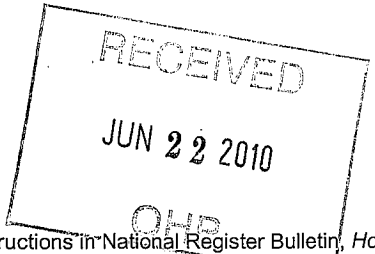


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United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

DRAFT



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 (NPS Form 10-900a).

1. Name of Property

Historic name Chapel of the Transfiguration

Other names/site number Saint Nicholas Episcopal Church Outdoor Chapel

2. Location

street & number 855 West Lake Blvd. not for publication

city of town Tahoe City vicinity

State California code CA county Placer code 061 zip code 96145-0855

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 _____ Date _____

Title _____ State or Federal agency and bureau _____

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

Signature of commenting official _____ Date _____

Title _____ State or Federal agency and bureau _____

4. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is: Signature of the Keeper _____ Date of Action _____

___ 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:) _____

Name of Property

County and State

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.)

- Ownership options: private, public - Local, public - State, public - Federal, private

- Category options: building(s), district, site, structure, building(s), object

Table with 2 columns: Contributing, Noncontributing. Rows for buildings, sites, structures, Objects, buildings, 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)

Other: Rustic

foundation: Stone, walls: Stone, wood, glass, roof: Wood, other:

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

The Chapel of the Transfiguration is a small rustic style chapel with a rectangular floor plan of approximately 35 feet wide by 26 feet deep. The steep gabled roof comprises one half of the building height, which is approximately 35 feet tall. The chapel consists exclusively of sanctuary and chancel. It is built in the rustic style with massive rubble rock walls and long wood framework with open-timbered ends. The roof is finished with wood shingles and the foundation is built of fieldstone. The interior of the chapel is the same rubble rock walls and open-timbered supports. The Chapel of the Transfiguration is situated in a forest of pines and cedars just off of Highway 89 about a mile south of Tahoe City at Lake Tahoe. The Chapel of the Transfiguration has not changed in appearance since its constructed in 1909 and has been in continuous use as a chapel ever since then. The congregation is seated outside of the chapel on benches/pews in a grove of pines facing the broad opening of the chancel. The chapel is in excellent condition and has had almost no alterations since its construction.

Narrative Description

The Chapel of The Transfiguration, better known as the Outdoor Chapel, was built in 1909 and was the first church built at Tahoe City, Lake Tahoe. The chapel is approximately one mile south of Tahoe City along Highway 89 (also known as West Lake Blvd.) on the northwestern shore of Lake Tahoe. Elevation at the chapel is approximately 6250 feet above sea level.

The setting of The Outdoor Chapel is wooded and peaceful. The giant pine and cedar trees and a rock wall built in 1944 (which honors the men and women who served in the Armed Forces during World War II) separate the chapel from Highway 89.

The Chapel of the Transfiguration is a small simple building of approximately 676 square feet. The building is symmetrical and rectangular in plan. The masterfully executed rubble stone masonry wall of rough, native stones of irregular shapes and sizes are laid in a reinforced concrete mortar. The stones for the building were gathered on site. The rubble stone walls are reinforced on all four corners with rubble stone buttresses that are 3 ½ feet wider at the bottom than at the top. The steep pitched gable roof contributes a substantial amount to the building's character. The roof is finished with wood shingles. The remainder of the structure is wood frame construction using native peeled logs. The peeled logs are the same diameter as the surrounding pine trees.

The front facade of the chapel faces towards the west. The walls are rubble stone with a broad rectangular opening of approximately 12 feet tall by 19 feet wide. Large wood plank doors are used as shutters in the winter to close this entrance and keep the snow out. In the summer the doors are always open. All attaching hardware appears to be original. The front of the chapel is framed with large peeled native logs. The triangle shaped upper section of the façade is wood framed amber glass. There are 44 panes of glass framed by wood. Most of the panes are 10 inch squares. At the apex of the windowed wall is a multicolored stain glass window depicting a chalice and baptismal shells. The exaggerated eave extends out a few feet from the building's front wall which has outlookers that extend out beyond the sheltering roof. A wood celtic cross of approximately 4 feet in height stands on the apex of the roof.

The side elevations of the chapel face north and south and are identical. The walls are built of rubble stone and toward the back of the chapel on the two sides are 3 stone steps that lead to wooden doors. The doors open up from the outside into the sanctuary. All attaching hardware appears to be original.

The back elevation of the church faces toward the east. The lower section of the wall is rubble stone with two windows in the shape of pointed arches that are approximately 2 ½ feet wide by 5 feet high. The windows consist of six 10 inch square wood framed amber colored window panes and 2 triangular panes. The upper section of the wall is constructed of wood plank boards and has two smaller pointed arch windows with 4 panes of wood framed amber colored glass.

