

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
REGISTRATION FORM

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1. Name of Property

=====

historic name: First Baptist Church

other name/site number: N/A

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2. Location

=====

street & number: Southwest corner of 12th and Louisiana Streets

not for publication: N/A

city/town: Little Rock

vicinity: N/A

state: AR county: Pulaski code: AR 119 zip code: 72202

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3. Classification

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Ownership of Property: Private

Category of Property: Building

Number of Resources within Property:

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>2</u>	<u> </u>	buildings
<u> </u>	<u> </u>	sites
<u> </u>	<u> </u>	structures
<u> </u>	<u> </u>	objects
<u>2</u>	<u>0</u>	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register: N/A

Name of related multiple property listing: N/A

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4. State/Federal Agency Certification
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As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this X 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 X meets _____ does not meet the National Register Criteria. _____ See continuation sheet.

William A. Slator
Signature of certifying official

6-21-94
Date

Arkansas Historic Preservation Program
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property _____ meets _____ does not meet the National Register criteria. _____ See continuation sheet.

Signature of commenting or other official

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

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5. National Park Service Certification
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I, hereby certify that this property is:

____ entered in the National Register
_____ See continuation sheet.

____ determined eligible for the
National Register

____ See continuation sheet.
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
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Historic: RELIGION

Sub: Religious facility

Current: VACANT/NOT IN USE

Sub: _____

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7. Description
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Architectural Classification:

Collegiate Gothic
=====
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Other Description: N/A

Materials: foundation Stone roof Ceramic tile
walls Stone other Stained glass
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Describe present and historic physical appearance. X See continuation sheet.

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8. Statement of Significance
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Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties: Locally

Applicable National Register Criteria: C

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions): A

Areas of Significance: ARCHITECTURE
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Period(s) of Significance: 1941

Significant Dates: 1941

Significant Person(s): N/A
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Cultural Affiliation: N/A

Architect/Builder: McAninch, A. N.
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State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above. X See continuation sheet.

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9. Major Bibliographical References

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X See continuation sheet.

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:

- X State historic preservation office
- Other state agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other -- Specify Repository: _____

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10. Geographical Data

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Acreage of Property: Less than one

UTM References:	Zone	Easting	Northing	Zone	Easting	Northing
A	<u>15</u>	<u>566480</u>	<u>3843940</u>	B	<u>15</u>	_____
C	<u>15</u>	_____	_____	D	<u>15</u>	_____

___ See continuation sheet.

Verbal Boundary Description: ___ See continuation sheet.

Lots 3, 10, 11 & 12, the west 95 feet of Lot 2, and the east 8 feet of the west 95 feet of Lot 1, Block 169, Original City of Little Rock, Arkansas

Boundary Justification: ___ See continuation sheet.

This boundary includes all the property historically associated with this resource.

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11. Form Prepared By

=====

Name/Title: Kenneth Story, Architectural Historian

Organization: Arkansas Historic Preservation Program Date: 06/09/94

Street & Number: 323 Center Street, Suite 1500 Telephone: (501) 324-988

City or Town: Little Rock State: AR Zip: 72201

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Summary

The First Baptist Church, located at the southwest corner of Louisiana and 12th Street and just north of the Governor's Mansion Historic District, is a single-story, cut stone church building designed in the Collegiate Gothic style. Its defining architectural features include its intersecting gable roof plan, eastern monumental stained glass window, twin front towers and stepped buttresses.

Elaboration

The First Baptist Church, located at the southwest corner of Louisiana and 12th Street and just north of the Governor's Mansion Historic District, is a single-story, cut stone church building designed in the Collegiate Gothic style. Its plan is symmetrically-arranged around an axis running from the eastern or front elevation to the western elevation; it includes a large sanctuary flanked by shallow, single-story aisles set between full-height, gable roof bays that project from the northern and southern elevations. The building design includes no chimneys. The ceramic tile, intersecting gable roof and cut stone walls are supported by a continuous stone foundation.

The eastern or front elevation is anchored by the large, central monumental stained-glass window above the broad first story recessed entrance. These are flanked by two shallow towers which are in turn flanked by the remainder of the end wall and the entrances to the side walls of the projecting gables. The monumental window is composed of a single row of eight square window openings set below four tall lancet windows, each capped with a trifoliate, and five quatrefoils at the top. The recessed entrance below is framed by a broad, spreading pointed arch and filled with three sets of modern double glass doors. A low, spreading staircase leads up to the entrance. The flanking towers are each fenestrated with a single, central, stone-trimmed window at the lower level and capped with decorative stone trim. The remaining wall surfaces of the gable end section are blank, and the side walls of the projecting side gables each contain a double-leaf entrance accessed via a staircase and stoop on the first floor and a pair of square-headed windows on the second floor.

The northern and southern elevations are almost identical. Each features two levels of windows, the lower of which are virtually all square-headed and glazed with either stained glass or a single clear pane. The upper level is glazed exclusively with stained glass set into large pointed arch openings, each of which contains three tall lancet windows. The eastern projecting gables on both elevations are identically fenestrated, with three square-headed windows on the lower level

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that step-up from east to west surmounted by a large, combination Gothic window. The western projecting gables are slightly different from one another. That on the northern elevation contains a large Gothic stained glass window on the second floor and three square-headed windows placed directly above a double-leaf entrance below while that on the southern elevation is asymmetrically fenestrated with a total of seven square-headed casement windows placed irregularly across the gable end wall. The aisle and clerestory between are symmetrically fenestrated on both elevations, with the aisle wall being lit by a total of four groupings of three casement windows each, and the clerestory containing four large Gothic windows placed directly above. Each of these window bays is separated by a large stepped buttress that projects significantly above the aisle roof and out from the clerestory wall. The projecting gable ends on both elevations feature gabled parapets.

The western or rear elevation is symmetrically arranged and relatively plain. Three windows at the northern and southern ends provide the only interior light from this elevation; otherwise the wall is blank and divided into a total of five blank recessed panels that rise almost to the full height of the elevation.

Significant exterior details are virtually all executed in the stone trim that surrounds and connects the various door and window openings. Of particular note are the trifolds and quatrefoils that ornament the central window grouping on the front elevation and three of the four projecting gables on the northern and southern elevations (the only exception being the western gable on the southern elevation). Also of note are the monumental flanking towers on the front that rise above the gable roof and the stone-trimmed, stepped buttresses that project from the clerestory walls. Finally, the ashlar-faced cut stone -- shaped into long, short blocks that prefigure the Modernistic stone construction that will become especially popular after WW II -- provides an unmistakable texture to the exterior that both recalls the Medieval and heralds the Modern.

