

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 First Church of Christ, Scientist  
other names/site number N/A

### 2. Location

street & number 520 Vine Street N/A not for publication  
city, town Scranton N/A vicinity  
state Pennsylvania code PA county Lackawanna code 069 zip code 18503

### 3. Classification

Ownership of Property	Category of Property	Number of Resources within Property	
		Contributing	Noncontributing
<input type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<u>1</u>	<u>      </u> buildings
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input type="checkbox"/> district	<u>      </u>	<u>      </u> sites
<input type="checkbox"/> public-State	<input type="checkbox"/> site	<u>      </u>	<u>      </u> structures
<input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<u>      </u>	<u>      </u> objects
	<input type="checkbox"/> object	<u>1</u>	<u>      </u> 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 Brent Glass, Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission 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)

Education/library**7. Description**

Architectural Classification

(enter categories from instructions)

Classical Revival

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation limestonewalls limestoneroof metalother stone

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

The First Church of Christ, Scientist is located in downtown Scranton. The immediate area surrounding the nominated edifice is dominated by large public buildings, including Albright Memorial Library adjacent to the west, Central High School directly to the north, and the Masonic Temple and City Hall to the southwest. The building is two story, rectangular and built in 1915 of Indiana limestone. This Neo-Classical Revival building is dominated by a columned portico that spans most of the front facade. The building possesses good integrity, having experienced few major alterations despite being converted from a church to a library in 1987.

The front (northeast) wall is belted with a cyma reversa water table at the base which wraps around all four sides of the building, and a smooth faced parapet above a simple molded cornice, frieze and architrave that wrap around the two side elevations. The smooth faced front wall is pierced by three large wood panel doors with three rectangular windows above which have non-figurative stained glass, leaded in a rectangular grid. Four tapered, smooth pilasters that rise from the water table to the architrave flank the doors and windows. Two more pilasters are located near the outer corners of the wall under the edges of the portico. The portico features a tiled roof, molded cornice, and the same frieze and architrave found on the front wall. Six smooth columns in the Ionic order support the portico. Steps nearly spanning the width of the portico stretch from the podium to ground level.

The five-bay side elevations duplicate each other in almost all details. Three regularly spaced pierced panels punctuate the parapet. Tripled windows extend the full height of the main floor in the center of each side elevation. These windows have one non-operable sash set above two operable sash. Two similar single windows flank the center triplets. Paired casement windows, set one pair over the other with a stone panel in between, are located at the rear corner of each side elevation. All of these main floor windows are accented by molded stone surrounds on three sides above square stone sills. The base is pierced

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

First Church of Christ, Scientist

Section number 7 Page 2

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by double hung windows that echo the arrangement of first floor windows. The basement windows have no surrounds. The only difference between the two side elevations is a doorway rather than a window that pierces the watertable in the rear bay on the northwest elevation.

The rear (southwest) elevation has four bays of two sets of paired casement windows, placed one pair over the other with a panel in between, on the first floor. These windows have the same surrounds found on the side elevations. The base is punctuated by two 4/4 windows toward the outside corners, and a transomed double door and paired 2/2 windows in the center. These basement windows have no surrounds. The cornice, frieze and architrave wrap around only the first few feet of the rear elevation from the side elevations. The parapet is plain.

The first floor interior contains the building's main rooms. The front entrances open to a vestibule flanked by stairs that descend to the basement. The vestibule in turn opens to the large, former sanctuary (now a reference reading room). Behind the former sanctuary at the rear of the building is another stairway and small office in the south corner, and a parents' browsing room and elevator in the east corner. The vestibule features naturally finished woodwork of double paneled doors opening to the exterior with paneling in between. Three pairs of double doors with glazed openings surrounded by an entablature and pilasters open from the vestibule to the former sanctuary. The sanctuary has plaster walls, and wainscoting and baseboards fashioned of quartered oak. Window surrounds are made of molded oak. Exposed original hardwood flooring stretches across this room. The ceiling features a central large panel surrounded by eight smaller panels, each demarcated by boxed ceiling beams. These beams are in turn supported by pilasters (two on each wall and one in each corner) that extend to the wainscoting. The two pilasters on the rear wall of main room flank two more pilasters which in turn surround a screen composed of ornate pierced oak panels. A hemi-spherical glass lighting fixture hangs by a chain from each of the ceiling panels. Two paneled doors in the rear corners of the sanctuary open to the office and browsing room which have plain plaster walls and ceilings.

