

St. Michael's Church
Charleston
Charleston County
South Carolina

HABS No. SC-62

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10-CHAR,
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PHOTOGRAPHS
WRITTEN HISTORIC AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA
District of South Carolina

Historic American Buildings Survey

Prepared at Washington Office
for Southeast Unit

710

Saint Michael's Protestant Episcopal Church
78 Meeting Street
Charleston
Charleston County
South Carolina

Page One

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Historical Data:

An Act of Assembly in 1751 divided Charles-Town into two Parishes, Saint Philip's and Saint Michael's, that South of Broad Street to be called Saint Michael's, and a parish church to be built "on or near the place where the old church of Saint Philip stood." The corner-stone of the present Saint Michael's Church was laid in 1752 and the Church was opened for worship February 1, 1761. The bells and clock were brought from England in 1764 and the organ in 1768.

At the evacuation of Charles-Town by the British in 1782, the bells were stolen and shipped to England. A Mr. Rhyner (?) purchased them in London and sent them back in 1783. During the Civil War, they were sent to Columbia, S. C. for safety. When General Sherman burned that city in 1865, these bells were so injured as to be useless. In 1866, they were again shipped to England, recast from the same patterns by the successors of the firm which had originally made them and again returned to Charleston and replaced in the belfry on March 21, 1867.

A brief history of the Saint Michael's Church is told by a Memorial Tablet as follows: "This building, begun in 1752, opened for Divine Worship February 1, 1761, exposed to the fire of British Artillery on James Island in 1780, struck four times by the Federal Artillery on Morris Island 1863 to 1865, seriously injured by cyclone August 25, 1885, almost destroyed by earthquake August 31, 1886, has been restored by the generosity of American churchmen and friends, and re-opened June 19, 1887".

Saint Michael's Protestant Episcopal Church

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A description of the early Saint Michael's Church is given in B. R. Carroll's Historic Collections of South Carolina written by George Milligan in 1763, as follows:

"Saint Michael's Church is built of brick; it is not yet quite finished. It consists of a body of a regular shape, and a lofty and well-proportioned steeple, formed of a tower and spire. The tower is square from the ground and in this form rises to a considerable height: the principal decoration of the lower part is a handsome portico, with Doric columns, supporting a large angular pediment, with a modillion cornice; over this rises two square rustic courses; in the lower one are small round windows, on the North and South; in the other, small square ones; On the East and West from this, the steeple rises octangular, having windows on each face, with Ionic pilasters between each, whose cornice supports a balustrade; the next course is likewise octagonal, has sashed windows and festoons alternately on each face, with pilasters and a cornice, upon which rises a circular range of Corinthian pillars, with a balustrade connecting them;- The body of the steeple is carried up octangular within the pillars, on whose intablature the spire rises, and is terminated by a gilt globe, from which rises a vane, in the form of a dragon: This steeple is 192 feet in height, and is very useful to the shipping, who see it long before they make any other part of the land;- The Church is 80 feet in length, without including the tower and retired place for the alter, and 58 feet wide.

Bibliography:

Carroll, B. R. - Historical Collections of
South Carolina

Johnson, John - Historic Points of Interest in
and around Charleston

L. H. H. H.

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HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

HABS No. SC-62

SAINT MICHAEL'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH

An addendum to
 Saint Michael's Church
 78 Meeting Street
 Charleston, South Carolina
 in HABS Catalog (1941)

Address: 80 Meeting and Broad Streets, Charleston, Charleston County, South Carolina.

Present Owner and Occupant: Saint Michael's Church.

Present Use: Church.

Statement of Significance: The oldest church standing in Charleston, Saint Michael's is a well-known mid-18th century monument rich in historical associations and architectural features.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History. [The history of this building is treated in extenso by George W. Williams, in St. Michael's, Charleston (Columbia, S. C.: University of South Carolina Press, 1951). The following data have been taken from Williams, and are given here in brief.] Williams lists a comprehensive bibliography.

