

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

For NPS use only

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

received

date entered

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

1. Name

historic St. Paul's Cathedral

and/or common

2. Location

street & number 125 Pearl Street not for publication

city, town Buffalo vicinity of

state New York code county Erie code

3. Classification

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

4. Owner of Property

name Episcopal Diocese of Western New York

street & number 126 Pearl Street

city, town Buffalo vicinity of state New York

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Erie County Courthouse

street & number 126 Pearl Street

city, town Buffalo vicinity of state New York

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Historic American Buildings Survey has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date 1965 federal state county local

depository for survey records Library of Congress

city, town Washington vicinity of state DC

7. Description

Condition

excellent
 good
 fair

deteriorated
 ruins
 unexposed

Check one

unaltered
 altered

Check one

original site
 moved date _____

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

St. Paul's Cathedral is located in downtown Buffalo on an irregular but basically triangular lot, bounded on the north by Church Street, the west by Pearl Street, on the southeast by Erie Street and on the east by a segment of Main Street. Set on a diagonal axis, the church was until recently hemmed in by office buildings set on a grid plan. In 1970, Cambridge Seven Architects designed Cathedral Park with trees and benches by closing Erie Street. Now Upjohn's church can be appreciated from a distance unlike its prototype, Trinity church in New York City.

The irregular plan was typical of English Parish churches so admired by America's Gothic Revivalists. The church is 175 feet by 96 feet with nine bays and a tower, and is built of local red sandstone set in a random ashlar pattern. The red Medina sandstone was shipped via Erie Canal from a quarry near Hulberton that was church-owned. The walls are load-bearing and are braced by pier buttresses capped with decorative Gothic finials. Fireproof interior construction consists of a concrete floor, brick arches, steel beams on stone piers, and corrugated iron lath.

The plan is a rectangular three-aisle nave with a chancel and sacristy at the northeast end and the narthex, tower and main entrance porch at the southwest end. A single transept to the northwest forms a large chapel which can be entered from Church Street. The main entrance is from Pearl Street on the west at a 135° angle to the nave. The large bell tower rises 275 feet and there is a smaller 125 foot high tower on the north end. Both are finished in sandstone, embellished with Gothic ornament and roofed in slate shingle as is the main roof. The interior floors are also covered in slate tiles. The chancel aisle between the choir stalls has a red and white Champlain marble floor laid in a geometric design with quatrefoils. A marble floor in a Greek-cross pattern of dull red on a white ground with borders of oak leaves and acorns is at the foot of the sanctuary step. The sanctuary has a marble mosaic floor, laid in a vine-and-grape design. A central design in front of the altar depicts the four Evangelists around a Greek cross. This floor was made in Paris and laid by Burke and Company of New York and Chicago. The north-west porch has a marble mosaic floor.

All interior walls are painted plaster, the supporting columns sandstone. "Special decorative features: The altar of Mexican onyx was designed by Robert W. Gibson. The inlay work was done by Lautz and Company of Buffalo. The stone reredos--also designed by Gibson--contains six panels of imported glass mosaics. The oak chancel furniture--sedilia, credence table and Bishop's chair--was designed by Gibson. He also designed the Scotch sandstone pulpit and font. The sandstone communion rail has a marble cap. The oak pews have carved ends consisting of a panel with a pointed arch, which encloses two smaller arches under a quatrefoil. The oratory altar located at the east end of the south transept features an elaborate triptych designed to frame the fourteenth-century painting by Jan Pollack. The chancel organ, built in 1952 by the Schlicker Organ Company, contains 2705

8. Significance

Period	National 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 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)

Specific dates 1849-1851 **Builder/Architect** Richard Upjohn

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

St. Paul's Cathedral is the premier church in Western New York. Designed by Richard Upjohn in the early English or Decorative style, this commission is the direct result of his fame as the architect of Trinity Church (1846) in New York City. With Trinity, Upjohn's reputation was secure and he was acknowledged as the leading American Gothic-Revival architect of the nineteenth century. St. Paul's is an excellent example of the archaeologically correct church - the kind of church advocated by the Cambridge Camden Society, founded in England for the advancement of Medieval art and architecture.