The basement floor plan echoes the first floor. A vestibule at the front of the building is now used as a media center. The flanking stairways that descend from the first floor open into short hallways separated from the media center by floor to ceiling glass walls. These two hallways run forward to bathrooms located under the building's front steps, and to what was once a large room located toward the rear under the sanctuary. This room, with plain plaster walls and ceiling, has six

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service****National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

First Church of Christ, Scientist

Section number 7 Page 3

cast iron columns arranged in a rectangular pattern to support the first floor. Walls have been constructed between these columns to create a room within the original room. The rear stairway descending from the first floor and an office are located in the rear, south corner. Another office and an exterior entrance are located in the rear, east corner. A mechanical room and the elevator are located between these two rear offices.

The building retains good integrity. No significant changes have been made to the exterior since 1915. The only major alterations to the interior were made in 1987 when the Lackawanna County Library System altered the church for use as a library. In the former sanctuary the screen and flanking pilasters were moved forward approximately ten feet from their original location. The organ chamber that once stood behind the screen was removed, and the walls between the chamber and the rear, eastern office were removed to form the browsing room. The organ, which had been inoperable for twenty years, was taken out. A podium which once stood in front of the screen was moved to the partitioned room within the large basement room. The elevator shaft was inserted behind and to one side of the moved screen to serve handicapped library patrons. The pews in the sanctuary were removed. A scalloped, carpeted platform for seating children was installed in the middle of the room. A fan shaped circulation desk was built near the front vestibule entrances. The glass partitions were also erected in the basement vestibule, and the large basement room partitioned in 1987. These changes were made according to the Secretary of the Interior's Standards. A number of changes, including the basement partitions, the erection of children's seating and the circulation desk, and the removal of the podium, were designed to be reversible.

**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

<p>Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)</p> <p>_____ Architecture _____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>	<p>Period of Significance</p> <p>_____ 1915 _____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>	<p>Significant Dates</p> <p>_____ 1915 _____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>
	<p>Cultural Affiliation</p> <p>_____ N/A _____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>	
<p>Significant Person</p> <p>_____ N/A _____</p>	<p>Architect/Builder</p> <p>_____ Ward, Albert J. _____</p> <p>_____</p>	

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

The First Church of Christ Scientist is important in local architecture as a superb representative of the large public buildings constructed in downtown Scranton between 1880 and 1930. These public buildings are excellent examples of period revival styles. Among these buildings, the First Church of Christ, Scientist is an outstanding example of Neo-Classical Revival styling. The nominated edifice is also important as the work of Albert J. Ward, a locally prominent architect who designed public and private buildings in period revival styles during the early twentieth century. The First Church of Christ, Scientist is a fine example of his work.

The First Church of Christ, Scientist building was commissioned by a Christian Science congregation that had been organized in Scranton in 1879, just ten years after Mary Baker Eddy founded the Mother Church in Boston. Rapid growth led to the granting of a charter in 1882, the first charter given to a Church of Christ, Scientist in Pennsylvania. The congregation held regular services in the church until 1985 when dwindling membership forced the congregation to sell the building. The building was purchased by the Lackawanna County Library Board. The County Library converted the building to library use in 1987.

The nominated building is part of a distinguished collection of public buildings erected in downtown Scranton between 1880 and 1930 in period revival styles. The largest number of these buildings were erected in the Gothic Revival style, followed by French Renaissance Revival and Chateausque style buildings, and buildings influenced by the Neo-Classical Revival style. Several downtown edifices are superb examples of the Gothic Revival style. Scranton City Hall, designed by Edwin Walter and built in 1893 at North Washington Avenue and Mulberry Street, is a three story limestone ashlar Victorian Gothic Revival

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service****National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

First Church of Christ, Scientist

Section number 8 Page 2

building trimmed with Ohio sandstone. An eight story bell tower, turreted four-story towers on the remaining three corners, and a main entrance of five pointed arches highlight this building, which was listed on the National Register in 1981. The Scranton Central High School, designed by the firm of Little and O'Connor and constructed at 501 Vine Street in 1896, is another Victorian Gothic Revival edifice. This four story sandstone and limestone building features rounded arch entrances and elaborate stone window surrounds. The French Renaissance Revival and Chateausque buildings include the 1893 Albright Memorial Library at Vine Street and North Washington Avenue, designed by the company of Green and Wicks. This two story, limestone building (listed on the National Register in 1978) has the steep tile roofs, dormer gables, and turrets of the Chateausque style.

