

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 of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in *Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms* (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

1. Name of Property

historic name Grace Episcopal Church

other names/site number

2. Location

street & number 404 Washington Avenue N/A not for publication

city, town Weldon N/A vicinity

state North Carolina code NC county Halifax code 083 zip code 27890

3. Classification

Ownership of Property

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

Category of Property

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Number of Resources within Property

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

Name of related multiple property listing:

N/A Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

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. See continuation sheet.

Signature of certifying official

8-7-91

Date

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

5. 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): _____

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Religion / religious structure

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Religion / religious structure

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(enter categories from instructions)

Gothic

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation stucco

walls stucco

roof asbestos

other wood

glass

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

Located in the established Washington Avenue residential neighborhood, two blocks from the commercial center of Weldon, Grace Episcopal Church stands as a sophisticated example of Gothic Revival-style parish churches built during the third quarter of the nineteenth century. In size and location, this diminutive church complements the dignity and charm of a street lined by shade trees and turn-of-the-century dwellings. A mix of dogwoods, maples, elms, and water oaks punctuate the generous front lawns along the street. Dogwoods line the perimeter of the churchyard along the street while crepe myrtle and mimosa shade the grounds to the northeast. The church is situated facing southeast on a corner lot that is defined along the sidewalk boundary by masonry coping. The church and its connecting brick parish house, built in 1953-1954, dominate the lot. The basic rectangular plan of the church follows a typical gable-front orientation, extends five bays deep, and includes a small rectangular chancel area in the rear. The structure's Gothic Revival exterior character is defined by the facade's off-set corner, two-stage buttress with capped pinnacle and flanking three-stage bell tower. This tower also serves as an entrance vestibule. The steep pitch of the nave and bell tower roofs, the dominant use of the pointed arch, and an extraordinarily intact interior further enhance the church's Gothic Revival design.

The overall integrity of the church's Gothic Revival design remains intact, even though time has erased a number of its distinctive details. Built as a brick structure during the 1870s, the church was significantly altered in appearance by the application of stucco in 1886, when the bricks were determined to be of poor quality. The stucco was originally scored and enhanced by penciled joints. Evidence of the scoring still exists, particularly at the rear of the church. Other alterations occurred in the twentieth century and include the removal of the following: the gable-front hood over the front entrance, two gablet ventilators from the bell-tower roof, and an elaborate Gothic pinnacle which capped the corner buttress. This buttress is now topped with a simple metal finial. The tower's decorative finials and the Latin cross rising from the central gable are also modern replacements. In addition, asbestos shingles now cover the original wooden roof shingles.

The exterior masonry walls are delineated by several distinctive features. A water table encircles the entire structure and a simple wooden cornice extends along the side elevations. On the front facade, a molded string course wraps around the offset corner buttress and extends across the facade to the bell tower. This slender buttress has two stages, each of which is highlighted by recessed panels. The face of each first stage panel contains a Gothic pointed arch and the second stage has plain rectangular ones.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Grace Episcopal Church, Weldon
Halifax County, North Carolina

Section number 7 Page 1

On the opposing corner, the bell tower is accented by rectangular recessed panels on each face of the first stage. A simple belt course separates the second and third stages.

All openings incorporate the popular Gothic pointed arch. The facade of the bell tower is distinguished by a slightly recessed double-leaf entrance, a single lancet window in the second stage, and a pair of lancet ventilators in the belfry. Nicely molded rake boards skirt the tower gable. The facade of the nave is accented by a central lancet window flanked by two smaller ones. A small ventilator that mirrors the pointed arch is located near the gable peak. Each side elevation is graced by a series of five identical windows. All windows and ventilators have sloped sills. Doorways originally flanked the rear chancel. Each contained a single-leaf door; however, the southwest access entry to the organ has been removed. The other entrance now connects the church with the parish house. The chancel has on each side elevation a diminutive lancet window, and, at the rear, short lancet windows flank a large, central lancet.

The interior is entered through a small vestibule in the bell tower, which opens into the nave with central aisle and a two-level chancel beyond. At the beginning of this aisle is the baptismal font, followed by a range of eleven modern pews on the south side and eight on the north. The first level of the chancel is dominated in the southwest corner by the organ cabinet and pipes. This part of the chancel contains the choir pews, lectern, and pulpit. The altar area, the third floor level, is separated by a handsome brass foliate chancel rail and a Gothic chancel arch. Composed of a simple archivolt containing three plain molding bands, this arch is supported by massive polygonal pillars with complementary capitals and tall bases.

In both the nave and chancel, the walls and high baseboards are finished in plaster and accented by darkly stained wainscoting. The wainscoting is composed of delicately beaded vertical boards with a simple molded cap. Along the nave's side elevations the wainscoting is interrupted by each window. The wainscoting in the vestibule is a modern replacement.