The interior furnishings have been largely lost in the relatively recent past; and yet, most of the original architectural features remain. Most notable, of course, is the original stained glass, which remains in abundance throughout the interior and to which it continues to lend its rich hues of blue, purple and red. Other significant original stone trim remains also. Other than these changes, the First Baptist Church remains largely intact and in good condition.

Also included is the single-story, gable roof, yellow brick parsonage located immediately to the south of the church building. Constructed in 1943, it is contributing.

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Summary

Criterion C, local significance
(Criteria Consideration A)

The First Baptist Church, constructed in 1941, is locally significant under Criterion C by virtue of its status as the best extant example in its particular neighborhood of a church building designed in the Collegiate Gothic style. Designed by Little Rock architect A. N. McAninch, it remains one of his best known interpretations of this national architectural style.

Elaboration

The congregation that would become the First Baptist Church of Little Rock traces its origins to July 24, 1824, when the city's first Baptist congregation met at the home of Issac Watkins. This small congregation continued to meet in private homes until 1825, when they constructed their first house of worship, a hewn log meeting house structure located on Third Street between Main and Scott Streets. However, this congregation effectively disbanded a few years later when a persuasive evangelist drew most of its members away to another congregation known as the Christian Church. The Baptist congregation remained dormant until 1858, when Dr. P.S.G. Watson and Rev. E.N. Chenault constituted the First Baptist Church for the second time. This congregation, though small (in 1860 it could claim a total of 38 members), remained active through the Civil War and Reconstruction.

In 1873 this congregation merged with that of the Union Baptist Church to form the new Central Baptist Church. In 1880, this new congregation merged with yet another congregation -- the Eighth Street Baptist Church -- to form the Calvary Baptist Church. Thus by 1881 this congregation could boast of not only about one hundred members, but also of two meeting houses: one at the intersection of 3rd and IZARD Streets (used primarily for baptisms) and the other on Eighth Street, used for Sunday meetings.

However, by 1884 a split occurred between original members of the Central Baptist Church and original members of the Eighth Street Church. The Eighth Street church was returned to those original members who desired to return to a separate congregation (which then renamed itself the Second Baptist Church) and the remaining congregation purchased a lot for a new building, known once again as the First Baptist Church. The new lot was located on the east side of Louisiana Street, between Eighth and Ninth Streets; the new building constructed there was called the Ninth Street Chapel.

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The congregation remained here until 1889, when they erected a "permanent" structure further south at the intersection of 12th and Louisiana, on a 95 x 140' lot. Their new building, a large, handsome brick edifice constructed in the High Victorian Gothic style, sheltered its first services on May 1, 1890. By 1891 the church could boast of a membership of 306.

The First Baptist Church grew steadily into and through the early twentieth century, reaching a membership of almost 1,000 souls by the early 1920's. However, the late 1930's heralded a dramatic surge in membership in all aspects of the church's activities: Sunday School, mission work, revivals and stewardship. All of this increased activity greatly strained the church's existing facilities and demanded the construction of new facilities.

Fortunately, some years before the First Baptist Church had come under the direction of a person equal to these challenges. Pastor Arden P. Blaylock was called to the church in 1931 and served the congregation as a powerful and persuasive evangelist who frequently spread the word outside the confines of the church proper at various missions and revival meetings. In addition to his other activities and responsibilities he shepherded his congregation through the construction period, when the old building was being demolished to make way for the new building.

The new First Baptist Church Building was designed by the Little Rock architect A.N. McAninch in the early spring of 1941, with the construction proceeding almost immediately thereafter (the McAninch name appears frequently in church records, and so it is likely that McAninch himself was at least a Baptist, if not a member of the First Baptist Church itself). No record has survived of the various craftspersons and contractors who participated in the actual construction, but the building as-built remains almost completely intact today, with few alterations of any kind, and so survives as an intact artifact in its own right.

The massive, Collegiate Gothic composition, complete with monumental Gothic window openings and stained glass, is fairly typical of Christian church construction of the period, though it remains a rather good example thereof. Yet the glory of the design is the rich, lustrous stained glass. Set largely in non-figural, geometric patterns, this glass is noteworthy for the lustre of the reds, purples and blues that dominate the palette and lend a rich glow to the interior. Unfortunately, no information has survived regarding the identity of the stained glass fabricator and the location of his/her shop. Yet it should be noted that at this late date -- certainly the last gasp of the Gothic Revival as such -- commercially-produced stained glass was available via mail-order catalogues at extremely affordable prices, and such may well have been the source for the glass in the First Baptist Church. Nevertheless, it is remarkable for its

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richness and quality, and stands among the finest stained glass craftsmanship known in the state.

The First Baptist Church is locally significant under Criterion C (Criteria Consideration A: Religious Property) as the best extant example of a Collegiate Gothic design in its particular neighborhood, and one of the best examples of stained glass craftsmanship in the entire city. It is also significant as the last known example of this declining style in any of Little Rock's historic neighborhoods.

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Bibliography

Caylor, John, *First Baptist Church, Little Rock, Arkansas, 1858-1965*, (Little Rock: 1965).

McAninch, A.N., architect, *Original Drawings for the First Baptist Church*, dated March 5, 1941.

Proceedings of the Pulaski County Baptist Association in the Twenty-Fifth Annual Session Held With High Street Baptist Church, Little Rock, Arkansas, October 7, 8, 9, 1940 (published 1940).

Proceedings of the Pulaski County Baptist Association in the Twenty-Sixth Annual Session Held With First Baptist Church, Little Rock, Arkansas, October 6, 7, 1941 (published 1941).

