

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 How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. 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 entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Sidney Park Colored Methodist Episcopal Church  
other names/site number Sidney Park Christian Methodist Episcopal Church

2. Location

street & number 1114 Blanding Street not for publication   
city or town Columbia vicinity   
state South Carolina code SC county Richland code 079 zip code 29201

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, 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  nationally  statewide  locally.  
( See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Mary W. Edmonds 9/20/96  
Signature of certifying official Date

Mary W. Edmonds, Deputy SHPO, S.C. Department of Archives & History, Columbia, S.C.  
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria.  
( See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of commenting or other official Date  
\_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

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

Elson H. Beall 10-24-96

Entered in the  
National Register

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Keeper Date of Action

### 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

#### Number of Resources within Property

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1	_____	buildings
_____	_____	sites
_____	_____	structures
_____	_____	objects
1	0	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

### 6. Function or Use

#### Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: RELIGION  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Sub: Religious Facility  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

#### Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: RELIGION  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Sub: Religious Facility  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

### 7. Description

#### Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

Late 19th & 20th Century Revivals/  
Late Gothic Revival  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

#### Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Stone  
roof Metal  
walls Brick  
other  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

#### Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

### 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 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 a grave.
- D** a cemetery.
- E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F** a commemorative property.
- G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

**Areas of Significance**

(Enter categories from instructions)

- Architecture
- Ethnic Heritage-Black
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

**Significant Dates**

1893

**Significant Person**

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

**Cultural Affiliation**

\_\_\_\_\_

**Period of Significance**

1893

**Architect/Builder**

\_\_\_\_\_

**Narrative Statement of Significance**

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

**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: Sidney Park C.M.E. Church Archives, Columbia, S.C.

**10. Geographical Data**

**Acreeage of Property** Less than one acre

**UTM References**

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

	Zone	Easting	Northing	Zone	Easting	Northing
1	<u>17</u>	<u>496540</u>	<u>3762760</u>	3	_____	_____
2	_____	_____	_____	4	_____	_____
	<u>See continuation sheet.</u>					

**Verbal Boundary Description**

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

**Boundary Justification**

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

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## 11. Form Prepared By

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name/title Katrina Wood  
organization Applied History Program, University of South Carolina date 4 May 1995  
street & number \_\_\_\_\_ telephone (803) 777-5195  
city or town Columbia state SC zip code 29208

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## Additional Documentation

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Submit the following items with the completed form:

### Continuation Sheets

#### 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.

#### Photographs

Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

**Additional items** (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

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## Property Owner

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(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name Sidney Park Christian Methodist Episcopal Church  
street & number 1114 Blanding Street telephone (803) 779-0214  
city or town Columbia state SC zip code 29201

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section 7 Page 5

Sidney Park C.M.E. Church  
name of property  
Richland County South Carolina  
county and State

Sidney Park Colored Methodist Episcopal Church is a two story brick frame building. The main body of the church is rectangular, with two towers with steeples on either side of the front facade. The building has a metal roof. The church has Gothic influences which are shown in the stained glass windows and the arches above the front door and in the windows in the columns of the towers. The foundation of the building is stone and the walls are brick. A concrete belt course separates the basement level from the main level. Five brick triple-shouldered buttresses are found on the west side, while four are found on the east, totaling nine.

The current church was built in 1893, after the original church burned in the early 1890s. Few changes have been made to the exterior of the church. The building is entered from the north facade through two doors at the main level of the church. The lobby is separated from the nave by another set of double doors. On either side of the main lobby are two small alcoves. There are two side balconies and one gallery in the rear. Twin staircases on either side of the church lobby lead to the gallery and balconies; the staircase on the east also leads to the belfry. The interior nave is supported by a truss system. Simple wooden pews with decorative art on the side panels are the main furnishings in the nave. A massive pipe organ is built into the wall behind the pulpit. The floors are wooden; the walls are plaster. The church also has a basement, which is used by various organizations. The basement includes cooking facilities and a multipurpose room.

Two towers, both octagonal in shape, are on either side of the north facade. The tower on the east side has an octagonal steeple. Two Gothic windows are vertically situated in the facade. The tower on the west is the tallest of the two. It has three vertically situated windows. Above the uppermost window is the belfry, which makes this tower one story higher than the other. There are four pointed-arch vents, one on every other side of the octagonal tower at the belfry level.

From the west side of the church, four triple-shouldered buttresses can be seen. Part of the building protrudes from the rear of the church for approximately twenty feet. It is rectangular and is on story high. Between each of the buttresses, there are two windows. One is a Gothic-styled window situated between the main and balcony levels of the church. Below this window, and separated by a concrete belt, is a smaller round arched window, which is in the basement of the church. There are five sets of these windows on the west side.