The most commanding Gothic Revival feature on the interior is the impressive modified hammer-beam roof with its massive brackets and spandrels forming four independent trusses and two half trusses. Each truss forms an almost semi-circular arch that is accented by a king post and diagonally set hammer beams, each with a trefoil terminus. The trefoil motif is also repeated in the cutwork designs within the face of each spandrel. Two-tone staining highlights each truss, with the beams darker than the spandrels. The steeply pitched ceiling is sheathed with darkly stained tongue-and-groove boards.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Grace Episcopal Church, Weldon
Halifax County, North Carolina

Section number 7 Page 2

Although similar in shape, each grouping of windows varies one from the other. Those along the side elevations have splayed plaster outer surrounds with simply molded wooden architraves. Each window contains twentieth-century stained glass with foliate and fleur-de lis details. These windows replaced the original stained glass ones with simple quarrels like those presently found in the bell tower's second stage. The triplet window with Y-tracery and cathedral glass at the rear of the church contains geometric patterns and religious symbols. In contrast to the side elevation windows, the splayed plaster outer surrounds here stop short of the sill by approximately ten inches, thereby creating a base terminus between each window in the grouping. The principal chancel stained glass window was installed in 1935.

Although most of the interior furniture, doors, and flooring are replacements, each sensitively complements in design and materials the original interior scheme. Four pieces of furniture, baptismal font, two chancel chairs, and possibly the organ cabinet date from the period of significance. The tradition of carpeting chancel areas and aisle dates from 1889, just before the church was consecrated.

In 1953, the former vestry room off the chancel was removed when a simple, one-story brick parish house was appended to the church at the rear. This flat-roof structure, laid in common bond, contains a series of rooms, including office, altar guild room, and classrooms in addition to a large meeting room. Exterior features include awning-type metal-framed windows, a recessed primary entrance with double-leaf doorway and transom, two secondary exterior entrances with transoms, and a bold marble cross inset above the primary entrance. Both the exterior and interior details of the parish house reflect functional austerity and do little to compromise the integrity of the original sanctuary.

8. Statement of Significance

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

nationally statewide locally

Applicable National Register Criteria A B C D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions) A B C D E F G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)

Architecture

Period of Significance

1872-1889

Significant Dates

1872

Religion

1886

1889

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Significant Person

N/A

Architect/Builder

Unknown

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

Grace Episcopal Church in Weldon is a significant reflection of socio-economic trends in eastern North Carolina as well as religious and architectural trends within the Episcopal church during the late nineteenth century. From 1865 when fund raising efforts began until 1889 when the church finally stood complete, the Episcopal congregation in Weldon struggled with its financial limitations and strong desire to construct a sophisticated modern church. This protracted period mirrors the economic instability and hardships that eastern North Carolina and the Episcopal church experienced during the Reconstruction and post-Reconstruction periods. Grace Church exemplifies on a diminutive scale the Gothic Revival style preferences of Episcopal congregations in the state's municipal areas during the third quarter of the nineteenth century. It also reflects the slow adoption of ecclesiological principles focusing on liturgical and symbolic functions by congregations in small towns and rural areas of eastern North Carolina. Begun in 1872, stuccoed in 1886, and completed by 1889, this brick church, which follows more the tenets of an Early English parish church, is an unusually well preserved gable-front structure with a facade dominated by flanking three-stage bell tower and two-stage buttress. The interior is highlighted by darkly stained woodwork, which features a handsome modified hammer-beam truss system with massive brackets, and a recessed chancel, which was added in 1881.

Historical Contexts: Architecture and Religion

The development of Grace Episcopal Church in Weldon, from its inception in the mid 1860s until the completion of the church by 1889, represents a remarkable architectural achievement on the part of a small congregation during a period when the agriculturally based economy of eastern North Carolina was recovering from the ravages of the Civil War. During the late nineteenth century agricultural production in North Carolina increased, but farmers suffered financial hardships caused in part by over production and falling commodity prices.¹ Economic recovery in small towns evolved slowly until industrial and manufacturing enterprises were begun late in the century. As this occurred, population in the towns increased dramatically as many workers moved there from rural areas.² The Episcopal Church in eastern North Carolina also suffered financial hardship after the Civil War, but still experienced growth in membership and in the number of new congregations.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Grace Episcopal Church, Weldon
Halifax County, North Carolina

Section number 8 Page 1

When congregations built new structures, construction always adhered to the Gothic Revival style, illustrating either the influence of the masonry early English period or the picturesque Carpenter Gothic style.

Even though Weldon grew slowly during the late nineteenth century and supported a variety of new businesses, its failure by 1890 to develop significant industrial enterprises retarded its economic growth. Prior to the war Weldon's economy had been linked to the development of modern, more efficient transportation systems in North Carolina, first as the location of the Roanoke Navigation Company which built the Roanoke Canal in 1824, and by mid century as terminus of four railroads connecting North Carolina, South Carolina, and Virginia. With approximately 160 inhabitants in 1860, Weldon grew in population from 208 in 1870 to 1,000 in 1880 and by 1890 was a town of 1,100.⁴ The 1867-1868 Branson's Business Directory lists Weldon as a community which supported two lawyers and physicians, one hotel, three Methodist congregations, one school, one plow factory, two grist mills, and three merchants.⁵ By 1869 a correspondent of the Fayetteville Eagle stated that "Weldon is looking up," and has two good hotels with good food at the Emery House, eight or ten business houses and a manufacturer of ". . . probably the best cotton plow in the South."⁶ This same correspondent also recognized Weldon's great water power as perfect for future factories.

