

Christ Church
Accokeek, Maryland

VICINITY

Prince Georges

HABS No. MD-605

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PHOTOGRAPHS
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA
District of South Carolina

Historic American Buildings Survey
Delos H. Smith, District Officer
1707 Eye St., N.W., Washington, D.C.

HABS NO. MD-605

Addendum To:
CHRIST CHURCH AT ACCOKEEK
600 W. Farmington Road
Accokeek ^{Via}
Prince George's County
Maryland

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PHOTOGRAPHS AND
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
Washington, D.C. 20013-7127

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

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CHRIST CHURCH AT ACCOKEEK

HABS NO. MD-605

Location: 600 West Farmington Road, Accokeek, Prince George's County, Maryland

Significance: Christ Church is one of the earliest Episcopal churches in Southern Maryland, built in 1747. The building displays characteristics of both Colonial-era ecclesiastic architecture, and of Victorian-era Italianate and Gothic Revival due to this 1857 renovations.

Description: The Colonial-era main block or nave is a high, one-story, Flemish-bond brick, one-bay-by-five bay structure with a gable-front roof. A frame entry vestibule, located at the south wall, has replaced the original entry to the west front where there is currently a tripartite window. To the east rear is a lower, one-bay wide, common-bond (7:1) brick chancel with a gable roof, flanked by shed-roofed sacristy rooms in American-bond brick.

The windows are long, round-arched, four-part, diamond-paned casements with a hood mold with corbeled stops. At the west front is a tripartite window. The center bay is like those found elsewhere but shorter, flanked by smaller, sidelight-like windows. There is a similar window to the rear but under a single, round-arched brick lintel. Above the west front window is a round stained-glass window.

The entry vestibule has a gable-front roof and a round-arched, double-door entry. The doors have molded panels, with an oval panel to the center and spandrel-like panels around it, and a squared panel to the bottom. The overhanging roof is supported by small, dentil-like brackets against a plain frieze board. The roof is covered in slate. There is a small, squared bell cote at the front edge of the roof ridge, with round-arched, louvered vents, and a pyramidal roof with a cross atop it.

The interior consists of a nave with a center aisle and open pews to either side, with a wood-paneled ceiling with ornamental Gothic

cross-bracing. There is a choir and organ loft to the west front, accessed by a wood spiral stairway in the northwest corner. There is a rounded chancel arch, through which the separate chancel or sanctuary is located. It too has ornamental cross-bracing. The walls are plaster with wainscoting and the windows are recessed into the wall with splayed reveals (and no surround). The floor is covered with hexagonal brick.

History:

Christ Church was built in 1747, receiving major repairs and renovations in 1857 following a fire which left only the exterior brick walls standing. This church was first established in 1698 as a chapel of ease for St. John's at Broad Creek, which served as the center for King George's Parish (also known as Piscataway Parish). King George's Parish was one of the thirty parishes formed in Maryland in 1692 when the General Assembly instituted the Church of England as the established church.

According to the court records of 1744, the Vestry petitioned for an act of assembly to fund the building of a brick chapel to replace the existing frame one which had "gone to decay." Thus, construction of the main block of the current church began in 1747, and was dedicated in January of 1748. This was a simplified basilica plan typical of Anglican churches, a long rectangular nave with side aisles with an entry at one of the short sides and a sanctuary at the other. It did not, however, have the bell tower and separate sanctuary that it now has (Pearl).

On December 23, 1856, fire struck the church leaving only brick walls standing. According to the Planter's Advocate, within two months, \$2,500 was raised for the reconstruction. The proposed renovations included "first-pointed for round-head windows. A chancel and porch, or little tower... An open roof to crown the whole" (18 Feb. & 10 June 1857). This translates to new windows (still round-arched) with Italianate window heads, and tripartite windows front and rear. Also, a new entryway, moved from the west front to the south side,

with a frame vestibule. The chancel was added, as was the bell cote. Also added was the exposed roof structure with Gothic cross-bracing, and the stained-glass windows. The reconstructed chapel was dedicated on the 18th of June 1857 (Pearl & Christ Church).

The church was renovated once more in 1968, in an attempt to restore it to its 1857 form. Only the floors and pews were to resemble those of the 18th century. The side aisles were replaced with the current center aisle, and the brick flooring, a reproduction of the original flooring found during the renovation, was installed. Shed additions flanking the chancel contain a kitchen and a utility room. The rectory was added to the property in 1932, and the Canterbury School in 1961 (Christ Church).

Sources:

Christ Church. "Welcome to Christ Church."
Brochure which gives a short history of
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Historical Trust Historic Sites Inventory
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Donning Company Publishers, 1984.

Historian:

Catherine C. Lavoie
Historic American Buildings Survey
June 1991