1. Original and subsequent owners: The General Assembly of the Province of Carolina passed the "Church Act" of 1706, setting out the limits of the urban parish of St. Philip. In 1751 the General Assembly passed a bill for dividing this parish and thus establishing the Parish of St. Michael. Funds for building the church were appropriated from public moneys, and raised by subscription. In 1778 the Anglican church was separated from the state by the Act of Disestablishment; since that time the church of St. Michael can be considered as owned by its members.

2. Date of erection: Clearing of the site began in September, 1751; the first stone was laid February 17, 1752. Work on the walls progressed rapidly during 1752 but slowed down toward the end of that year. The roof was put on in 1753, and in the same year work began on the tower, which was completed in 1755. Pewing was installed by the summer of 1760, flooring in 1761, and the building was substantially complete by December 4, 1762.

3. Architect: There have been various speculations but the evidence indicates that Samuel Cardy was the architect. His known works show that he was capable of designing this one.

4. Builder: In 1751 Samuel Cardy was engaged as builder; he continued in this capacity until the work was completed. He carved the cornice on the "clock-level" of the tower, in addition to directing the work.

5. Workmen: Several craftsmen are known to have executed specific parts of the building. Elfe and Hutchinson carved the balusters at the arcade-level of the tower, the original altar rail, and the pulpit. Pierre Goddefroy made the cypress ball which surmounts the spire; it was gilded by Jeremiah Theus. Humphrey Sommers did some plastering on the tower. Glazing was done by John Stevenson and his helpers, Malbro, Stepney, Jupiter and Seaser. Henry Burnett carved the Corinthian entablature on the arcade-level of the tower, foliated work inside the portico, and the fret of the main ceiling. Anthony Forehand embellished the original columns and capitals of the chancel. Frederick Stroble was subcontractor for the chancel.

6. Suppliers: Brick was supplied by James Withers and by Zachariah Villepontoux. Lime was furnished by Isaac Lesesne and by Robert Rivers. Lumber was furnished by Gray, by Anthony Borneau, by Tacitus Gaillard, by Joseph Baird, and by Warnock. James Laurens and Company supplied the hardware. Cypress shingles were supplied by Gabriel Manigault, and the paving stones of the portico by Henry and Arthur Perroneau. Slate, ironware, glass and sundry items were imported from England and Holland.

7. Alterations and additions: The building retains its original plan and most major features. Except for the modification of the chancel the alterations have been largely limited to replacement of damaged and worn parts.

8. Parapet: In 1789 a parapet wall was built along the north and south sides, replacing the original cornice. Bernard Downey was the bricklayer and plasterer. In 1833 marble gutters were placed inside the parapet, by John White. The parapet and gutter were removed in 1847. [The pedestals which terminate the parapet of the west end appear to mark the position and size of the former parapet along the north and south. Several blocks from the marble gutter have been preserved, and are now placed along the sidewalk near the west front of the building; they were used as mounting blocks before the days of the automobile. This information came from Albert Simons and from observation.]

9. Vestry: The vestry room was added in 1883, following plans of W. B. W. Howe, Jr., architect.

10. Entrances: The door from the vestibule to the central aisle was replaced after the earthquake of 1886 by one of Gothic design; it was removed in 1921 and the present Ionic pedimented entrance installed. The doorway at the center of the north wall was closed up in or before 1818.

11. Chancel: In 1772 Corinthian pilasters replaced the original rounded columns, and a gilded wrought-iron rail replaced the original wooden one. In 1788 the Palladian window was closed up with brick. The chancel was damaged by artillery fire in 1865, and repaired in 1866-67 under the direction of E. B. White, architect;

at this time the Palladian window was reopened. In 1905 the chancel was altered to the present state by Tiffany.

12. Extension plans: In 1804 it was proposed to extend the building three bays eastward, and plans were prepared by Robert Mills, architect; this proposal was not carried out, however.