On the east facade, there are five buttresses, which are situated identically to the ones on the east side. There are six sets of the window patterns which are seen on the west facade. A metal belt runs around from the south end of the church to this side, for about half the length of the west side between the basement and first levels. This is part of the heat and air conditioning system.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section   7   Page   6  

Sidney Park C.M.E. Church  
name of property  
Richland County South Carolina  
county and State

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On the south, or rear facade, are two brick pilasters, one on each end of the facade. The protruding part of the building begins about five feet into the left side of the building. Next to this is a Gothic window, situated at the first level. In the center of this facade is a apse, which contains a triple Gothic window. On the right side of the apse is a Gothic window in the same style as the one on the left.

Currently, the church is in fair physical condition. Some stabilization of the stained glass windows and weatherization of the roof is advisable.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section 8 Page 7

Sidney Park C.M.E. Church  
name of property  
Richland County South Carolina  
county and State

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Sidney Park Christian Methodist Episcopal Church (formerly Sidney Park Colored Methodist Episcopal Church) is an important part of the African-American experience in Columbia. For this reason, it is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A. The church is also significant under Criterion C as an example of late Gothic Revival church architecture.

From its establishment in 1886 until the end of the Civil Rights movement in the 1970s, Sidney Park C.M.E. Church allowed its members to congregate freely, hold elected positions in the church, and organize to fight oppression in the world in which they lived.

The church was involved in most aspects of its members' lives. It was an institution which provided for marriage, education, avenues to political freedom, and funeral services for the deceased. All of these things took place in a church which was designed and built by the free labor of the men and women of the original congregation.

The founding members of Sidney Park Colored Methodist Episcopal Church were originally members of Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church.<sup>1</sup> In the 1880s a disagreement occurred within Bethel A.M.E. Church, and six hundred members left. They began holding services at Stenhouse Hall, now known as the Oliver Gospel Mission, on the corner of Taylor and Assembly streets. In November of 1886, the group became incorporated into the Colored Methodist Episcopal Church denomination. At this time they organized and founded Sidney Park C.M.E. Church.<sup>2</sup> Immediately they began looking for a new place of worship.

On February 28, 1887, the Trustees of Sidney Park C.M.E. paid William B. Stanley \$1,000.00 for land at the corner of Assembly and Blanding Streets. With free labor and materials provided by the congregation, the original wooden frame church was completed in 1889. This was such an impressive event that the Columbia Register, the newspaper for whites in Columbia which rarely reported any events of the city's black community, covered the opening ceremonies of the church.<sup>3</sup> Sadly, this church burned sometime between 1890 and 1892. The present church, of the same design, was built in 1893 of brick construction. Again, the congregation of the church designed, provided materials for, and built the church.

Before the Civil Rights movement of the 1950s and 1960s, the church took on numerous roles in the African-American community. Because of the restrictions placed on them by the white community, the members of Sidney Park

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<sup>1</sup>B.T Martin, "The Beginning History of Sidney Park CME Church", 1990, Sidney Park CME Church Archives, Columbia, South Carolina, 9.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid. pp. 9-11.

<sup>3</sup>Columbia Register, December 22, 1889.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section 8 Page 8

Sidney Park C.M.E. Church  
name of property  
Richland County South Carolina  
county and State

C.M.E. were forced to use the church as a concert hall, a school, and as a meeting place.

When African-American musicians would come to Columbia in the 1920s and 1930s, Sidney Park C.M.E. could be counted on to oblige them with a sponsorship or a performance in their church. Such performers as Florence Cole-Talbert, a world renowned soprano, would come to Columbia and give concerts as benefits for the church. Some of the historically black colleges, such as Benedict College, Fisk University, and Paine College, had traveling choirs which would sing at Sidney Park C.M.E.<sup>4</sup>

Although the building's primary role was as a church, it played various roles in the community. One role it played in the 1920s and 1930s was as a school. During this time, there were not many public schools for black children in Columbia. Sidney Park C.M.E. opened a school in their church for the youths of the church during the day. At night, adults were taught to read.<sup>5</sup>

The church also served as a meeting place for various organizations in the black community. The church provided many activities for its members. Weekly bulletins in the Palmetto Leader, Columbia's newspaper for the black community, show meetings for choir practice, usher board, missionary organizations, and even a drama club held on a regular basis. Many times the church also held meetings for the purpose of civil disobedience.