7551 SW (MICALMONT)

LITTLE ROCK QUADRANGLE ARKANSAS

7.5 MINUTE SERIES (TOPOGRAPHIC)

92°15' 34" W

36°45'

1988

SEARDY TO ST. M. TO INTERSTATE 40

17°50'

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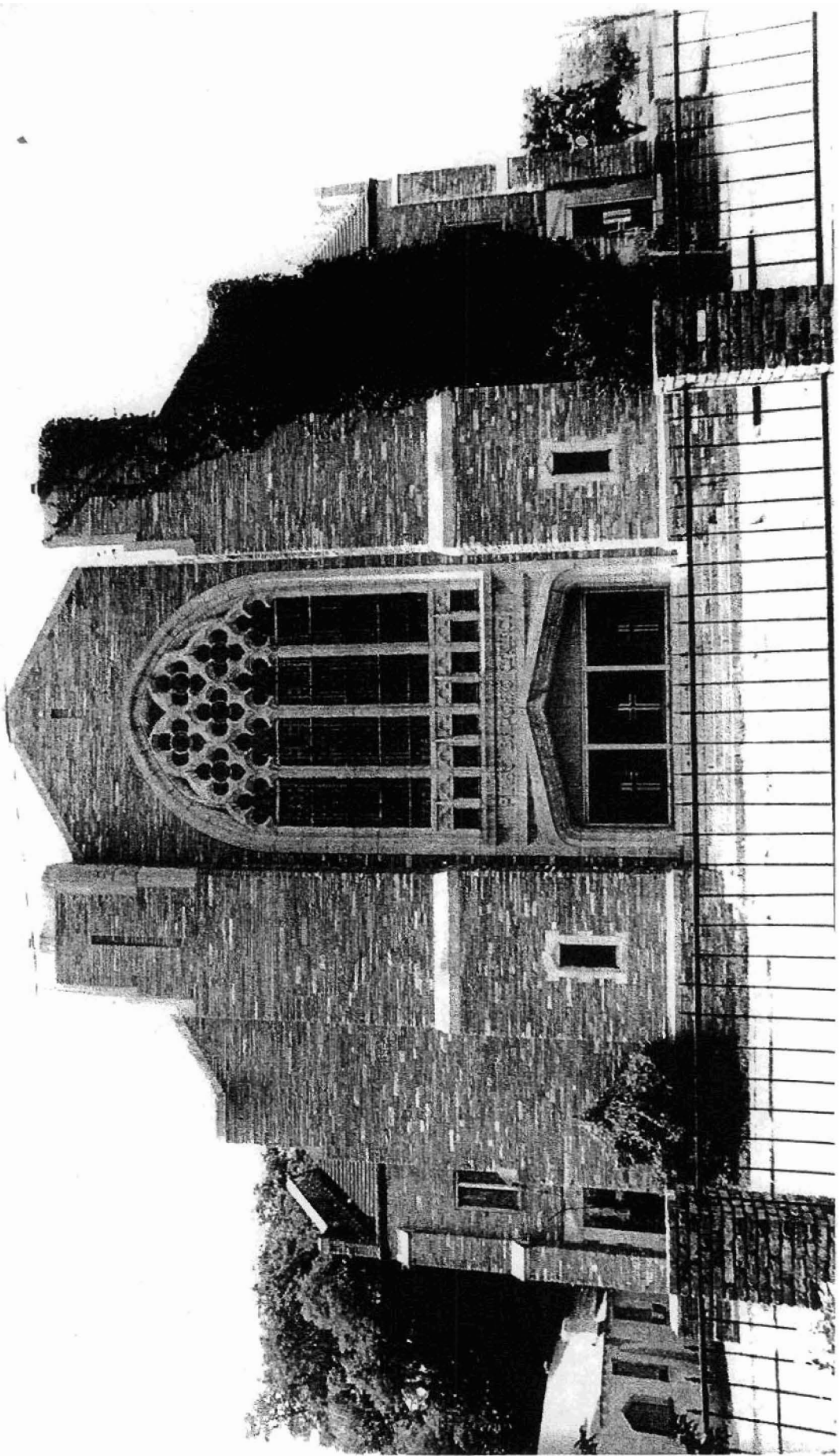


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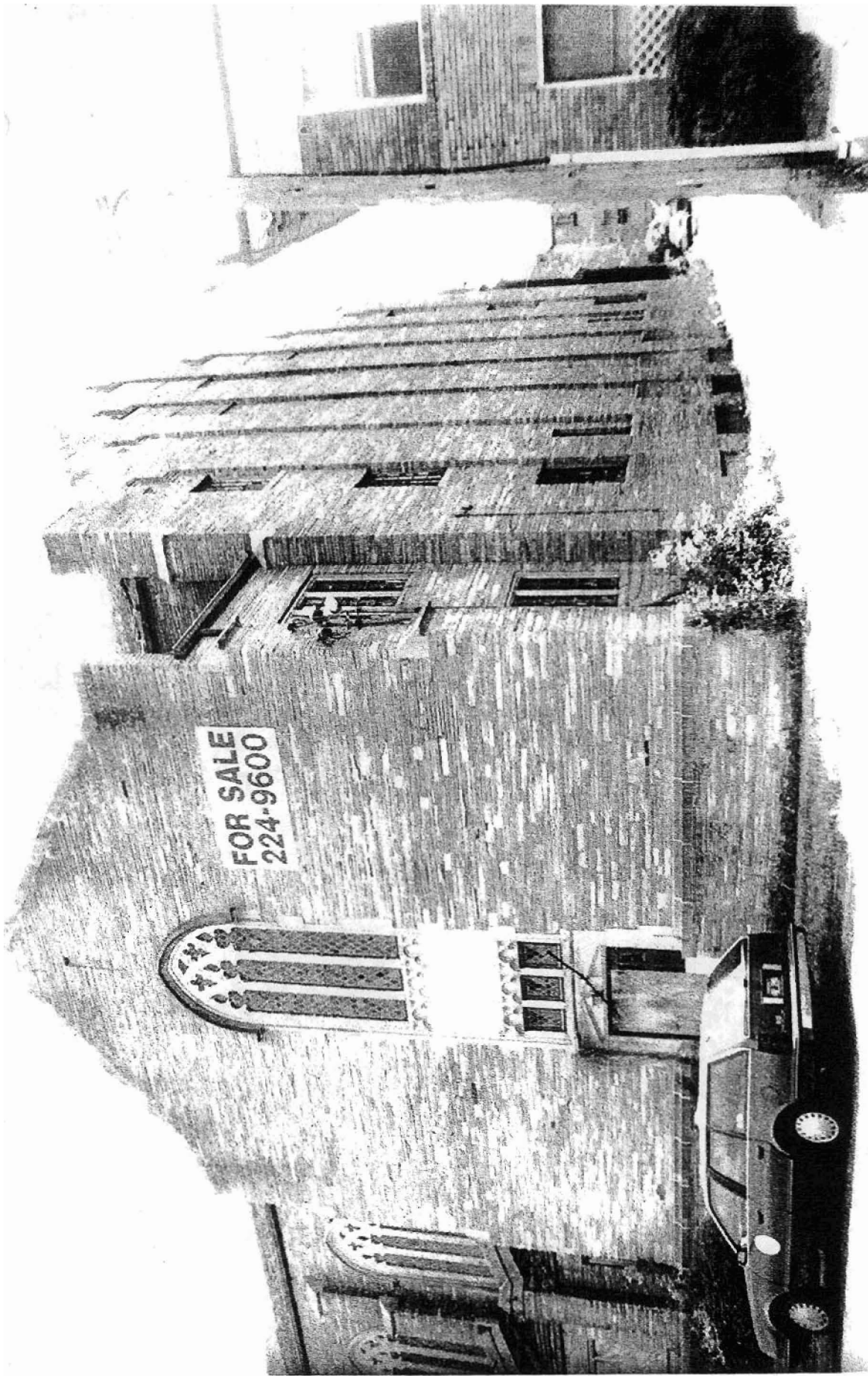