The First Church of Christ, Scientist is an outstanding example of these period revival style buildings, and the purest example of its particular style among these buildings. Several other large public buildings are influenced strongly by the Neo-Classical Revival style, but these buildings also evidence elements of other period styles. For example, the Scranton Technical High School, built in 1905 at 723 Adams Avenue and designed by Gilbert Edson and Edward Langley, features a Neo-Classical Revival entrance with flanking columns supporting a pediment, and Neo-Classical Revival parapet, cornice and entablature. However, the windows of this four story stone building are highlighted by keystone round and flat stone arches in the Georgian Revival style. The four story United States Post Office and Courthouse was erected at Washington Avenue and Linden Street in 1930-193 from designs by James A. Wetmore and Louis A. Simon. The overall styling of the principal facade is Neo-Classical Revival with the third and fourth stories dominated by Corinthian order columns set in front of recessed windows. However, the stone building is decorated with Art Deco carving in the entablature, in a band beneath the columns, and in panels above the first floor windows. The principal facade of the five story, stone Delaware, Lackawanna and Western Railroad Station at Lackawanna and Jefferson Avenues also has an overall Neo-Classical Revival styling. The principal facade has smooth columns extending from the second to fourth floors in front of recessed windows, with squared, smooth pilasters to either side. However, the architects of this 1908 building, Kenneth Murchison and Edward Langley, highlighted the pediment above the columns with prominent French Renaissance Revival medallions and clock surround.

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service****National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

First Church of Christ, Scientist

Section number 8 Page 3

The First Church of Christ, Scientist is also an important work by a locally significant architect. Albert J. Ward, 1882-1951, was a prolific architect in the Scranton area during the early twentieth century. He designed many church, school, medical, administrative, residential and commercial buildings in Scranton and Lackawanna County. His most notable commissions were designed in early twentieth century revival styles. For example, the 1910 Audubon School, located at 1801 Mulberry Street, Scranton, was erected in the Tudor Revival style. He also designed his 1915 home at 1106 Grandview Avenue and a 1913 home at 1110 Grandview Avenue, Scranton, in the Tudor Revival style. The 1910 Grace Reformed Episcopal Church at 419 Monroe Avenue, Scranton was designed in the Gothic Revival style. He executed the Midvalley Hospital in 1914 at 1400 Main Street, Peckville in the Georgian Revival style. The First Church of Christ, Scientist stands as a fine representative of his early twentieth century period revival designs.

**9. Major Bibliographical References**

International Correspondence Schools, Ambition (Scranton: 1922), Vol. 18, No. 3, pp. 1-3.

History of Scranton, Pennsylvania (Dayton, Oh.: United Brethren Publishing House, 1891), pp. 474-477.

Murphy's History of Lackawanna County (Toledo, Oh.: 1928), pp. 998-999.

"Students Met for Christian Science Start," Scrantonian, July 3, 1966, Section C, p. 69.

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**

Acres of property 0.3

UTM References

A 18 444800 4584150  
 Zone Easting Northing

C \_\_\_\_\_

B \_\_\_\_\_  
 Zone Easting Northing

D \_\_\_\_\_

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

See continuation sheet

**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title Marnie Rees, Administrator/William Sisson  
 organization Lackawanna County Library System/PHMC date 1988  
 street & number Room 308, 200 Adams Avenue/State Museum telephone 717-963-6478/717-783-8946  
 city or town Scranton/Harrisburg state PA zip code 18503/17108