They were deeply concerned with the quality of modern church architecture and one of its chief activities was the promotion of the simple Early English parish church as the model for new houses of worship. The Society's reverence for Gothic buildings was summed up by the Rev. George Ayliffe Poole: "A Gothic Church, in its perfection, is an exposition of the distinctive doctrines of Christianity, clothed upon with a material form; and is, as Coleridge has more forcibly expressed it, 'the petrification of our religion.'" The Cambridge Camden Society held that a revival of the building arts of the Middle Ages would serve not only to improve standards of architectural quality and taste, but to remind the beholder of the verities of Christian religion. It remained, however, firmly Anglican, with no thought that a reversion to Catholicism was necessary to achieve its aims.

The members of the Society identified themselves as "Ecclesiologists," and beginning in 1841 they published *The Ecclesiologist*, a periodical devoted to church building, restoration, ritual, and symbolism. A primary purpose was to propagate the aims of the Society throughout the English-speaking world.

The English Ecclesiologist influence and the growth of the Episcopal denomination in the 1840s led to the founding in 1847 of the New York Ecclesiological Society, American counterpart of the Cambridge Camden Society. This organization immediately started the New York Ecclesiologist, a journal intended to disseminate Ecclesiological precepts and educate the Episcopal clergy in church architecture, history, and liturgical tradition. The lack of architectural purity in many new churches outside eastern metropolitan areas prompted the American Society to try to control quality in Gothic design by recommending the Early English parish church as the most suitable model for religious edifices.²

9. Major Bibliographical References

SEE CONTINUATION SHEET

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property less than an acre

Quadrangle name Buffalo Northwest

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

UTM References

A

1	7	6	7	3	4	3	0	4	7	4	9	7	6	0
Zone	Easting			Northing										

B

Zone	Easting			Northing										

C

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D

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G

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H

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Verbal boundary description and justification

SEE CONTINUATION SHEET

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

state code county code

state code county code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Carolyn Pitts, Historian

organization History Division, National Park Service date

street & number 1100 L Street, NW telephone (202) 343-8172

city or town Washington state DC 20013-7127

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

title date

For NPS use only

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

date

Keeper of the National Register

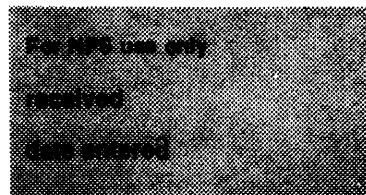
Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

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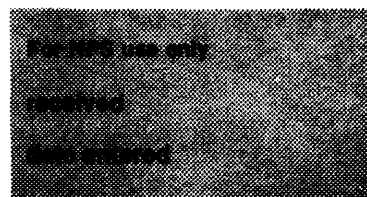
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pipes. The gallery organ, built by the English organ builder Robert Hope-Jones in 1908, has 1385 pipes. The gallery also contains an eighty-five-pipe Trompeta Real built by the Schlicker Company in 1964. St. Paul's Cathedral has several architectural fragments from European structures. A fragment of a pillar from the Cloth Hall, Ypres, Belgium, is mounted as a memorial to the Belgians who died in World War I. On the south wall of the sanctuary is a fragment of the high altar of Notre Dame Cathedral, Rheims. A stone fragment of the wall of Christ's Cathedral, Canterbury, c. 1000, is located near the Bishop's chair."¹

In 1888, a fire destroyed the interior of St. Paul's but the towers and walls stood. The vestry hired an English architect, Robert W. Gibson to refurbish the interior. He made no significant changes on the exterior except the addition of a clerestory for increased light within. Gibson was a well known "Gothicist" and the present cathedral shows both of these great 19th century architects at their best.

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It was logical that the largest industrial city in western New York should commission the architect of the acclaimed Trinity Church and accordingly the vestrymen of the major Episcopal church engaged Richard Upjohn. The first designs, presented in 1848 were modified in 1849 and construction began in the spring of 1850. There was a small carpenter Gothic church on the site. It was moved and construction was begun. The church was consecrated in October, 1851 and the tower or broach spire was not completed until 1870. From the very beginning, the architect was over budget. At the consecration, the rector, Dr. William Shelton, while praising Upjohn profusely, also noted:

A refined, cultivated, and religious taste has been here giving to every object and to every part, to every line the impress of cultivated architectural skill. The cost has far exceeded, nearly doubled, his design and our intent. It has been his infirmity, and we may pardon that infirmity in consideration of the surpassing beauty he has achieved.³

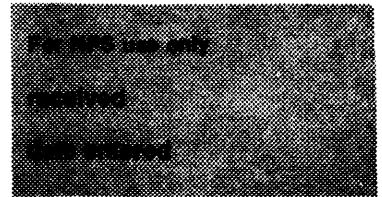
Francis Kowsky in his article on St. Paul's compares the church with the better known Trinity church:

In addition to its greater picturesqueness the Buffalo church displays more strictly than Trinity the principles of ecclesiology, the science of church building that dictated the architectural requirements for Anglo-Catholic ritual. The altar, for example, is at the eastern end of the building. Moreover, St. Paul's, built with hammer dressed random ashlar, is Early English, the style of the thirteenth century which had come to be esteemed as a purer form of Gothic than the late Medieval Perpendicular style in which Trinity is cast. But the major ecclesiological advance over Trinity is the design of the chancel, the most important liturgical area of the church. As correct ecclesiology demanded, it is distinguished externally by a lower roofline than that of the nave, which it terminates. Upjohn further called attention to the sanctuary by placing a bell turret near it at the northeast angle of the building. To churchmen of the 1850s, the back of St. Paul's gave notice of an up to date parish.

The skill with which all of these elements--asymmetry, irregular stonework, Early English style, and low chancel--are united proclaims St. Paul's the fully evolved example of a mode of church design Upjohn had embarked upon in such post-Trinity works as the Church of the Holy Communion (1846), New York City, St. Mary's (1846), Burlington, New Jersey, and Grace Church (1847), Brooklyn. Trinity Church had made America aware of the movement to reinspire Gothic architecture that had advanced to maturity in England under the banner of Pugin; St. Paul's confirmed that, since Trinity, America's most well-known religious architect had moved beyond the Gothic Revival based on Pugin to embrace the Parish Church Revival fostered by the Ecclesiological Society, the American branch of which thought highly

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of Upjohn. Upjohn's recognition of his own achievement may have prompted the statement attributed to him that he regarded St. Paul's as his best ecclesiastical work.

Inside, St. Paul's possessed the openness of a hall church, for there was no clerestory and the aisles reached almost to the height of the nave. The feeling of spaciousness, which was characteristic of Upjohn's metropolitan churches, gained impressively from the two-story chapel extending off of the north aisle. A hammerbeam roof, the boarding of which was painted dark blue and decorated with gold stars, covered the nave. Although the imitation plaster vaulting of Trinity Church was avoided, sham was nonetheless present: the piers and arches of the nave arcades were wood painted the color of the exterior stone. The stained glass was described as being of a rich salmon color.

Predictably, local citizens touted St. Paul's as the finest house of worship in the state outside of New York City. Buffalo, the "Queen City of the Lakes," had its first architectural landmark. Situated a short distance from the terminus of the Erie Canal and within a few blocks of Lake Erie, St. Paul's symbolized the progressive spirit of the young city which enjoyed growing prosperity from its pivotal location between the farmlands and resources of the west and the markets and industry of the east. In 1866 Upjohn's beautiful church was the natural choice to become the Episcopal Cathedral for the new Diocese of Western New York, a function it continues to perform.⁴

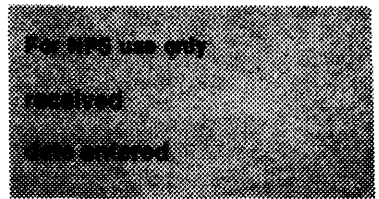
A decade after Upjohn's death in 1878, a fire nearly destroyed his magnificent church. The interior with its wooden arcading was gutted.

Late in the summer of 1888 Robert W. Gibson (1854-1927) took charge of repairing the damaged building. Gibson, like Upjohn an Englishman, had immigrated to this country in 1881. He had made his name two years later, when, in competition with H. H. Richardson, he had won the commission for All Saints Cathedral in Albany. For all of 1889 he supervised the work at St. Paul's. On January 3, 1890, the church reopened with the service of Reconciling and Hallowing.

Retaining the original walls, which had remained sound, Gibson introduced only minor changes to the exterior. The freestanding tower escaped the blaze and stands today unaltered from Upjohn's time. It still lifts its majestic spire 270 feet into the air, well above its newer and more famous "skyscraper" neighbor across the street, Louis Sullivan's Prudential (Guaranty) Building of 1894.⁵

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Several of Gibson's additions included using stone instead of wood for the structural parts while preserving the basic outlines of the original ground plan (nave, aisles and north chapel) but made the chancel longer and wider and added a clerestory. The final bay of the nave was also enlarged to create an expansive area at the ceremonial end of the church.