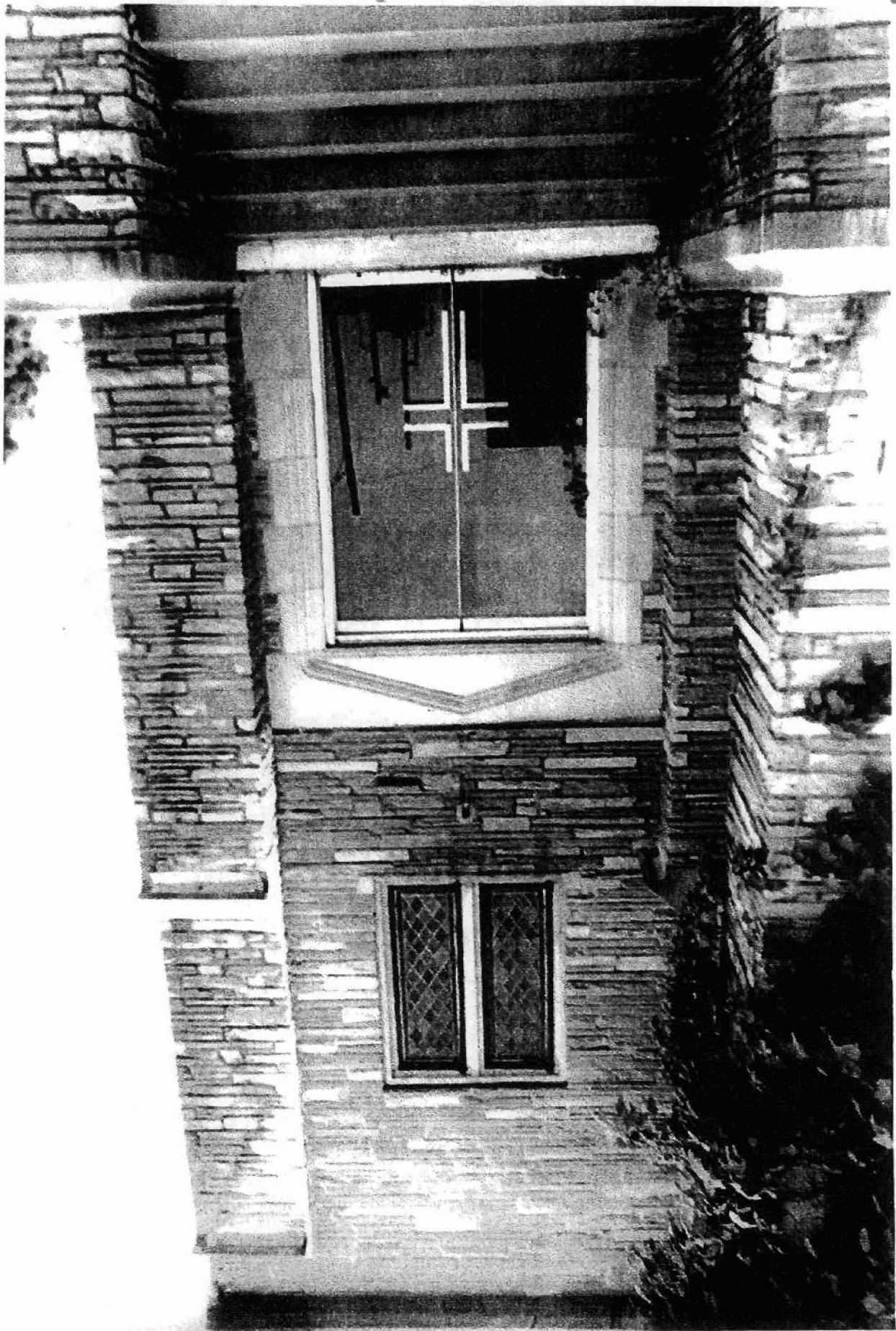


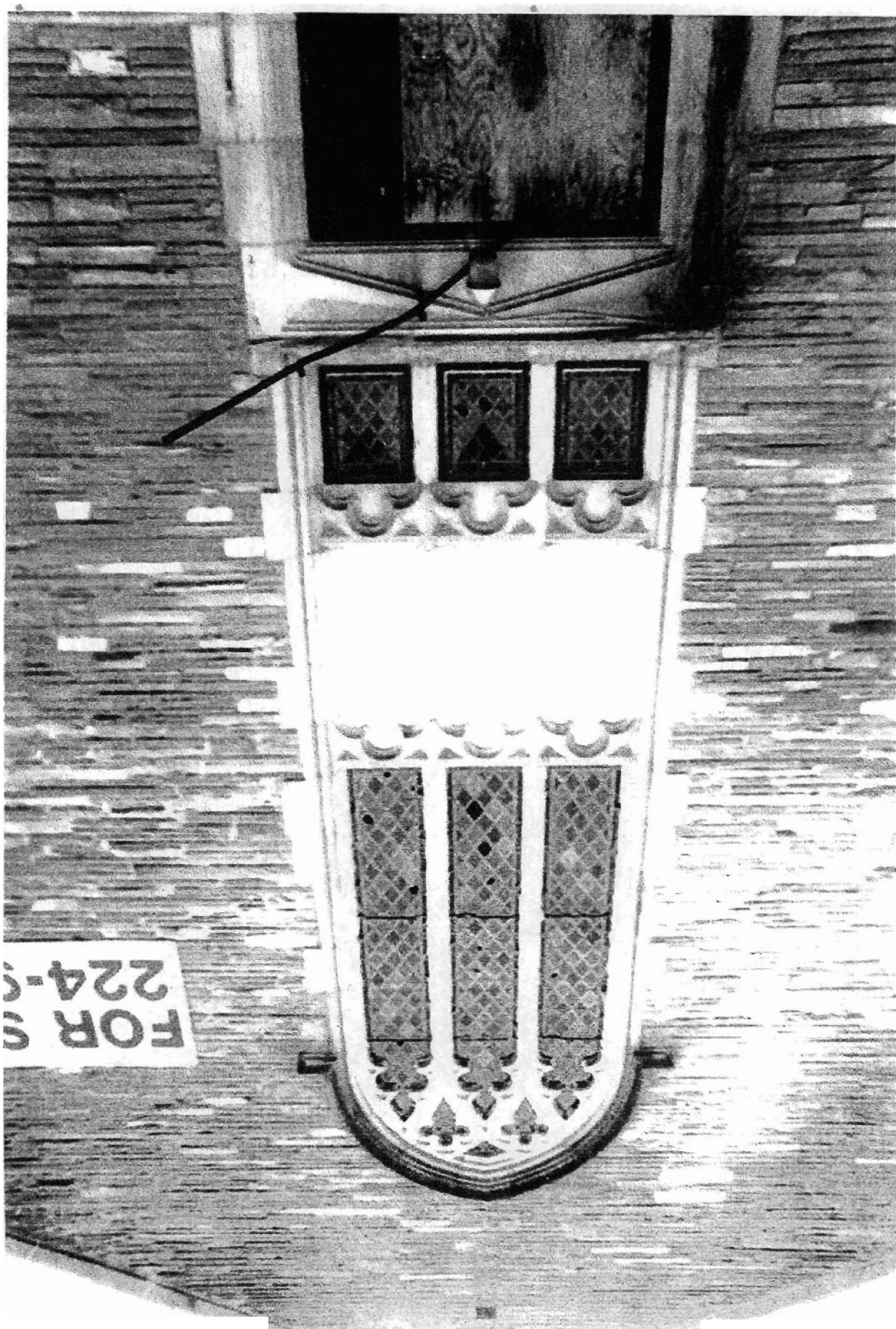


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