

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number _____ Page _____

SUPPLEMENTARY LISTING RECORD

NRIS Reference Number: 89000160

Date Listed: 3/20/89

St. Benedict's Convent & College H.D.
Property Name

Stearns
County

MN
State

Multiple Name _____

This property is listed in the National Register of Historic Places in accordance with the attached nomination documentation subject to the following exceptions, exclusions, or amendments, notwithstanding the National Park Service certification included in the nomination documentation.

Bill Boland

Signature of the Keeper

3/20/89

Date of Action

=====
Amended Items in Nomination:

Criterion Exception A applies.

DISTRIBUTION:

National Register property file
Nominating Authority (without nomination attachment)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

FEB 03 1989

National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form

NATIONAL
REGISTER

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. Benedict's Convent and College Historic District
other names/site number St. Benedict's Convent

2. Location

street & number College Ave. and Minnesota St. not for publication N/A
city, town St. Joseph vicinity N/A
state Minnesota code MN county Stearns code 145 zip code 56374

3. Classification

Ownership of Property	Category of Property	Number of Resources within Property	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> building(s)	Contributing	Noncontributing
<input type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> district	<u>14</u>	<u>1</u> buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> public-State	<input type="checkbox"/> site	<u>2</u>	<u> </u> sites
<input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<u>5</u>	<u>2</u> structures
	<input type="checkbox"/> object	<u>21</u>	<u>3</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.

Nina M. Archabal 1/25/89
Signature of certifying official Nina M. Archabal Date
Minnesota State Historic Preservation Officer
State or Federal agency and bureau Minnesota Historical Society

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.
 See continuation sheet.

determined eligible for the National Register. See continuation sheet.

determined not eligible for the National Register.

removed from the National Register.

other, (explain:)

Bill Boland 3/20/89

Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

RELIGION/religious structure

RELIGION/church school

RELIGION/church-related residence

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

RELIGION/religious structure

RELIGION/church school

RELIGION/church-related residence

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(enter categories from instructions)

Romanesque

Renaissance

Beaux Arts

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation STONE/Granite

walls BRICK

WOOD

roof ASPHALT

other ASBESTOS

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

St. Benedict's Convent and College Historic District is comprised of a series of religious and educational buildings, structures, and objects constructed from 1882 to the late 1920s that illustrate the origin and development of the Convent. The property is located in the center of St. Joseph, a community of 3,014 about ten miles west of the county seat St. Cloud in south-central Minnesota. Encompassing approximately six acres, the district is clustered along the north edge of the campus at the intersection of College Ave. and Minnesota St.

The east edge of the district is delineated by a series of five interconnected brick buildings built between 1882-1914, each of which is considered a contributing element. The following description corresponds to the map on the Continuation Sheet for Section 10, page 1.

1) St. Cecilia Hall, Gregory Steil, O.S.B., architect, contributing. Erection of the original convent building began in 1879 and was completed three years later. It is nine bays wide and 2½-stories high on a raised, uncoursed, rubble stone foundation. Fenestration of the symmetrical facade shows double rows of 1/1 double hung sash aligned above each other on the two main levels; each window has a projecting granite sill and drip cap. Centered in the facade is a brick gable porch punctured on three sides by a series of square-shaped concave recesses that terminate as small openings. Brick dentils highlight the frieze. The asphalt shingled, low pitched gambrel roof has five matching shed dormers with paired, double hung windows. The west (rear) elevation duplicates the same fenestration and detailing as the facade.

2) St. Benedict Hall, Gregory Steil, O.S.B., architect, contributing. Rectangular in plan, St. Benedict Hall was added perpendicular to the north gable of St. Cecilia in 1883, projecting behind it and forming an "L" plan. Also 2½-stories high on a raised foundation, the five bay facade is dominated by a projecting three-story tower which has a mansard roof and matching gable dormers to the east and west. The fenestration of the west-facing extension is identical to St. Cecilia Hall.

