

**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

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

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

1. Name

historic St. Francis Xavier Cathedral

and/or common

2. Location

street & number 626 Fourth Street _____ not for publication

city, town Alexandria _____ vicinity of _____ congressional district 8th - Gillis Long

state Louisiana code 22 county Rapides Parish code 079

3. Classification

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

4. Owner of Property

name Roman Catholic Diocese of Alexandria-Shreveport

street & number The Chancery Office, 2315 Texas Avenue

city, town Alexandria _____ vicinity of _____ state Louisiana

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Rapides Parish Courthouse

street & number Murray Street

city, town Alexandria _____ state Louisiana

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Louisiana Historic Sites Survey has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date 1980 _____ federal state _____ county _____ local

depository for survey records Louisiana State Historic Preservation Office

city, town Baton Rouge _____ state Louisiana

7. Description

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

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

St. Francis Xavier Cathedral is located on Fourth Street on the periphery of downtown Alexandria. The Latin cross church has a 5 bay nave, a tall transept, and a semiocagonal apse. It has heavily proportioned gables and simple lancet arches with "Y" tracery. Some features, including the transept, rose windows, the 3 part entrance, and the 135 foot tower with its 4 centered arches, were taken from a later period of Gothic architecture. The tower is surmounted by crenelation and 4 small corner towers which resemble Elizabethan chimneys. Clearly the design was not drawn with a view toward archaeological correctness.

The following changes have been made since 1907 when the tower was completed:

- (1) The 3 part gabled entrance archway has been stuccoed over.
- (2) The interior has been completely replastered and the false vaulting has been painted.
- (3) The impressive stained glass windows have been releaded and protected with plate glass.

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 checked="" 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-	<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)
	1895-cornerstone laid			
Specific dates	1899-building dedicated	Builder/Architect	N. J. Clayton	
	1907-tower added	Criterion	C	
Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)				

St. Francis Xavier Cathedral is significant in the area of architecture as the finest and most monumental Gothic style church building in the city of Alexandria. It is also a local landmark, having been for a time the city's tallest structure.

Although the present church dates from 1895, the congregation traces its roots to the early nineteenth century. In 1817 a Catholic church or chapel was established in Alexandria which is considered to be the forerunner of St. Francis Xavier. In fact, it was the first church structure of any denomination in Alexandria. Its location is not known.

By 1832 the small chapel was in need of repair and had outgrown its usefulness so steps were taken to erect a new church. Four acres of land were acquired on lower Front Street, between present-day Xavier and Bellier Streets, and the new church was built in 1834. It was named St. Francis Xavier and was for several years the sole church structure in Alexandria.

By 1895 the need for a larger church to replace the old one was evident, and this is when the present church was built. It was located in the upper part of the city and not in lower Alexandria where the old church was situated. While the new St. Francis Xavier Church was under construction the original church was destroyed by fire.

Because of the central location of Alexandria and the size of the new church there, Cornelius de Ven, Bishop of the Diocese of Natchitoches, petitioned Rome that the See City for the diocese be transferred from Natchitoches to Alexandria and that its church be elevated to a cathedral. In 1910 Pope Pius XI revoked the title of cathedral from Immaculate Conception in Natchitoches and elevated the St. Francis Xavier Church in Alexandria to the dignity of a cathedral.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Research Report compiled by Joseph Ticheli, located in St. Francis Xavier Cathedral National Register File, State Historic Preservation Office, Baton Rouge.

Alexandria Daily Town Talk, 1907, 1908, 1938.

CONTINUED

10. Geographical Data

ACREAGE NOT VERIFIED

Acreege of nominated property approx. .5 acre

Quadrangle name Alexandria, LA.

UTM NOT VERIFIED

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

UMT References

A	115	5512	5410	314	614	11610
	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.

See attached map.

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

state	code	county	code
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state	code	county	code
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11. Form Prepared By

name/title Joseph A. Ticheli

organization St. Francis Xavier Cathedral Parish date 1980

street & number 3822 Norman Street telephone (318) 443-7921

city or town Alexandria state Louisiana

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 Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

title Louisiana State Historic Preservation Officer date 10/29/80 *(per phone J. Ticheli 11/10/80)*

For HCRS use only

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

date 12-3-80

Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

FOR HCRS USE ONLY	
RECEIVED	NOV 5 1980
DATE ENTERED	DEC 8 1980

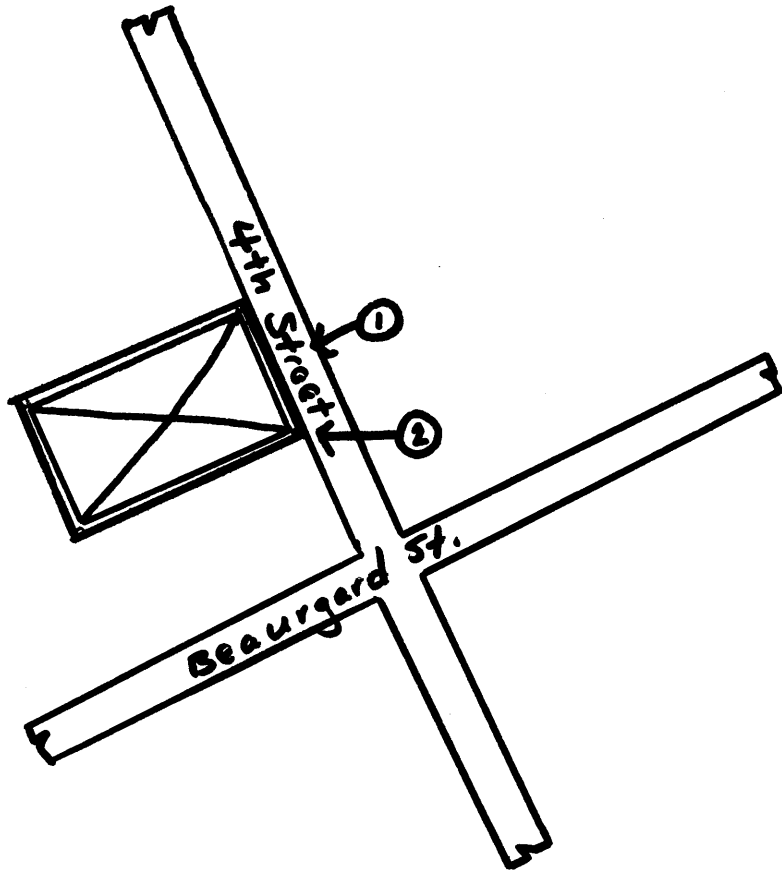
CONTINUATION SHEET

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- Heck, Robert. Rapides Area Planning Commission Survey, 1973.
- Menard, Leonard. St. Francis Xavier's Cathedral Calendar-Souvenir
Menard Memorial Dedication. Alexandria, Louisiana:
By the Author, 1923.
- St. Francis Xavier Cathedral Weekly Bulletin, "Past History,"
Alexandria, Louisiana: 1975 (Mimeographed).
- Ticheli, Joseph. Alexandria, An Old Friend: A Bit O' Fact and
Folklore. Baton Rouge, Louisiana: 1979.
- Walle, Julius. Rector of St. Francis Xavier Cathedral. Interview,
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St. Francis Xavier Cathedral Alexandria, Louisiana

The boundaries are 5ft away from
the church on all four sides.



NOV 5 1980

DEC 3 1980