13. Earthquake damage in 1886: The top of the spire was damaged by a strong wind in 1885, and repaired; on the same day these repairs were finished, August 31, 1886, an earthquake occurred. The tower settled 8" and was 18" out of plumb, leaning toward the west; it was nearly intact, however, and in a few days regained its approximate verticality. A step was installed between the vestibule and the auditorium, as the result of this settlement. The portico was greatly damaged, so as to require taking the remains down and rebuilding it. Various cracks in the walls of the building were repaired. The work of repairing earthquake damage was directed by William A. Potter, consulting architect, and John Gaillard Keith Gourdin, supervising architect.

14. Pulpit: This was made and installed in 1759, the carvings being done by Henry Burnett. It is in its original position, but was damaged most severely by artillery fire in 1863-65. The quality of replacement parts is not equal to that of the original ones. The principal decorative original parts are the inlaid panel on the west face and the ceiling of the sounding board. The pineapple at the top dates from 1912.

15. Pews: Additional pews were installed in the space originally occupied by a cross-aisle in 1818.

16. Chandelier: This was installed in 1804, being furnished by G. Penton of London, England. It cost 102 Pounds, 18 Shillings and 10 Pence. In 1879 the lowering mechanism and chain were removed and the chandelier piped for gas. In 1906 it was electrified and rehung with a new chain. The original chain now supports a smaller chandelier in the vestibule.

17. Electric lighting fixtures: These were installed by Tiffany in 1912.

18. Font: This was installed in 1771.

19. Altar: The present altar was installed in 1892. The whereabouts of the original altar, if it exists today, is unknown.

20. Organ: It was made by Snetzler of London, England, in 1767, and installed in 1769. After a number of overhauls, in 1911 it was largely replaced by the present instrument, which utilizes some of the original pipes. The original case was retained, but extended somewhat in size.

21. Bells: Bells imported from London were installed by Baker in 1764. After several removals and replacements, in 1866 they were recast by the original foundry, and installed in 1867.

22. Clock: Joshua Lockwood installed the clock in 1764. The faces, at the four cardinal points of the tower, replaced festoons. The mechanism was electrified in 1946.

23. Walls around the churchyard: Built at various times from 1778 to 1811; they were rebuilt to the present form in 1816-17. An older gate on Meeting Street was replaced by the present wrought-iron gates, the work of A. Iusti, in 1840. At the same time, Iusti made the gates on Broad Street.

24. Parish house: This was erected in 1924-25; Simons and Lapham were the architects.

25. Important old views: Williams reproduces an old plan of the pews [opposite p. 37], a photograph showing war damage, 1863 [opposite p. 164], a photograph showing wind damage in 1885, one showing earthquake damage in 1886, and one showing hurricane damage in 1939 [sic] [opposite p. 165].

26. Damages and repairs of 1938 [This information was supplied by Albert Simons, FAIA, whose architectural firm, Simons and Lapham, directed the repairs]: During the tornado the eastern end of the roof "exploded", causing considerable damage to the ceiling of the auditorium as well. Roof trusses were strengthened with steel plates and tension rods, and part of the roof joists and boarding were replaced. The entire plaster portion of the ceiling was replaced, using metal lath. Minor repairs were made to the tower, and to the building in general.

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement

1. Architectural character: A notable Colonial example of an English 18th-century type, St. Michael's Church contains well preserved original cedar woodwork in the auditorium. The tower is audacious in construction, with corbeled brick stages and ingenious timber framing, and graceful in silhouette.

2. Condition: Good, well maintained.

B. Technical Description of Exterior

1. Number of bays, over-all dimensions, layout: Three bays wide by seven bays long; 59'-9 1/2" x 129'-3 1/2"; rectangular, with projecting chancel and portico.

2. Wall construction: Stucco on brick, painted white. Walls are treated with Roman Doric pilasters of full height. Interior partitions are of brick. The tower walls are independent.

