

INVENTORY SHEET FOR GROUP NOMINATIONS: IDAHO STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY, BOISE, IDAHO

NOMINATION: (TOURTELLOTTE AND HUMMEL ARCHITECTURE IN IDAHO 72),

✓ SITE NAME: St. Mary's Catholic Church ✓ SITE NUMBER: 113

✓ LOCATION: 616 Dearborn, Caldwell, Canyon County (027), Idaho

OWNER'S NAME AND ADDRESS:

Roman Catholic Diocese of Boise
420 West Idaho Street
Boise, ID 83702

QUADRANGLE AND SCALE: Caldwell, 7.5 minute ACREAGE: less than one

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION:

The nomination includes the St. Mary's Catholic Church and the property on which it stands, lots 11 and 12, block 97, Caldwell Townsite. Legal description on file at Canyon County Courthouse, Caldwell, Idaho.

UTM(S): 11/5,24,880/48,34,430

DATE OR PERIOD: 1925

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE: Architecture

EVALUATED LEVEL OF SIGNIFICANCE: Local

CONDITION: excellent unaltered original site

DESCRIPTION:

St. Mary's Catholic Church in Caldwell is a red brick veneered structure in a stylized Italianate Romanesque revival style. The rectangular main block has a front-facing gable finished with a parapet wall. The parapet is raised on elbows which are in effect the caps of the corner pilasters framing the elevation. To the left of a facade of considerable decorative interest rises an eight-foot-tall, thirteen-foot-square outset tower, containing a side entry on Seventh Street and terminating in a low-pitched hipped roof.

The decorative scheme uses the full-round arch and the circle as major motifs. The entrance, which is centered under the front-facing gable, is a pair of rectangular double doors approached through a shallow vaulted portico: a coffered arch on a plain entablature, supported on coffered pilasters and smooth columns in the Tuscan order. On either side of the entry is a pair of small, round-arched, dark-glazed lights with hood molds of outset brick. A large stained glass oculus, also with a hood mold, is centered over the portico. A miniature blind arcade of round arches forms the lower part of the stepped brick corbel table immediately below the parapet. Round-arched, hood-molded windows filled with stained glass are used to light the nave. The motif recurs in the side entrance and the first two levels of lights set into the tower, one on each exposed face of the square structure. Hood-molded

windows, filled with stained glass are used to light the nave. The motif recurs in the side entrance and the first two levels of lights set into the tower, one on each exposed face of the square structure. Hood-molded oculi light the third level below a patterned brick band and a cornice. At the top of each face of the tower is pierced by a pair of narrow, round-arched openings, hood-molded and filled with louvers.

Decorative treatment of the red brick and white mortar masonry is also an important feature. Besides the outset moldings, each of the round arches and oculi is surmounted or surrounded with a fan-like frame of brick. A string course separated by a tightly patterned band of bricks runs under the cornice of the tower. The lateral eaves are underscored with stepped, toothed, corbelled rows of brick. A continuous strip of end-set bricks runs around the building above the concrete foundation.

The rectangularity of the plan is broken by small gabled or hipped eaves containing secondary entrances on either side of the nave, as well as by the tower. The interior has been remodeled but retains an open-beam ceiling and triple-arched screen.

SIGNIFICANCE:

St. Mary's Catholic Church in Caldwell is architecturally significant as one of the relatively few examples of Romanesque revival architecture in the work of the firm: the best example in the Thematic Group, and the only one with an Italianate quality. It is more broadly significant as an example of the 1920s-1930s picturesque impulse which was important in the firm's work after its neo-classical period, represented locally by the Odd Fellows Home for the Aged (site 102). Particularly in its externally near-perfect condition, the church is one of the most distinguished buildings in the town of Caldwell.

As observed in the significance statement for the Romanesque eclectic Immanuel Methodist Church in Boise (site 41), designs taking the round arch as their principal motif were in a minority in the work of the firm. This church is certainly the best example of it since St. John's Cathedral (National Register, 1978), and, appearing as it does two decades later, makes a fine example of the resurgence of picturesque taste. Like St. John's, which if completed as planned would have added Gothic steeples to a Romanesque body, St. Mary's shows some overlapping of styles: the Romanesque body is penetrated by a surprising formal classical entrance. All the forms are simplified and stylized in a manner appropriate to the period. The interior has been remodeled but retains an original open-beamed ceiling which appears here for the first time and would become a stock device in the neo-Gothic churches of the 1930s and beyond (see St. Mary's, Boise, site 133).

As reported in the Statesman in 1925, the new church in Caldwell was to be called Immaculate Conception and cost \$16,000. H. J. McNeel was the contractor.

MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES:

(Boise) Idaho Statesman. September 29, 1925, p. 8, c. 5.

Boise, Idaho. Hummel Jones Miller Hunsucker P.A. File 115J. Collection book reference 1926. Frederick Hummel retrospective file. Tracings signed Tourtellotte and Hummel.