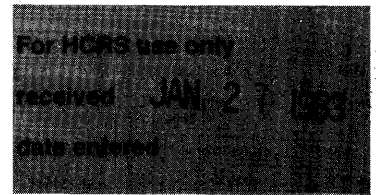


**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

**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 Church of St. Bernard

and/or common Church of St. Bernard

2. Location

street & number 197 W. Geranium Avenue N/A not for publication

city, town St. Paul N/A vicinity of congressional district 4th

state Minnesota code 22 county Ramsey code 123

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	N/A <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 Church of St. Bernard

street & number 197 W. Geranium Avenue

city, town St. Paul N/A vicinity of state Minnesota 55102

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Ramsey County Courthouse

street & number 15 W. Kellogg Boulevard

city, town St. Paul state Minnesota 55102

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Historic Sites Survey of St. Paul and Ramsey County has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date 12/80 - 11/ 82 federal state county local

depository for survey records Ramsey County Historical Society, 75 W. 5th Street

city, town St. Paul state Minnesota 55102

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

The Church of St. Bernard is located at the northwest corner of West Geranium Avenue and North Albemarle Street in the middle of a residential neighborhood in St. Paul's North End. To the north, east, and west of the structure are other church buildings which do not relate well to the original design, while to the south of the church are a number of houses. The building towers over almost all of the nearby buildings and is a very prominent feature of the North End skyline. The church itself is a large red pressed brick structure with limestone trim. It is 156 feet long by 70 feet wide except at the transepts where the width is 85 feet. It features a cruciform plan and a symmetrical facade with two identical massive corner towers which are 130 feet high. The corners of the towers gradually bow in to create octagonal open belfries with round brick columns with smooth limestone capitals supporting conical caps topped by crosses. Each tower has narrow rectangular windows with rockfaced sills and lintels. Between the two towers the windows on the main facade are grouped between brick pilasters to create a barrel vault effect. Above this in the gable end are a number of small square windows arranged to create a cut-out Latin cross.

On the side walls each bay has a large rounded arched window divided by engaged columns with limestone capitals, most of which were left uncarved due to budget limitations. The building has shortened transept arms, each with a gabled roof extending out of the mass of the building. The rear of the building features a projecting polygonal apse, and also has windows arranged in a cut-out Latin cross in the gable end. At the rear of the church most of the limestone capitals were carved with very expressionistic lines and forms. The building retains its original slate roof.

The architect, John Jager, also designed the interior of the building, which was not completed until 1914. It was designed to seat 1,000 persons without pillars or columns obstructing the view, a feature made possible by the use of steel-reinforced concrete construction. It was lavishly decorated with murals and stained glass. Some of the painting was done by German artists Schweidl and Son, who travelled to St. Paul from Europe for the job. Major alterations were made to the interior in 1958 which obscured much of the original design. At that time, a metal canopy was installed over the main entrance and the exterior doors were replaced. With the exception of these alterations the building has been well preserved and is in fine condition.

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 checked="" 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input checked="" 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)

Specific dates 1905 **OWNER/Architect** John Jager **Builder:** George Grant

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Church of St. Bernard (1905-1914) is one of the most accomplished designs of John Jager (1871-1959), a talented Minneapolis architect who studied under Otto Wagner in Vienna. It is one of the most innovative examples of church design in the State of Minnesota, one of the first steel-reinforced concrete buildings constructed in St. Paul, and a prominent landmark and influential religious institution in St. Paul's North End which represents the neighborhood's links to its European heritage.

John Jager was born in Yugoslavia in 1871 and studied under the leading architect of the Viennese secession, Otto Wagner. He was assigned to the Austrian technical mission in China during the Boxer Rebellion, and shortly thereafter--in 1902--travelled to Minnesota where he joined his father and brother who was a Catholic priest. He established his own architectural practice in Minneapolis in 1902, and in 1909 he joined the Minneapolis firm of Hewitt and Brown. Jager may well have been responsible for some of Hewitt and Brown's most intriguing designs. During World War I Jager served in Serbia with the Red Cross. Upon his return to Minneapolis he rejoined Hewitt and Brown until the firm was dissolved. In 1933 Jager was appointed Superintendent of Federal Works and in this capacity he supervised Federal Emergency Relief Administration, Works Progress Administration and other Federal projects of the period. He was a lifelong friend of William Gray Purcell, and helped to prepare the 1953 exhibition at the Walker Art Center on Purcell and Elmslie. Jager regularly attended the Minneapolis Planning Commission's meetings, and was also an historian of early Minneapolis architecture. In keeping with his wishes, all of his papers were burned after his death in 1959, making it difficult to answer all of our questions about his influential and impressive career.

In addition to St. Bernard's Church, Jager laid out the Minnehaha Creek, the major routes of the Twin Cities Rapid Transit Company and designed a City Beautiful-inspired plan for Minneapolis and a church in St. Stephan, Minnesota.