The interior of the chapel consists of only two rooms – the chancel and sanctuary. The chancel is approximately 26 feet wide by 20 feet deep. Exposed log columns and roof trusses in the chancel give the building a particularly rustic feeling.

Name of Property

County and State

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.
[X] 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.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

Religion

Period of Significance

1909

Significant Dates

1909

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above)

Cultural Affiliation

Architect/Builder

Architects: Bliss, Walter and Faville, William

Builders: Watson, Robert Montgomery and

Watson, Robert Howard

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply)

Property is:

- [X] 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.

Period of Significance (justification)

1909 - Year of construction.

Criteria Considerations (explanation, if necessary)

National Register Criterion Consideration A: Religious Properties, applies because the Chapel of the Transfiguration is a religious property. The Chapel meets the requirements of criterion A because it derives its significance from its architecture.

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

The Chapel of the Transfiguration is of national significance in architecture because it is a prime example of rustic architecture. Rustic is a style which through the use of native materials puts an emphasis on harmony with the natural surroundings. Rustic architecture replaced the use of known and accepted architectural styles with excessive ornamentation. The rustic style was created by the natural-feeling forms and materials that tied the structure with its environment. The chapel built in 1909 was a forerunner to the rustic architecture encouraged by the National Park Service in the 1920's and 1930's. Rustic buildings became the trademark of the National Park Service architecture. The Chapel of the Transfiguration was built to harmonize with the natural environment using indigenous materials of native rocks and logs. The stones were dug out of the nearby mountainsides and the logs from trees in the surrounding forest.

Narrative Statement of Significance (provide at least one paragraph for each area of significance)

The idea of a church in Tahoe City was first mentioned in The Sacramento Missionary in March 1903 by Bishop William Hall Moreland of the Episcopal Missionary District of Sacramento. Bishop Moreland was in awe of the physical beauty of the area and wanted the church to reflect that natural beauty.

The D.L. Bliss family donated the original two acres of land for the building of the chapel. Duane Leroy Bliss was a 19th Century timber and mining magnate who first realized the potential of tourism in the Lake Tahoe Basin. He formed the Lake Tahoe Railway and Transportation Company and built the elegant and famous Tahoe Tavern in Tahoe City.

The architects for the chapel were Walter Danforth Bliss and William Baker Faville of San Francisco. Walter Bliss was D.L. Bliss' son and designer of the Tahoe Tavern. During Bliss and Faville's career, the firm built several significant San Francisco buildings including the St. Francis Hotel and the Bank of California. Bliss and Faville met at MIT and had both been employed in New York at McKim, Mead, and White, which had designed Shingle Style homes. The Shingle Style on the East Coast developed into the San Francisco Bay Region tradition of architecture when members of this group, including Bliss and Faville, settled around San Francisco. The San Francisco Bay Region Tradition, which began in the late 1800's, sought to protect the natural beauty by harmonizing with the landscape. Bliss and Faville were undoubtedly influenced by this architecture when they designed The Chapel of the Transfiguration.

Under direction of Bliss and Faville, Robert Montgomery Watson and his son Robert Howard Watson built The Outdoor Chapel in the summer of 1909. The elder Watson was one of the early settlers of Lake Tahoe, coming to Tahoe City in 1875. He was appointed as the Tahoe area's first constable in 1904. He supplemented this livelihood with work as a builder. The rustic building materials of The Outdoor Chapel are very similar to those of the Watson Cabin in Tahoe City, California, which was built the same year 1909, by the same builders, Robert M. Watson and his son Robert H. Watson. The Watson Cabin was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 1979 (Building #79000518, 560 North Lake Blvd. Tahoe City, CA). The Chapel of the Transfiguration and the Watson Cabin are the oldest buildings built on-site in Tahoe City.

The Chapel of the Transfiguration was the first church built at Tahoe City Lake Tahoe. The chapel's strong, rustic character and intimate connection to its surrounding make it a gem of rustic architecture. The natural materials harmonized the building with its setting. The stones, quarried locally, match portions of the surrounding geology. The logs are the same size as the surrounding pines. The rough stonework and the large logs emphasize the connection to nature, which gives the chapel a rustic honesty and informality characteristic of rustic architecture.

Name of Property

County and State

Developmental history/additional historic context information (if appropriate)

Lake Tahoe is a large freshwater lake in the Sierra Nevada Mountains. It is located along the border between California and Nevada west of Carson City, Nevada. Lake Tahoe is the largest alpine lake in North America and the second deepest after Crater Lake in Oregon. Lt. John C. Fremont was the first non-indigenous person to see Lake Tahoe on February 14, 1844.

