

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The First United Methodist Church (1924) is a buff brick, neo-classical, auditorium style church located on Lee Avenue near the Lafayette central business district. Despite a sizable rear addition, the church retains its National Register eligibility.

The church is raised a full story above grade on a high basement. The front portion of the building is articulated with a two story, five bay facade and an Ionic pedimented portico. This front portion serves essentially as a narthex providing access and circulation for the auditorium space behind. The auditorium features a paneled balcony, a patterned beam ceiling, and rows of two story round head stained glass windows. The space culminates in a large vaulted chancel with a decoratively paneled platform. Behind the auditorium is a range of classrooms and offices.

The exterior of the building culminates in a full entablature and a parapet. The walls of the auditorium and the facade are accented with colossal brick pilasters. The front portion of the church features the building's most elaborate classical articulation. In addition to the aforementioned portico, the lower story fenestration is accented with ear-molded frames and segmental and triangular pediments. The upper story fenestration also features ear-molded frames, but with keystones rather than pediments. The tympanum of the portico features a central oculus.

To the rear of the church is a c. 1950 two-story brick office wing. This wing is small in stature compared to the church and is not visible from the main frontal view of the building. Hence, in our opinion, the wing is not detrimental to the church's architectural integrity.

Specific dates	1924
Builder/Architect	Builder: First United Methodist Church Architect: J. A. Baylor Contractors: Knapp and East

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)
Criterion C

The First United Methodist Church is locally significant in the area of architecture because it is a landmark in the late nineteenth-early twentieth century architectural heritage of Lafayette Parish.

The Lafayette Parish Historical Sites Inventory has identified some 149 late nineteenth-early twentieth century structures in the parish. We feel that although this figure is certainly low, the inventory undoubtedly includes the parish's most important period buildings. Taken among this group, the First Methodist Church is important because of its impressive neo-classical styling. Most of the parish's other period buildings are innocuous commercial structures, frame Victorian houses, or bungalows. First Methodist is one of relatively few classically styled buildings in the parish. Moreover, it is one of only three known buildings which feature colossal pedimented porticos. Of these three, it is the only one with a full five bay facade and the only one with ornamental fenestration surrounds. It is therefore one of the parish's most pretentious and most high style period buildings.

Major Bibliographical References

Historical Sites Inventory, Lafayette Parish, Section II. Prepared by the Lafayette Regional Planning Commission for the Lafayette Council of Governments, June, 1977.

1924 cornerstone.