Columbia's early fight for civil rights took place in the black churches. During Reconstruction, Black South Carolinians had seen freedmen rise to hold political office. Columbians saw these men who met here when Congress was in session. They were not satisfied with the events which transpired after Reconstruction. Slowly they began to see their rights disappear. At the turn of the century, African-Americans in South Carolina were struggling with disenfranchisement, their children were still not receiving equal education, and they were not receiving equal pay for their work.<sup>6</sup> These men and women began to organize a struggle for equality which culminated in the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s in Columbia.

Members and non-members alike met at the church throughout the early twentieth century to wage war on the injustices of their living conditions. Blacks met here to discuss issues from schooling for their children, to disenfranchisement for the adults. Sidney Park C.M.E. became even more

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<sup>4</sup>Flyers printed by McCaw of Columbia for Sidney Park CME Church, 1922.

<sup>5</sup>Mrs. Francis Mack, interview by author, Phone, Columbia, South Carolina, 24 April, 1995.

<sup>6</sup>Newby, I.A., Black Carolinians: A History of Blacks in South Carolina from 1895 to 1968. (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1968), 65.



United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section 8 Page 9

Sidney Park C.M.E. Church  
name of property  
Richland County South Carolina  
county and State

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motivated and involved during the Civil Rights Movement of the 1950s and 1960s. Members began trying to register to vote, and recruited more people to join the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP).

The involvement of the church in the NAACP membership drive did not begin during the Civil Rights movement. Its roots can be traced back to the early 1930s. In 1932, J.C. Anderson, the minister of Sidney Park, was the chairman of the new membership drive for the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People in Columbia.<sup>7</sup> During his tenure as minister here, he recruited most of his congregation to join the organization. During the movement, Sidney Park C.M.E. temporarily housed the NAACP in their parsonage, which became the church office. Small meetings of the activists were frequently held at the church. Today, the Columbia branch of the NAACP is permanently housed in the former parsonage of the church.

Sidney Park C.M.E. is also significant under Criterion C as an excellent example of late nineteenth century Gothic Revival church architecture. One particularly significant feature of the church is its towers. From the time of the church's construction these towers have been a distinguishable aspect of the Columbia skyline. Sidney Park C.M.E. Church has the only set of octagonal towers in the city. The tower on the east side of the facade is topped by an octagonal steeple. The tower on the west, one story taller than its companion, has an octagonal steeple which has a circular cap covering and accentuating its point. These and other Gothic influences of the church such as the lancet windows and pointed arches throughout, the wall buttresses, and the heavy timber truss system found in the sanctuary, help illustrate the building's local architectural significance.

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<sup>7</sup>The Palmetto Leader, September 1932.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section 9 Page 10

Sidney Park C.M.E. Church  
name of property  
Richland County South Carolina  
county and State

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**BIBLIOGRAPHY**

Oral Interviews

Austin, Rev. Dr. William. Interview with author. Columbia, South Carolina,  
22 February 1995.

Mack, Francis. Interview with author. Columbia, South Carolina, 24 April 1995.

Primary Sources

The Palmetto Leader (Columbia, S.C.) March-December 1932.

Columbia Register (Columbia, S.C.), December 22, 1889.

The State (Columbia, S.C.), November 23, 1989.

The Sidney Park Informer (Columbia, S.C.), May 2, 1948.

Secondary Sources

Gottfried, Herbert, and Jan Jennings. American Vernacular Design, 1870-1940.  
Ames, Iowa: Iowa State University Press, 1988.

Martin, Benjamin T. The Beginning History of Sidney Park C.M.E. Church.  
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United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section 10 Page 11

Sidney Park C.M.E. Church  
name of property  
Richland County South Carolina  
county and State

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Verbal Boundary Description

The boundary of the nominated property is shown by the area marked "Brick Church Building" on the accompanying plat for Sidney Park C.M.E. Church, dated 11 October 1963 and drawn at a scale of 1" = 20'.

The church is bounded on the north by Blanding Street, on the south by a parking lot owned by the city, on the west by an office building, and on the east by the church office building.

Verbal Boundary Justification

The boundary of the nominated property is restricted to the footprint of the historic church building.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section Photographs Page 12

Sidney Park C.M.E. Church  
name of property  
Richland County South Carolina  
county and State

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The following information is the same for each of the photographs:

Name of Property: Sidney Park C.M.E. Church  
Location of Property: 1114 Blanding Street, Columbia  
Richland County, South Carolina  
Photographer: Steven A. Davis  
Date of Photographs: April 1995  
Location of Negatives: S.C. Department of Archives & History, Columbia, S.C.

1. Principal (north) facade
2. West facade
3. Southeast facade
4. Altar and pulpit
5. Rear gallery
6. Heavy timber truss system

Josephine E. Wilson

Florence S. Habenicht et al

10' Concrete Drive

Laurel Holding Co.

