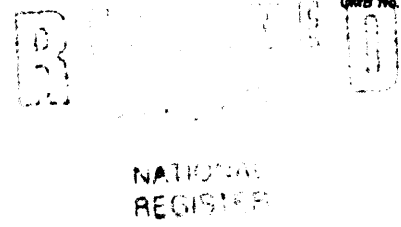


United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

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 St. Peter's Church & Rectory
other names/site number _____

2. Location

street & number One Bluff Street not for publication
city, town Council Bluffs vicinity
state Iowa code IA county Pottawattamie code 155 zip code 51503

3. Classification

Ownership of Property	Category of Property	Number of Resources within Property	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	Contributing	Noncontributing
<input type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input type="checkbox"/> district	<u>2</u>	<u>0</u> buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> public-State	<input type="checkbox"/> site	_____	_____ sites
<input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> structure	_____	_____ structures
	<input type="checkbox"/> object	<u>2</u>	<u>1</u> objects
			<u>1</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] 6/10/92
Signature of certifying official Date
State Historical Society of Iowa
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. Entered in the National Register
 See continuation sheet. [Signature] 7/24/92
 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)

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

RELIGION/Religious Structure

RELIGION/Religious Structure

RELIGION/Church-related Residence

RELIGION/Church-related Residence

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(enter categories from instructions)

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

LATE VICTORIAN: Gothic

foundation Limestonewalls BrickStuccoroof Slateother Limestone trimComposition shingles

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

St. Peter's Church (1887) and Rectory (1895) are located on one of the bluffs (loess hills) from which Council Bluffs derives its name. The two buildings face to the NW and overlook the community's business district. The church, with its 100' spire, is a landmark in the community and is visible for blocks.

St. Peter's is of masonry load bearing construction, red brick with dressed limestone trim. The Gothic Revival style church was designed by architect Mathias Schnell, is rectangular in shape, and measures 42' x 107'. It features a symmetrical facade on one gable end with an apse at the opposite end. The central spire rises from a 10' square vestibule with double entry doors. Fenestration throughout is lancet arched. The windows are capped by brick patterned hoods, while the sills are of stone. Above the entry doors is a large arched window, with a pattern of four small brick arches above, and at the third level is an arched belfry with louvers. The side elevations of the vestibule also contain three levels of arched openings, culminating in the louvered arch at the top. The spire is capped by a copper cross. Buttresses are located at all corners, and are symmetrically arranged along the side elevations as well. The facade features a single window on each side of the spire, while six windows are located on each side elevation. Three windows are located high in the walls of the apse. All are of stained glass (with protective plexiglas) and are original to the construction of the building. The names of the donors are known, but not the name of the craftsman. Along the side walls, brick pilasters alternate with buttresses between the windows. A corbeled brick frieze is located just below the slate roof. The single story "U" shaped area around the apse is original (it is shown on the earliest Sanborn map), but has been extended to connect with the rectory and has been covered with stucco. The foundation, from the watertable down, has also been stuccoed. An engraving from 1889 shows a cross on the roof above the altar, at least two small brick chimneys, and finials on the corners and points of the spire. In 1988 handicapped accessiblity was provided when an entry door was created in the fifth of the six windows on the north elevation. The exterior of the church was steam cleaned, and re-pointed within the past twenty years.

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

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)	Period of Significance	Significant Dates
<u>Architecture</u>	<u>1887; 1895</u>	<u>1887; 1895</u>
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	Cultural Affiliation	_____
_____	<u>N.A.</u>	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
Significant Person	Architect/Builder	
<u>N.A.</u>	<u>Mathias Schnell (arch.)</u>	
	<u>Wickham Bros. (bldr.)</u>	

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

St. Peter's Church (1887) is significant under Criterion C and meets Criterion Consideration A as a good, relatively unaltered example of Gothic Revival church design from the 1880s. St. Peter's Rectory (1895) is significant under Criterion C as a companion building to the church in terms of scale, materials and construction date.