Gibson also took the opportunity afforded by the fire to endow St. Paul's with that special charm possessed by Medieval buildings that have various parts in different styles. More disposed toward archaeological picture-squeness than the cautious ecclesiologists of Upjohn's day, Gibson introduced conspicuous details from the Decorated style of English Gothic. Most obvious are the foliated capitals in the nave arcade (and elsewhere) that replaced the simply molded ones of Upjohn's design and the striking traceried window that now fills the end wall of the chancel where earlier existed triple lancets. Gibson carefully integrated his Decorated portions with what survived from the first church. In so doing he insured that St. Paul's, erected in the style of the thirteenth century and rebuilt in the style of the fourteenth century, remained the Niagara Frontier's finest church of the nineteenth century.⁶

Footnotes

¹Historic American Building Survey. Data Pages Recording project 1964, 1965, 1973. p. 7. HABS with Olaf William Shelgrin, AIA, Buffalo.

²Loth, Calder and Sadler, Julius. The Only Proper Style. Boston: New York Graphic Society, 1975.

³Evans, Charles W., et. al. History of St. Paul's Church, Buffalo, New York. Buffalo: Matthews and Northrup, 1903. (The parish vestry minutes and building records from the nineteenth century have been lost.)

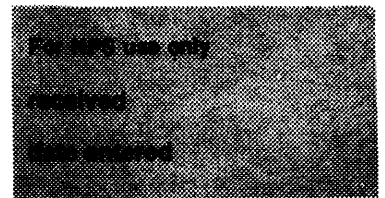
⁴Kowsky, Francis R. Richard Upjohn and the Gothic Revival in Buffalo. Unpublished Article. July 1977. pp. 3-4.

⁵Ibid., p. 7.

⁶Ibid., p. 8.

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Edited with footnotes, occasional additions in the text and a continuation of the history from 1888 to 1903 by Alice M. Evans Bartlett and G. Hunter Bartlett.

Kowsky, Francis R. Richard Upjohn and the Gothic Revival in Buffalo. Unpublished article, July 1977.

Loth, Calder and Sadler, Julius. The Only Proper Style. Boston: New York Graphic Society, 1975.

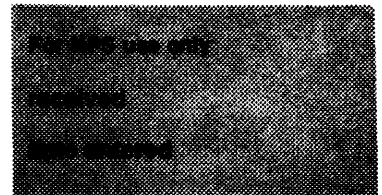
New York Ecclesiologist. October, 1848; April, June, 1849; July, 1850; July, September, 1851.

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Upjohn, Everhard M. Richard Upjohn, Architect and Churchman. New York: Columbia University Press, 1939.

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1

Verbal Boundary

All those two small triangular pieces or parcels of land situate lying and being in the City of Buffalo in the County of Erie and State of New York and bounded and described as follows:

First. Commencing at a point in the southerly line of Church Street, being the northeasterly corner of Inner Lot number forty two (42) as the same is laid down upon the Map of the Village of New Amsterdam, being the northerly corner of said Lot nearest Main Street, and running thence easterly along the southerly line of Church Street produced to a point where such line would intersect the northwesterly line of Erie Street produced, thence southwesterly, along such line of Erie Street produced, to the southeasterly corner of said Inner Lot, thence northwesterly along the easterly line of said Inner Lot to the place of beginning on said southerly line of Church Street, according to the plan laid down in the margin hereof, and marked with the letter "A".

Second. Commencing at a point in the easterly line of Pearl Street, such point being the southerly corner of said Inner Lot number 42 on said Street, and running thence southerly, along said line of Pearl Street produced, to the northeasterly, along line of Erie Street, thence northeasterly on said line of Erie Street to the southeasterly corner of said Inner Lot on said street, and thence northwesterly, the southerly line of said Inner Lot, fifty (50) links to the place of beginning, according to the plan laid down in the margin hereof and marked with the letter "B".

Also All the right title and interest of the party of the first part of in and to so much of Court, Pearl, Erie and Main Streets in said City as abut upon and lie adjacent to said Inner Lot Number 42 as laid down upon the Map hereinbefore mentioned or the lands hereby conveyed.

Book 956, page 497 Erie County Court House.