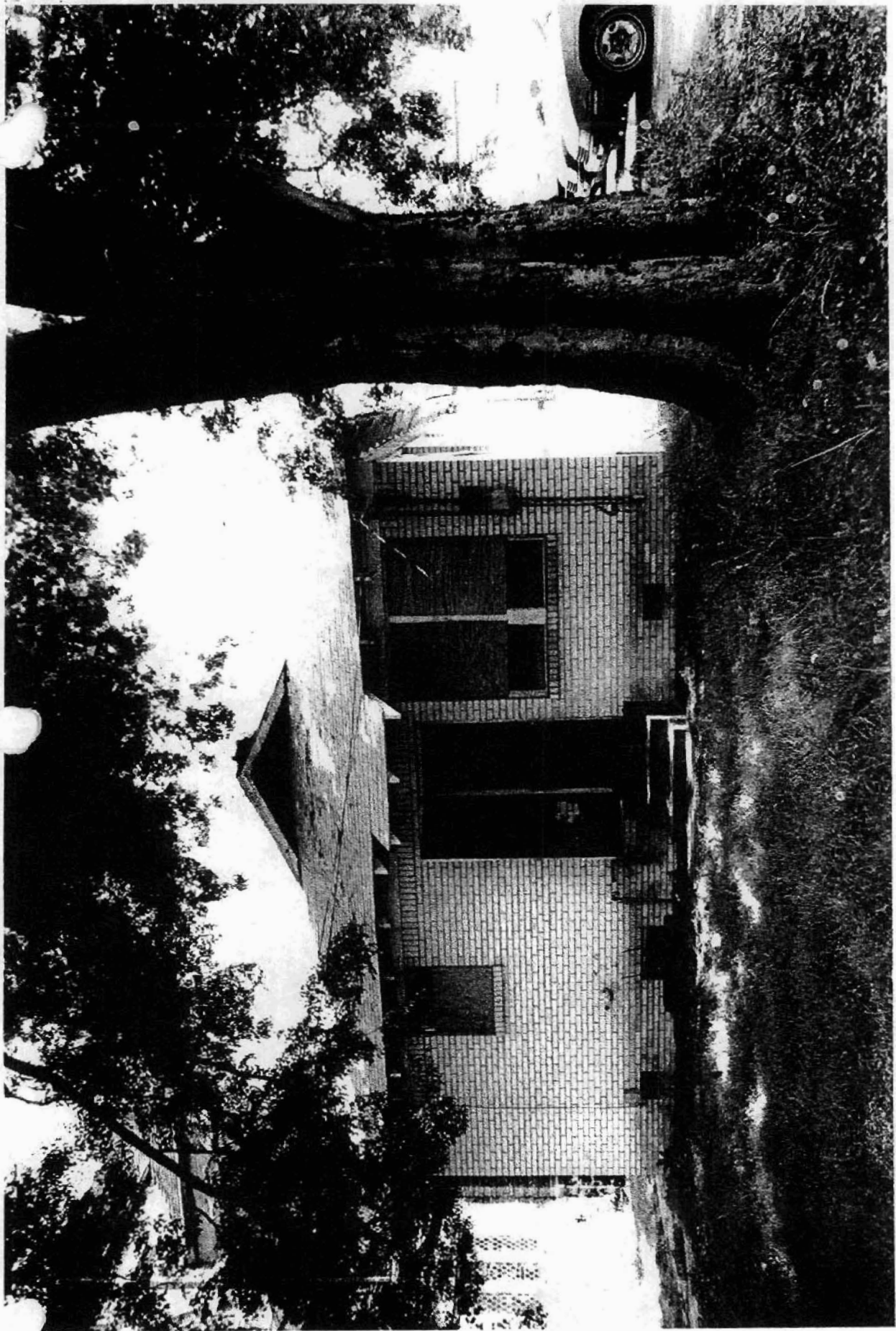
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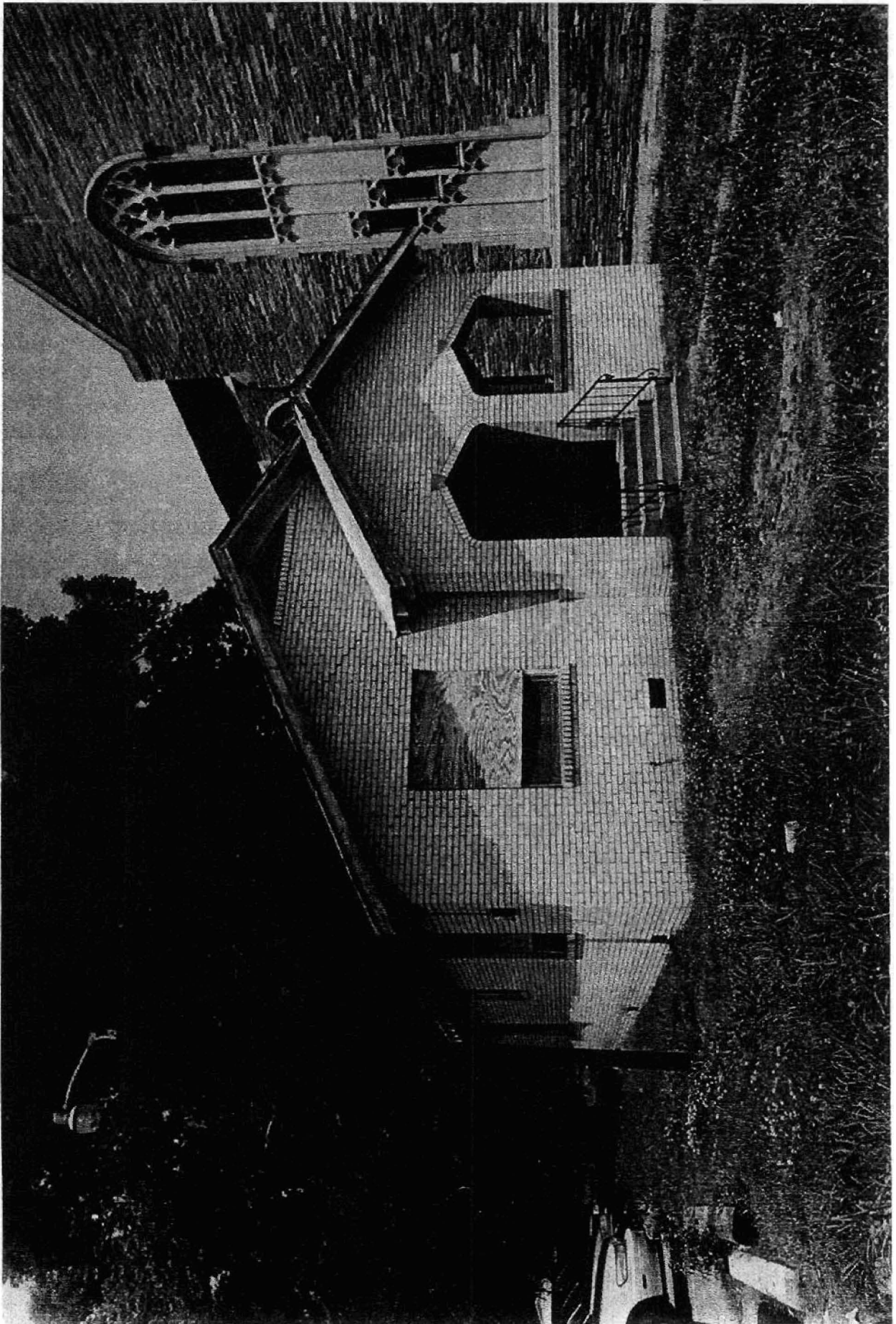