St. Peter's Parish of Council Bluffs was founded by German Catholic immigrants who had been members of the predominately Irish St. Francis Xavier Parish. Locally, it is said that the idea of creating a German parish in Council Bluffs originated with a group of German women who gathered in December of 1884. After agreeing upon the need for a parish for the German element of St. Francis Parish, the ladies formed themselves into a society to accomplish this end. By May of 1886 the male element of the German population of Council Bluffs also formed an association to aid in the creation of a German Catholic parish. With Bishop Cosgrove (of the Davenport Diocese) and Rev. B.P. McMemony (pastor of St. Francis) approving of the idea, the Germans saw their goal within reach. A shortage of German speaking priests in the Davenport diocese posed a problem, though. This was remedied by communication with Abbot Wolf of the Benedictine monastery in Atchison, Kansas. In April of 1887 the abbot notified Brother Adolph Wesseling that he was to take charge of the new parish while also overseeing the construction of a church for the parish.

On May 12, 1887 Father Wesseling wrote to his Abbot about plans for the new church.

The plans for the church will be finished in about 10 days and contract be let as soon as possible. The church will be of pure Gothic style. \$11,000 of course pews, altars, confessional excepted. We had several

9. Major Bibliographical References

Babbit, Charles, H. Early Days at Council Bluffs. Washington, D.C.: Bryon S. Adams Press, 1916.

Corles, J.H. Pocket Souvenir of Council Bluffs. Council Bluffs, IA: J.H. Corles, c.1904.

Correspondence from the files of the Des Moines Diocese archives.

Council Bluffs Globe, 16 March 1888; 19 March 1888.

Field, Homer and Hon. Joseph R. Reed. History of Pottawattamie County, Iowa. Chicago: S.J. Clarke Pub. Co., 2 Vols, 1907.

Historic photographs from parish records.

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

Acreage of property Less than one acre.

UTM References

A

1	5
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2	6	1	4	7	5
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4	5	7	1	3	6	5
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Zone Easting Northing

C

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B

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Zone Easting Northing

D

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See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

Original plat, Lot 1, lot 171 and SW 8' Lot 2, lot 168, City of Council Bluffs.

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

This is the area historically associated with these resources.

See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By

name/title	Molly Myers Naumann, Consultant	(515) 682-2743	
organization	St. Peter's Parish	date	May 1992
street & number	1 Bluff Street	telephone	(712) 322-8889
city or town	Council Bluffs	state	IA zip code 51503

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ST. PETER'S GERMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH.

(Source: Council Bluffs City Directory, 1889.)

On the interior St. Peter's follows the traditional Christian church plan with nave and side aisles. The aisles are created by clusters of "tall slender Gothic pillars of imitation marble" from which Gothic arches spring. (Council Bluffs Globe, 18 March 1888.) Originally the interior featured lavish stenciling on the walls and ceiling. There have been several redecorations over the years, with the most recent including the application of a simplified stenciled pattern along the side walls at sill level. New pews, floor covering and lighting fixtures have been installed, the communion rail has been removed, and the ornate altars replaced by a simple modern one. A balcony extends across the interior at the back of the sanctuary. Despite the changes, the feeling of spaciousness remains, with the ceiling rising from a height of 12' at the side walls, to 27' at the center.

St. Peter's Rectory is located immediately SW of the church building with the same NW facade orientation. The residence was constructed in 1895, just eight years after the church. It is two

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and one-half stories, of brick construction with limestone trim. Basically rectangular in shape (with a two story bay on the south side, and a 3' projection on the north), it measures 56' x 30'. Like the church the entry is on the gable end, but in the residence it is off-set to the right side. A broad porch extends across the front of the house, and a small vestibule has been built out from the doorway. The rectory windows are segmental arched with limestone keystones. A lunette window and a corbelled brick frieze (similar to that used on the church) are found on the gable end. An embossed gable ornament features a cross superimposed on a rising sun motif. The north gable is covered with a decorative shingle pattern, while the rear of the house features a hip roof. A single chimney is located in the center of the roof. Alterations to the exterior appear limited to the removal of a rounded corner at the north end of the porch, and at the rear of the house, a walkway was extended to the church (by 1928), and an attached garage has been added. The interior of the rectory has not been addressed in this nomination. Although a contributing structure, the rectory is of secondary importance to the church.