3. Portico: This is on the west front and is somewhat narrower than the facade. There are four Roman Doric columns, stucco on brick, on high plinth blocks, extending full height. The entablature is of the mutular type, with metopes and soffits containing panels ornamented with conventional leaves in relief. The pediment has a rather high pitch. The ceiling has three large recessed panels containing simple centerpieces, with a frieze containing plain consoles and cornice. This is of plaster on wood lath. The portico extends over the flagstone sidewalk which forms its floor. Thresholds are granite. The portico was almost entirely reconstructed after the earthquake of 1886, but appears to follow the original one.

4. West facade: This is treated in three bays, the pilasters being coupled at the outer corners. In the center is a high semicircular-arched opening with rustications, in which are double doors with a glazed transom above. The transom bar is molded. Each door contains four tiers of raised and fielded paneling. At the top is a square panel with a molded hexagonal panel inside it, points at top and bottom. Below it is a horizontal rectangular panel with a lozenge. Below that is a square panel with a molded circular panel inside. The bottom tier contains two nearly square flush panels. The doors are of longleaf yellow pine; they appear to have been varnished but the surface is discolored.

In each side bay is a smaller doorway, with a stucco architrave trim, above which is a classical frieze and cornice. The doors are double, with four tiers of raised and fielded panels. High above each doorway is a round blank panel with stucco architrave.

This facade wall was considerably damaged in the earthquake of 1886 and was repaired.

5. Windows: There are two tiers of windows. Both the upper and lower tiers are semicircular arched, treated with stucco quoins. Sills are wood, painted white. Sash are of wood, double-hung, with heavy muntins. Several windows contain stained glass (described with the interior).

6. Roof: The roof is gabled, and has a flare near the bottom. At the west end is a stucco parapet, with a pedestal at each corner, curving up to meet the tower. Roofs of chancel and portico are gabled. Roof surfaces are covered with slate. The roof was considerably damaged in 1885, 1886, and 1938; repairs were extensive.

The framing of the roof is of heavy hewn timber trusses spanning the width without interior supports. A tie beam 8" x 11 1/2" carries 8" x 8" queen posts and 8" x 8" inclined struts. Between the

queen posts is an 8" x 10" collar which carries a king post and inclined struts. Joints are mortised and pegged, reinforced with iron straps. In 1938 additional steel plates and tension rods were added to strengthen the frame. Principal rafters are 10" x 10 1/2" and carry three purlins 8" x 8 1/2". Rafters are 2 3/4" x 7", spaced approximately 13" on centers. Trusses are spaced at about 12' intervals, the end bays being shorter. A cornice, pedimented at the east gable, is carried on the wall pilasters; it has features suggestive of both the Doric and Tuscan orders. The bed moldings are corbeled out and above them the projection of the corona is constructed with an overhanging course of flagstones, stuccoed over. This method of constructing stucco cornices is found in other (later) Charleston churches.

7. Tower: The tower is structurally independent of the church; it is located over the main vestibule, which is square in plan. Above the roof, it consists of five stages.

a. First stage: This is square, divided into two equal bands, the upper one rusticated (the lower portion was formerly rusticated, but is now smooth). The lower portion contains a round window ornamented with four stucco keystones, on each of three sides (the fourth side being below roof level). The lower portion contains a square window on each side, with stucco head imitating a flat arch with keystone. There is a water table between the two portions, and a crude cornice at the top.

b. Second stage: The belfry stage is of stucco, octagonal in plan, without any exterior transitional elements. Corners are chamfered and bear Ionic pilasters, which rest on a low plinth course and bear an unconventional entablature--a coved frieze with modillion cornice above. In each side is a semicircular-arched opening with stucco quoins and louvers.

c. Third stage: The clock stage is of stucco, octagonal in plan, smaller than the belfry, leaving a walk around the rim. The balustrade is of wood, with a paneled pedestal at each corner, and turned balusters. At each corner is a Roman Corinthian pilaster; this order carries a wide (but otherwise conventional) wooden entablature with dentils and modillions in the cornice. In the sides facing the cardinal directions are clock faces, in the others are semicircular-arched windows with rusticated trim, impost and keystone. These contain double-hung sash, with octagonal panes. This stage was originally intended for a signal light.

d. Fourth stage: The gallery stage, of wood, is octagonal in plan and smaller than the one containing the clock. At the corner are slender Roman Corinthian engaged columns which carry an entablature. On each face is a semicircular arched opening with impost, archivolt and keystone ornamented with an angel's head. At the bottom of each opening is a railing with turned double balusters. At the core of this gallery is the casing around a winding stair; it appears externally as eight pilaster strips with cornices, forming the inner support for the plaster groined vault which constitutes the ceiling of the open gallery.

e. Fifth stage: An octagonal tapering spire, with curving flare at the bottom, supports a gilded ball and wrought-iron weathervane.

C. Technical Description of Interior

1. Plan: Auditorium with three aisles, each preceded by a vestibule, the central one being in the base of the tower. A shallow apse terminates the central aisle on the east; terraced galleries extend along the other three sides. Box pews are located on both sides of three aisles.

2. Stairways: Each side vestibule contains a stair leading to the galleries. A low landing in the front corner, then a straight flight to a balcony at gallery level (in the north vestibule another flight leads from there to the tower, over the central vestibule). Open string, with molded handrail, turned balusters and carved brackets.

3. Flooring: Aisles and side vestibules are paved with 9" square ceramic tiles laid diagonally, alternating red and black. The central vestibule is paved down the center with tiles, and along the north and south sides with worn stones, 17 1/2" square. The chancel is paved with marble, 18" squares laid diagonally, black and white alternating; two large inscribed marble slabs have been set into the chancel door, commemorating early 19th century bishops who are interred beneath them. Pews are floored with wood and carpeted; No. 43 has a simple marquetry floor, in two tones of natural wood. The galleries are floored with longleaf yellow pine boards.

4. Wall finish: The original wall finish appears to have been plaster laid directly on the brick; in later times furring, lath and plaster have been applied,--it is painted white, (yellow in the central vestibule).

5. Ceiling of auditorium: There is a large plaster cove intersected by arched heads of window openings, having a plain wide rib each bay, and a recessed flat central ceiling supported from the tie-beams of the roof trusses, surrounded by a wooden border, whose soffit is ornamented by a large fret band in relief. The inner side of this border simulates a Baroque entablature, with a carved egg-and-dart molding at the bottom, a frieze with upright consoles (like bent triglyphs) supporting modillions which are molded to continue the bed moldings of the cornice, and a plain molded cornice. A pendant centerpiece of carved wood, from which a chandelier is suspended, bears eight radiating foliated and flowered ribs superposed on acanthus leaves; between them at the rim are leafy volutes. The lower part (pendant) is ornamented with two rows of eight acanthus leaves. The wooden portions are original; the plaster surfaces are replacements (on metal lath) of 1938-39, repairing storm damage. The entire ceiling is painted white.

6. Ceiling under side galleries: This is of plaster, a warped surface which is straight at the gallery architrave and arched at the outer wall.

7. Ceiling of vestibule: This is of plaster, in the form of a cloister vault with semicircular penetrations on all four sides. There is a round hole in the center for hoisting and lowering bells (now closed). It is painted light yellow.

8. Doorways and doors--entrance: A double door opens from the central vestibule to the auditorium; it is of modern design and execution (c. 1935). It is framed by a pedimented frontispiece with Ionic pilasters, executed in wood, stained mahogany color.

Doorways to vestry and side vestibules have narrow wood architraves, frieze and cornice; reveals are paneled. Doors have six raised and fielded panels.

9. Trim: Window openings have no trim. At the spring line of the ceiling cove is a heavy plaster impost, from which a corbel capital with pyramidal guttae projects under each rib.

The central vestibule has a paneled wooden wainscot with two tiers of raised and fielded panels, now painted light yellow. The side vestibules have a simple wainscot of matched and beaded boards laid vertically.

10. Hardware Chancel rail: This is a grille of gilded wrought iron, dating from 1772, with a yellow pine handrail at the top. There are two square gates at the center; each side section has four units and a pedestal at each end. Each gate has a circular bar inscribed within the square, with foliated C-shaped scrolls in the corners; at the center is a wind-blown rosette from which radiate 16 thin bars, those near the horizontal and vertical axes curving to meet, with foliations and wavy spike; those near the diagonal axes meet to form petals. Each rail unit is symmetrical about a foliated stalk, with scrolls giving a tall urn-like profile. Pedestal grilles have symmetrical scrolls at top and bottom, slightly inclined straight bars between. It is in excellent condition, having been cleaned and re-gilded in recent years.

11. Lighting: A large brass three-tiered chandelier is suspended from the centerpiece of the ceiling. It was installed in 1804, later equipped with gas, and still later electrified.

Small electric fixtures of one tier, sympathetic in character, hang in each bay under the galleries, and in the central vestibule. They were executed by Tiffany and Company in 1912. Modern concealed lighting has been installed to supplement these fixtures.

12. Heating: There is no physical indication of an original heating system.

13. Chancel: This has been greatly altered more than once, the original design being a matter for conjecture. In its present state it incorporates some older elements with work by Tiffany in 1905,

and is not without historical interest.

In plan it is a flattened semiellipse; the head is a segmental arc--somewhat less than a semicircle. The vertical portion is treated with a wooden Roman Corinthian pilastered order on pedestals, one wide central bay containing a Palladian window and a narrower bay at each side, with one pilaster returning at each flank. This order treatment, whose entablature forms an impost, appears to be relatively old. It is richly embellished with carved acanthus leaves, leaf-and-tongue moldings, egg-and-dart moldings, dentils, and foliated modillions. The pilasters are tapered and fluted, with reeding in the lower one-third. The work by Tiffany appears to have respected this ordonnance, filling in the lower portion with a smaller order of engaged Corinthian columns whose capitals reach to the spring line of the Palladian window. In the four small intercolumniations (two at each side) are painted inscriptions--the Credo, Lord's Prayer, and Ten Commandments. The surface of the quasi hemidome is painted, with divisions ornamented in a manner loosely following 16th century Italian precedent, including the symbols of the Cross, Alpha, and Omega in the central area.

14. Pulpit: This is of wood. The pulpit proper is elevated, supported on an octagonal pedestal and brackets, hexagonal in plan, surmounted by a domed sounding-board borne on two Corinthian columns. An open-string stair with balustraded rails and carved brackets gives access to the pulpit level. Excellent detailed measured drawings of the pulpit were published in The Georgian Period. Many parts are replacements following severe damage in the 1860's; the most notable original parts remaining are the west panel of the pulpit and the soffit of the sounding board. The former is inlaid, bearing light symbols on a black circle in the center. These symbols are IHS, the H surmounted by a Latin cross; below them is a Star of David with the triangle of the Trinity in the center. 24 rays radiate from the dark circle; they are of yellow pine and mahogany against a quarter-sawed oak field. The panel is edged with a carved egg-and-dart molding, with concave quadrants at the corners. The soffit of the sounding board is inlaid with 12 radiating rays and with flaming suns at the four corners which are not occupied by Corinthian Capitals.

15. Ordonnance of the Galleries: Five Ionic columns support each side gallery, with two under the center of the west gallery; they are surmounted by a denticulated entablature and a paneled attic course with a pedestal over each column. This work is entirely of cedar, in natural color; at some time in the past it had been covered with paint, which was removed in 1938. Column shafts are hollow; capitals, of the type generally named after Scamozzi, are carved from solid blocks. Except for the lower 1/5, shafts are fluted. No base is visible. Several columns lean slightly.

16. Pews: Box pews on the main floor appear largely original but have been damaged and repaired at various times. Most are provided with benches but some have chairs. On the outside are two tiers of raised and fielded panels. Doors are one panel wide, hung on two

wrought-iron H hinges; cast button latches appear to be much later additions. Original fastenings appear to have been box locks, whose keyholes and escutcheons remain in place. Pews which fill in the original cross aisle are similar to the others.

Seating in the side galleries is three rows of benches, terraced. They are paneled, the panels generally resembling those at the main floor.

17. Alter, reading desk and bench: These are relatively modern pieces.

18. Tiffany glass is found in the chancel windows, central window of north side, east window of north aisle, and south doors.

a. Chancel:

(1) Central window: Saint Michael slaying the dragon, above a base containing a commemorative inscription. Blue, yellow and flesh-color predominate, with accents of pink and green. The lower part of the scene has a dark background.

(2) Side windows are similar, consisting of base, pedestal, and niche with symbols (IHS; A Ω [Alpha and Omega]), wreaths and arabesques. Yellow and orange predominate, with rich blue-greens in medallions. Gradations of color are particularly noticeable, and remind one of settled water-color washes.

b. North window: The Annunciation is the subject, with the Virgin Mary kneeling at an altar and the Angel descending, amid clouds. Blue is the central hue in a close harmony, varying from violet to green. There is a small area of red, and a plain border of light yellow-green.

c. Window at east end of north aisle: The subject is an angel at the tomb informing followers of Christ that He had ascended to Heaven. Pearly whites and blue predominate, with some brown and neutral areas, within an amber border. This window must be seen early in the day.

d. South door: Double doors are glazed, with semicircular transom. The door panels are similar, each containing a niche over a low base. At the bottom of the niche is a diagonal interlace in a panel, above it an inscription, a circular medallion with a landscape, and a cartouche with swags in the arch. The lunette over the doors consists of several semicircular bands, the widest of which contains two medallions and central conventional flowering plant. Greens and blue-greens predominate, with jewel-like spots of orange, red, yellow, and green against the darker.

19. Baptismal font: This is an elliptical basin mounted on a pedestal, which is shaped like a heavy turned baluster. The basin is of figured marble somewhat the color of onyx, with gray streaks. It has a wooden cover shaped like a Mandarin's hat; it is suspended by a cable, with a counterweight in the form of a brass dove (Holy Spirit).

20. Monuments: The walls of the auditorium and vestibule bear a number of monuments of various periods, mostly of marble.

21. Tower construction:

a. Masonry: The walls of the tower are of brick, up to the beginning of the open gallery. Those of the square portion vary from 4'-9 1/2" to 5'-3" in thickness. This thickness permits the transition from square to octagon without placing any substantial load over a void. There are squinches with a radius of 3'-0" in the corners, but they carry only a low section of wall under the openings in the belfry. The belfry is octagonal, 28'-3 3/4" wide, with walls 3'-5" in thickness; 7'-11 1/2" above the belfry floor they begin to corbel on the inner side. The clock stage is octagonal, 22'-10" wide, with walls 2'-9" in thickness; near the top they corbel slightly on the inner side.

b. Timber: The floors of the tower, at the different levels, are of planks. The floor of "Stage 2," as designated on sheet 9 of the HABS measured drawings, is framed with 3" x 12" joists about 2' on centers with 5" x 12" joists and headers around a central well through which bells could be hoisted--this contains a trap door. About 6' below this are timber ties which stiffen the walls; other ties lower down have been removed at some unknown date. The floor of the belfry rests upon two principal girders 2'-6" deep by 1'-4" wide; each is compound, the bottom half being a single piece and the upper half two pieces abutting at the center of the span. The upper and lower portions join in a saw-tooth fashion. These principal girders are cambered about 2". They carry two secondary girders (at right angles to it), each made of two 5 1/2" x 14" pieces. Across these secondary girders rest floor joists 5 1/2" x 14" spaced about 1'-6" on centers. There is an open well in the center of this frame, without planking. The belfry floor was thus made strong enough to carry heavy concentrated loads at any points they might occur.

