

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

For NPS use only

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

received **DEC 15 1983**

date entered

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

1. Name

historic Church of the Blessed Sacrament, Priory, and School

and/or common

2. Location

street & number 5040-5041 ^{9th} ~~Ninth~~ Avenue N.E. not for publication

city, town Seattle vicinity of

state Washington code 053 county King code 033

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 type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government <input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial <input type="checkbox"/> transportation
	n/a	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military <input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name Western Dominican Province

street & number Box 3045

city, town Oakland vicinity of state California 94609

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. King County Administration Building

street & number 500 Fourth Avenue

city, town Seattle vicinity of state Washington 98104

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Washington State Inventory of
Cultural Resources

has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date December 1979 federal state county local

depository for survey records Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation

city, town Olympia vicinity of state Washington 98504

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input 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

The Church of the Blessed Sacrament is one of Seattle's best examples of Gothic religious architecture. Designed in 1909 by the Beezer Brothers of Seattle, the church towers over the surrounding neighborhood of single family homes. The building is constructed of concrete and brick and ornamented with sandstone and cast-stone details. The form and plan of the structure closely imitates Gothic traditions. The church is complimented by a red brick priory with similar sandstone details, and a small frame parochial school across from the priory on the east side of Ninth Avenue. With the exception of the school, the buildings in this complex are in a good state of repair and the integrity of the original designs has been maintained.

The area surrounding the Blessed Sacrament complex is primarily residential. Most of the homes were built at the same time as the church and many fit into the Bungalow style. The area around the priory has been landscaped with lawns, trees, and shrubs. Church property also includes the playing field to the north of the church and the newer school to the east. These two elements have been excluded from this nomination.

The Church of the Blessed Sacrament is a large building and its concrete and brick walls rise atop a massive reinforced concrete foundation. A fine example of the Late Gothic Revival, the church's detailing was inspired by the perpendicular phase of English Gothic architecture. The church is organized into basic Gothic spatial elements including a long nave, flanking side aisles, a crossing and transepts, and a rectangular chancel. The exterior reflects these spaces directly, but is further enhanced by a 182 foot high tower on the south side of the east facade. As originally designed, the church was to have two identical towers flanking its entrance, but only one was completed. This tower visually dominates the structure and is certainly the tallest edifice for many blocks. Framed at the corners by heavy, step-backed buttresses, a large bell chamber is exposed near the top through twin lancets at each of the tower's four faces. At the top of the belfry, the transition is made to an octagonal spire sheathed in a herringbone pattern of copper plates. The spire is crowned by a copper cross.

On the body of the church, the cross-gable roof is clad in slate and shelters the nave, transepts, and chancel. Smaller, low pitched shed roofs cover the side aisles, confessionals, and shrines below the clerestory.

The primary facade faces east and consists of a wide central bay and two slightly narrower side bays separated by heavy buttresses. Each bay is penetrated by pointed-arch portals, the central one being larger and more strongly emphasized. The archivolt of this portal is of carved sandstone and the tympanum is carved with the heraldic seal of the Dominican Order. A large window with elaborate tracery is located above the central portal. Two smaller lancet windows are placed in flanking positions above the side portals. Monumental, full-width stairs descend the hillside from the three portals to meet the street below. Other details on this facade include cast-stone belt courses, quoins around the windows, stepped buttresses with stone coping, a carved stone screen above the main portal with two carved figures, and a stone screen with niches near the peak of the gable. A coped parapet wall extends slightly above the roofline on all elevations.

The north and south walls of the church are stepped in appearance. The plane of the wall recedes twice as one goes from the side chapels to the clerestory. Each bay on these elevations is divided by stepped buttresses. Shallow Tudor-arched windows light the aisles and above them are pointed arch windows with Perpendicular style tracery.

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The transepts of the building are ornamented with buttresses and carved sandstone shields and niches. A polygonal one story chapel extends outward at the ground floor level. Above this is a large stained glass window identical to the one above the east entrance. On the west side of the transepts, the body of the chancel has been expanded outward to create additional chapels. Consequently, the plane of the exterior wall remains constant to the west end of the church. On the north side of the church, this chapel has been heightened to the base of the transepts' gables. The west facade of the church has a large window whose tracery is the same as those on the transepts, but a new stained glass pattern was added in 1962.

The interior of the church is dominated by an approximately 200 foot long nave and chancel, intersected at the crossing by 50 foot long transepts. The maximum height of the interior is 68 feet. Side aisles parallel both sides of the nave behind open arcades, each consisting of a six bay series of octagonal concrete piers and underposed Gothic arches. Small shrines and confessionals are set within the outer side aisle walls, with larger chapels incorporated into the transepts. At the crossing, three extremely high pointed arches visually separate the ceilings of the chancel and transepts from that of the nave. A choir gallery is located above the narthex at the beginning of the nave.

Despite the structural completion of Blessed Sacrament in 1925, the interior of the church was never finished. Most walls are of plain painted brick, although the aisles have plain concrete walls. The sheet metal roof is supported by exposed steel beams and trusses. Original plans reveal that these were to be covered with elaborate wooden trusses and plaster vaults. The confessionals and chapels on the aisles were eventually covered with Gothic wood paneling in 1968, and a carved wooden reredos designed by the John Graham Company was added in 1958. Polychromatic stenciling was also added in that year.

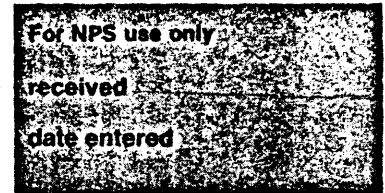
Other interior features include a kitchen in the basement and a variety of unornamented offices and storage spaces.

BLESSED SACRAMENT PRIORY

Like the Church of the Blessed Sacrament, the priory also faces east and employs brick masonry construction with sandstone ornamentation. The building is three stories high, rectangular, and has a small ell on its west side. Derivative of the Italian villa form, the second floor accomodates the principal public rooms and these are more formally delineated through fenestration and through the central hall at that level. The priory is a simple composition of red brick above a concrete aggregate foundation. Sandstone window surrounds and simple ornamental trim borrow from the Tudor Gothic period. The main entrance door is reached via a symmetrically designed staircase with octagonal stone newel posts and metal balusters. The centrally placed entrance pavilion is composed of red brick with a molded Tudor arch composed of standstone. The arch is capped by a label mold with floral stops. An entablature above this arch is inscribed with the words "Priory of the Blessed Sacrament." On either side of this portal, brick and sandstone-faced buttresses are capped by convex hoods with trifol tracery that duplicate the buttresses in the clerestory of the adjacent church. The top edge of the pavilion is defined by a sandstone cornice and a centrally placed Late Gothic period cross set atop a coping ledge in which is placed a bas relief with angels. The front door is of dark stained wood and has a leaded and frosted glass window with a cross motif at its center.

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Most windows in the structure are banded in sets of two or three. Although nearly all windows in the priory are double hung sash type with small leaded glass panes, they range in size from nine over nine to 12 over 12 to one large rear window that has 18 panes in both the upper and lower sections. There is also a quarreled window to the north, as well as a large three sectioned leaded and colored glass window on the north wall that lights the staircase landing.

The windows of the first and third floors have quoined surrounds; the windows of the principle second floor have label molds. The structure is completed with asphalt shingled hip roof with wide eaves and exposed rafter tails.

The interior of the priory was finished very simply. Wainscoting and some built-in furniture is found in the first floor dining room and central hall. Otherwise, the building is composed of simple offices and bedrooms.

The priory was designed by Arnold Constable and its construction was completed in 1922.

Located immediately to the southeast of the priory is a small garage with an asphalt shingled pyramidal roof. It has a brick and cast stone foundation, brick walls, and a large garage door. Its form imitates the priory but it appears to be of later construction. East of this garage is a wood frame garden shed clad in asphalt shingles that appears to date from the 1940's. These two structures do not contribute to the significance of this complex.

