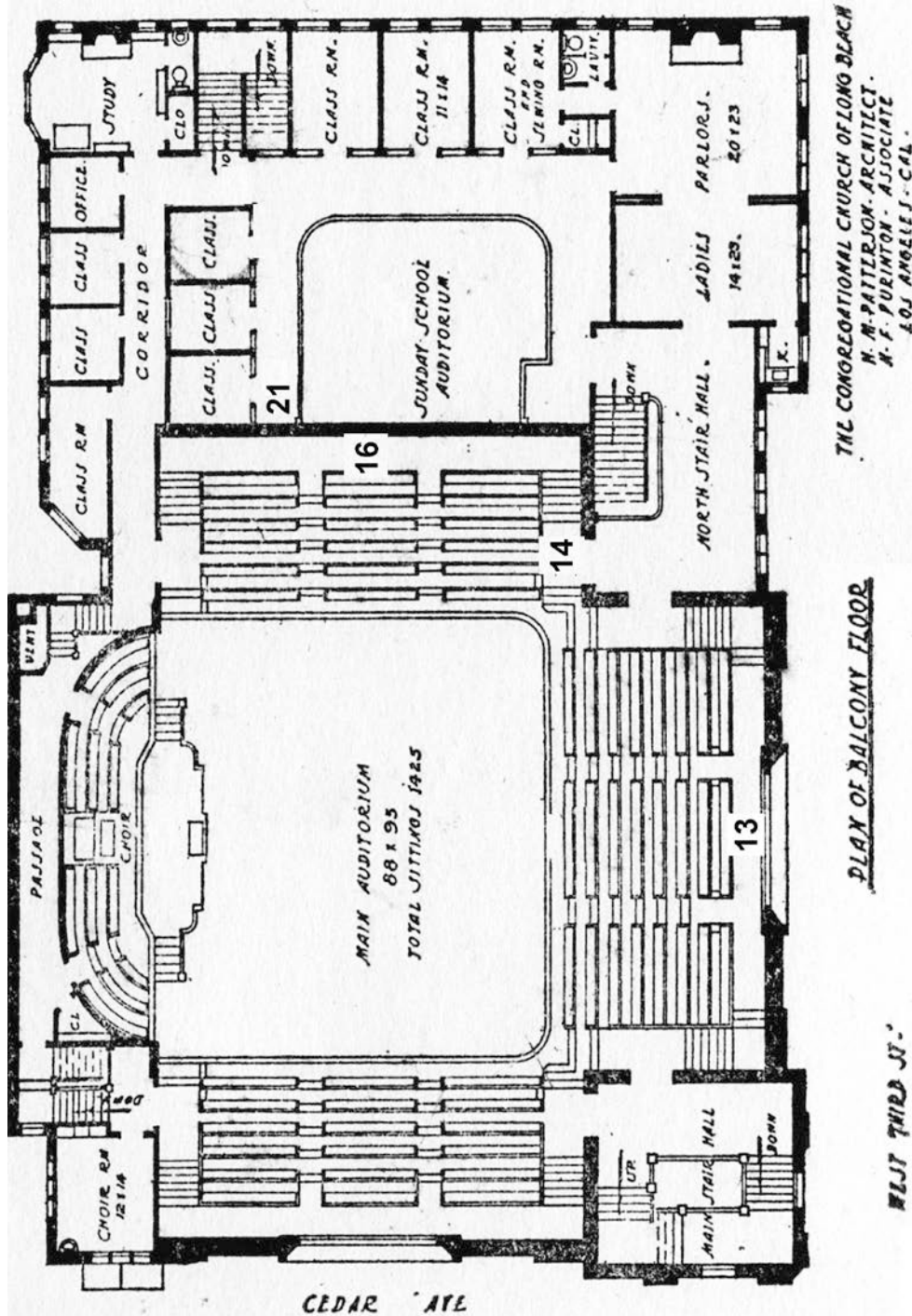
Sketch map – Balcony Floor

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Floorplan of Balcony Floor.
 Numbers indicate location of photographs.
 Loryea, Photo Album of First Congregational Church, Presented to Margaret and Jotham Bixby, 1915.