Upon discovery of gold in the South Fork of the American River in 1848 thousands of gold seekers going west passed near the basin on their way to the gold fields. In 1858 the Comstock Lode, a silver deposit, just 15 miles to the east in Virginia City, Nevada was discovered. From 1858 until 1890 logging in the Lake Tahoe Basin supplied large timbers to shore up the underground workings of the Comstock mines. The logging was so extensive that loggers cut down almost all of the native forest.

D.L. Bliss founded the Carson and Tahoe Lumber and Fluming Company. He eventually controlled every facet of the business. By the 1890's the decline of the Basin's lumber industry was closing mills. The Bliss Family whose extensive interests had dominated the Glenbrook (and the Basin) economy had wisely spared the magnificent stand of trees around the Lake Outlet at Tahoe City. It was to this location that they began to move the structures and materials, which would be the basis of their new operations.

This new endeavor would be in the realm of tourism. The Bliss Family's plan called for the construction of a hotel to rival any in the country. To do this D.L. Bliss had to build a railway to connect Tahoe with Central Pacific's line at Truckee, CA. With the completion of the railroad in 1900 work immediately started on the Tahoe Tavern. It had its grand opening in June of 1901. The Tavern was a grand hotel and the showplace of Tahoe. People from all over the world came to see Lake Tahoe and many stayed at the Tahoe Tavern.

In 1908 the Bliss family donated two acres of land half a mile south of Tahoe Tavern to the Episcopal Church for the construction of an outdoor chapel. The construction of the Chapel of the Transfiguration took place during the summer of 1909. Robert M. Watson and his youngest son, Robert H. Watson, built the chapel; made out of native rock and trees. Many people who stayed at the Tahoe Tavern visited the outdoor chapel. Wedding would be held in the Chapel and elegant receptions would be held at the Tavern. In addition to the few year round residents, the summer congregation of the Chapel also included many families from the San Francisco Bay area and others from across the country who visited the lake during the summer months

Unfortunately the Tahoe Tavern was demolished in 1969 and condominiums were built on its footprint, but the Chapel of the Transfiguration continues to welcome visitors just as it did back in 1909.

9. Major Bibliographical References

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

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

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

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other
- Name of repository: _____

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): _____

Name of Property _____

County and State _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 3.78 acres
 (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

Verbal Boundary Description (describe the boundaries of the property)

Assessor's Map Book 83 Page 17 Lot 1, County of Placer, CA
 See attached map.

Boundary Justification (explain why the boundaries were selected)

The nominated property includes the parcel historically associated with the Chapel of the Transfiguration.

11. Form Prepared Byname/title Nancy Gotschallorganization St. Nicholas Episcopal Churchdate August 9, 2009street & number Box 42, 213 Vista Pines Circletelephone (530) 546-4100city or town Tahoe Vistastate CAzip code 96148-0042e-mail Manysmiles28@yahoo.com**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)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Chapel of the Transfiguration

Name of Property

Placer County, CA

County and State

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number 7 Page 1 of 1

DESCRIPTION (continued)

The floor is flagstone and mortar. Three very large stone steps lead up to the rubble stone altar which is 8 feet wide by 3 feet deep and situated at the back of the chancel. The back wall of the chancel is rubble stone and has a wooden door on the left side of the altar that leads into the sanctuary.

The sanctuary is a small room in the rear of the chapel . It is approximately 26 feet wide by 6 feet deep. The sanctuary is spilt in half by a wooden wall that is 7 feet in height and has a door in the middle. The floor is made of wood planks and the walls are rubble stone set in mortar. There is a loft in the sanctuary for storage.

The Chapel of the Transfiguration has had no alterations to the original building. Electric power was installed in the chapel in 1937 when the old bellows-type organ was replaced by a new Hammond electric organ. A long carved wooden plaque above the chapel entrance with the words "Chapel of the Transfiguration 1909" was added in 1984. Copper caps on the outlookers were added in 2005 to protect the wood from the snow. The benches/pews that the congregation sit on outside of the chapel have been replaced a few times. The latest replacement was completed in June 2009 when Gus Gotschall took on the demolition of the old benches and construction of new benches, for his Boy Scout Eagle Project, in conjunction with the centennial anniversary of the Chapel of theTransfiguration. (This nomination is for the Chapel only and does not include the benches.)

The Outdoor Chapel is owned by the Episcopal Diocese of Northern California and is part of Saint Nicholas Episcopal Church. The church is approximately 175 yards from the chapel. The Outdoor Chapel is used for Saint Nicholas' summer services. In the winter services are moved back into the church as the grounds surrounding the chapel are covered in snow.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Chapel of the Transfiguration

Name of Property

Placer County, CA

County and State

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number 9 Page 1 of 1

Bibliography

Freudenheim, Leslie Mandelson and Elisabeth Sacks Sussman. Building with Nature: Roots of the San Francisco Bay Region Tradition. Santa Barbara, CA: Peregrine Smith, Inc., 1974.

