State of North Carolina
Division of Archives and History

INDIVIDUAL PROPERTY FORM FOR

Iredell County

MULTIPLE RESOURCE OR THEMATIC NOMINATION

1 NAME

HISTORIC
Key Memorial Chapel

AND/OR COMMON
St. Philip's Roman Catholic Church

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER
150 E. Sharpe Street

CITY, TOWN
Statesville

STATE
North Carolina

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY
DISTRICT

BUILDING

STRUCTURE

SITE

OBJECT

OWNERSHIP
PUBLIC

PRIVATE

BOTH

PUBLIC ACQUISITION

STATUS
X OCCUPIED

UNOCCUPIED

WORK IN PROGRESS

ACCESSIBLE

Y YES RESTRICTED

NO

PRESENT USE
AGRICULTURE
MUSEUM

COMMERCIAL
PARK

EDUCATIONAL
PRIVATE RESIDENCE

ENTERTAINMENT
RELIGIOUS

GOVERNMENT
SCIENTIFIC

INDUSTRIAL
TRANSPORTATION

MILITARY

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME
Mr. Albert F. Walser, Attorney-at-Law

STREET & NUMBER
150 E. Sharpe Street

CITY, TOWN
Statesville

STATE
North Carolina

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE

REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

STATE

6 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE
Laura A. W. Phillips (Winston-Salem)

DATE
February 4, 1980

ORGANIZATION
Consultant for Survey and Planning Branch

TELEPHONE
(919) 733-6545

ADDRESS
Archives and History

CITY OR TOWN
Raleigh

STATE
North Carolina
DESCRIPTION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CONDITION</th>
<th>CHECK ONE</th>
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<tr>
<td>X EXCELLENT</td>
<td>___ DETERIORATED</td>
<td>___ UNALTED</td>
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<td>__ GOOD</td>
<td>___ RUINS</td>
<td>X ALTERED</td>
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<td>_ FAIR</td>
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DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The former Key Memorial Chapel is a small, 2 x 4-bay brick Gothic Revival structure located on the southwest corner of S. Traud and E. Sharpe Streets in Statesville. Built in 1898, it was used for many years as a Catholic church, but by 1976 the building had been abandoned and was becoming overgrown with vines. Now, however, the exterior has been renovated, the interior carefully and imaginatively remodelled, the narrow and deep lot has been landscaped with rose gardens, and the structure is being adaptively re-used as a law office.

The front of former Key Memorial Chapel features a large, pointed arch window with arched brick drip mould. Above this is a square window - probably an earlier alteration - and in the peak of the gable a decorative wooden bargeboard with kingspot. (The rear gable also originally had this feature, though it has now been removed.) The northeast corner of the building features a two-story tower with decorative brick band between first and second levels round windows with radiating muntins in the second level with corbelled brick course above, a widely overhanging bracketed cornice, and a crenelated parapet. At the tower base is the main entrance with double-leaf replacement doors, pointed arch transom and gabled entrance porch with the same decorative wooden bargeboard and kingpost as is found in the facade gable. The flanks of the building have 1/1 pointed arch sash windows with arched drip moulds. The rear elevation exhibits two pointed arch doors with brick drip moulds, and between and above these, a broad, pointed arch stained glass alter window featuring a "Jesus in Gethsemane" scene.

On the interior, the original decorative detailing has been retained wherever possible, while the spaces have been altered to accommodate the needs of a law office. Materials from other old buildings have also been utilized in an imaginative way on the interior.
Key Memorial Chapel (St. Philip’s Roman Catholic Church), built in 1898, was the first Roman Catholic church in Iredell County and remains as one of the few nineteenth century religious structures in Statesville. A fine example of the Gothic Revival style, this diminutive chapel has been preserved and adaptively re-used as a law office.

CRITERIA ASSESSMENT

A. As the first Roman Catholic church in the county, the former Key Memorial Chapel is associated with the broad pattern of religious diversification which took place during the second half of the nineteenth century in Iredell County, where the Presbyterian (especially), Methodist and Baptist churches had been most strongly represented during pre-Civil War years.

C. The former Key Memorial Chapel embodies the distinctive characteristics of the Gothic Revival style - the style which became popular for religious architecture in Iredell County during the last quarter of the nineteenth century.
Philip Barton Key was a native of Maryland and a grandson of Francis Scott Key. His wife was Anna Maria Washington Thornton, a great granddaughter of the niece of Martha Washington. Before moving to North Carolina, Key had been a prosperous planter in Louisiana and had served as an officer in the Confederate Army. During the late nineteenth century Key became a prominent figure in Statesville commerce and industry, where liquor and tobacco had begun to play a large role in the economy. Statesville, in fact, had become a major shipping point for liquor, and Key took on a large part of this trade when he opened his wholesale liquor business, P. B. Key and Company, on February 1, 1883. In 1892 Key's company branched off into the tobacco business, and by 1896 the company had built one of Statesville's largest factories.

Key died in 1896. His wife, who at this time was a communicant of the Protestant Episcopal Church and who had earlier donated a memorial window above the altar at Trinity Episcopal Church (Mitchell College Historic District, M.R.N.), sponsored the building of a small Roman Catholic Chapel in memory of her husband. Key had been raised in the Catholic faith. A lot was purchased on the southwest corner of Tradd and Sharpe streets across Sharpe Street from "Esperanza," the Key's home. In addition to the widow, others who contributed funds for the construction of the chapel included: Mrs. Key's brother, J. R. Thornton, a United States Senator from Louisiana; the widow of S. P. White, an Associate Justice of the United States; Mrs. E. Hayne Davis, daughter of a chief justice of North Carolina; Cardinal J. C. Gibbons, Archbishop of Baltimore; and the Right Reverend Leo M. Haid, Abbot of Belmont Abbey. The November 1, 1898, issue of The Landmark carried a notice that "Messrs Lazenby Bros. have been awarded the contract to build a Roman Catholic Church in Statesville. The building which will be about 22x42 ... will cost from $1,200 to $1,500." In 1901 the chapel was dedicated.

From the mid-nineteenth century there had been a few Catholic families in Statesville, but for many years they had to travel to Salisbury for mass. Later in the nineteenth century and well into the twentieth century, priests came to Statesville once or twice a month from Salisbury, Greensboro, and other places to celebrate mass, first at private homes and then at the chapel. Throughout its existence as a place of worship, the structure was known as St. Philip's. By mid-twentieth century the Roman Catholic population had grown to the point that a larger sanctuary was needed, and in 1956 the congregation left the chapel and moved to the former St. John's Lutheran Church on South Mulberry Street (Mitchell College Historic District, Building No. 38), renaming it St. Pius X.

After the departure of the congregation, Key Memorial Chapel (St. Philip's) fell into disuse, and by the 1970s it was becoming overgrown with vines. In 1977 the former chapel was renovated foraptive re-use as a law office and is now once again well maintained.

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Blood, Don D. "A History of St. Philip's Roman Catholic Church, The Key Memorial." Typescript copy located in the files of the Survey and Planning Branch, Archaeology and Historic Preservation Section, Division of Archives and History, Raleigh.


The Landmark, Statesville.

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY

UTM REFERENCES

| A | ZONE | EASTING | NORTHING |
| B | ZONE | EASTING | NORTHING |
| C | ZONE | EASTING | NORTHING |
| D | ZONE | EASTING | NORTHING |

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND