

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

For NPS use only

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

received FEB 28 1984  
date entered

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

**1. Name**

historic St. Francis Xavier Cathedral Complex

and/or common same

**2. Location**

street & number 626 Fourth Street N/A not for publication

city, town Alexandria N/A vicinity of

state LA code 22 county Rapides Parish code 079

**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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational
<input type="checkbox"/> site	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	N/A in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
	N/A being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military
			<input type="checkbox"/> museum
			<input type="checkbox"/> park
			<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> religious
			<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
			<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
			<input type="checkbox"/> other:

**4. Owner of Property**

name Roman Catholic Diocese of Alexandria-Shreveport

street & number P. O. Box 7417

city, town Alexandria N/A vicinity of state LA 71306

**5. Location of Legal Description**

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Rapides Parish Courthouse

street & number 701 Murray Street P. O. Box 952

city, town Alexandria state LA 71301

**6. Representation in Existing Surveys**

title LA Historic Sites Survey has this property been determined eligible?  yes  no

date 1983  federal  state  county  local

depository for survey records LA State Historic Preservation Office

city, town Baton Rouge state LA

## 7. Description

<b>Condition</b>		<b>Check one</b>	<b>Check one</b>
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved date <u>    N/A    </u>
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		

### Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The St. Francis Xavier Cathedral Complex consists of a brick Gothic cathedral (1895, 1907--N.R.), a brick Queen Anne-Beaux Arts academy building (1897, 1907), and a brick bungalow style rectory (1898, 1930). It is located along Fourth Street in the Alexandria central business district. Despite some alterations to the buildings, the complex retains its National Register eligibility.

The St. Francis Xavier Cathedral Complex traces its beginnings to 1895 when the present church was built. In 1910 the church was elevated to the status of a cathedral. Since its inception the Cathedral Complex has been the focus of Roman Catholicism in Rapides Parish, serving as a worship center, school, convent, residence, and administrative center.

### The Cathedral (1895, 1907) (already listed individually on Register)

The cathedral was begun in 1895 and dedicated in 1899. The tower was added in 1907. The Latin cross church has a five bay nave, a tall transept, and a semiocagonal apse. It has heavily proportioned gables and simple lancet arches with "Y" tracery. These early Gothic features are mixed with later Gothic features, including rose windows, the three part entrance, and the 135 foot tower with its four center arches. The tower is surmounted by crenelation and four small corner towers which resemble Elizabethan chimneys.

The following changes have been made since 1907 when the tower was completed:

- (1) The three part gabled entrance archway has been stuccoed over.
- (2) The interior has been completely replastered and the false vaulting has been painted.
- (3) The impressive stained glass windows have been releaded and protected with plate glass.

### The Academy/Convent (1897, 1907)

This was originally a two-and-one-half story frame galleried structure with a semihexagonal bay at each end. It faced the side of the cathedral with its shorter side toward Fourth Street. In 1907 the Fourth Street end of the academy was rebuilt and enlarged to create a nine bay, two-and-one-half story brick structure. In 1952 the remainder of the old (1897) frame academy burned, leaving the aforementioned brick structure with its quoins, round arch windows, gambrel roof, and Beaux Arts porch. The building's most noteworthy feature is the garret (the nuns' quarters), which has shaped gables, imbricated shingles, a massive central pyramid, an ornamental pressed tin roof covering, and dormers with multiple Corinthian pilasters. After the 1952 fire a new one story frame rear wing was added. The interiors feature standard early twentieth century detailing. Although they are in a good state of integrity, the interiors are not significant in their own right.

### The Rectory (1898, 1930)

This building began as a single story frame Queen Anne Revival cottage (1898).

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Continuation sheet St. Francis Xavier Cathedral Item number 7  
Complex

Page 2

7. Description (continued)

In 1903 it was moved from the east side of the cathedral to its present location. In 1930 a second story was added and the entire exterior was veneered in brick. This created what is essentially a two story bungalow. The rectory has received no noticeable alterations since this remodeling.

Contributing Elements:

Of course, the cathedral and academy-convent contribute to the complex's architectural importance. In addition, the rectory is listed as a contributing element because its present character is over fifty years old, it is historically linked with the other buildings, and its role has been integral to the functioning of the complex.

Assessment of Integrity:

Despite the previously mentioned changes, both the cathedral and the academy-convent maintain their architectural character. The 1952 addition to the 1907 academy is set to the rear and is not visible from the front. The changes to the exterior of the cathedral are minor. The rectory has suffered no loss of integrity since the 1930 renovation. Overall, the complex's architectural impact in downtown Alexandria remains intact.

## 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/
<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 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** 1895–1930      **Builder/Architect** Architect for Cathedral: J. M. Clayton,  
 See Item 7 for specific dates for each bldg.      Galveston  
**Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)** No architects known for academy or rectory  
 Criterion C

The St. Francis Xavier Cathedral Complex is locally significant in the area of architecture because of its contribution to Alexandria's historic townscape. The two major elements of the complex (the contemporaneous cathedral and academy-convent) are both landmarks in the area.