Hathaway, Julia Quinan (1993). "The Ten-Acre Site." Unpublished Masters Thesis. University of Nevada, Reno, NV.

Larson, Sara and the North Lake Tahoe Historical Society. Postcard History Series Lake Tahoe. Charleston, SC: Arcadia Publishing, 2008.

Moreland, Rev. William H "The Missionary District of Sacramento" The Sacramento Missionary March 1903

Scott, Edward B. The Saga of Lake Tahoe. Crystal Bay, NV: Sierra-Tahoe Publishing Company, 1957.

Stollery, David J. Tales of Tahoe. Sparks, NV: Western Printing and Publishing Company, 1979

Van Etten, Carol. Tahoe City Yesterdays. Tahoe City, CA: Sierra Maritime Publications, 1987.

Photographs:

Submit clear and descriptive black and white 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: Chapel of the Transfiguration

City or Vicinity: Tahoe City

County: Placer

State: CA

sdfsdf

Photographer: Nancy Gotschall

Date Photographed: July 12, 2009

Description of Photograph(s) and number: Front façade and west side elevation, looking east.

1 of 14

Name of Property: Chapel of the Transfiguration

City or Vicinity: Tahoe City

County: Placer

State: CA

Photographer: Nancy Gotschall

Date Photographed: July 12, 2009

Description of Photograph and number: Front façade and westside elevation, looking east.

2 of 14

Name of Property: Chapel of the Transfiguration

City or Vicinity: Tahoe City

County: Placer

State: CA

Photographer: Nancy Gotschall

Date Photographed: July 12, 2009

Description of Photograph and number: South side elevation, looking north.

3 of 14

Name of Property

County and State

Name of Property: Chapel of the Transfiguration

City or Vicinity: Tahoe City

County: Placer

State: CA

Photographer: Nancy Gotschall

Date Photographed: July 12, 2009

Description of Photograph and number: Back of chapel, east side elevation, looking west.

4 of 14

Name of Property: Chapel of the Transfiguration

City: Tahoe City

State: CA

County: Placer

Photographer: Nancy Gotschall

Date Photographed: July 12, 2009

Description of Photograph and number: Detail of wooden sign added in 1984 on front façade and west side elevation, looking east.

5 of 14

Name of Property: Chapel of the Transfiguration

City: Tahoe City

State: CA

County: Placer

Photographer: Nancy Gotschall

Date Photographed: July 12, 2009

Description of Photograph and number: Detail of amber colored window panes on the front façade, looking west from inside the chapel.

6 of 14

Name of Property: Chapel of the Transfiguration

City: Tahoe City

State: CA

County: Placer

Photographer: Nancy Gotschall

Date Photographed: July 12, 2009

Description of Photograph and number: Detail of the rubble stone wall above the altar inside the chapel, looking east.

7 of 14

Name of Property

County and State

Name of Property: Chapel of the Transfiguration

City: Tahoe City

State: CA

County: Placer

Photographer: Nancy Gotschall

Date Photographed: July 12, 2009

Description of Photograph and number: Detail of door in sanctuary that leads outside to south side elevation, looking south.

8 of 14

Name of Property: Chapel of the Transfiguration

City: Tahoe City

State: CA

County: Placer

Photographer: Unknown

Date Photographed: 1909

Description of Photograph and Number: Copy of historical postcard. Front façade and west side elevation, looking east.

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Name of Property: Chapel of the Transfiguration

City: Tahoe City

State: CA

County: Placer

Photographer: Nancy Gotschall

Date Photographed: July 12, 2009

Description of Photograph and Number: Front façade and westside elevation, looking east.

10 of 14

Name of Property: Chapel of the Transfiguration

City: Tahoe City

State: CA

County: Placer

Photographer: Nancy Gotschall

Date Photographed: July 12, 2009

Description of Photograph and Number: Front façade and west side elevation, looking east

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Name of Property

County and State

Name of Property: Chapel of the Transfiguration

City : Tahoe City

State: CA

County: Placer

Photographer: Nancy Gotschall

Date Photographed: July 12, 2009

Description of Photograph and Number: Front façade and west side elevation, looking east.

12 of 14

Name of Property: Chapel of the Transfiguration

City: Tahoe City

State: CA

County: Placer

Photographer: Nancy Gotschall

Date Photographed: July 12, 2009

Description of Photograph and Number: Detail of roof inside chapel chancel, looking north.

13 of 14

Name of Property: Chapel of the Transfiguration

City: Tahoe City

State: CA

County: Placer

Photographer: Nancy Gotschall

Date Photographed: July 12, 2009

Description of Photograph and Number: North side wall of chancel, looking north from inside the chapel. Door leading into sanctuary.

14 of 14

Property Owner:

Protestant Episcopal Bishop

P.O. Box 50

Tahoe City, CA 96145-0050

(530) 583-4713

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 Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, PO Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.