On the front lawn, between the rectory and the church is Our Lady of Grace Shrine, built by the Rev. Father J.J. Hannan, S.J. about 1958. This is one of dozens of similar shrines built by the Jesuit. It is not considered a contributing object due to the date of construction and its relatively small size.

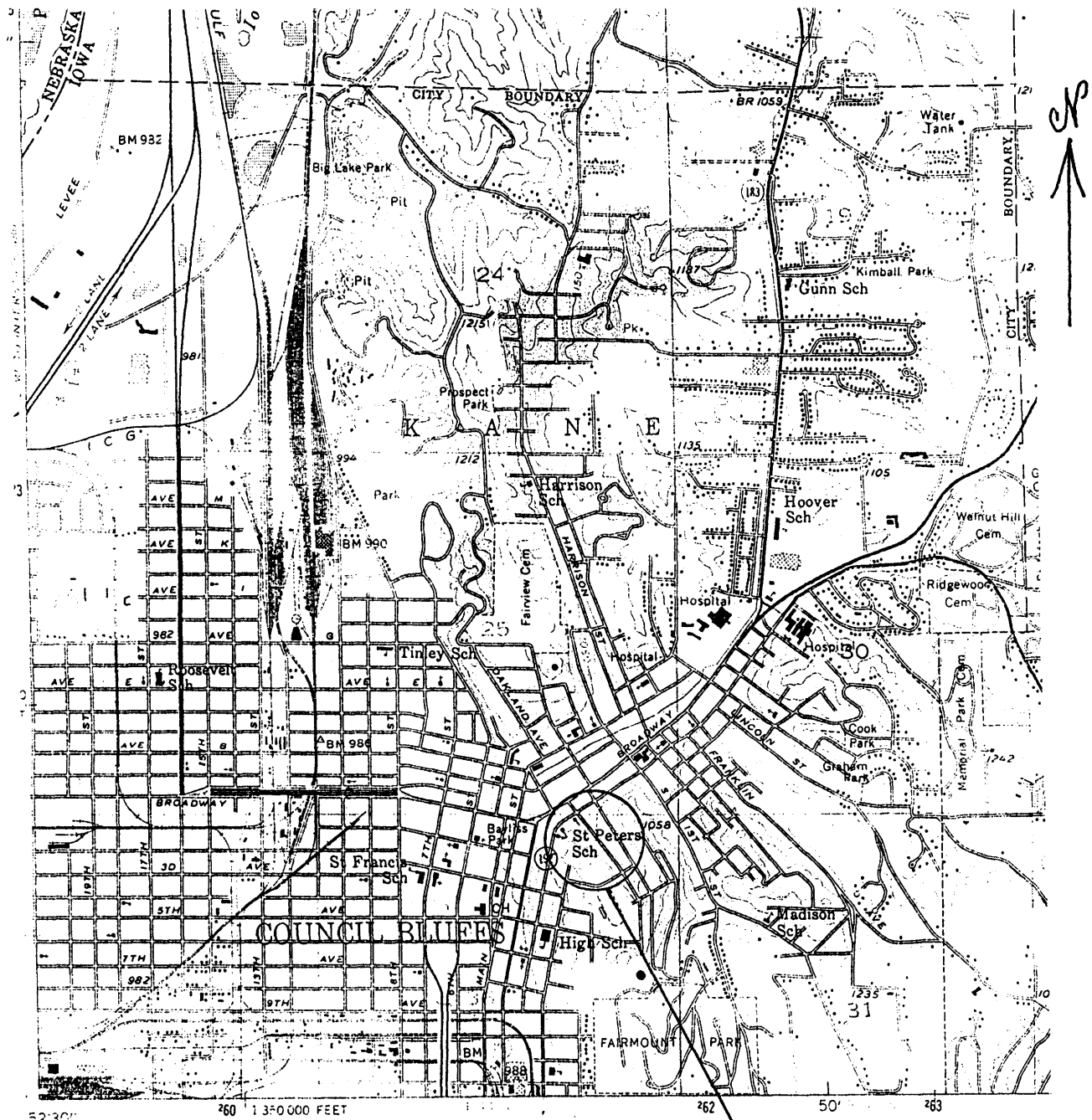
There have been some changes in the immediate surroundings of the church and rectory over the years. Bluff Street appears to have been straightened a little just in front of the two buildings, and a minor grade adjustment made. The steps from the street are not original, but have been there at least 30 years, while those from the sidewalk to the entry doors appear unchanged. Behind the church and rectory the area has been paved for parking. Immediately to the north of the church is a now vacant school building. The original wood frame school from 1887 served until replaced by this brick building in 1924. It was built to house a Sisters' home as well as the school. It is not considered part of this nomination because it is not one of the original buildings in the complex and it does not relate to the others stylistically.