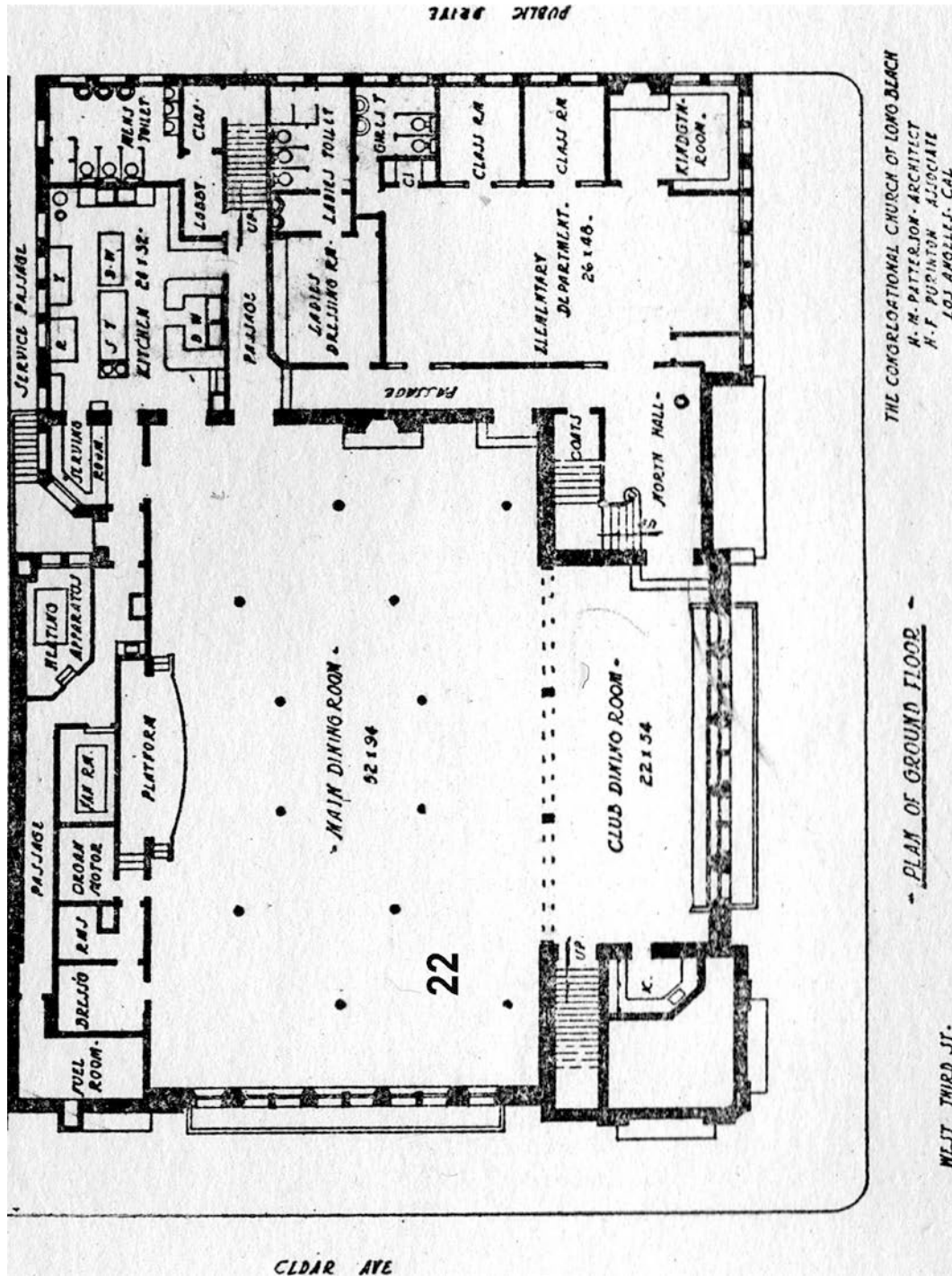
Sketch map – Ground Floor

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Floorplan of Ground Floor.
 Number indicates location of photograph.
 Loryea, Photo Album of First Congregational Church, Presented to Margaret and Jotham Bixby, 1915.