Although small in size, Weldon was a cosmopolitan community with advantages uncommon in towns of similar size. Both the river and railroad provided the people of Weldon with ready access to such urban areas and markets as Richmond, Philadelphia, New York and Baltimore. Stores' inventories included the latest fashions and most up-to-date goods. The Roanoke Literary Society played an active role within the community and allowed its hall to be used by various organizations and congregations. The Roanoke and Tar River Agricultural Association in Weldon sponsored annually a fair, the largest in the area. As housing needs increased, the Weldon Enterprise and Loan Company was organized in 1869 "to assist in building cottage dwellings to rent."⁷ Aided by these advantages, Weldon became by 1880 the largest town in Halifax County.⁸

Throughout the 1880s, the people of Weldon remained steadfast in their conviction that the economic future of the town depended on the redevelopment of the Roanoke Canal and the Roanoke River's water power, a post-war goal which had eluded the town. Other business investments had increased significantly with fifty-six merchants and tradesmen serving the community's needs. In addition five doctors and three lawyers were practicing in the

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Grace Episcopal Church, Weldon
Halifax County, North Carolina

Section number 8 Page 2

town, and seven mills including two corn mills, two cotton gins, and one saw mill were operating. Manufacturing concerns included one iron foundry, one brick works, two shoe and boot companies and one carriage works.¹⁰ Between 1885 and 1890 there was little appreciable growth; however, a new round house was completed for the Raleigh and Gaston Railroad.¹¹ Local sentiment regarding Weldon's future is best presented in The Roanoke News on September 22, 1887: "The growth of Weldon is only a question of time. But how long a time is the question?"¹²

Despite the fact that membership in the Episcopal Church began to increase again following the war, the church suffered from serious economic hardship until the 1890s. Between 1866 and 1883 the number of communicants in the state more than doubled, increasing from 2,451 to 5,889.¹³ In 1866 there were forty-two congregations in the eastern section of the state, a number which had risen to fifty-eight by 1876.¹⁴ The Assistant Bishop of the Diocese of North Carolina, the Reverend Theodore B. Lyman, following a visitation in the spring of 1878 to the northeast portion of the state, commented:

. . . the congregations everywhere have been unusually large. I have never felt more strongly encouraged, and I do think that the prospects of the church, particularly in the eastern portion of the State, are hopeful in the extreme.¹⁵

Nevertheless, this period of church history in North Carolina is described as one of poverty with meager resources and lacking a sufficient number of clergy, a dilemma which continued into the 1880s.¹⁶ Generally people had very limited if any resources with which to make a regular tithe and what was given varied from year to year. At the meeting of the Convocation of Tarboro on December 4, 1889 at Grace Church in Weldon, a resolution was even adopted petitioning Northern congregations to assist the parishes in helping the people in the area recover from hardships following crop failures.¹⁷

As new Episcopal congregations formed in North Carolina during the mid to late nineteenth century, church architectural preferences within the Episcopal denomination were increasingly rooted in the Gothic Revival style and reflect a progression in design and theological ideals. The former evangelical emphasis on worship was giving way to the Ecclesiological movement and its study of liturgical and symbolic functions within the worship service of the medieval Gothic Church. Appointments, vestments, and ceremonies were becoming common practice.¹⁸ The strong influence of the Cambridge Camden Society in England, which published in 1841 The Ecclesiologist, "a periodical devoted to church building, restorations, ritual, and symbolism,"¹⁹ gave rise to this development of a Gothic standard. In the United States, the New York

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**Grace Episcopal Church, Weldon
Halifax County, North CarolinaSection number 8 Page 3

Ecclesiological Society formed in 1848. It in turn published New York Ecclesiologist, "a journal intended to disseminate Ecclesiological precepts and educate the Episcopal clergy in church architecture, history and liturgical tradition."²⁰

In an effort to control the quality of Gothic architectural design, the New York Ecclesiological Society recommended "the Early English parish church as the most suitable model for religious edifices."²¹ Several features became vital elements in demonstrating the Ecclesiological movement's aim to make a building serve its intended function. These were the restoration of the chancel, use of asymmetry in placement of a tower and/or entrance, and separation of chancel and nave by a rood screen or altar rail as well as a heavily defined arched opening. The steep pitch of the roof, the tall spire of the bell tower, the elevation of the chancel, and the use of stained glass, were all symbolic elements within this Gothic Revival style. If walls could not be decoratively painted, then all woodwork was to be darkly stained.²² The altar became the focal point within the chancel with the pulpit and lectern placed to each side. Crosses were placed on some altars and also replaced other steeple ornaments.²³

The work and writings of two architects, Frank Wills (1822-1856) and Richard Upjohn (1802-1878), most notably illustrate the Gothic Revival church designs popular with Episcopal congregations in eastern North Carolina during the last half of the nineteenth century. As the first official architect for the New York Ecclesiological Society, Wills provided designs for numerous churches throughout the country and wrote articles on architecture for the Society's journal.²⁴ On the other hand Richard Upjohn's Gothic Revival designing talents included impressive masonry churches following the Perpendicular, Early English, or Decorated styles. Upjohn also felt a strong commitment to providing good design for simple churches and did so on occasion without fee for rural wooden meetinghouses, chapels and missions. Through his pattern book entitled Upjohn's Rural Architecture, first published in 1852, he provided designs for modest board-and-batten churches. Upjohn is acknowledged as "the leading Gothic Revival architect of nineteenth century America."²⁵