Joe S. Berry & Myer Jake Berry

3-Story Brick Apartment Bldg.

Brick Church Building

No. 1114

(A)

8' Concrete Drive

2-Story Brick Drilling

No. 1108

(B)

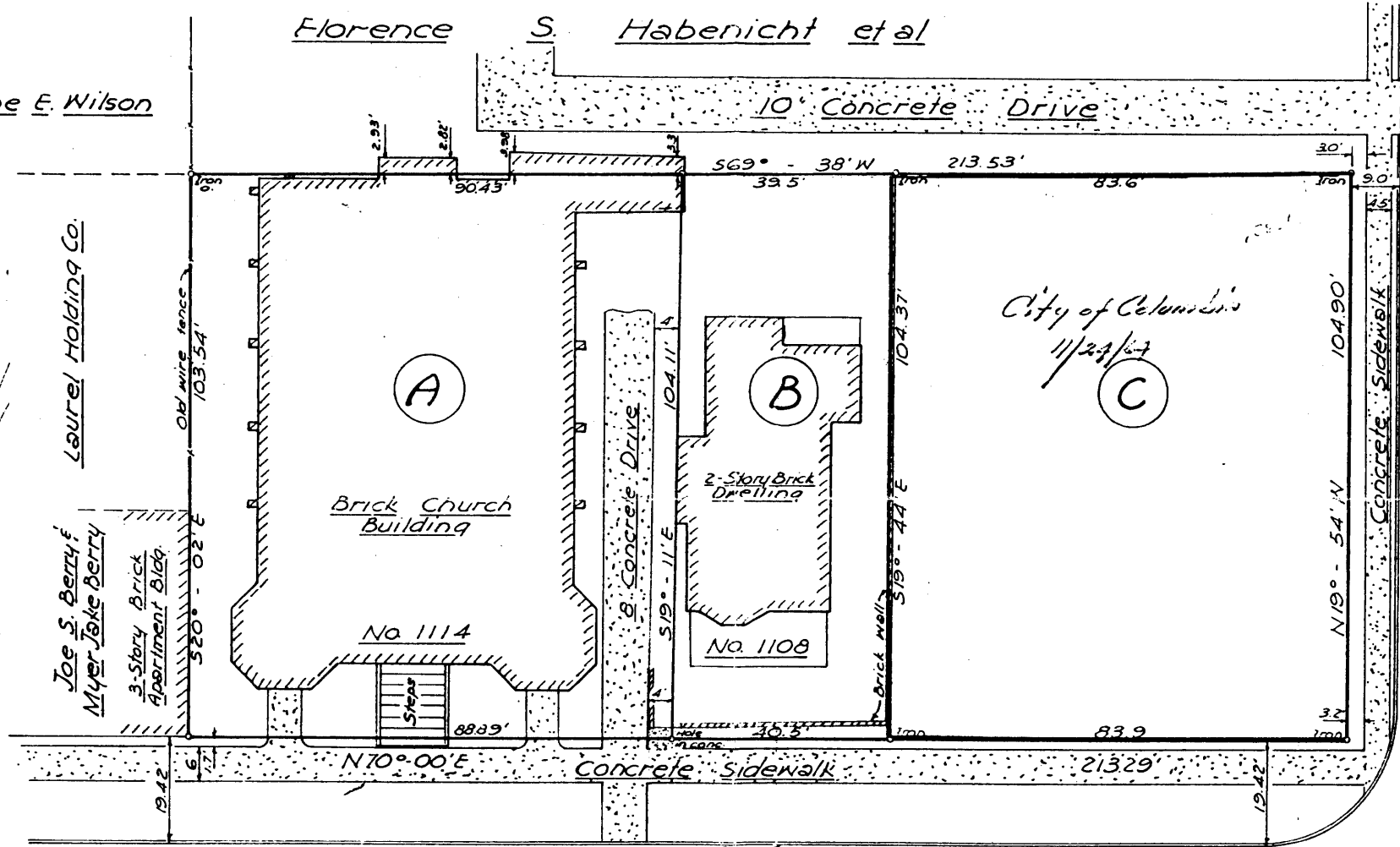
City of Columbia  
11/23/63

(C)

Concrete Sidewalk

Street

Assembly



Blanding Street

Property Surveyed for

Sidney Park C.M.E. Church

Columbia, S.C.

Scale: 1" = 20'

B.P. Barber & Associates, Engineers - Columbia, S.C. Oct. 11, 1963

Note: Street lines approved by Office of City Engineer