BLESSED SACRAMENT SCHOOL

The school for the parish was also designed by the Beezer Brothers and was completed in 1913. The building is a two story wood frame structure measuring 56 by 77 feet. Built on a slope, the main floor of the school has five classrooms and storage areas, and the ground floor has two classrooms, recreational rooms, kitchen, and store rooms. The building has a concrete foundation with wood framed floors and walls. The exterior walls are wood sheathed, but are now covered by asphalt shingles in an imitation brick pattern. A parapet wall covers the school's flat roof and has a molded cornice which turns into a pediment over the main entrance. Pilasters flank the front door and large banks of wood sash six over six windows illuminate the classrooms. Currently, the building is used only as storage and is in a deteriorated condition. Because of numerous building and fire code violations, the building was condemned in 1948. Plans to demolish the existing structure and erect a new parish hall on the site will probably be executed in the near future.

Because of the limited budget allocated to the Blessed Sacrament Church project, the school was built with cost in mind. Unlike the priory or the church itself, brick and Gothic detailing were not represented, and the permanence and quality of that masonry work was lacking in the school structure.

Immediately north of this old school is the school that was built to replace it. Completed in 1950, it has a brick verneer with stone details, and imitates the styling of the church, although it is a simpler composition. Due to its recent construction, this school has not been included in this nomination.

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/ humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		

Specific dates	1909 - 1925	Builder/Architect	Beezer Brothers, Arnold Constable Builder: Sherer and Carlson
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Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Church of the Blessed Sacrament is one of the finest examples of Gothic architecture in the city of Seattle. The church displays many of the characteristics common to the Late Gothic Revival, which proved so popular for academic and religious structures in the early 20th century. The building's commanding presence dominates this section of the city and emphasizes the role of the church as a center of community life. The Beezer Brothers of Seattle designed the church and school and, together with their chief project architect, Arnold Constable, guided the construction of Blessed Sacrament over its sixteen year period of construction.

The design of the church was based on the final period of English Gothic architecture, called the Perpendicular phase. This was the most popular form of Gothic architecture imitated in America's Late Gothic Revival. Blessed Sacrament is also one of a few churches in the city to be organized in a full cruciform plan. Reflecting the spirit of Gothic design, the scale of this imposing church is readily comprehended due to the fact that the composition is articulated as a consistent ensemble of modular elements, e.g., interior spaces, bays, and modular buttresses. At the exterior, the repetitious use of buttressing serves to reinforce the verticality of the composition. Carved detailing, executed in light colored cut and cast stone, highlights the red brick wall surfaces.

Blessed Sacrament's relatively simple profile, smooth walls, and clean, strong lines are characteristic of the Late Gothic Revival and its stone details discretely accentuate the form of the building rather than complicate its surface like the ornamentation of earlier American Gothic monuments. Arnold Constable, the project architect, had studied the work of Ralph Adams Cram and Bertram Grosvenor Goodhue, the most prominent advocates of the Gothic Revival movement during this period. Their philosophy of design and Arnold's understanding of it can be recognized in the simple, logical order of the finished design of Blessed Sacrament.

The church was designed to echo the architecture of the University of Washington campus, which is located one and one-half miles to the east. The American Late Gothic Revival, created similar images for college campuses as well as churches. The "Collegiate Gothic" architecture of the University is reflected in much of the detailing of Blessed Sacrament including the use of brick walls with stone detailing and the combination of brick and sandstone Gothic arches and pointed buttresses. According to the son of the project architect, a major factor in choosing a Gothic style for the church was an attempt to establish a symbolic link with campus architecture. Indeed, one of the church's main responsibilities was to serve the religious needs of the campus's Catholic students.

The Late Gothic Revival was a major force in the history of American architecture and Blessed Sacrament Church is one of the region's most compelling illustrations of that idiom. As described during the dedication ceremonies, "The Blessed Sacrament Church represents the aurora of a new and freshened artistic growth and a bright ray of hope for a more permanent construction and better art in church building in the United States."