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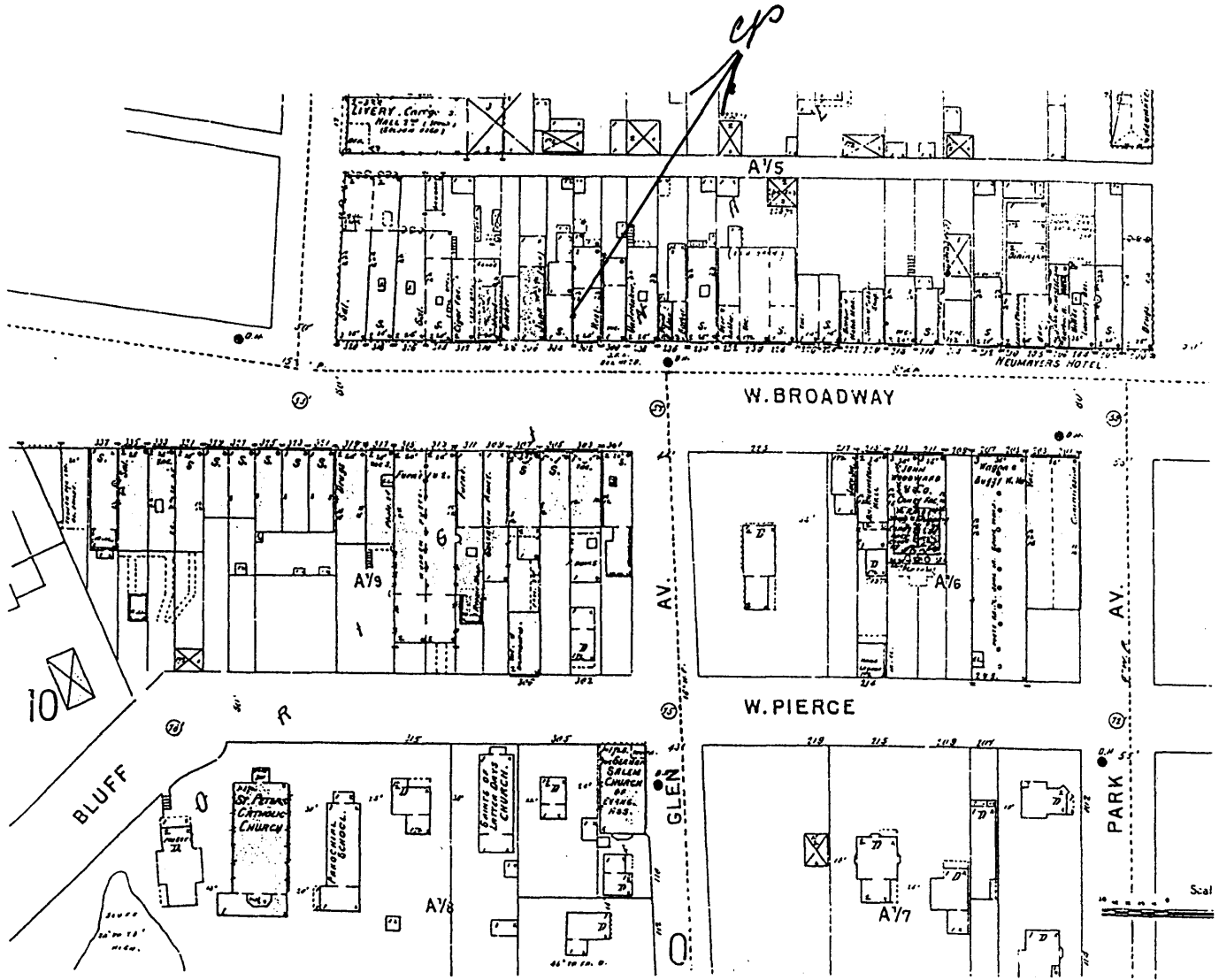
U.S.G.S. map of Council Bluffs showing location of St. Peter's complex.