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

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

First Church of Christ, Scientist

Section number 10 Page 1

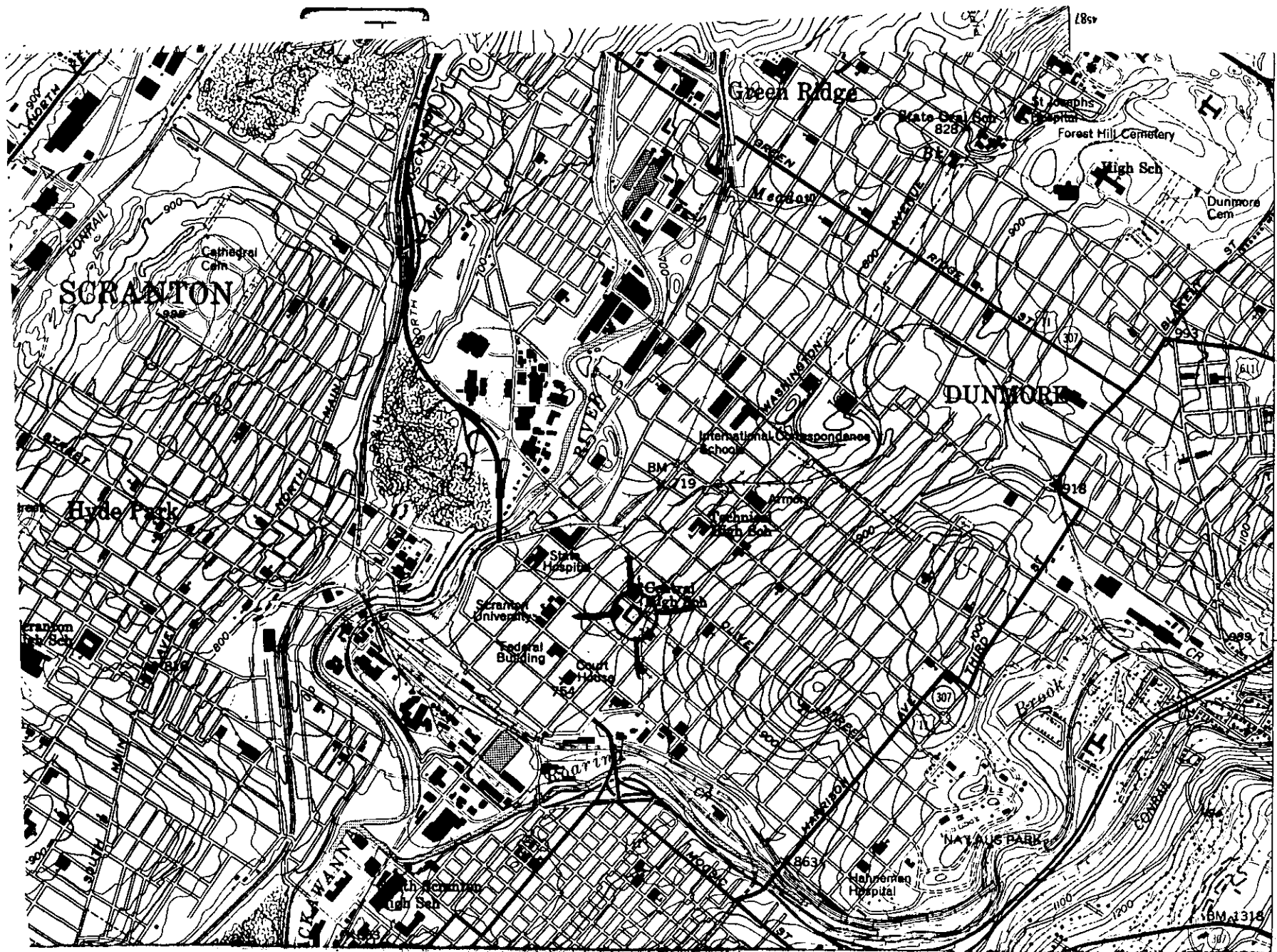
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**Boundary Description**

Beginning at the south corner of the intersection of Vine Street and Dix Court, then proceeding southeast along Vine Street seventy-eight feet to a point, then proceeding 190 feet southwest to a point, then proceeding northwest seventy-eight feet to the southeast side of Dix Court, then proceeding northeast 190 feet to the point of beginning.

**Boundary Justification**

This boundary contains the nominated building and its immediate setting. It includes the land historically associated with and partially occupied by the building, amounting to two city lots.



4586  
 ELMHURST 6.3 MI.  
 MOSCOW 9.5 MI.  
 25'  
 4584  
 4583

St. Joseph's Hospital  
 Forest Hill Cemetery  
 High Sch  
 Dunmore Cem  
 International Correspondence School  
 Scranton University  
 Federal Building  
 Court House  
 St. Joseph's Hospital  
 Natus Park  
 St. Joseph's Hospital  
 E 4450