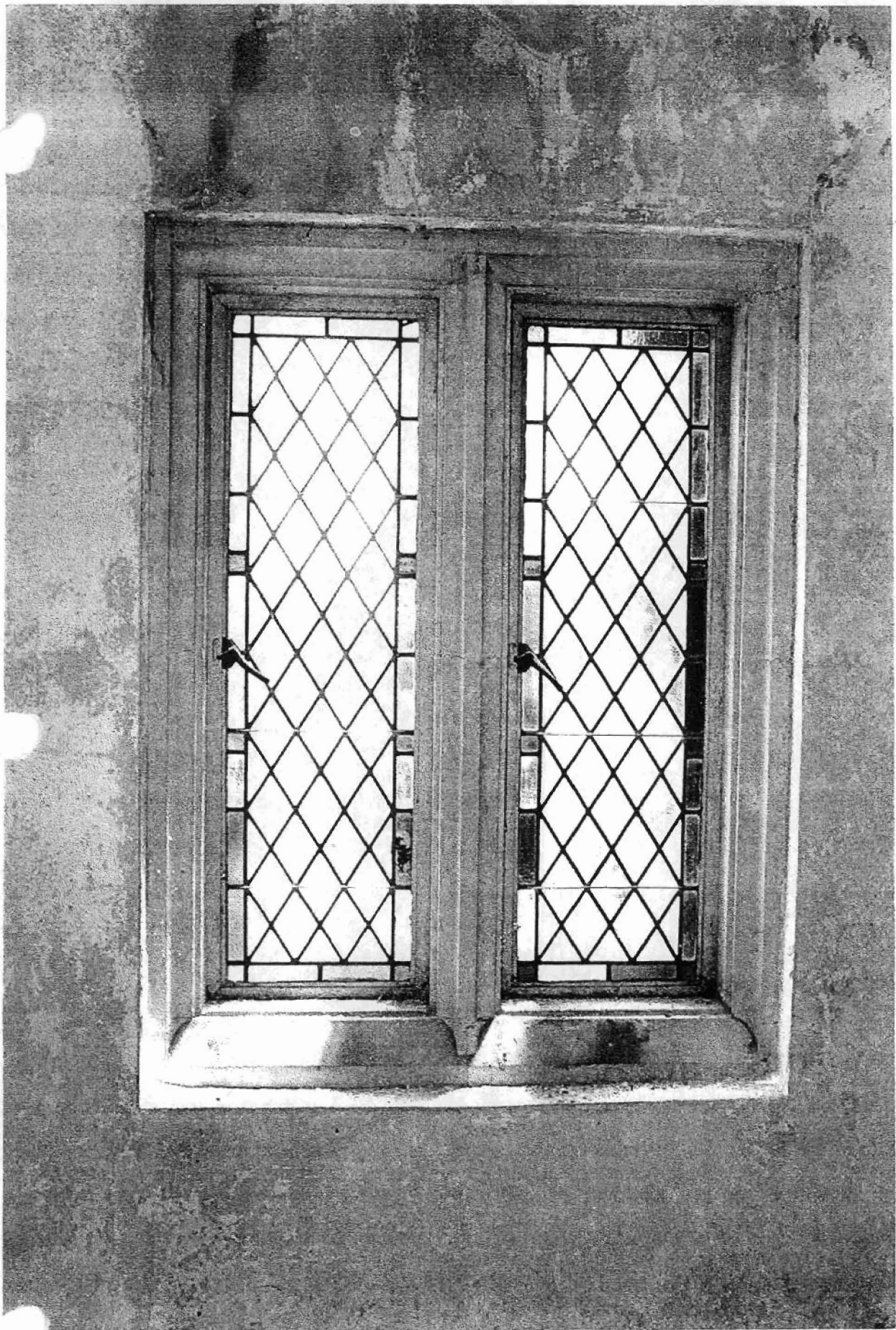




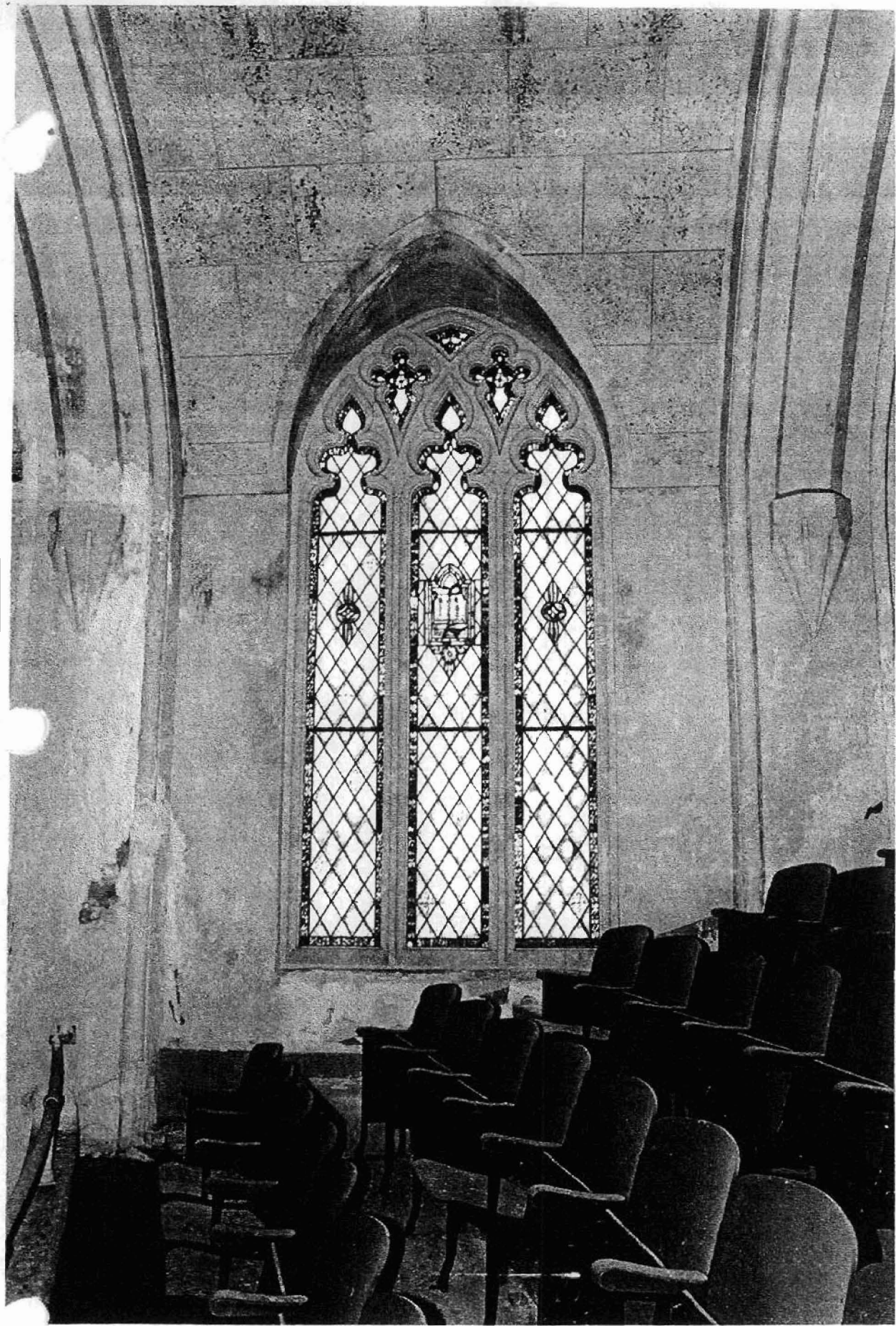
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