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CFN-259-1118



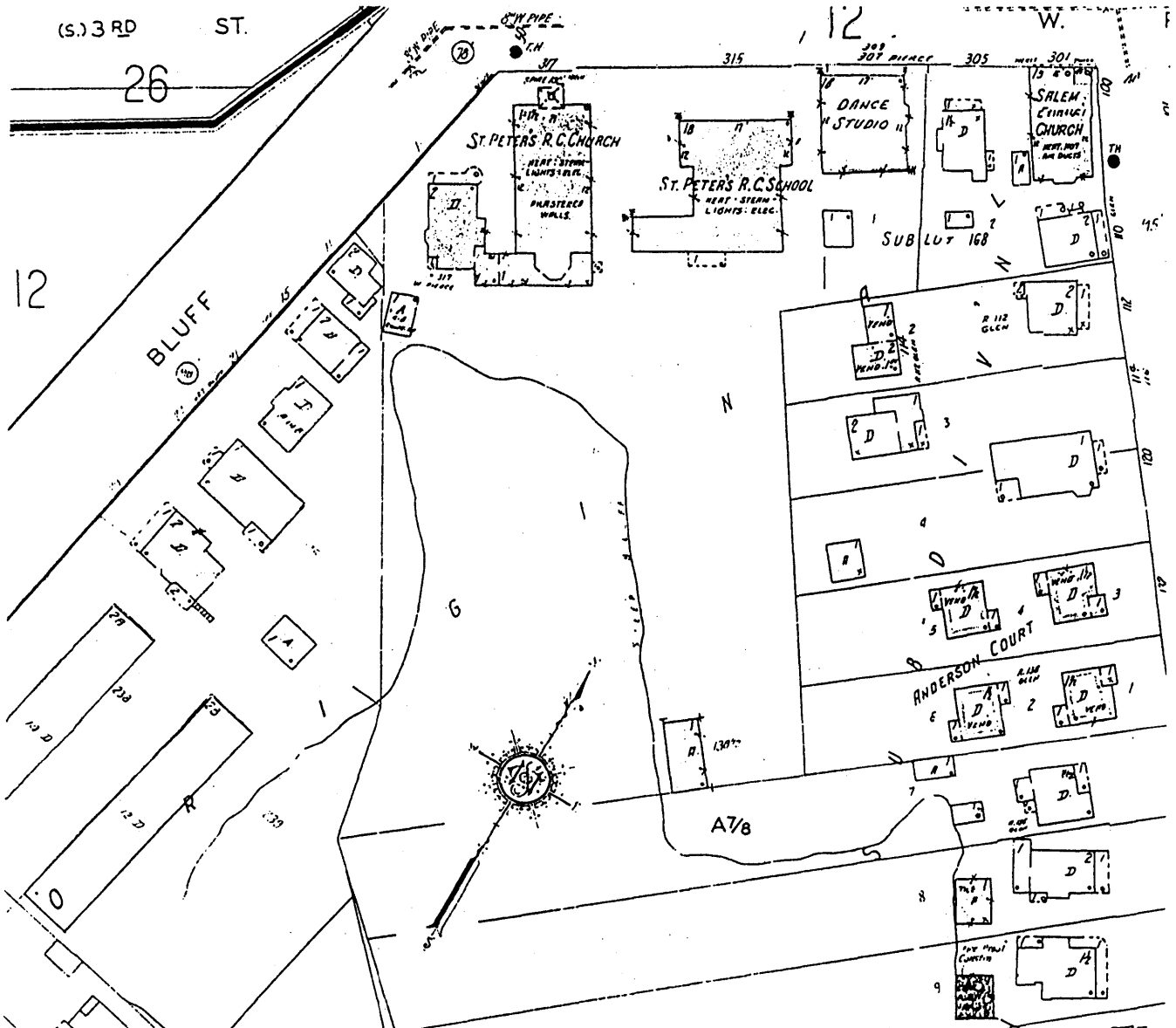
1896 Sanborn Fire Insurance map showing St. Peter's complex.