The Church of St. Bernard is one of Jager's masterpieces. Architecturally the building is of major significance for its unusual combinations of the decorative features of the Prairie Style with the expressionistic forms of the Viennese Secession and Art Nouveau. As such it forms a very marked contrast with so many of St. Paul's other Catholic Churches, most of which, like the Cathedral of St. Paul, are much more derivative in design. The use of steel-reinforced concrete construction was revolutionary at the time the building was constructed and evidently caused some friction between the architect and the builder. The church was designed to be fireproof. It consists of an outer red pressed brick shell which is not part of the structural system of the building, a middle section of steel supports which support the roof, and an inner section of reinforced concrete.

The Parish of St. Bernard was organized in 1890 as a filial parish of the Assumption Church, St. Paul's first German Catholic parish which was organized in 1856. It should be noted that the Assumption Church (1871-74) and School (1864) are both listed with the St. Paul Heritage Preservation Commission and the National Register of Historic Places. According to the parish tradition, St. Bernard's was organized because members of the Assumption Church who lived in the North End had to travel so far that many of them did not attend services frequently and at least one nearly froze to death on her way to church.¹ (see continuation sheet)

¹Robert Gillis, "St. Bernard Jubilee," St. Paul Pioneer Press, April 7, 1940.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Brooks, H. Allen. The Prairie Style. New York: W.W. Norton and Co., 1972.
 Building Permit No. 44525, City of St. Paul, Building Permits Division.
 Garrity, Michael. Unpublished site evaluation prepared for the St. Paul Heritage Preservation Commission, 1979. (see continuation sheet)

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property less than 1
 Quadrangle name St. Paul East, Minn. Quadrangle scale 7.5
 UMT References

A	1 5	4 9 1 5 2 0	4 9 8 0 0 8 0	B			
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
C				D			
E				F			
G				H			

Verbal boundary description and justification

West 1/2 of vacated Albemarle Street and vacated alley adjacent and following Lots 1 through 12, Block 2, Barney, Norton and Kingsley's Second Addition.

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

state	N/A	code	N/A	county	N/A	code	N/A
state	N/A	code	N/A	county	N/A	code	N/A

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Patricia Murphy, Historic Sites Survey Director
 organization Ramsey County Historical Society date October 14, 1981
 street & number 75 W. 5th Street telephone (612)292-0090/222-0701
 city or town St. Paul state Minnesota 55102

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 Russell W. Fridley
 title State Historic Preservation Officer date 1-12-83

For HCRS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register
 Entered in the National Register date 2/24/83

J. Allene Byers
 Keeper of the National Register

Attest: _____ date _____
 Chief of Registration

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

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

Church of St. Bernard, St. Paul, Ramsey Co.

Continuation sheet

Item number 8,9

Page 1

8. Many of the first members of St. Bernard's were German, Austrian, and Hungarian families. The parish met for a short time in a private home on Jessamine Street and then constructed their first church at Rose and Albemarle Street. The parish quickly outgrew its quarters and decided to construct the new church. John Jager's brother, Reverend Francis Jager, was a good friend of the Reverend A. Ogulin who served as the priest of St. Bernard's from 1890 until 1912 when he was transferred to St. Agnes Church in the Frogtown neighborhood of St. Paul. Clearly this friendship must have played an influential role in the selection of Jager as the architect of the new St. Bernard's Church.

The cornerstone of the church was laid in 1905, and it was consecrated on January 1, 1907 with Archbishop John Ireland presiding. The building was not complete however, until 1914. The church cost \$102,000 to construct and has a seating capacity of 1000. The contractor for the building was George J. Grant. During the 20th century St. Bernard's parish has continued to flourish, and a rectory, convent, parish hall, school, and even a bowling alley have been built around the church itself. In 1934 the attendance at the school numbered 1280, making it the largest parochial grade school west of Chicago. Today the church continues to be a powerful religious and social institution in the North End neighborhood.

9. _____ . "John Jager: An Unheralded Champion of Urban Planning." Architecture Minnesota, v.7, no. 2 April/May 1981, p. 148-150.
- Gebhard, David and Tom Martinson. A Guide to the Architecture of Minnesota. Minneapolis, Minnesota: University of Minnesota, 1977.
- Gillis, E. Robert. "St. Bernard Jubilee." St. Paul Pioneer Press, April 7, 1940.
- Reardon, James Michael. The Catholic Church in the Diocese of St. Paul. St. Paul, Minnesota: North Central Publishing Co., 1952.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number _____ Page _____

**Note: These changes apply to
Church of St. Bernard in Ramsey
County, Minnesota.**

REFERENCE NUMBER: 83000927

STATE: MINNESOTA

COUNTY: Ramsey

RESOURCE NAME (HISTORIC): Church of St. Bernard (Catholic)

CITY:

VICINITY OF:

ADDRESS:

CERTIFICATION DATE:

REMOVED DATE:

COMMENTS:

Nina M. Archabal

Nina M. Archabal
State Historic Preservation Officer

JUN 17 1988

Date