

**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.

**DRAFT**

**1. Name of Property**

Historic name: First Church of Christ Scientist

Other names/site number: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of related multiple property listing:  
The Architecture of Albert Frey

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

**2. Location**

Street & number: 605 South Riverside Drive

City or town: Palm Springs State: CA County: Riverside

Not For Publication:  Vicinity:

**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**

Applicable National Register Criteria:

\_\_\_ **A**      \_\_\_ **B**      \_\_\_ **C**      \_\_\_ **D**

<p>_____ <b>Signature of certifying official/Title:</b></p> <p>_____ <b>State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government</b></p>	<p>_____ <b>Date</b></p>
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<p>In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register criteria.</p>	
<p>_____ <b>Signature of commenting official:</b></p> <p>_____ <b>Title :</b></p>	<p>_____ <b>Date</b></p> <p>_____ <b>State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government</b></p>

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#### 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:) \_\_\_\_\_

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Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

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#### 5. Classification

##### Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply.)

- Private:
- Public – Local
- Public – State
- Public – Federal

##### Category of Property

(Check only **one** box.)

- Building(s)
- District
- Site
- Structure
- Object

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**Number of Resources within Property**

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	buildings
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	sites
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	structures
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	objects
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

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**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

RELIGION/religious facility

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**Current Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

RELIGION/religious facility

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## 7. Description

### Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

MODERN MOVEMENT

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**Materials:** (enter categories from instructions.)

Principal exterior materials of the property: CONCRETE BLOCK, METAL, WOOD,  
STUCCO, GLASS

### Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance and condition of the property. Describe contributing and noncontributing resources if applicable. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, type, style, method of construction, setting, size, and significant features. Indicate whether the property has historic integrity.)

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### Summary Paragraph

The First Church of Christ Scientist is located on the west end of a block consisting of one- and two-story apartment buildings, small hotels, and another church building. The area is isolated from the main thoroughfare of South Palm Canyon Drive by a large, vacant parcel of land to the west, and the generally dry Tahquitz River to the north. Constructed in 1956, the one-story church building is modest in size, exhibiting architectural elements associated with the work of Albert Frey including a shed roof, deep eaves with metal fascia, sandblasted terra cotta colored concrete block construction, large windows, and slender steel posts. The building is in excellent condition and retains a high level of historic and physical integrity.

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### Narrative Description

The Palm Springs First Church of Christ Scientist was designed in 1956 by the architectural firm of Clark Frey & Chambers. The original master plan dated June 9, 1956 shows a foyer, auditorium, and a row of small office spaces behind the auditorium (**Figure 1**). In addition, a large Sunday school classroom, boardroom, and restrooms were also depicted; however, these three elements were not constructed until 1961 according to updated plans and building permits.

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In 1968, building permits confirm that a 360 square foot childcare room designed by Albert Frey was built at the rear of the building.

In terms of design, the church building exhibits key character-defining features associated with the work of Albert Frey. It is unadorned, utilitarian and constructed of sandblasted terra-cotta-colored concrete block (**Figure 2**). It features a shed roof, deep eaves, pipe support posts, metal fascia, and large plate glass north-facing windows (**Figure 3**). Stucco finish covers portions of the four elevations.

The building's distinguishing architectural element is sandblasted terra-cotta-colored concrete block arranged in a stack bond pattern. The shed roof covering the foyer and auditorium is the second most prominent element as it slopes upward toward the south with deep eaves on the west and north elevations. Clerestory windows punctuate the auditorium's west elevation beneath the shed roof. In contrast, the east elevation lacks eaves due to the presence of an interior terrarium screened by a grid of horizontal openings in a wall of concrete block. Aluminum-framed floor-to-ceiling plate glass windows and glazed entry doors distinguish the primary entrance on the north elevation, which is shaded by the main shed roof supported by slender steel posts. Stucco sheathes exterior surfaces on either side of the windows. Flat metal clads all fasciae.

A flat roofed addition constructed in 1961 is attached to what was the west elevation of the auditorium with a long hallway separating the two elements. The addition consists of two outward-stepped rectangular volumes of stack bond concrete block construction containing the restrooms and Sunday school classroom. Metal-framed windows on the west and south punctuate the latter. At the northeast corner of the church is the boardroom that was also added in 1961. Its flat-roofed rectangular volume features floor-to-ceiling, north-facing glazing and metal mullions. The addition's east elevation is of terra cotta colored concrete block arranged in a stack bond pattern identical to that of the original building. A finish of stucco was applied to the west side of the boardroom addition that originally was exposed concrete block. At the rear of the building is a small childcare room with three windows that was added in 1968. Between the Sunday school and childcare room is a narrow covered entry corridor. As noted, the 1961 additions were designed and anticipated in the 1956 plans prepared by Clark Frey & Chambers.

Similar to the exterior, the building's interior is unadorned and utilitarian. The foyer, with its wall of north-facing glazing, leads to the spacious auditorium. Wooden horizontal slats form the rear wall behind the auditorium's rostrum and serve as vents above flanking exits. Ceiling air conditioning vents that run the length of the auditorium center a pair of distinctive lapped redwood soffits with hidden recessed uplighting. The room's east wall consists of three pairs of sliding glass doors that open onto an elongated terrarium with light provided from the grid of rectangular openings within the stack bond concrete block wall. Clerestory windows provide illumination from the west.

The entirety of the north end of the boardroom is glazed with aluminum mullions. A recessed metal parapet that shields air-handling equipment on the roof above the foyer was added in 1991. Similar recessed wooden parapets atop the flat roof at the rear of the building are also not

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original to the design. The church itself centers a large asphalt parking area with a concrete sidewalk surrounding the building. Where the street curves on the north, a concrete block retaining wall forms a gravel-filled planter containing mature olive trees.

Because the building's three major additions (restrooms, Sunday school, boardroom) were designed by Clark Frey & Chambers in 1956, and the small childcare room by Albert Frey in 1968, integrity of design, materials, and workmanship remain high. The recessed non-original parapets could be easily removed and do not markedly detract from the overall design as relates to physical integrity. Because the property was commissioned by the First Church of Christ Scientist, which continues to hold services there, integrity of location, setting, and feeling remain high. As a result, the First Church of Christ Scientist is able to convey its architectural significance because the property exhibits those physical features associated with the work of Albert Frey in collaboration with John Porter Clark and Robson Chambers. These are its sandblasted terra-cotta-colored concrete block construction, shed and flat roofs, deep overhangs, metal fasciae, large plate glass windows, and pipe support posts. The building's form follows its function, eschewing ornamentation and providing no obvious historical references suggestive of a church.

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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.)

- 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

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**Areas of Significance**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

ARCHITECTURE  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Period of Significance**

1956  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Significant Dates**

1956: Initial construction  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Significant Person**

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Cultural Affiliation**

N/A  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Architect/Builder**

Frey, Albert  
Clark, John Porter  
Chambers, Robson  
\_\_\_\_\_



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**Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph** (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance, applicable criteria, justification for the period of significance, and any applicable criteria considerations.)

The First Church of Christ Scientist is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion C at the local level of significance in the area of Architecture. The property embodies the distinctive characteristics of religious architecture associated with the modern movement as interpreted by Albert Frey for the desert environment of the Coachella Valley. In addition, the property meets *The Architecture of Albert Frey* Multiple Property Submission registration requirements for religious buildings in association with the historic context “Desert Modern Design in the Coachella Valley, 1934-1965.” The property satisfies Criteria Consideration A: Religious Properties because it derives its primary significance from architectural distinction as evaluated under Criterion C. The period of significance corresponds with the building’s date of construction, 1956.