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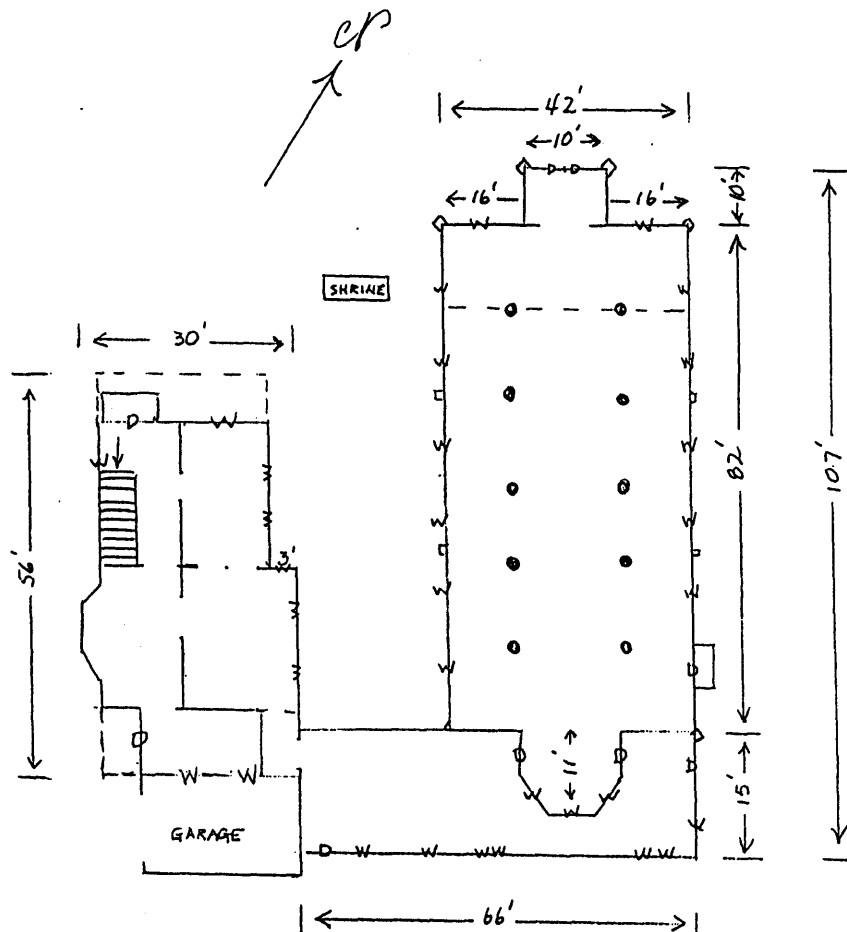
1928 Sanborn Fire Insurance map showing the
St. Peter's complex with the new school building.

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Floor plans of St. Peter's Church & Rectory.

(Not to scale.)

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sketches prepared but Mr. Mathias Schnell of Rock Island was alone and immensely satisfactory. He is both architect and builder and, therefore, able to sketch for the money what he, if left to his bidding, is prepared to produce in reality. He is also building McMenony's church. I have seen in my travels several churches of Mr. Schnell, they are all beautiful and a marvel of cheapness.

On June 15, 1887 Wesseling wrote to Abbot Wolf...

...We have let the contract today for our church to very good and responsible parties. The church will be of pure Gothic architecture 106' x 47' with tiny pillars and octagon sanctuary and tower 133' built of hard brick and pressed brick in entire front, with best Ben Davis Black Pennsylvania slate roof.....in all \$11,126.00 to this is to be added \$200.00 for the architect, Mr. Mathias Schnell of Rock Island, Ill. The church is very beautiful.