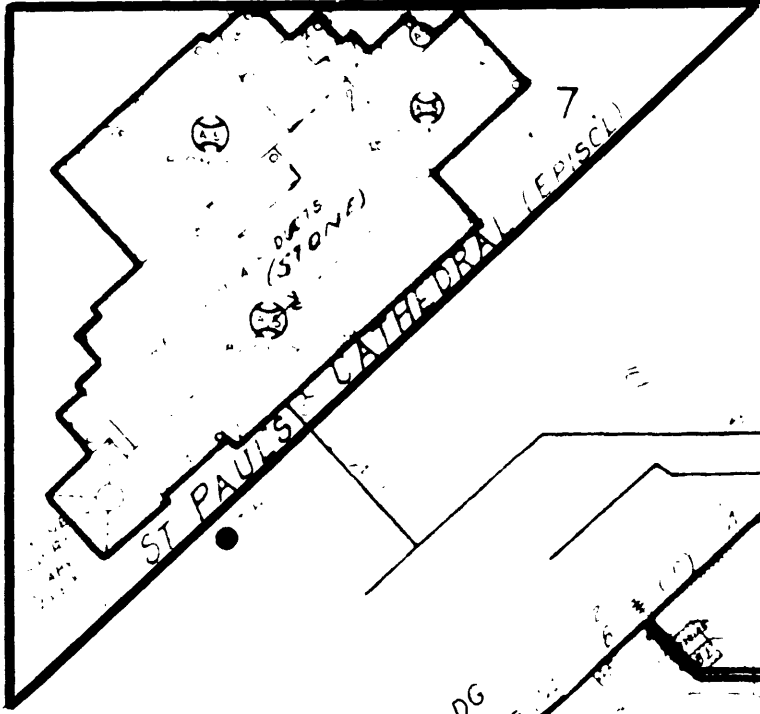
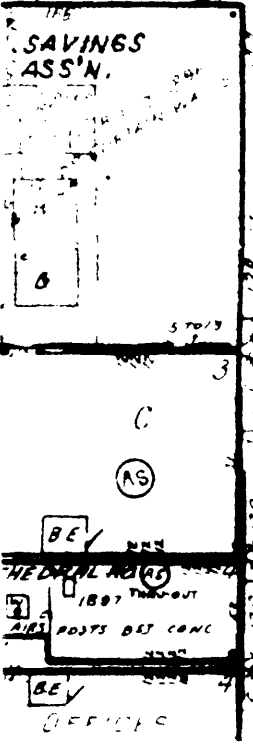
1TH (APR 1, 1923) ONLY

CHURCH

MAIN

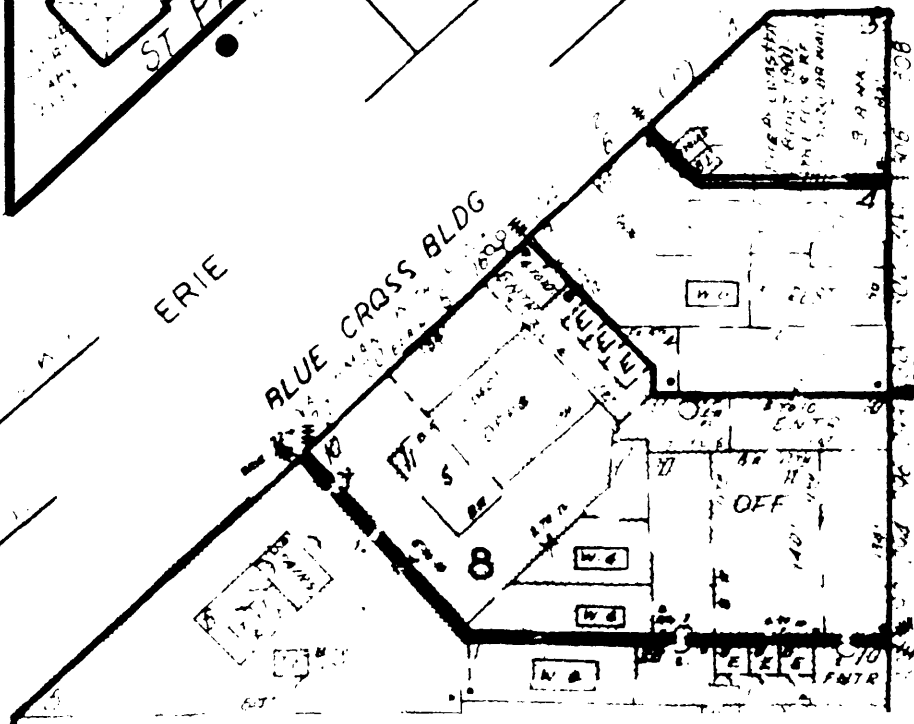
AL BLDG

PEARL



ERIE

BLUE CROSS BLDG



St. Paul's Episcopal Cathedral
125 Pearl Street
Buffalo, Erie County, New York

NIAGAR Sanborn Map, scale 1" to 50'

W SWAN