The Ecclesiological movement provided an educational framework for clergy and congregations throughout eastern North Carolina as decisions were made concerning new construction. More prosperous congregations located in the larger towns and cities usually hired an architect. Most had constructed churches during the early antebellum period, but a few were built during the mid 1850s and 1860s, namely Christ Church in Raleigh by Richard Upjohn of New York, 1848-1852; St. John's Church in Wilmington by James F. Post, 1853-1860; Trinity Church in Scotland Neck by Frank Wills of New York, 1854-1855; Christ Church in Elizabeth City by John Crawford Neilson of Baltimore, 1856-1857;

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**Grace Episcopal Church, Weldon
Halifax County, North CarolinaSection number 8 Page 4

Calvary Church in Tarboro by William Percival, 1859-1867; and Grace Church in Plymouth by Richard Upjohn, 1860-1861. All were masonry construction and followed the Gothic precepts of the Early English parish church. Contemporary with these structures are three more modest board-and-batten churches. St. Mary's Chapel, Raleigh, (1858) was designed by Richard Upjohn and the designs of both St. Mark's Church, Halifax (1854), and St. Paul's Church, Beaufort (c. 1857) were influenced by Upjohn's work.²⁶

Members of the clergy were also actively involved in providing overall designs and/or specifications for renovations, including chancels, bell towers, porches, and transepts. In 1874, Assistant Bishop Theodore B. Lyman urged the following:

. . . where new churches are in contemplation, greater care should be taken to have them built in a more churchly form. It costs scarce anything more to have a building in just proportions, and in comely style, than to construct the unsightly barns which are all too often erected. A little judicious attention on the part of the Clergy, would always avail to secure buildings in perfectly good taste, while such buildings always exert a refining and elevating influence.²⁷

He also called attention to the importance of a broad central aisle and stated that placing pews in front of the chancel was ". . . to violate every principle of good taste . . .".²⁸ Two ministers who were actively contributing to church design were the Reverend Johannes Adam Oertel, D. D., who designed the original Church of the Good Shepherd, Raleigh (1874),²⁹ and the Reverend Gilbert Higgs, who supplied drawings for various additions.³⁰

During the three decades following the war, Episcopal church construction was predominately board and batten or frame, with few masonry exceptions. St. Peter's Church, Washington (1869-1873) and Grace Church, Weldon (1874-1888) are two of these exceptions which survive. Little is known about the origin of specific designs, frame or masonry; however, the influence of Upjohn's Rural Architecture is apparent in many of the frame churches.³¹ These churches follow basically two forms, the simple gable front and the gable front with central or off-set tower. Holy Innocents, Avoca (1879-1880) and St. Barnabus Church, Snow Hill (1887) represent examples of the gable front form. Three churches which illustrate this same typical form with varying bell tower placement are St. John's, Newbegin Creek and St. Martin's, Hamilton, consecrated respectively in 1880 and 1883, and Grace Church, Trenton (1885).

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Grace Episcopal Church, Weldon
Halifax County, North Carolina

Section number 8 Page 5

Assistant Bishop Lyman continued to encourage congregations not only to be thoughtful about church design, but also to maintain and improve existing structures. In 1879 he wrote:

. . . there is no surer sign of a proper and becoming spirit, in any Christian community, than when vigorous efforts are employed to preserve the houses of God from dilapidation, and keep them in a condition more worthy the service of Him to whom they have been sacredly dedicated.³²

Throughout the 1880s examples of renovations are recorded for churches in eastern North Carolina. Chancels and bell towers were the most common additions. St. James's Church, Kitchens was reported in 1879 as having received a new chancel, front porch and bell tower³³; St. Mark's Memorial Church, Roxobel was also enlarged by the addition of a chancel by 1883³⁴; and Church of Our Saviour, Jackson had completed by April, 1886, extensive renovations including a corner bell tower, transept, and double lancet windows which replaced "the old square ones."³⁵

Historical Background

Efforts to construct an Episcopal church in Weldon extended from 1863, when fund raising efforts were initiated, to the completion of the present-day Grace Church by July 7, 1889, when the church was consecrated. This twenty-five-year period was dominated by economic hardships associated with the Civil War and its aftermath, which made fund raising a challenge and created within the congregation a resolve not to go into debt for the building. Older Episcopal congregations in the vicinity, namely those at Scotland Neck, Halifax, Jackson, and Warrenton, also had a direct influence on Grace Church through their ministerial associations. Trinity Church, Scotland Neck and St. Mark's, Halifax, both in Halifax County, exhibited a sophisticated and up-to-date architectural standard to which the congregation at Weldon likely aspired. Unfortunately, the origin of the building plans for Grace Church remains unknown.