The "good and responsible parties" were Wickham Bros. of Council Bluffs. This firm was responsible for most of the major construction which took place in the city for years. Although not members of St. Peter's Parish the Wickhams made substantial contributions to the construction of the church and continued their support in the following years. Wickham Bros. also received the contract for the construction of the rectory in 1895.

St. Peter's is an almost classic example of a late 19th century Gothic Revival design. Executed in red brick it is rectangular in shape, measuring 42' x 107', with a symmetrical facade on the gable end. The entry doors are located at the base of the soaring 100' central spire. All fenestration is lancet arched, with brick patterned hoods and dressed stone sills. The buttressed corners with stone caps are typical of Gothic Revival designs. These buttresses are repeated on the side elevations, alternating with brick pilasters. Brick corbeling is found just below the slate roof. The apsidal end features three lancet windows placed high in the wall, to allow the light to fall down onto the altar. The symmetry of the exterior is continued on the interior, a nave with side aisles plan. This plan has been in common use since the Early Christian churches of the fourth century. The church is divided into three basic areas, the vestibule or narthex, the nave with side aisles,

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and the apsidal end with the altar. In Early Christian churches, as in many 19th century churches in this country, the exterior was usually fairly simple, a combination of brick and stone, while the interior was richly decorated with paintings, carvings, and gilt. The interior of St. Peter's was originally much more ornate than what is seen today.

In the June 15, letter Wesseling goes on.....

The same stands _____ in Fort Madison, Iowa. I am surprised we got it so cheap. I am just ordering three bells for our church. I got them donated from one man as something extra to cost \$400.00.....

While no documentation has been located identifying St. Joseph's Church in Fort Madison as a Schnell design, it is remarkably similar to St. Peter's. The pitch of the roof, and design and proportion of the spire are very much alike. However, differences do exist. St. Peter's has a central entry with a window on each side of the facade while St. Joseph's possesses a central entry with a smaller doorway on each side and towers on the corners of the facade added between 1900 and 1907. St. Francis Xavier (Father McMenony's church), which is non-extant, and St. Bernard's in Breda (Carroll County) are also known to be designed by Schnell.

The completion of the church did not end the efforts of the parishioners to improve their religious institutions. A scant six months after the church was dedicated, the children of the parish began their school year in a frame structure built by the men of St. Peter's. The Benedictine sisters who taught the youngsters, moved into the frame house built to accomodate them before the year 1888 ended. Both structures were located just to the north and east of the church. Eight years elapsed before the parish would construct the rectory. The success of their previous endeavors, and the cramped nature of the priest's quarters in the rear of the school, led them to complete the substantial residence for their pastor just to the southwest of the church.

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Iowa Architects Files, State Historical Society of Iowa, Historic Preservation Bureau, Des Moines, IA.

Jennings, Gottfried, Check, Perservationists. Council Bluffs: A Settlement History and Survey Findings. City of Council Bluffs, 1982.

Kempler, the Rev. John F. The Catholic Church in Council Bluffs. N.D.

Orff, Frank. Council Bluffs City Directory, 1889. Council Bluffs, IA: Frank Orff Pub. Co., 1889.

Perkins, J.R. Historic Houses of Council Bluffs. Talk given 21 November 1957. Script for slides located at the Council Bluffs Public Library, vertical files, folder "Historic Houses".

Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps. 1885, 1896, 1921, and 1928.

Souvenir of St. Peter's. c.1905 or 1906.

St. Peter's Dedication Program. 18 March 1888.

St. Peter's Diamond Jubilee: 1887-1962.