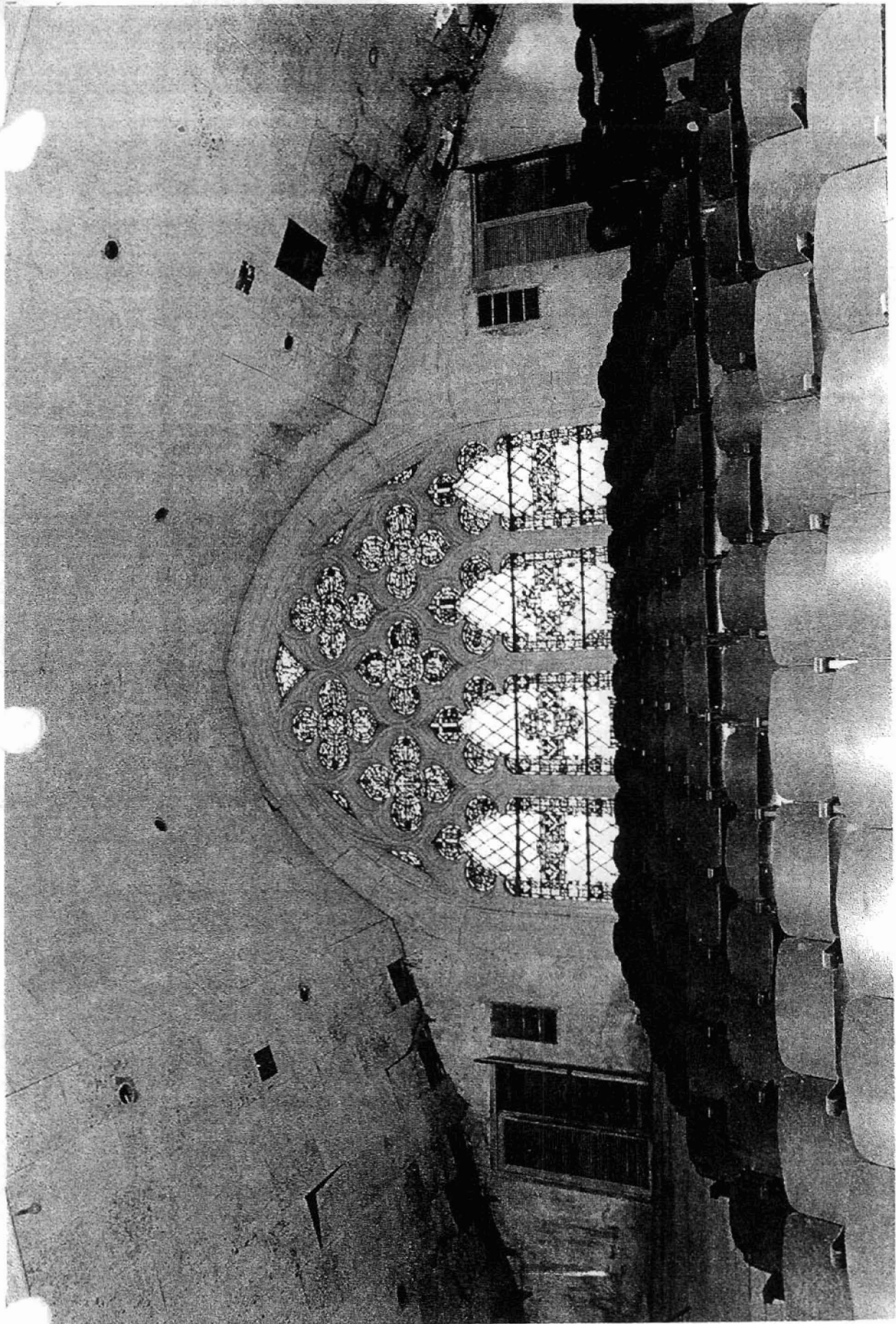
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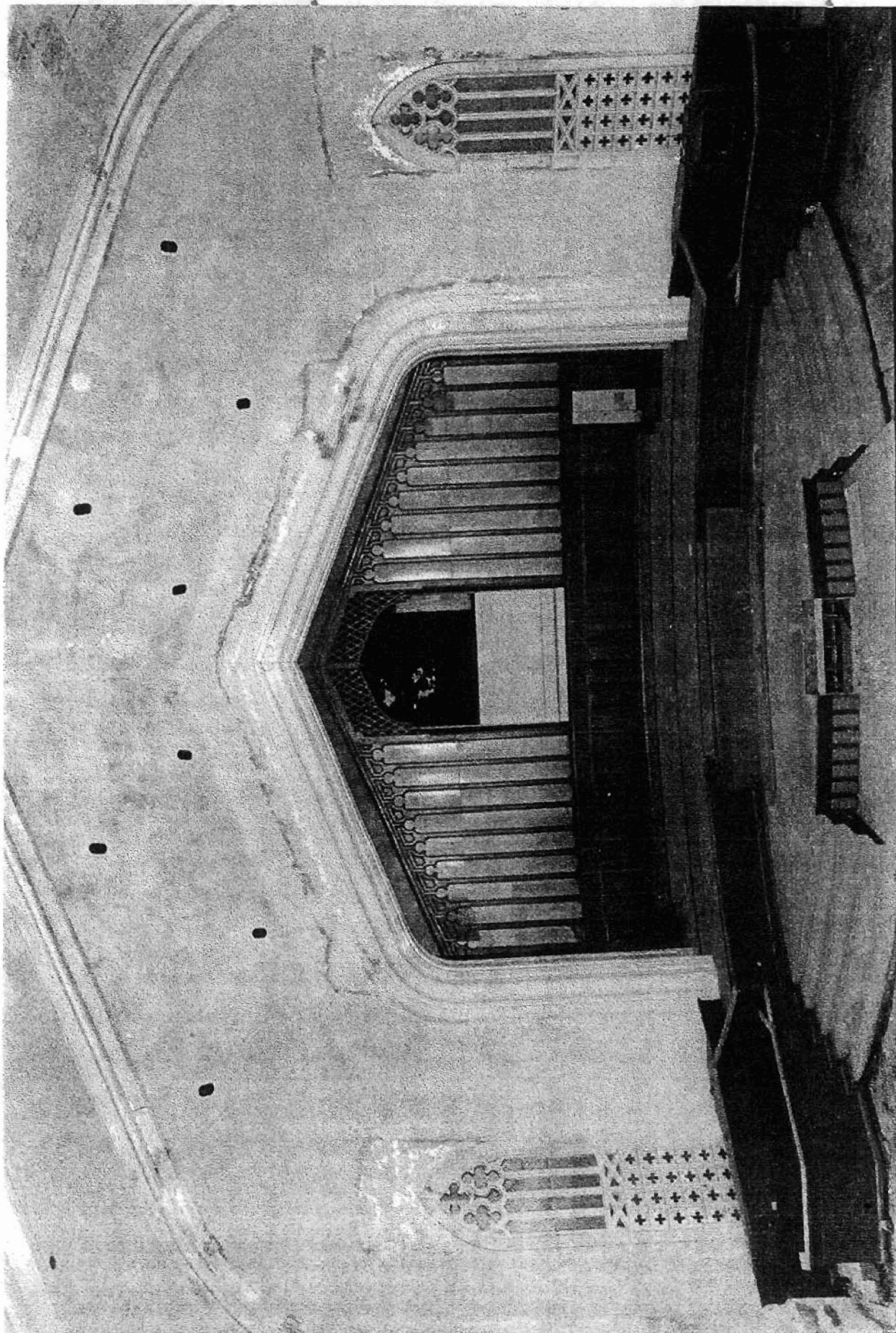












1. 1957 B. 1957 (1957)

6. 5

1772 B. 1957, 1957

1970 B. 1957

1974, 1994

1970 On File in 1994

1970 On File in 1994

1994