The earliest documented fund raising effort for an Episcopal Church in Weldon is associated with the Civil War period. In 1863 the Reverend Robert A. Castleman, the rector of St. Mark's Church, Halifax began conducting services in Weldon. He was the first ordained Episcopal minister to hold services in Weldon. These services were held either in the town's Literary Hall or in the dining room of the hotel. By 1865, the congregation had raised \$800 for the church building fund; however, as the end of the war neared, these Confederate monies were given to Mr. Castleman when he was forced to resign following the revocation of his rail pass. From about 1868 to about

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Grace Episcopal Church, Weldon
Halifax County, North Carolina

Section number 8 Page 6

1870 services were infrequently conducted by Mr. Neilson Falls, who was also associated with St. Mark's in Halifax. Between 1870 and 1874 a Mr. Gilliam, the rector of Church of Our Saviour in Jackson, held services in Weldon.³⁶

The immediate post-war years gave rise to a new building fund initiative. Mrs. Charles J. Gee and Miss Mary A. Long directed this initiative by the "ladies of the vicinity," which raised \$376 in 1866 and \$100 more in 1869-70.³⁷ On November 6, 1869, the Roanoke News reported:

The work of procuring the requisite amount of money for the erection of an Episcopal Church in this place has now commenced in earnest Some twelve or fifteen hundred dollars are already guaranteed, but it is designed to secure some \$5,000 between this time and next spring in order then to commence the erection of a brick church Let the people of this community give this undertaking a most hearty support--a good church in this place is most sadly needed.³⁸

Other fund raising efforts included in 1870 a "feast" and a vocal concert given by Miss Pocahontas Happer [?] of Baltimore, which jointly raised \$350, and in 1871 another concert by Miss Happer provided an additional \$300. Entertainment and feasts continued to serve as a means of fund raising in 1873; however, the railroad authorities also assisted by contributing a "liberal share" of the profits of several excursion trains. In addition, the Sewing Society donated the products of its labor.³⁹

Church records indicate that "in 1872 the first practical steps were taken towards the building of the Church." The following building supplies were purchased: "the first lot of brick - 3000 . . . for \$270," window frames, and lumber.⁴⁰ At this time, the building lot may have been given to the church by Col. N. M. Long, but the deed was not actually recorded until January 10, 1874.⁴¹

Listed as a mission church prior to 1874, the Weldon Episcopal church, which had only eleven communicants, was formally "admitted into union with the Convention" of the Diocese of North Carolina on May 21, 1874, and was named Grace Church.⁴² Assistant Bishop Lyman noted following his visitation on February 2, 1874, that

. . . there is no resident clergyman, nor any services except those of a lay reader. Some years ago subscriptions were secured nearly sufficient for the erection of a Church. An eligible lot has been presented, but the work has been allowed to linger on with little or no progress.⁴³

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Grace Episcopal Church, Weldon
Halifax County, North Carolina

Section number 8 Page 7

Shortly thereafter the Reverend Matthias M. Marshall, D.D. of Emmanuel Church, Warrenton became rector for about four months. He was succeeded by the Reverend Aristides S. Smith, D.D., who served as rector from 1876 to 1887.⁴⁴ In 1876, and for a number of years thereafter, Dr. Smith was also conducting services for the Episcopal congregations in nearby Scotland Neck, Halifax, and Ringwood.⁴⁵

Very little is known about the actual progress of the church's construction between 1874 and 1877. In his 1877 annual report Dr. Smith provided an insight into its status:

The Church in Weldon, after a hard struggle on the part of its members, is now so far completed, that we are enabled to use it. When completed it will cost between \$3,000 and \$4,000. . . . There is but little indebtedness for the work which has been done, and there is money on hand to pay for that, and also a cabinet organ which has been ordered.⁴⁶

The Church Building Fund for the diocese also reported that \$25 was appropriated for Grace Church.⁴⁷ The rector's 1878 report indicates that during the previous year the church, which could seat 175 people, had been provided with seats, a furnace had been placed in the basement, and plans were underway for "enclosing the Church with a neat paling. . . ."⁴⁸ Dr. Smith lamented that

The unexpected freshet in the Roanoke River, last winter, which carried away our two R. R. bridges, and swept away almost the entire result of a whole year's labors, has greatly crippled our resources and put it out of our power, at present, to plaster and paint our church building, and procure for it the necessary furniture.⁴⁹

By 1880, however, the congregation had made additional progress toward completion of the church. The installation of stained glass windows in the church was finished by March 11, 1880, at a cost of about \$250.⁵⁰ In his 1880 annual report Dr. Smith summed up the development of the church:

The Church in Weldon has been laboring under a heavy burden ever since its organization. It began to build an expensive church before it was able to finish, and has prosecuted the work up to the present time with scarcely any aid from abroad; but, with indomitable energy, the little band of church workers here has gone on with its work, as the means could be provided, till now our house presents quite a church-like appearance. . . .⁵¹

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Grace Episcopal Church, Weldon
Halifax County, North Carolina

Section number 8 Page 8

The physical development of Grace Church continued hand-in-hand with the congregation's fund raising ability during the 1880s. By 1883, the number of communicants had tripled to thirty-three. Sponsorship of concerts remained a popular source of revenue. One particularly innovative function, a Japanese tea party held on April 28 and 29, 1886, netted \$60 for the church.⁵² Donations were also accepted, and two of the more interesting ones were given in 1887: 5,000 cigarettes from Julian S. Carr of Durham and \$5 from a Mr. H. Wallers of the Coast Line.⁵³

The cooperative association between Episcopal clergy in the area and Grace Church grew during the 1880s and involved not only conducting worship services but also assistance with the building project. In 1881, at the suggestion of the "bishop of the diocese [Bishop Theodore B. Lyman] and the Rev. Mr. [Gilbert] Higgs, the latter furnishing descriptions and plans," the interior plan of Grace Church was modified by the addition of a recessed chancel which replaced the vestry room. A new vestry room was added.⁵⁴ The roof was also ceiled at a cost of \$78 and brackets were added.⁵⁵ Dr. Smith in 1883 submitted the following update as a part of his report on Grace Church:

The church in Weldon has, during the past year procured a pipe organ and has paid the larger portion of the purchase money. The interior of the church has been improved at considerable cost; which improvements have all been paid for. It only wants now to be plastered and painted on the inside, to render it one of the neatest village churches in the Diocese.⁵⁶

The financial effort which was required to continue work on the church is illustrated by the fact that from 1883 to 1886 the congregation each year fell short in its salary payments to its rector, Dr. A. S. Smith.⁵⁷ Gilbert Higgs, rector of Church of the Saviour in Jackson, assisted Dr. Smith on special occasions and by filling in as needed. In 1887, with the departure of Dr. Smith, Mr. Higgs became rector-in-charge of Grace Church, a position he filled on a temporary basis until W. Layton Mellichampe became rector following his ordination on December 15, 1889.⁵⁸

Shortly before his departure, Dr. Smith confirmed in his 1886 annual report to the diocese a discovery which would alter the exterior character of the church. He states:

It has been found that the bricks, of which the church in Weldon was erected, were not of good quality and that to protect them, the building will have to be stuccoed. For this purpose, \$90 have been subscribed.⁵⁹

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Grace Episcopal Church, Weldon
Halifax County, North Carolina

Section number 8 Page 9

To remedy the problem, stucco was applied to the exterior and was made to resemble stone blocks by scoring the surface and penciling the joints.⁶⁰ This work and other needed to complete the structure was in all likelihood supervised by Mr. Higgs utilizing his building experience. In his 1889 annual report for Grace Church, he describes:

During this fiscal year the church has been put in thorough repair and is now ready for consecration. The walls have been plastered inside and stuccoed outside, the roof painted, the ceiling and brackets oiled and stained, the chancel, aisles and Vestry-room carpeted, the furnace repaired. A triplet chancel window of cathedral glass has been presented by the Rt. Rev. the Bishop of the Diocese [Theodore B. Lyman]. . . . Arrangements are being made for the purchase of a bell.⁶¹

On Sunday July 7, 1889 Grace Church was consecrated by Bishop Lyman.⁶²

Shortly, thereafter, the congregation, which had grown from thirty-four communicants in 1889 to fifty in 1890, was once again involved in building projects, including the construction of a rectory for its new minister on the northwest portion of the church lot. Stylistically compatible with the church, this building served as the rectory until 1929 when it was torn down.⁶³ In 1892 the church, itself, underwent two modifications, the church floor was lowered and the chancel roof was raised.⁶⁴

Interior appointments also evolved; few early furnishings remain in the church today. The two handsome chancel chairs are probably those presented by "lady friends" in Baltimore at the same time as two silver plated alms-basins by "gentleman friends in the same city."⁶⁵ The brass communion rail was given in 1897 in memory of Dr. Aristides S. Smith, and the baptismal font was presented in 1899 by the Guild of Loving Service. The most striking object in the church is the pipe organ cabinet. It is uncertain whether the cabinet dates from 1892 or 1913 when new organs replaced earlier ones.⁶⁶ In 1935 Mr. Paul Garrett gave the present stained-glass chancel window in memory of his two children. It is unclear whether he gave the grouping of three lancet windows or simply the larger middle one. What became of the triplet chancel window presented by Bishop Lyman also is unclear.⁶⁷

Few changes during the twentieth century have significantly altered the exterior of Grace Church. Between 1953-1954 the adjoining one-story brick parish hall was built behind the church. Today, however, the Grace Church complex still aptly fits the description given it in 1890 by a Baltimorean of taste, "a little gem."⁶⁸

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Grace Episcopal Church, Weldon
Halifax County, North Carolina

Section number 8 Page 10

NOTES

¹Hugh Talmage Lefler and Albert Ray Newsome, North Carolina: The History of a Southern State (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, third edition, 1973), 523, hereinafter cited as Lefler and Newsome, North Carolina.

²William S. Powell, North Carolina through Four Centuries (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1989), 414-416.

³Lawrence Foushee London and Sarah McCulloh Lemmon (eds.), The Episcopal Church in North Carolina, 1701-1959 (Raleigh: The Episcopal Diocese of North Carolina, 1987), 272, 297, hereinafter cited as London and Lemmon, Episcopal Church.

⁴Francis A. Walker, A Compendium of the Ninth Census (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1872), 282; L. Branson (ed.), The North Carolina Business Directory (Raleigh: Published by J. A. Jones, 1872), 114, hereinafter cited as Branson, N.C. Business Directory, with appropriate date; Roanoke News (Weldon), July 29, 1880, hereinafter cited as Roanoke News; Branson, N.C. Business Directory, 1890, 339. According to Branson's directory (1872) the citizens of Weldon thought that their population was "much larger" than the figure recorded in the 1870 census.

⁵Branson, N.C. Business Directory, 1867-8, 54-55.

⁶Roanoke News, December 1, 1869.

⁷Roanoke News, December 1, 1869.

⁸Roanoke News, September 15, October 23, 1869.

⁹Roanoke News, July 29, 1880.

¹⁰Branson, N.C. Business Directory, 1884, 355-361.

¹¹Roanoke News, October 22, 1887.

¹²Roanoke News, September 22, 1887 (quote); July 28, 1887.

¹³London and Lemmon, Episcopal Church, 272.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Grace Episcopal Church, Weldon
Halifax County, North Carolina

Section number 8 Page 11

¹⁴ [Journal of the Fiftieth Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of North Carolina (Raleigh: Diocese of North Carolina, 1866)], 55-56, hereinafter cited as Journal of the Annual Convention, with appropriate date; Journal of the Annual Convention, 1875, Appendix B, 10-12. In 1883 the Diocese of East Carolina was formed from the Diocese of North Carolina.

¹⁵ Journal of the Annual Convention, 1878, 57.

¹⁶ London and Lemmon, Episcopal Church, 272; Journal of the Annual Convention, 1874, 44; Journal of the Annual Convention, 1878, 57.

¹⁷ Roanoke News, December 12, 1889.

¹⁸ Raymond W. Albright, A History of the Protestant Episcopal Church (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1964), 292, hereinafter cited as Albright, Protestant Episcopal Church.

¹⁹ Calder Loth and Julius Trousdale Sadler Jr., The Only Proper Style: Gothic Architecture in America (Boston: New York Graphic Society, 1975), 61, hereinafter cited as Loth and Sadler, Only Proper Style.

²⁰ Loth and Sadler, Only Proper Style, 62.

²¹ Loth and Sadler, Only Proper Style, 62.

²² William H. Pierson, Jr., American Buildings and Their Architects: Technology and the Picturesque: The Corporate and the Early Gothic Styles (Garden City, N. Y.: Doubleday & Company, 1978), 154-158, hereinafter cited as Pierson, American Buildings and Their Architects.

²³ Albright, Protestant Episcopal Church, 187.

²⁴ Pierson, American Buildings and Their Architects, 201-202.

²⁵ Loth and Sadler, Only Proper Style, 61.

²⁶ Loth and Sadler, Only Proper Style, 205; Lawrence Wodehouse, "Upjohn's Rural Architecture" in North Carolina," N.C. Architect, 15 (November, 1963), 12.

²⁷ Journal of the Annual Convention, 1874, 48-49.

²⁸ Journal of the Annual Convention, 1874, 49.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Grace Episcopal Church, Weldon
Halifax County, North Carolina

Section number 8 Page 12

²⁹Marshall DeLancey Haywood, Lives of the Bishops of North Carolina from the Establishment of the Episcopate in That State Down to the Division of the Diocese (Raleigh: Alfred Williams & Company, 1910), 215.

³⁰Journal of the Annual Convention, 1886, 26; "Grace Church, Weldon, N. C.," The Churchman, 24 (February 28, 1891), 324 (photocopy in Grace Episcopal Church File, Archives, Episcopal Diocese of North Carolina, Raleigh, N. C.), hereinafter cited at "Grace Church."

³¹Catherine W. Bishir, North Carolina Architecture (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1990), 314.

³²Journal of the Annual Convention, 1879, 77.

³³Journal of the Annual Convention, 1879, 81.

³⁴Journal of the Annual Convention, 1883, 68.

³⁵Journal of the Annual Convention, 1886, 26.

³⁶Journal of the Annual Convention, 1868, 25, 29, 96; [Record Book], Grace Episcopal Church, n.d., Grace Episcopal Church, Weldon, N. C., hereinafter cited as Record Book, Grace Church.

³⁷Record Book, Grace Church.

³⁸Roanoke News, November 6, 1869.

³⁹Record Book, Grace Church.

⁴⁰Record Book, Grace Church.

⁴¹Col. N. M. Long to Trustees of Episcopal Church, Weldon, January 10, 1874, Halifax County Deeds, Office of the Register of Deeds, Halifax County Courthouse, Book 57, 149-150.

⁴²Journal of the Annual Convention, 1874, 23, 105.

⁴³Journal of the Annual Convention, 1874, 42.

⁴⁴Record Book, Grace Church.

⁴⁵Journal of the Annual Convention, 1877, 175-179; Journal of the Annual Convention, 1878, 94-95; Journal of the Annual Convention, 1879, 186-190.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Grace Episcopal Church, Weldon
Halifax County, North Carolina

Section number 8 Page 13

⁴⁶Journal of the Annual Convention, 1877, 180.

⁴⁷Journal of the Annual Convention, 1877, 8.

⁴⁸Journal of the Annual Convention, 1878, 95.

⁴⁹Journal of the Annual Convention, 1878, 95.

⁵⁰Record Book, Grace Church; Roanoke News, March 11, 1880.

⁵¹Journal of the Annual Convention, 1880, 156.

⁵²Journal of the Annual Convention, 1883, 127; Roanoke News, February 11, April 22, May 6, 1886.

⁵³Roanoke News, June 16, 1887.

⁵⁴"Grace Church"; Roanoke News, July 28, 1881; Journal of the Annual Convention, 1882, 153.

⁵⁵Journal of the Annual Convention, 1881, 145-146; Roanoke News, July 6, 1882.

⁵⁶Journal of the Annual Convention, 1883, 128.

⁵⁷Journal of the Annual Convention, 1883, 127; Journal of the Annual Convention, 1884, 94; Journal of the Annual Convention, 1885, 82. By 1881 Dr. Smith had given up his charge of Trinity Church, Scotland Neck and shortly thereafter assumed responsibility for Church of the Advent in Enfield. Following his resignation from Grace Church, he continued to minister to the congregations in Enfield and Ringwood.

⁵⁸"Grace Church"; Journal of the Annual Convention, 1887, 91; Journal of the Annual Convention, 1888, 19; Journal of the Annual Convention, 1889, 91. Mr. Higgs in 1887 was also associated with Emmanuel Church in Warrenton, Church of The Saviour in Jackson, and St. Luke's Mission in Gaston. Church records give only a sketchy insight to the ministers who have served at Grace Church and their tenure. Only one, the Reverend D.P. Moore, who served from 1928-1942 and 1948-50, appears to have remained at Grace Church for an extended period of time.

⁵⁹Journal of the Annual Convention, 1886, 88.

⁶⁰Photograph of Grace Episcopal Church, ca. 1889, in possession of Grace Church, Weldon, N. C.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Grace Episcopal Church, Weldon
Halifax County, North Carolina

Section number 8 Page 14

:: Journal of the Annual Convention, 1889, 92.

:: Roanoke News, July 11, 1889.

:: Journal of the Annual Convention, 1889, 91; Journal of the Annual Convention, 1890, 101; "Grace Episcopal Church, Weldon, N. C." (scrapbook compiled by Rebecca N. Hill and in the possession of Mrs. F. H. Gregory, Jr., Weldon, N. C.), hereinafter cited at "Grace Church" scrapbook.

:: Roanoke News, February 11, 1889.

:: Journal of the Annual Convention, 1886, 88.

:: "Grace Church" scrapbook.

:: "Grace Church" scrapbook.

:: "Grace Church".

9. Major Bibliographical References

Albright, Raymond W. A History of the Protestant Episcopal Church. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1964.

Allen, W. C. History of Halifax County. Boston: The Cornhill Company, 1918.

Bishir, Catherine W. North Carolina Architecture. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1990.

Branson's North Carolina Business Directory, for 1867-8. Raleigh: Branson & Jones, Publishers, [Also used Branson's for 1872, 1884, 1890.].

Grace Episcopal Church File. Archives, Episcopal Diocese of North Carolina, Raleigh, N. C.

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:

- State historic preservation office
 Other State agency
 Federal agency
 Local government
 University
 Other

Specify repository:

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of property less than one acre

UTM References

A

1	8	2	6	6	9	9	0	4	0	3	4	0	5	0
Zone	Easting	Northing												

B

Zone	Easting	Northing												

C

D

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

Rectangular in shape, the property for Grace Episcopal Church fronts on Washington Avenue, extending seventy-five feet to the corner of Washington Avenue and Fifth Street and then one-hundred forty-five feet along Fifth Street. This parcel is identified in the Halifax County tax maps as Weldon Township, map #475, parcel 257.

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

The boundary includes the entire city lot that has historically been associated with Grace Episcopal Church.

See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Drucilla H. York, Architectural Historian
organization N/A date May 28, 1991
street & number 1903 E. Fourth Street telephone (919) 752-5260
city or town Greenville state North Carolina zip code 27858

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Grace Episcopal Church, Weldon
Halifax County, North Carolina

Section number 9 Page 1

"Grace Episcopal Church, Weldon, N. C." (scrapbook compiled by Rebecca N. Hill and in possession of Mrs. F. H. Gregory Jr., Weldon, N. C.).

Halifax County, N. C., Record of Deeds.

Haywood, Marshall DeLancey. Lives of the Bishops of North Carolina from the Establishment of the Episcopate in That State Down to the Division of the Diocese. Raleigh, N. C.: Alfred Williams & Company, 1910.

Lane, Mills, Architecture of the Old South: North Carolina. Savannah, Ga.: The Beehive Press, 1985.

Lefler, Hugh Talmage and Albert Ray Newsome. North Carolina: The History of a Southern State. Chapel Hill, N. C.: University of North Carolina Press, third edition, 1973.

London, Lawrence Foushee and Sarah McCulloh Lemmon (eds.). The Episcopal Church in North Carolina, 1701-1959. Raleigh, N. C.: The Episcopal Diocese of North Carolina, 1987.

Loth, Calder and Julius Trousdale Sadler Jr. The Only Proper Style: Gothic Architecture in America. Boston, Mass.: New York Graphic Society, 1975.

Pierson, William H., Jr. American Buildings and Their Architects: Technology and the Picturesque: The Corporate and the Early Gothic Styles. Garden City, N. Y.: Doubleday & Company, 1978.

Powell, William S. North Carolina through Four Centuries. Chapel Hill, N. C.: University of North Carolina Press, 1989.

Protestant Episcopal Church. Diocese of North Carolina. Journal of annual conventions. 1866, 1868, 1874, 1875, 1877, 1878, 1879, 1880, 1881, 1882, 1883, 1884, 1885, 1886, 1887, 1888, 1889.

Roanoke News (Weldon, N. C.).

United States Census. Microfilm of manuscript records, 1860, J. Y. Joyner Library, East Carolina University, Greenville, N. C.

Walker, Francis A. A Compendium of the Ninth Census.... Washington: Government Printing Office, 1872.

Wodehouse, Lawrence. "Upjohn's Rural Architecture in North Carolina." N. C. Architect, 15 (November, 1968), 13-22.

Grace Episcopal
Church
404 Washington Ave.
Weldon, N.C.
WELDON QUAD
Zone 18
Easting 266990
Northing 4034050

HX 765