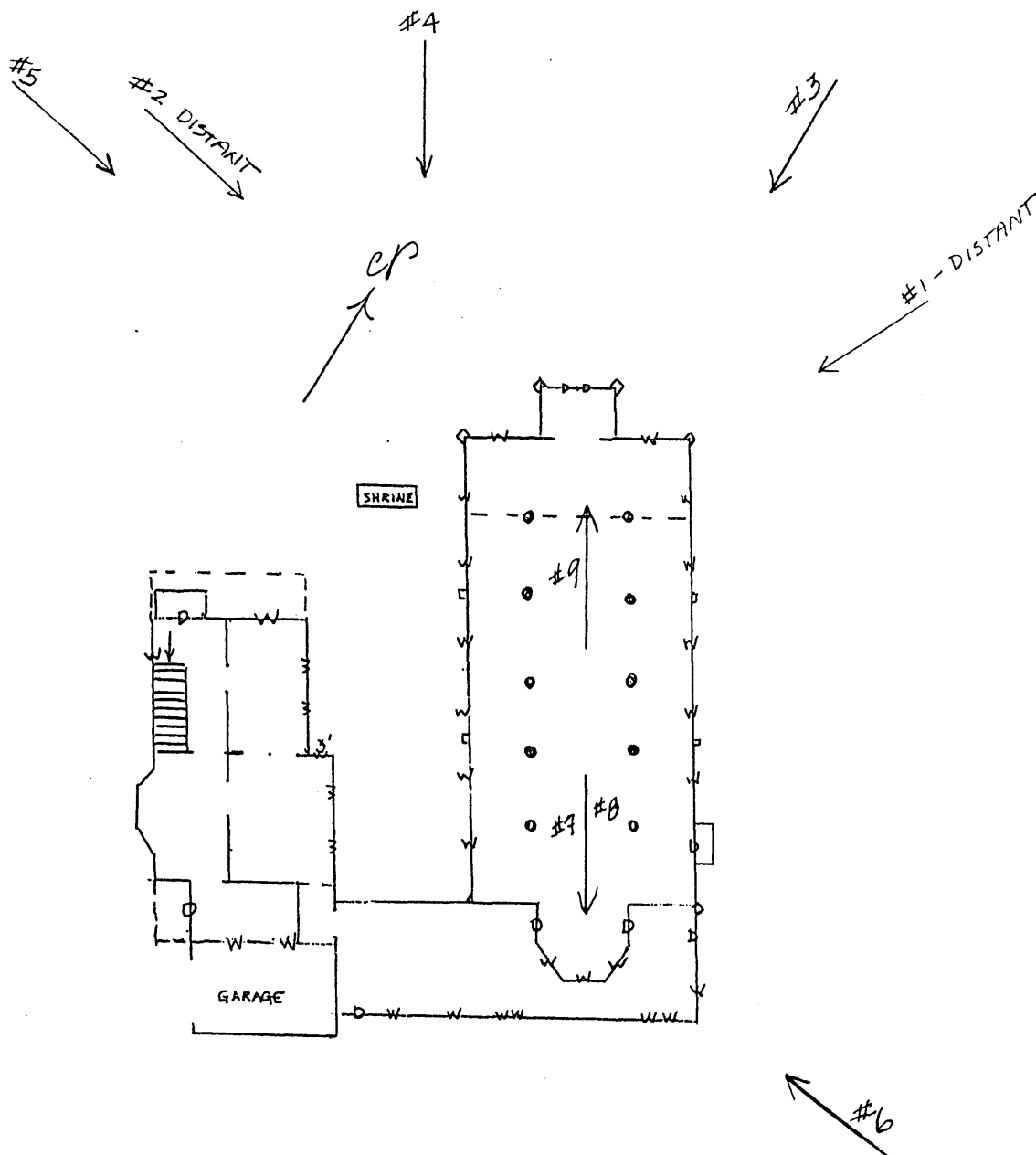
The Western World. 2 May 1912, pp 3 & 6.

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Sketch map showing photo angles.

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With one exception, all photographs submitted with this nomination for St. Peter's Church and Rectory, One Bluff Street, Council Bluffs, IA, were taken by Mike Whye in the Fall 1991, and all negatives are stored in his files in Council Bluffs, IA. The exception is a historic view of the church interior. No photographer or firm date have been established for this photo. The negative is stored in the parish files.

- #1 Distant view of church looking SW.
- #2 Distant view of church looking east on Broadway.
- #3 3/4 view of church facade looking south.
- #4 Church and rectory facades looking southeast
- #5 3/4 view of church and rectory facades looking east.
- #6 3/4 view of rear elevations of church and rectory looking west.
- #7 Interior of church looking toward altar.
- #8 Historic view of church interior looking toward altar.
- #9 Interior of church looking toward front entry.