9. Major Bibliographical References

- Burchard, John and Albert Bush-Brown. The Architecture of America: A Social and Cultural History, New York, 1966, pages 219-228.
- Church of the Blessed Sacrament, Dedication Ceremonies Brochure, May 1925.
- Constable, Francis. Letter to Padraic Burke, January 25, 1983, page 1.
- Constable, Francis. Telephone conversation, January 8, 1983 (Arnold Constable's son).

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property 1.3 acres

Quadrangle name Seattle North

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

UTM References

A

1	0
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5	5	1	2	3	0
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Verbal boundary description and justification Lots 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 28, 29, 30, 31, and 32, Block 7; and Lots 7, 8 and 9, Block 6 of A.B. Graham's University Addition. (Church: Lots 5, 6, 7, 30, 31, and 32 of Block 7; Priory: Lots 8, 9, 28, and 29 of Block 7; School: Lots 7, 8, and 9 of Block 6.)

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

state N/A code county code

state N/A code county code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Padraic Burke Edited by Mark L. Brack,
Office of Archaeology and
Historic Preservation

organization Building Systems Technology date June 1983

street & number 216 First Avenue South telephone (206) 624-9635

city or town Seattle state Washington 98104

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 National Park Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature *Mark L. Brack*

title State Historic Preservation Officer date December 5, 1983

For NPS use only

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

for Melvyn Byers Entered in the National Register date 1/12/84
Keeper of the National Register

Attest: _____ date _____

Chief of Registration

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Because of the prominence of its siting, Blessed Sacrament is an easily identifiable visual landmark contributing to the identity of the northern end of the city's University District. Situated atop a modest knoll overlooking the freeway, the edifice rises contrastingly above a townscape of small frame houses. The resulting image is reminiscent of a medieval town huddled beneath a great European cathedral. The church also provides a dramatic visual terminus to the west end of Northeast Fifty-Second Street, one block directly east of the portal facade.

Arnold and Louis Beezer were twin brothers that began their architectural practice in Pennsylvania. Though they erected several homes, it appears that religious buildings occupied most of their attention from the beginning. They designed St. John's in Johnstown (1897), St. John the Baptist in Pittsburg (1901), and S.S. Peter and Paul in Beaver (1901). The brothers later moved to the west coast and established offices in Seattle and San Francisco. Commissions in the San Francisco area include St. Dominic's in San Francisco (1928) and St. Albert's Monastery in Oakland. The only verified buildings by the Beezers in Washington are Blessed Sacrament and the parish school for St. John's Cathedral. Little else is known about the Beezers, for the firm has never attracted any scholarly research. Arnold Constable was solely responsible for the design of the priory, which was completed in 1922. It compliments the style and detailing of the church and the sensitive landscaping of the site further ties the two buildings together. This arrangement echos the centuries-old tradition of the grand church accompanied by a modest home for the clergy.

As Blessed Sacrament Church was being constructed, the parish had become sufficiently large for the establishment of a parochial school. As had been the historic pattern with most Roman Catholic churches built in the United States, Blessed Sacrament made plans to serve the educational needs of the parish children. A school building was constructed directly across the street from Blessed Sacrament Church on the east side of Ninth Avenue Northeast. The school was dedicated on August 31, 1913, and was formally opened with an enrollment of 69 pupils. The design of the school is typical for this period with its high ceiling and large banks of windows. This historic relationship between the Catholic church, priory, and school has been maintained in this small complex, and the buildings continue to reflect the educational, spiritual, and aesthetic roles the church has played in this community. More significantly, the Church of the Blessed Sacrament continues to be one of Seattle's most impressive examples of Late Gothic Revival religious architecture, and has been declared a Seattle Landmark by the Seattle Office of Urban Conservation.

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Norberg-Schultz, Christian. Meaning in Western Architecture, Revised Edition, New York, 1980, page 109.

Seattle, City of, Office of Urban Conservation. "Landmarks Nomination Form," unpublished document.

The Washington State Architect, December 1928, page 1, and May 1929, page 1.

Woodbridge, Sally B. and Roger Montgomery. A Guide to Architecture in Washington State, Seattle, 1980, page 208.