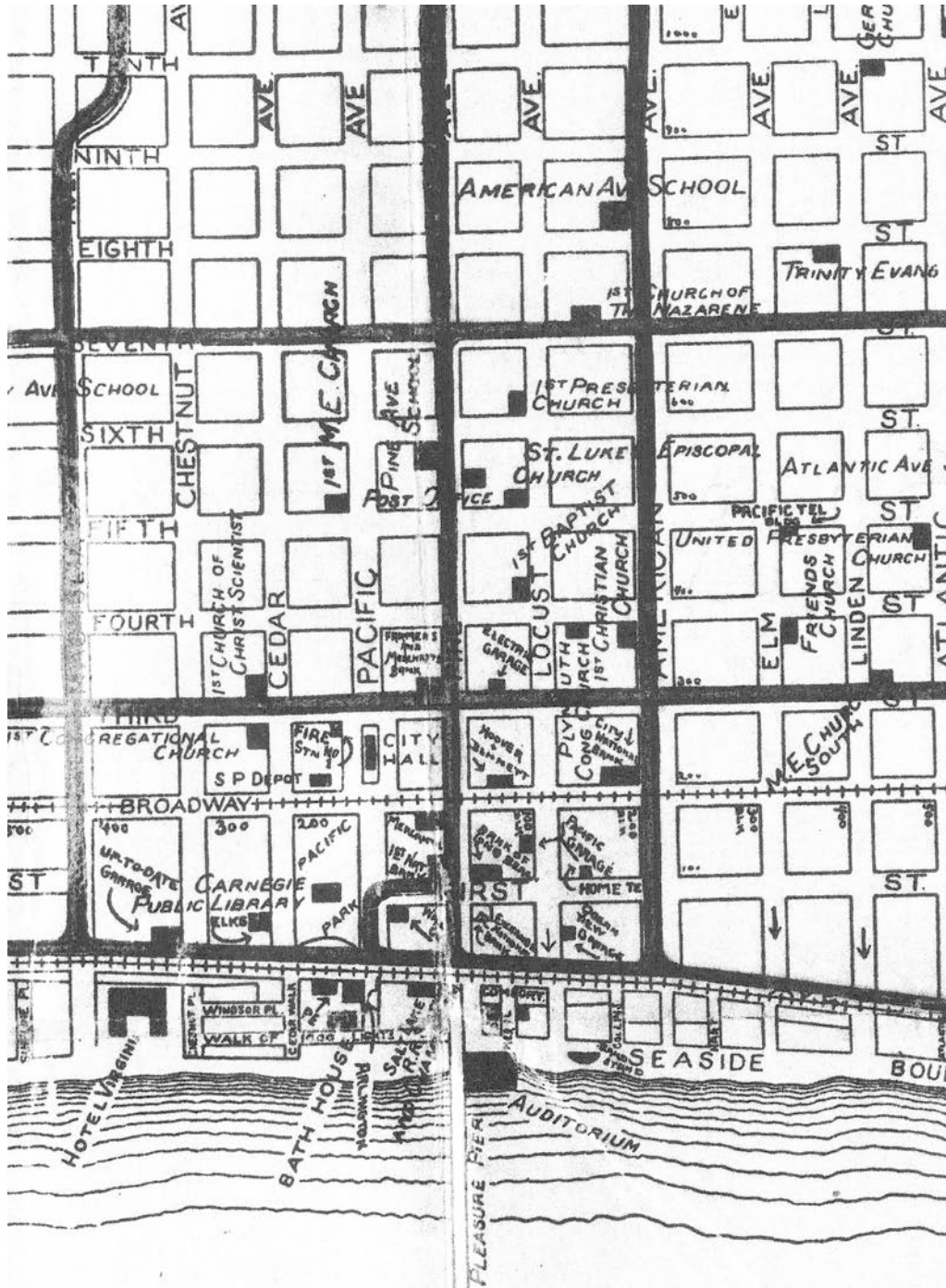
Figure 1

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1913 Map - Downtown Long Beach shows location of many churches, City Hall, the Carnegie Library, Hotel Virginia, the Pleasure Pier, the Auditorium, and adjacent Bath House.
 Albert G. Thurston, Map - Long Beach, The Delight of the Pacific. Pasadena: Albert G. Thurston, 1933.

Figure 2

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

**National Register of Historic Places
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First Congregational Church of Long Beach

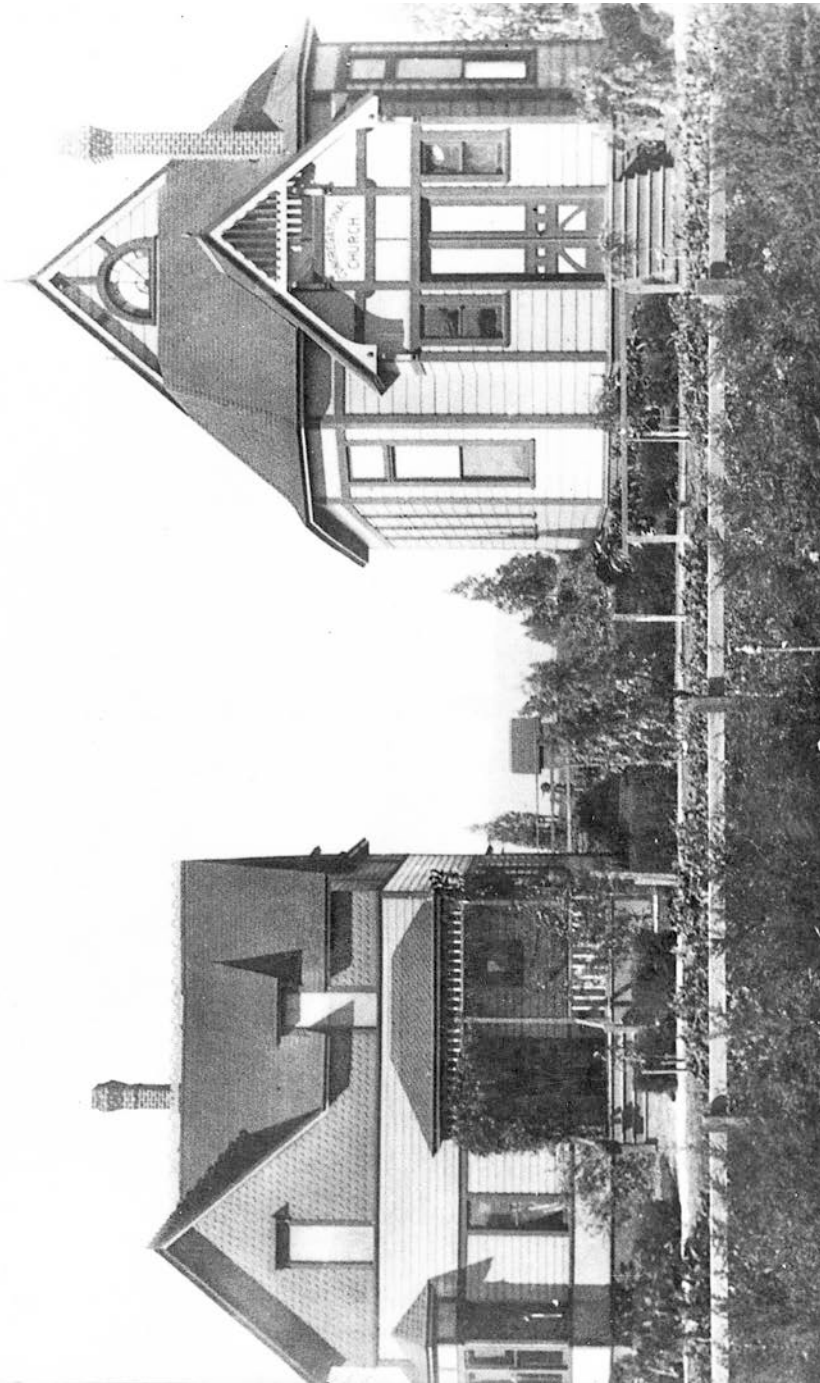
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West Third Street and Cedar Avenue circa 1890 showing Cerritos Hall renamed The First Congregational Church of Long Beach (right). The parsonage (left), built in 1888, was moved for construction of the 1914 church and is at 640 Pacific Avenue today.

