

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

For NPS use only

**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**

received

date entered

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*  
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

**1. Name**

historic Presbyterian Church Building

and/or common Oak Grove Heritage House

**2. Location**

street & number Northwest corner Benton and Justus Streets N/A not for publication

city, town Oxford N/A vicinity of

state Indiana code 018 county Benton code 007

**3. Classification**

<b>Category</b>	<b>Ownership</b>	<b>Status</b>	<b>Present Use</b>
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> educational
<input type="checkbox"/> site	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
	<u>N/A</u>	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military
			<input type="checkbox"/> museum
			<input type="checkbox"/> park
			<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
			<input type="checkbox"/> religious
			<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
			<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
			<input type="checkbox"/> other:

**4. Owner of Property**

name Oak Grove Heritage, Inc.  
c/o Mrs. Linden Fell, Secretary

street & number 200 East Enota Street

city, town Oxford N/A vicinity of state Indiana 47971

**5. Location of Legal Description**

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Benton County Courthouse

street & number 700 East 5th Street

city, town Fowler state Indiana 47944

**6. Representation in Existing Surveys**

title N/A has this property been determined eligible?  yes  no

date  federal  state  county  local

depository for survey records N/A

city, town \_\_\_\_\_ state \_\_\_\_\_

## 7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one	
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved	date N/A
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed			

### Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Presbyterian Church Building, Richardsonian Romanesque in style, is located on the northwest corner of Benton and Justus Streets in Oxford. Irregular in plan, it is a one-and-one-half story, common bond brick building, with a gable/hip roof. The raised foundation is of a darker brick, topped by a stone water table. There is a three story, square, pyramidal roof tower at the southeast corner.

There are two exterior entrances to the sanctuary, which comprises the south part of the building. These entrances, which are identical and located on the east and south sides of the tower, are accessed by stone steps with brick foundations. Each door is surmounted by a stained glass fanlight and is framed by a round limestone arch, supported by clustered columns. The upper floors of the east, south and north sides of the tower are identical. On the second story is a nine-light, round window with a limestone surround. There is a louvered vent with a round arch, limestone head, on the third story. The corners of the tower are rounded on the ground floor, becoming plain, rounded, brick tourelles on the upper level, extending above the cornice line and topped with rounded limestone caps. There is limestone banding between the floors of the tower, and its pyramidal slate roof is topped by a copper finial.

Set back from the tower is the sanctuary, expressed on the exterior by east- and south-facing gables which intersect the hip roof. In the first story of each of these gables is a three part, round-arched, stained glass window. The larger, central light is flanked by smaller windows, separated by brick pilasters. Each has a round-arch limestone head and a limestone sill. Above the three-part window on each gable is a series of five small, round-arch vents with connecting round-arch, limestone heads. There is a limestone sill common to all. In the apex of each gable is a triangular inset of decorative stonework.

North of the sanctuary, on the east side of the building, is a one-bay gable roof extension. On the east side of this extension is a stained glass window with a round-arch, limestone head and a limestone sill. In the gable is decorative stonework identical to that in the previously mentioned gables. There is a square-planned porch to the south of and abutting the extension. The round-arched entry on the east side of the porch is broader but similar in design to the entries on the tower. The arch motif is repeated in a smaller opening on the south side of the porch.

There is another entrance to the building on its east side, just north of the gable-roof extension. This entrance extends below grade and has steps leading down to it. It has a fanlight, a round-arch, limestone head, and a gable-roof portico.

There are double-hung, stained glass windows with stone lintels and sills on the north side of the building. On the basement level below many of the first story windows are square, single sash windows with limestone lintels and sills.

Except for the tower, the roof is asphalt. The original slate roof was replaced in 1966. The only other exterior alterations are tuckpointing of mortar joints, done the same year, and releading of stained glass windows, done in 1967.

Inside, the sanctuary is octagonal in shape and has a 16 foot ceiling. Woodwork and doors are dark oak. The floor is yellow pine. Light fixtures with bulbs in frosted white globes hang on 12 foot chains from the four corners of the ceiling. These replaced a large chandelier with many small bulbs in 1923.

Two large Sunday School rooms are in the north part of the church. The basement contains an entrance hall, a cloak room, a large social/dining room, a kitchen, nursery, and restrooms. The basement was finished and plumbing installed in 1923.

# 8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400–1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500–1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600–1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700–1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800–1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900–1920	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

Specific dates 1902

Builder/Architect Steele Brothers/ W. F. Sharpe

**Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)**

The building is significant as the only representation of the Richardsonian Romanesque style in Oxford. It is a well-proportioned and gracefully balanced example of the style. The structure is also the only extant church of the late 19th/early 20th century period and generally one of the most important buildings in terms of architecture in Oxford.

The church was designed by architect W. F. Sharpe. It was built by the local firms of Steele Brothers, contractors, and Roberts and Benedict, masons.

The building was used as a church until 1979 when, after an insurance inspection report required costly changes to make the building safer, the congregation voted to discontinue using the building and to search for an alternate use. Oak Grove Heritage, Inc., was organized in 1981 to purchase the building and preserve it as a historic landmark. It has been used for community activities such as music festivals and art exhibitions.

# 9. Major Bibliographical References

See Continuation Sheet

# 10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property Less than one acre

Quadrangle name Fowler Quadrangle, Indiana

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UTM References

A 

1	6	4	7	8	7	8	0	4	4	8	5	1	8	0
Zone		Easting				Northing								

B 

Zone		Easting				Northing								

C 

Zone		Easting				Northing								

D 

Zone		Easting				Northing								

E 

Zone		Easting				Northing								

F 

Zone		Easting				Northing								

G 

Zone		Easting				Northing								

H 

Zone		Easting				Northing								

**Verbal boundary description and justification** Starting at the northwest corner of Justus and Benton Streets (where Indiana 352 from north turns west at southeast corner of church); thence 87' west, then north 120' to the alley, then east along south side of the alley 87' to Justus Street, then south 120' to Benton Street.

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state N/A code county code

state code county code

# 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Robert E. Duffy, Member

organization Oak Grove Heritage, Inc.

date June 12, 1982

street & number 305 E. McConnell St., R. 1

telephone 317/385-2509

city or town Oxford

state Indiana 47971

# 12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national  state  local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

title Indiana State Historic Preservation Officer

date 1-27-84

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I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

date

Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

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Continuation sheet Presbyterian Church Bldg. \* Item number 9

Page 1

"Kings of the Prairie" by George Ade, Saturday Evening Post, July 4, 1931.

"History of Benton County and Historic Oxford" by Jesse Birch, 1942.

Documents Pertaining to Life & Times of R. W. Irvin (1891-1980) at Benton County  
Library, Fowler, Indiana.

"American Architecture Since 1780: A Guide" by Marcus Whiffen

Oxford (IN) Gazette of April 25, 1980.

Notes & Papers Pertaining to Oxford Presbyterian Church History. Ethel McConnell Bartindale  
in possession of Virginia Brenz of Oxford.



Presbyterian Church Building  
Oxford, Indiana  
UTM Reference: 16/478780/4485180