### The Cathedral:

The St. Francis Xavier Cathedral is Alexandria's only major example of a 50+ year old building in the Gothic style. It is also one of relatively few buildings in the CBD that reflects a specific historic style of architecture as opposed to the normal "commercial vernacular." Moreover, the cathedral's Gothic styling has a monumental and impressive quality, which can be seen, for example, in its twenty-one foot diameter rose windows and its nave lancets, each of which is as tall as a normal two-and-one-half story building. Finally, the cathedral qualifies as a local landmark because it was, for a time, Alexandria's tallest structure.

### The Academy:

The academy has a symmetrical and pretentious nine bay facade with a Beaux Arts arched portico. This sets it above the Queen Anne Revival cottages, boxy houses, and brick commercial buildings which characterize old Alexandria. In addition, its roof is a riot of texture and form and is easily the most complex and intricate roofline in the city (see Item 7 for specific features).

As noted in Item 7, although the rectory is not architecturally significant in its own right, it should definitely be considered a contributing element to the complex. Its present character is over fifty years old, it is historically linked with the other buildings, and its role has been integral to the functioning of the complex.

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

Research reports prepared by Joe Ticheli; based on considerable research in such primary sources as church records and contemporaneous newspaper accounts. Copies in National Register file, LA State Historic Preservation Office.  
 Copies of old photos of cathedral, academy, and rectory (in National Register file). Louisiana Comprehensive Standing Structures Survey, Rapides Parish.

## 10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property Approximately 2 acres.

Quadrangle name Alexandria, LA

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

UTM References

A	<u>1</u> <u>5</u>	<u>5</u> <u>5</u> <u>2</u> <u>5</u> <u>2</u> <u>0</u>	<u>3</u> <u>4</u> <u>6</u> <u>4</u> <u>1</u> <u>6</u> <u>0</u>	B			
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
C				D			
E				F			
G				H			

### Verbal boundary description and justification

See enclosed sketch map for description. Justification: Northeast and southeast boundaries follow curblines, as shown on the sketch map. The northwest and southwest boundaries were cut closely in order to exclude adjacent modern construction.

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

state N/A code county code

state code county code

## 11. Form Prepared By

Assisted by: Joe Ticheli, 3822 Norman St.,

Alexandria, LA 71301  
(O) 318-473-7425  
(R) 318-443-7921

name/title Division of Historic Preservation  
National Register Staff

organization State of Louisiana date January 1984

street & number P. O. Box 44247 telephone 504-342-6682

city or town Baton Rouge state LA 70804

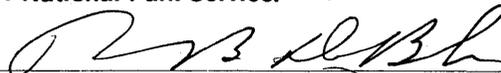
## 12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

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 State Historic Preservation Officer Robert B. DeBlieux date February 23, 1984

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

Melores Byers  
 Keeper of the National Register

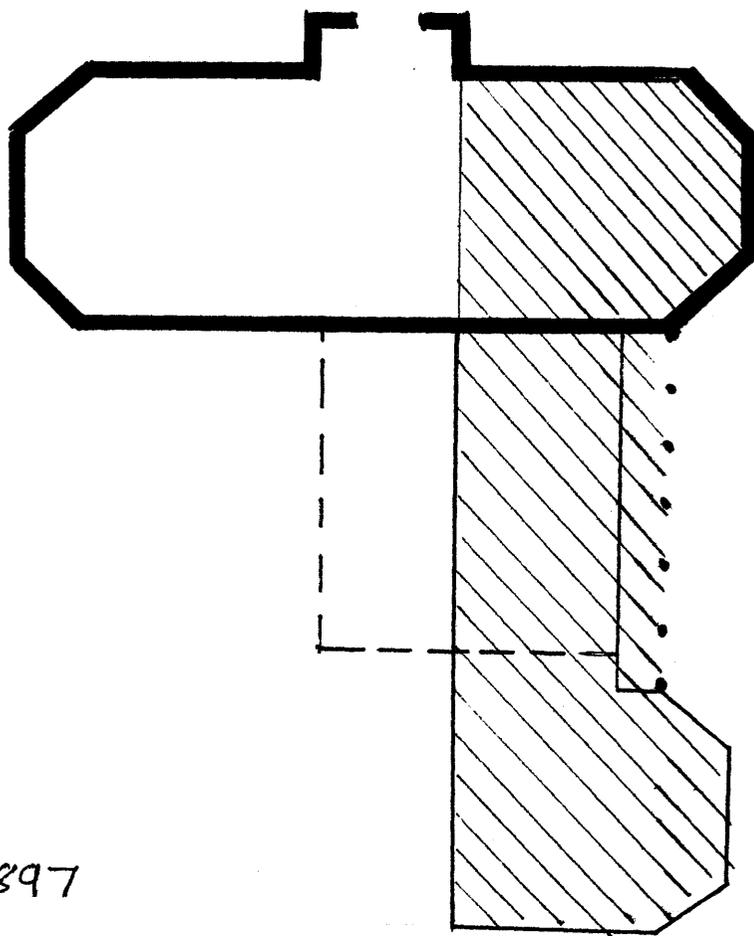
Entered in the National Register date 3/29/84

Attest: \_\_\_\_\_ date \_\_\_\_\_

Chief of Registration

ACADEMY-CONVENT

4<sup>TH</sup> ST.