Source: Historical Society of Long Beach.

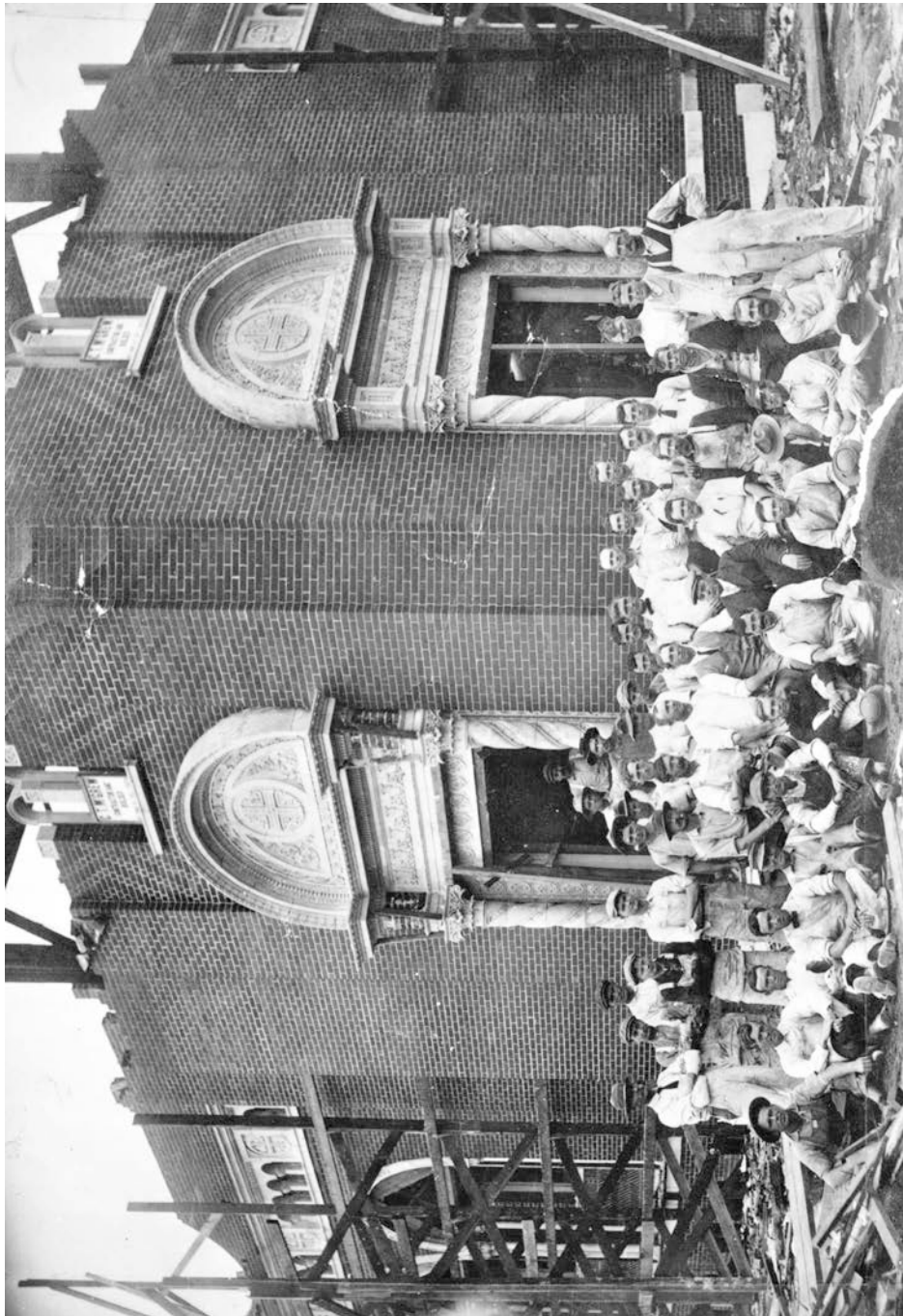
Figure 3

United States Department of the Interior
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Construction site at West Third Street and Cedar Avenue circa 1914. The cornerstone was laid on January 23, 1914, the church was completed by November, and dedicated on December 28, 1914. Note the steel girders at the base of the tower.
Source: Long Beach Public Library Digital Archives.

Figure 4

United States Department of the Interior
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First Congregational Church of Long Beach in 1915.
Loryea, *Photo Album of First Congregational Church*, Presented to Margaret and Jotham Bixby, 1915.

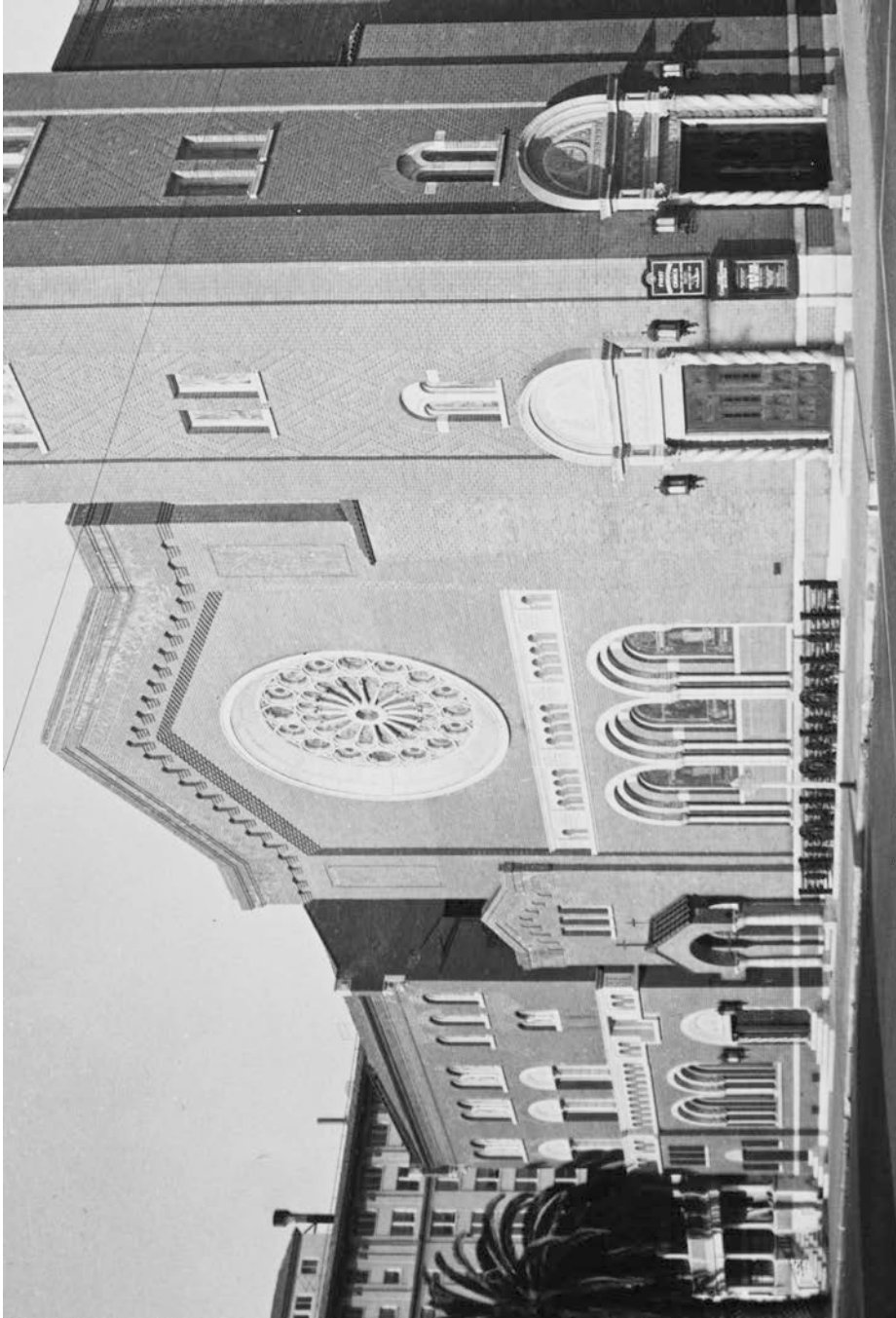
Figure 5

**United States Department of the Interior
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First Congregational Church of Long Beach circa 1944 showing Pilgrim Hall to the left of the South Entrance to the sanctuary auditorium. This provided additional education and meeting rooms, was designed by H.M. Patterson, and built in 1925.
Source: First Congregational Church of Long Beach Archives.

Figure 6

United States Department of the Interior
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Foyer viewed from Main Entrance showing groin vaults and stenciling, and the three stained and leaded glass windows by Joseph Evan Mackay on the north wall. Compare to Photograph #11. Loyea, *Photo Album of First Congregational Church*, Presented to Margaret and Jotham Bixby, 1915.

Figure 7

