

NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK NOMINATION

NPS Form 10-900

USDI/NPS NRHP Registration Form (Rev. 8-86)

OMB No. 1024-0018

ST. STEPHEN'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH

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United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

1. NAME OF PROPERTY

Historic Name: St. Stephen's Episcopal Church

Other Name/Site Number:

2. LOCATION

Street & Number: State 45

Not for publication: \_\_

City/Town: St. Stephen's

Vicinity: \_\_

State: SC

County: Berkeley

Code: 015

Zip Code:

3. CLASSIFICATION

Ownership of Property

Private:   x  

Public-Local:     

Public-State:     

Public-Federal:     

Category of Property

Building(s):   X  

District:     

Site:     

Structure:     

Object:     

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing

  1  

    

    

    

  1  

Noncontributing

     buildings

     sites

     structures

     objects

     Total

Number of Contributing Resources Previously Listed in the National Register: \_\_

Name of Related Multiple Property Listing:

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**4. STATE/FEDERAL AGENCY CERTIFICATION**

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, 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.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Certifying Official

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal Agency and Bureau

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

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Commenting or Other Official

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal Agency and Bureau

**5. 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 Keeper

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date of Action

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**6. FUNCTION OR USE**

Historic: Religion Sub: religious facility

Current: Religion Sub: religious facility

**7. DESCRIPTION**

Architectural Classification: COLONIAL: Georgian

Materials:

Foundation:

Walls: Brick

Roof:

Other:

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**Describe Present and Historic Physical Appearance.**

St. Stephen's Church is a small one-story brick structure with a rectangular plan; the building is 46 feet or five-bays long and 36 feet or three-bays wide. The design is unusual because of the gambrel roof with Jacobean, curvilinear, parapeted gables at the ends. In order to incorporate an ornamental tray ceiling like that at St. Michael's Church in Charleston (1752-61), the high gambrel roof used here is uncommonly heavy and the Palladian window over the altar at the east end is also too small. In spite of these defects of design, the church is pleasing as a whole. The walls are laid in Flemish bond. Doors and windows have fanlights above and are topped by segmental brick arches. The windows have exterior paneled shutters and each parapeted gable has a round window in its center. The roof line is marked by a wide wooden cornice. Another distinctive feature of the exterior architecture is the use of brick Doric pilasters, of which there are six on each side and four on each end. There are three entrances, one located in the center of each long (north and south) side and one in the center of the west (narrow) gable end.

The church has a main (east-west) aisle and a cross aisle midway in the body of the church. The floor is of tile and there are 45 pews. A large gallery with pews is located at the west end. The reredos of the church are unusually impressive. On either side of the small east Palladian window, which is framed by fluted pilasters carrying a broken pediment, are taller dog-eared frames for the tablets of the Law. These frames are set between fluted pilasters supporting entablatures from which spring a higher denticulated pediment surmounting the whole window treatment. The space between the top of the window and the point of the pediment is ornamented by a gilded glory surrounding the letters IHS. The ornamented cedar pulpit is also modeled after that of St. Michael's Church.

Following the earthquake of 1886 iron rods were run through each end from front to back and from side to side, to save the building from threatened collapse. The restored structure is in good condition and is still used for religious purposes. The fabric of the church, including its interior woodwork, appear to be original.



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**State Significance of Property, and Justify Criteria, Criteria Considerations, and Areas and Periods of Significance Noted Above.**

St. Stephen's Church, erected in 1767-69, is an excellent and well-preserved example of a small, Georgian, brick, country parish church constructed on South Carolina's usual rectangular plan. The structure, however, exhibits unusual architectural pretensions, because it includes a high gambrel roof with Jacobean curvilinear gables, exterior Doric pilasters, and a ornamental tray ceiling.

By Act of Assembly in 1754 a portion of St. James Parish, Santee, established in 1706, was laid off to form St. Stephen's Parish. The first church in the new parish was a wooden building erected as a chapel of ease. In 1762 an act was passed to replace this structure with a new brick church. Construction on the existing church began in 1767 and was completed in 1769. Francis Villepontoux and A. Howard provided the brick and acted as architects; William Axson was the master mason. The initials of these men are cut into the brickwork. St. Stephen's was incorporated in 1788 and regular services were discontinued in 1808. Twice, however, the building was repaired during the 19<sup>th</sup> century and thus saved from destruction. In 1932 the church was again reopened for regular worship.

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**9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES**

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 (Specify Repository):

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**10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA**

Acreage of Property: approx. 4.59 acres

UTM References: **Zone Easting Northing**

## Verbal Boundary Description:

The boundary is in the shape of a trapezoid which includes St. Stephen's Church structure and churchyard. Starting at the northwest corner on the south edge of State Route 45 at latitude 33°24'21" N. – longitude 79°55'06" W., proceeding to the southeast along the south edge of the state road about 500 feet to the northeast corner at latitude 33°24'20" N. – longitude 79°54'57" W., continuing to the southwest about 300 feet to the southeast corner at latitude 33°24'15" N. – longitude 79°54'57" W., then going northwest about 500 feet to the southwest corner at latitude 33°24'16" N. – longitude 79°55'06" W., then returning to the northeast about 400 feet to the beginning, the northwest corner.

## Boundary Justification:

The boundary includes the building which has historically been known as St. Stephen's Episcopal Church and its churchyard that maintain their historic integrity.

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**11. FORM PREPARED BY**

Name/Title:

Address:

Telephone:

Date: December 31, 1969

Placed on the current nomination form and edited by:

Patty Henry  
National Park Service  
National Historic Landmarks Survey  
NRHE (2280)  
1849 C St., N.W.  
Washington, DC 20240

Telephone: (202) 354-2216

Date: April 15, 2005

DESIGNATED A NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK  
April 15, 1970