

**Saint James African Methodist
Episcopal (AME) Church
Design Guidelines
3600 Snelling Avenue**



Prepared for the Minneapolis Heritage Preservation Commission

**City of Minneapolis
Community Planning & Economic Development (CPED)**

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Introduction

Scope

These guidelines are meant to be used in conjunction with the latest version of *The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties*. These guidelines identify the property's period of significance; indicate historic uses, and state character-defining features. This document also specifies additional guidelines for exterior changes specifically suited to this property. These guidelines apply only to the exterior of the building. Where these guidelines do not provide specific guidance, *The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties* shall be followed. Exceptions to these guidelines may be granted by the Heritage Preservation Commission for good cause through the Certificate of Appropriateness application process.

Period of Significance

Saint James AME Church's period of significance is 1863-1963 and applies to the exterior of the building. The period begins with the official formation of the church as the First African Methodist Episcopal Church and ends after the church's first one hundred years, shortly after the current building was constructed.

Historic Uses

The congregation has operated at various formal places of worship since starting in 1863. In 1959, the current St. James AME Church was constructed at 3600 Snelling Avenue. At this location the building has continued to serve as a place of worship. Since the turn of the twentieth century, the church also has also offered spiritual and educational programs to the community. More recently, the church has offered Sunday school, music lessons, and tutoring hours.

Historic and Non-historic Features

The church was completed in 1959. Historic features include the vertical false half timbers, stucco, the cross, and cornerstone. It does not appear as though the first floor or transom windows have been replaced.

Building permits indicate the church was reroofed several times and has had its front and storm doors replaced. Photographic evidence indicates that the exterior lights, basement windows, entrance stairway and railing have been replaced since construction was completed. Non-historic features that have been added since the period of significance include the accessible ramp, basement awning windows, two central air units, power pole that connects the overhead service line to the church, aluminum downspouts, and aluminum gutters.

Additional site features, including the vegetation, a freestanding sign, shed, and sidewalk railing appear to have been installed after 1963 and are considered non-historic.

Character Defining Features

Character defining features are the form and detailing of those architectural materials and features that are important in defining the building's historic character and which must be retained in order to preserve that character. The Saint James AME Church's character defining features include its:

- Low-pitched gabled roof with overhanging eaves and exposed beams
- Stucco cladding
- Vertical false half timbering
- Fenestration pattern

Guidelines for Alterations to Building

I. Exterior Cladding

- A. Historic materials shall be preserved except when in demonstrated need of replacement or when presenting a health hazard. The replacement of deteriorated materials shall be with the same material used in the original construction.
- B. The historic stucco cladding shall be replaced with stucco, if replacement is necessary. Stucco that is minimally deteriorated shall be repaired as per *The Secretary of the Interior's Standard for the Treatment of Historic Properties*.
- C. The vertical half timbering shall be replaced with timber that matches the dimensions, texture, reveal, and appearance of this historic wood cladding.
- D. Paint color is not regulated by the Heritage Preservation Commission, but shall be complementary to the church and its surroundings.

II. Roof

- A. Historic materials shall be preserved except when in demonstrated need of replacement or when presenting a health hazard.
- B. The historic roof design shall be maintained. Alterations to roof pitch or roofline, including eave size and location, shall not be permitted.
- C. Character defining features shall be maintained and include the overhanging eaves and exposed beams. Vinyl or metal eaves shall not be permitted. The addition of soffits is not permitted.
- D. The roof is covered in non-historic asphalt shingles. Asphalt shingles shall continue to be used in future shingle replacements. Flexibility shall be employed in approving new shingles and in determining their compatibility.
- E. Replacement gutters shall have a painted finish that is complementary to the church and shall not be present on front or rear elevations.

III. Windows

- A. Historic materials shall be preserved except when in demonstrated need of replacement or when presenting a health hazard.
- B. On the primary and southern elevations, removing or radically changing windows is not permitted. Changing the number, location, size or glazing pattern of these windows, through cutting new openings, blocking-in windows, and installing replacement sash that do not fit the historic window openings is also not permitted.
- C. The addition of new windows on the rear elevation is permitted. New windows shall be compatible with the existing window's fenestration pattern, division of lights, color, reflectivity and proportions.
- D. Replacement windows shall match historic windows in size, division of light, and operation.
- E. Design alterations to the transom window above the front and rear entrance shall not be permitted.

- F. Acceptable materials for replacement windows shall include wood, engineered wood, aluminum, and aluminum-clad wood. Glass used in any replacement windows shall match the color and reflectivity of glass found in the church.
- G. Glass block basement windows are non-historic features. Basement windows may be replaced with glass block or with windows that maintain the historical openings. Existing window openings shall not be blocked or barred.
- H. The installation of decorative glass where it does not currently exist would not be compatible with the historic character of the church and is not permitted.

IV. Exterior Doors

- A. Replacement doors shall match the appearance of the historic doors. New doors shall be compatible with the historic character of the building, reflecting mid-century Modern design and avoiding excessive ornamentation.
- B. Existing door openings shall be retained. Enlarging or reducing door openings shall not be permitted.

V. Accessible Ramp

- A. The existing wooden accessible ramp is a non-historic feature. If removed, a replacement ramp shall be compatible with the historic character of the building.

VI. Front Stairway

- A. The existing concrete front stairway is a non-historic feature. If removed or altered, the replacement shall be compatible with the historic character of the building.
- B. Replacement railings shall match the simple appearance of the historic railings. Historical photographs can help indicate an appropriate design (figure 1).

VII. Walkways

- A. The concrete walkways are historic. However, preservation of their simple, highly-utilitarian, easily replicable concrete is not required.
- B. Replacement walkways shall match the current walkways in terms of materials.
- C. New designs of walkways are permissible. If removed or altered, the walkway's new design shall be compatible with the historic character of the church and its setting in the neighborhood.
- D. If the non-historic railings need to be replaced, the replacements shall be compatible with the historic character of the building.

VIII. Signage

- A. The existing cross on the front of the church is historic and shall be preserved except when in demonstrated need of replacement or when presenting a health hazard.
- B. Replacement of the exterior cross, when required, shall match the current cross in design, size, and location.
- C. A sign is permissible in place of the cross if the building ceases to be used as a church.

IX. Vegetation

- A. Landscaping elements such as shrubs shall be used to screen mechanical equipment such as vents or air-conditioning units, especially ones that already exist and are noticeable from the public right-of-way.

X. Accessory Structures

- A. The existing shed located on the rear of the lot is a non-historic resource and shall not be subject to design guidelines.

- B. New accessory structures, including but not limited to garages, sheds, raised planting beds, and greenhouses shall be located to the rear of the lot or on the neighboring non-historic lots 3 and 4 owned by the church. Detached accessory structures shall not be subject to design guidelines but must comply with applicable zoning ordinances. Accessory structures, on parcels 1 and 2, in compliance with these standards may be approved through the Certificate of No Change process (figure 2).

XI. Additions

- A. New additions shall be designed in a manner that makes clear what is historic and what is new. Additions shall be compatible, subordinate, reversible and inconspicuous with limited visibility from the public right-of-way. Additions to the front and north side elevations would have a substantial adverse impact and would not be appropriate.
- B. Any additions shall be constructed in a manner where there is the least possible loss of historic materials and craftsmanship, so that character-defining features are not obscured, damaged or destroyed.
- C. To ensure the protection of the church's integrity, the addition shall be compatible with the church's features, size, scale, proportion, and massing.
- D. Materials selected for the exterior cladding of any addition shall match original materials of the church; stucco panels are an acceptable replacement for stucco, but E.I.F.S. is not permitted. New materials on the façade of the addition are permissible but shall not be a primary material.
- E. The addition shall be subordinate. It shall not exceed the height of the existing historic structure nor significantly alter the historic relationship of the church to its immediate surroundings.
- F. Acceptable locations for an addition include the church's non-historic lots 3 and 4. If any part of the addition, including a connector, is present on lots 1 and 2, the addition shall be considered by the Heritage Preservation Commission (HPC) through a Certificate of Appropriateness (COA).
- G. If the addition is connected to the church, it shall include accessibility features that result in the removal of the existing non-historic ramp.
- H. Paint color of a new addition is not regulated by the Heritage Preservation Commission, but shall be complementary to the church and its surroundings.



FIGURE 1. ST. JAMES AME CHURCH AT 3600 SNELLING AVENUE, DATE UNKNOWN,
PHOTO COURTESY OF ST. JAMES AME CHURCH

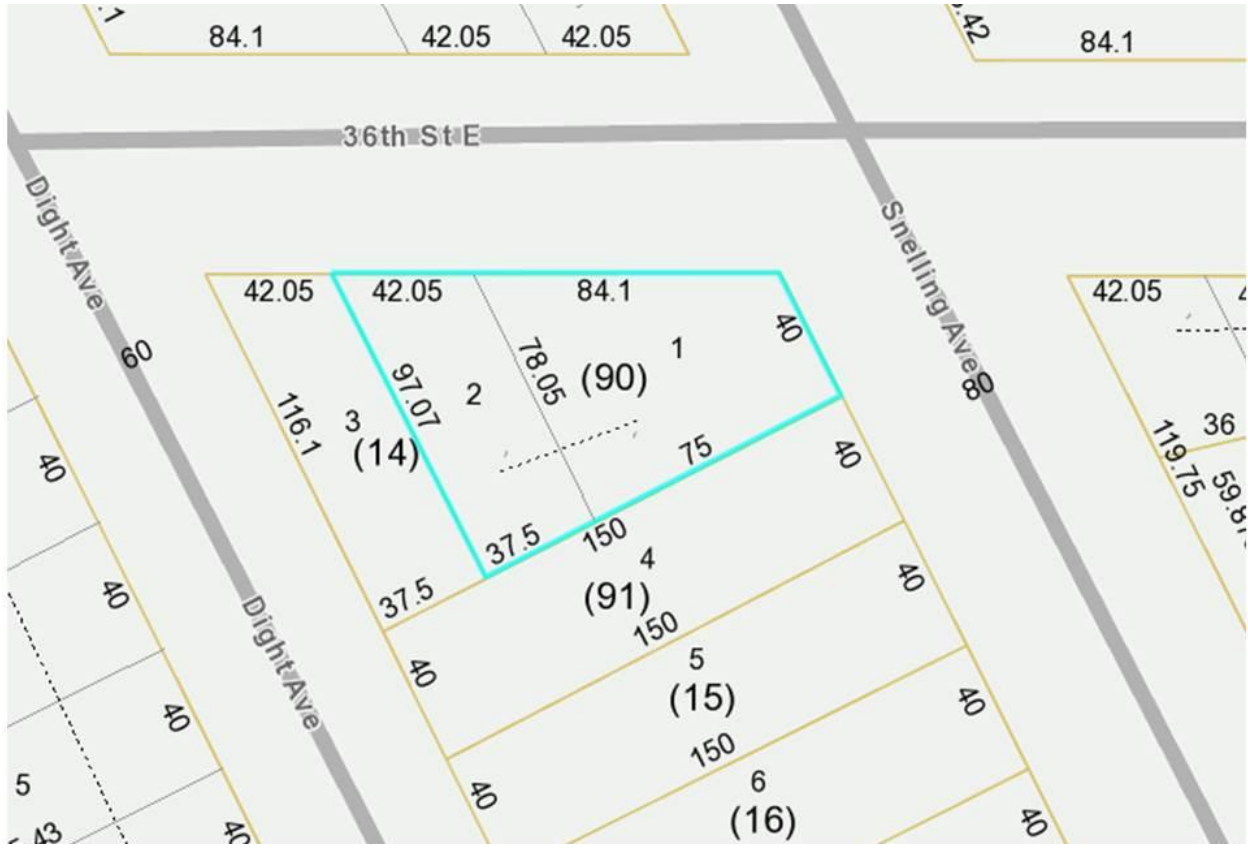


FIGURE 2. GRAPHIC DISPLAYING THE LOTS OF ST. JAMES AME CHURCH, LOTS 1 AND 2 ARE HISTORIC, LOTS 3 AND 4 ARE OWNED BY THE CHURCH BUT ARE NOT ELLIGIBLE FOR DESIGNATION, COURTESY OF HENNEPIN COUNTY

Glossary

Certificate of Appropriateness: A certificate issued by the planning director evidencing the review and authorization by the commission of plans for alteration of a landmark, property in an historic district or nominated property under interim protection.

Character-Defining Feature: The qualities of a property conveyed by its materials, form, and finishes that are the means through which its historic character is expressed.

Division of Lights: The pattern in which a window is broken into separate panes by rails and muntins.

Eaves: The underpart of a sloping roof overhanging a wall.

Freestanding Sign: A self-supporting sign affixed to a freestanding frame structure not attached to a building

Period of Significance: The time during which significant historical events or activities occurred.

Pitched Gable Roof: A pitched roof with a central ridgeline and vertical wall ends.

Primary Elevations: The sides of the building that face a public street or sidewalk. .