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Sanctuary auditorium in 1915 showing original Harris organ and configuration of choir loft. Also shown are the pulpit with matching table below and the three large high-backed chairs behind. These elements remain in use today.
Loyea, *Photo Album of First Congregational Church*, Presented to Margaret and Jotham Bixby, 1915.

Figure 8

**United States Department of the Interior
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Pastor's Study located on the second floor in the southwest corner of the Administration Wing. Note design for comfort and casual character of furnishings. Loryea, *Photo Album of First Congregational Church*, Presented to Margaret and Jotham Bixby, 1915.

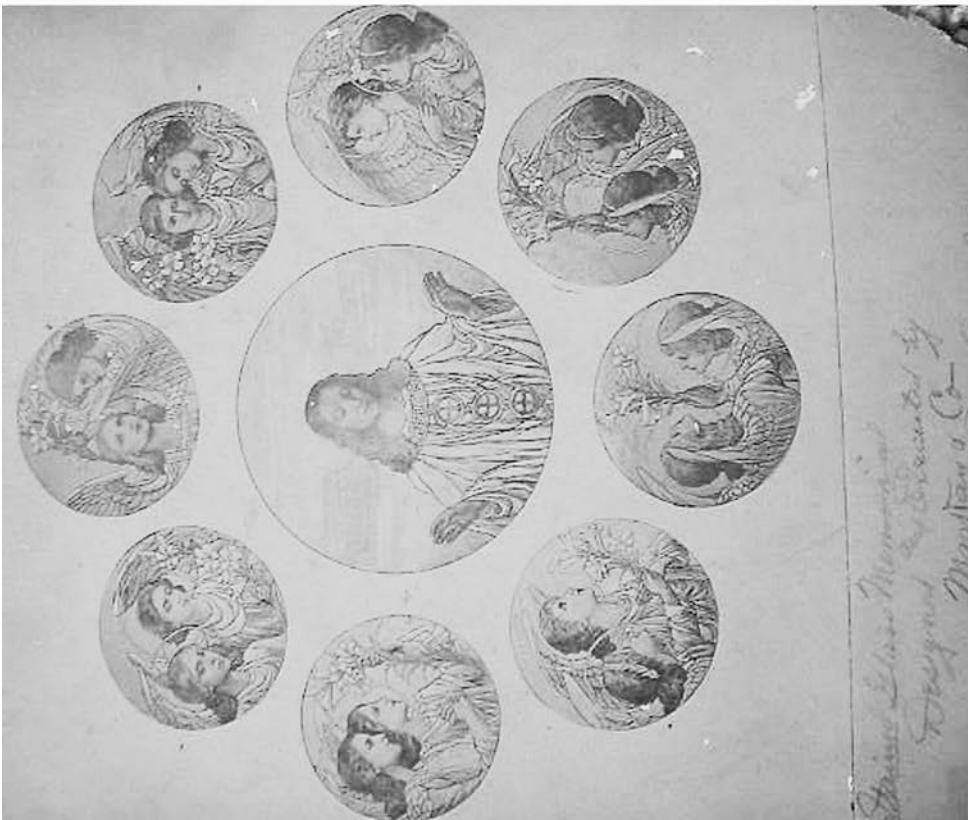
Figure 9

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First Congregational Church of Long Beach
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Composite showing pencil sketch for a rose window by Joseph Mackay Studios of Los Angeles (left) compared to closeup photos of two "medallions" from the 5 & 7 o'clock position of the east rose window (right) corroborates Mackay as glass artist. Sketch source: H-Net: Humanities and Social Sciences Online. "Network on Architectural Stained Glass." Medallions photographed on February 5, 2011