c. Frame to support bells: The bells vary in size and are located in an irregular pattern. Four rows of short upright timbers, varying in section from 6" x 12" to 11" x 12", carry girts 12" in depth 3' above floor level. These carry girts at right angles. An upper row of girts 10" in depth is carried 2'-4" higher. This whole bell frame is reinforced by diagonal and cross braces. (The form can be understood more clearly by referring to sheet 10 of the HABS measured drawings).

d. The floor of the clock stage is framed with two girders near the center, 8" x 2'-3 1/2", which carry another pair at right angles, 8" x 13 1/2". These heavy timbers serve to support a group of eight uprights in the center, which extend to the top of the spire. The flooring of this stage is laid on 4" x 6" joists of short span. Near the top of the clock stage, at the point where the masonry corbels in, is a complex frame of heavy timbers; four 6" x 15" pieces at interior angles of the octagon assume the form of a Greek Cross. Above them are four pieces 5" x 12" to 5" x 16" in the form of a square whose corners rest at the centers of four walls.

e. The floor of the open gallery is framed radially, with a girder to each corner, and joists carried on them.

f. Core of the spire: Eight verticals, varying in size from 4" x 9 1/2" to 9 1/2" x 9 3/4", are set around a circle of 4' diameter, in which is built a spiral stair; they continue to a point near the top of the spire, being spliced at irregular intervals, the splices "breaking joints."

g. Spire: Above the open gallery stage is a heavy floor construction, largely concealed, which carries eight timbers whose inclination is that of the spire's profile. Curved rafters resting on a low stud wall form the flare at the base of the spire. At the floor of the "attic" (Plan 6 on sheet 9 of the HABS measured drawings) is an octagonal tension ring of 2" x 11" pieces laid flat. Near the top of the core of the spire, crossed 6" x 6" timbers carry a central timber 7 1/2" x 7 1/2" which extends to the top; it is secured to another crossed pair a short distance below with a large bolt.

h. Condition of tower framing: Much of the timber is of native cedar; parts are of longleaf yellow pine. It is excellently preserved. Storms and a major earthquake have imposed great strains at times, which have caused minor deformations. The spire leans perceptibly toward the west, and appears slightly twisted counter-clockwise. Repairs made in 1938 included the insertion of some steel sections, especially just below the open gallery stage. There is every indication that the structure is sound and is being well maintained.

i. Timber ties in masonry: The two octagonal stages of brickwork have peripheral plank ties embedded in the masonry. They occur at window sills, window spring lines, and at the base of corbel courses. They lap at corners, and in some places are double. Some have been cut off, notably through a window opening at the clock stage, with no perceptible effect. The wood appears sound, where visible.

D. Site: The site is not exactly rectangular, but approximates 200' along Meeting Street and 160' along Broad Street. The church faces west and occupies the street corner; most of the remainder is taken up by a graveyard, which is enclosed by a brick wall erected 1816-17 in its present form, with two wrought-iron gates of considerable

note, made in 1840.

Other public buildings, the Post Office, County Court House, and the City Hall, occupy the remaining corner sites on this street intersection, which is perhaps the most famous one in the old part of Charleston.

Prepared by Harley J. McKee, Architect
National Park Service
September 1963.

Addendum to:

St. Michael's Episcopal Church
80 Meeting Street
Charleston
Charleston County
South Carolina

HABS No. SC-62

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PHOTOGRAPHS

Historic American Buildings Survey
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
Washington, D.C.

ADDENDUM
FOLLOWS...

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ADDENDUM TO
SAINT MICHAEL'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH
80 Meeting Street
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Charleston County
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