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

In his monograph on Albert Frey, scholar Joseph Rosa compiled a list of buildings and projects that Frey was responsible for designing as a firm partner or employee. The list does not include all of the works of his partnerships with Clark and Chambers; it includes only those works that were designed by Frey and not buildings designed by his partners. In the case of First Church of Christ Scientist, Rosa wrote in parentheses that the subject property was designed with Robson Chambers and does not mention John Porter Clark, who left the firm in 1957 after the initial plans were rendered. Notwithstanding the collaborative design credit, the First Church of Christ Scientist exhibits the key architectural elements Rosa associates with Albert Frey. These include its sandblasted terra-cotta-colored concrete block construction, shed and flat roofs, deep overhangs, metal fasciae, large plate glass windows, and pipe support posts.

The First Church of Christ Scientist exemplifies the distinctive characteristics of religious buildings associated with architect Albert Frey within the context “Desert modern design in the Coachella Valley 1934-1965.” The subject property is an important example of the religious building property type that maintains sufficient integrity to be readily identifiable as the work of master architect Albert Frey, in this case, in collaboration with John Porter Clark and Robson Chambers. As a result, the property meets National Register Criterion C, Criteria Consideration A, because it embodies the distinctive characteristics of religious architecture associated with Albert Frey and is the work of a master architect.

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## 9. Major Bibliographical References

**Bibliography** (Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form.)

As indicated in *The Architecture of Albert Frey* Multiple Property Documentation Form.

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### 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 of California, Santa Barbara
  - Other
- Name of repository: Palm Springs Art Museum

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): \_\_\_\_\_

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## 10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of Property Less than one acre

### Latitude/Longitude Coordinates

Datum if other than WGS84: \_\_\_\_\_  
(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

1. Latitude: 33.810067 Longitude: -116.542155

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

The nominated property is located at 605 South Riverside Drive, Palm Springs, Riverside County, California on the southeast corner of South Riverside Drive and Random Road. There is approximately 250 feet of street frontage. Its legal description is .70 ACRES M/L IN LOT 1 BLK D MB 022/076 APN: 508-191-030.

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**Boundary Justification** (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The nominated property includes the entire parcel historically associated with First Church of Christ Scientist, 605 South Riverside Drive.

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**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title: Peter Moruzzi/Architectural Historian  
organization: \_\_\_\_\_  
street & number: 2018 Griffith Park Blvd., #114  
city or town: Los Angeles state: CA zip code: 90039  
e-mail petermoruzzi@gmail.com  
telephone: 213-706-0151  
date: November 20, 2015

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**Additional Documentation**

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A **USGS map** or equivalent (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO, TPO, or FPO for any additional items.)

**Photographs**

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels (minimum), 3000x2000 preferred, at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map. Each photograph must be numbered and that number must correspond to the photograph number on the photo log. For simplicity, the name of the photographer, photo date, etc. may be listed once on the photograph log and doesn't need to be labeled on every photograph.

**Photo Log**

Name of Property: First Church of Christ Scientist  
City or Vicinity: Palm Springs  
County: Riverside  
State: California  
Photographer: Peter Moruzzi  
Date Photographed: November 4, 2015

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Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera:

- 1 of 10 CA\_Riverside County\_Frey MPS\_First Church\_0001.tif  
Context view, camera facing southeast
- 2 of 10 CA\_Riverside County\_Frey MPS\_First Church\_0002.tif  
East elevation, camera facing southwest
- 3 of 10 CA\_Riverside County\_Frey MPS\_First Church\_0003.tif  
East and south elevations, camera facing northwest
- 4 of 10 CA\_Riverside County\_Frey MPS\_First Church\_0004.tif  
Rear (south) elevation, camera facing northeast
- 5 of 10 CA\_Riverside County\_Frey MPS\_First Church\_0005.tif  
West elevation, camera facing northeast
- 6 of 10 CA\_Riverside County\_Frey MPS\_First Church\_0006.tif  
North and west elevations, camera facing east
- 7 of 10 CA\_Riverside County\_Frey MPS\_First Church\_0007.tif  
North elevation, camera facing southwest
- 8 of 10 CA\_Riverside County\_Frey MPS\_First Church\_0008.tif  
Primary (north) elevation, camera facing south
- 9 of 10 CA\_Riverside County\_Frey MPS\_First Church\_0009.tif  
Interior auditorium, camera facing south
- 10 of 10 CA\_Riverside County\_Frey MPS\_First Church\_0010.tif  
Interior boardroom, camera facing north

### Index of Figures

Figure 1. Master Plan, 1956.

Figure 2. Primary (north) and west elevations, looking southeast, 1959.

Figure 3. North and west elevations, looking southeast, 1959.

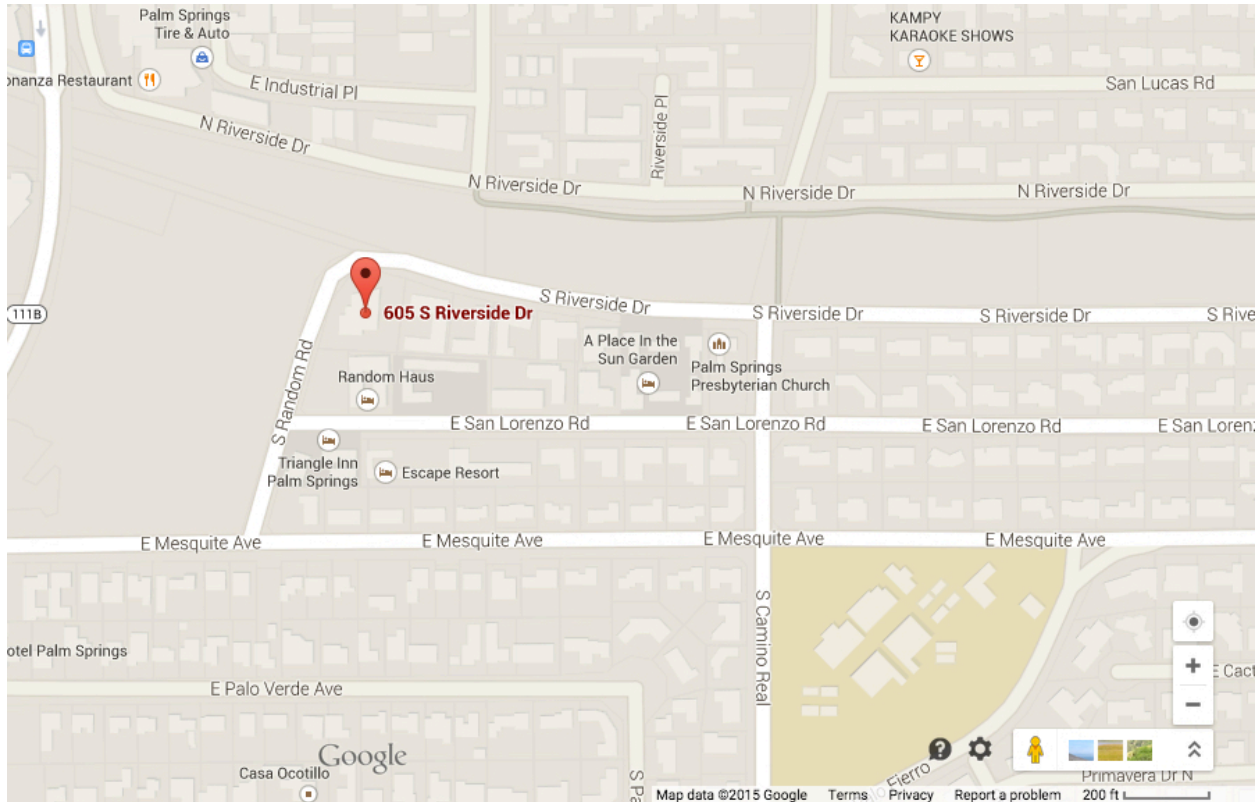
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### Location Map

Latitude: 33.810067

Longitude: -116.542155



**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 100 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,

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**Sketch Map/Photo Key**

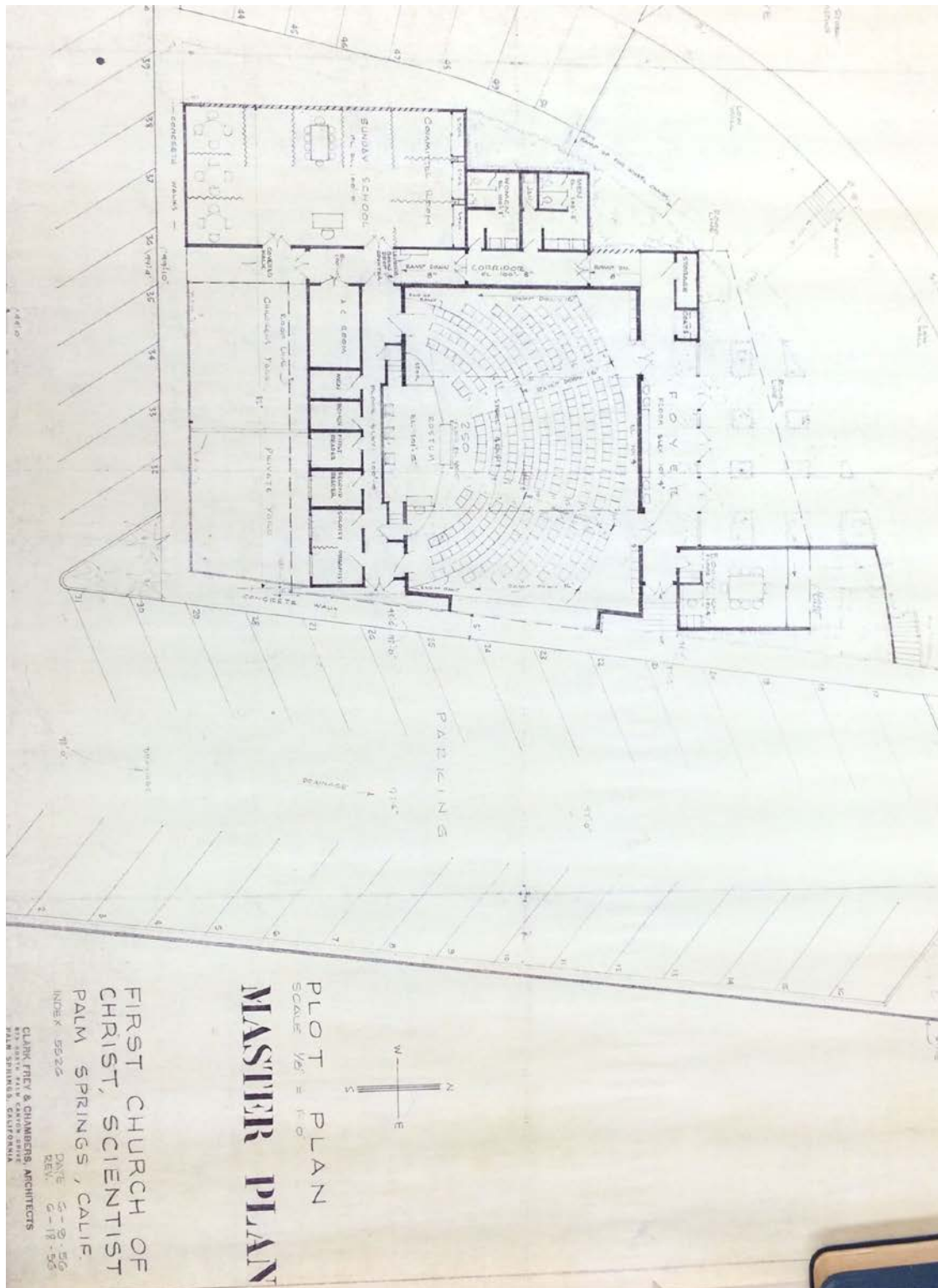


DC.

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**Figure 1.** Master Plan, 1956.



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**Figure 2.** Primary (north) and west elevations, looking southeast 1959.



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**Figure 3.** North and west elevations, looking southeast, 1959.



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