Figure 10

United States Department of the Interior
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First Congregational Church of Long Beach
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NOTE: all properties listed below followed by an asterisk are referenced in the Bibliography under Newspapers as a *Los Angeles Times* article on the date design was published.

Grand View Presbyterian Church – Addition of Chapel, Sunday School Rooms and Dining Room, Los Angeles. Design published: November 20, 1904; Style: Gothic Revival, status: unknown.*

Westlake Presbyterian Church on Grandview, Los Angeles. Design published: March 24, 1907; Style: Gothic Revival, status: unknown.*

First Christian Church of Rialto, Built: 1907; Style: Craftsman with Gothic windows, status: extant and listed in the National Register of Historic Places, 2003.⁵⁸

J.B. Merrill House, Los Angeles, Constructed: 1909; Style: Craftsman, status: Los Angeles Landmark, 1990.*⁵⁹

Hotel at 6th and Flower, Los Angeles. Design published: April 3, 1910, Style: Modern/Commercial, status: unknown.*

Apartments at 2nd and Flower, Los Angeles. Design published: July 17, 1910; Style: Modern/Commercial, status: unknown.*

Nine story hotel design, Long Beach. Plans announced: July 17, 1910; Style: Modern/Commercial, status: never completed.*

Santa Ana Presbyterian Church, Design published: July 23, 1911; Style: Neo-Classical, status: used as commercial space, condition: good.*

Presbyterian Church of Orange, Design published: February 18, 1912; Style: Gothic Revival, status: unknown.*

Presbyterian Mission School for Spanish Girls, Boyle Heights district of Los Angeles. Design published: September 14, 1913; Style: Mission, status: unknown.*

Glendora Methodist Episcopal Church, Design published October 5, 1913; Style: Gothic Revival, status: used as a church and in good condition.*

First Congregational Church of Long Beach, Design published: October 20, 1912; Constructed: 1914, Style: Romanesque Revival, status: City Landmark.*

Whittier Friends Church, Constructed: 1917; Style: Collegiate Gothic Revival, status: Demolished in 1970s due to excessive cost to earthquake retrofit.⁶⁰

First Presbyterian Church, Imperial, Design published: March 27, 1917; Style: Craftsman/Mission, status: unknown.*

First Methodist Church of Hemet, Design published: November 16, 1919; Style: Neo-Classic, status: unknown.*

⁵⁸ Janet Hansen, USDI/NPS Registration Form 10-900 – First Christian Church of Rialto.

⁵⁹ List of Los Angeles Historic-Cultural Monuments in Downtown Los Angeles.

⁶⁰ Personal communication with Whittier Friends Church, who provided photo.

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First Congregational Church of Long Beach ----- Name of Property Los Angeles, California ----- County and State ----- Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

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Washington Theater, Pasadena, Constructed: 1923-24; Style: Modern/Commercial, status: extant.⁶¹

Hollywood Presbyterian Church, Design published: July 15, 1923; Style: Gothic Revival, status: in use as a church.*

Union Church, Los Angeles, Constructed: 1923; Style: Neo Classical, status: listed as Los Angeles Historic-Cultural Monument, houses Union Center for the Arts.⁶²

First Congregational Church of Pasadena, Constructed: 1924; Style: Gothic Revival, status: in use as a church.⁶³

Emanuel Presbyterian Church, Los Angeles, Design published December 20, 1925; Constructed: 1928, Style: Gothic Revival, status: in use as a church.

⁶¹ Pacific Coast Architecture Database.

⁶² List of Los Angeles Historic-Cultural Monuments in Downtown Los Angeles.

⁶³ Pacific Coast Architecture Database.