1897

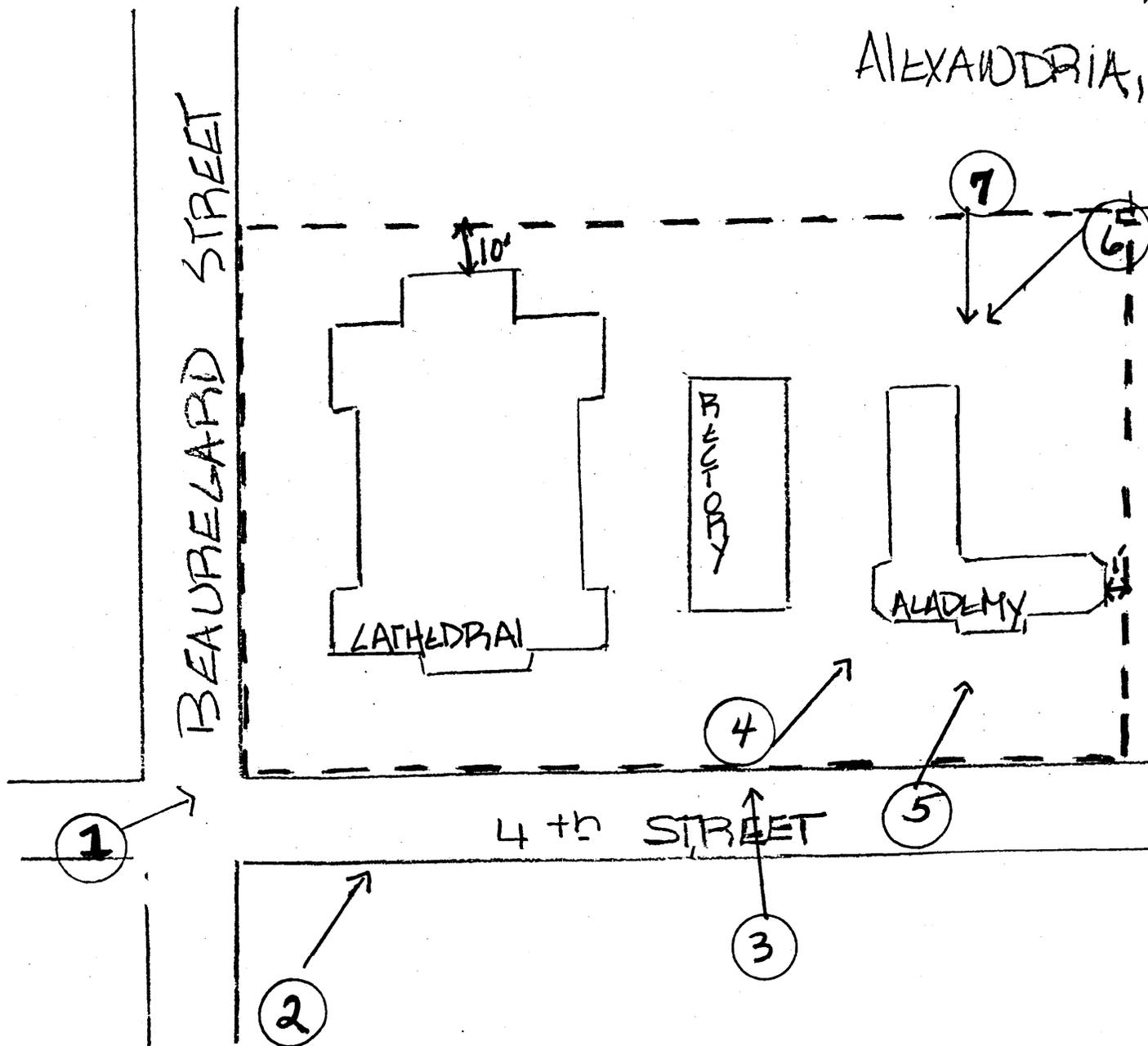
OUTLINE OF 1907 PORTION

1952  
REAR WING BUILT  
AFTER FIRE

PORTION BURNED 1952

# ST FRANCIS XAVIER LATHEDRAL COMPLEX

ALEXANDRIA, RAPIDES PARISH



NOT TO SCALE

### Boundary Description:

The northwest boundary parallels the side elevation of the academy at a distance of 1 foot, as shown. The southwest boundary parallels the rear elevation of the cathedral at a distance of 10 feet, as shown. The remaining boundary lines follow curb lines, as shown.

--- boundary line