3) St. Scholastica Hall, Kropp Bros., architect, contributing. In 1892 the Convent was enlarged with the addition of St. Scholastica to the northeast corner of St. Benedict, resulting in an elongated "T" configuration. St. Scholastica was designed to mimic the original St. Cecilia in scale and detailing; it is nine bays long and has the same type of window openings,

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although the dormers are smaller and have gable roofs with only one double hung window. Centered in the facade is a balconied, one-story, flat roof porch. The gable end has a series of double hung sash on each level, while the rear elevation is essentially the same as the facade except for the porch. In 1981 a small, one-story brick service dock was added to the north-east corner of St. Scholastica Hall; it is considered a non-contributing addition to a contributing building.

4) St. Gertrude Hall, George Bergmann, architect, contributing. The Romanesque Revival style St. Gertrude Hall was added perpendicular to the south wall of the original St. Cecilia Hall in 1899. It is 3½-stories high on a raised foundation of coursed, rough-faced granite, and is dominated by a slender, four-story rounded corner tower with a conical roof. Double hung windows with granite sills vary slightly on each level of both the south and east walls: the lower floor has segmental arches, flat brick lintels mark the second story, and semicircular arches with pronounced archivolt trim delineate the top story. The tower follows the same fenestration pattern. A band of corbeling above the third floor windows, small wooden modillions, and gable dormers with 1/1 double hung windows highlight each elevation. In 1906 architect A.J. Blix built seven dormers to match the original gable dormers. In 1979 a semicircular wood and brick entrance was attached to the southeast corner.

5) St. Teresa Hall, George Stauduhar, architect, contributing. When the convent continued to expand in population after the turn of the century, St. Teresa Hall was attached at an angle to the southwest corner of St. Gertrude Hall in 1914, serving originally as a dormitory, gymnasium, and classroom facility. It is four stories high with a flat roof and double hung windows, some of which were partially infilled at an undetermined date. The main arched entrance on the east wall is accessed by a decorative wrought iron staircase, and flanked on each side by large arched windows. An ornate circular staircase, also made of wrought iron, is attached to the southeast corner.

6) Sacred Heart Chapel, George Stauduhar, architect, contributing with a non-contributing addition. Focal point of the district, the cruciform type chapel was erected in 1912-14 north of St. Teresa Hall and linked at the apse to the rear (west) wall of St. Benedict Hall by a two-story brick enclosure. The Beaux Arts Chapel is built on a rusticated stone foundation and dominated by a massive, ribbed dome pierced with oculus windows that rest on a drum base supported by fluted Ionic columns. Recessed within the dome is a brick enclosure lit by a series of tall, narrow, semicircular windows with keystones. Alternating rows of pink and tan tiles accent the roof. The transept crosses the main axis at the dome; secondary apses extend from the transept. The buff-colored brick exterior is embellished with Doric pilasters, bands of corbeling, and terra-cotta ornamentation. All windows of the main Chapel are hexagonally-patterned European stained glass with drip caps, while the

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other openings are 4/1 sash. The centrally located altar is directly under the dome and made of Kasota stone with four Sienna marble columns. Sixteen granite columns on Kasota stone piers support the roof, and the floor is made of tile. In 1983 Sacred Heart Chapel underwent renovation which included rearrangement of seating and the removal of eight granite columns. These columns were incorporated in the 1983 Gathering Place, which was added to the former west entrance. Although the interior of the Chapel was renovated, it retains many of its original furnishings. The Gathering Place is built of nearly identical buff-toned brick as the Chapel, and is complementary in design, mass, and feeling.

7) Cloister Walks, George Stauduhar, architect, contributing. Also built in 1914, the Beaux Arts style elevated Cloisters are constructed of rusticated stone, white, buff-colored, and red brick. They extend north and south from the Chapel connecting with St. Teresa and Marmion Hall. The upper enclosures are generously embellished with a variety of decorative moldings and terracotta ornaments including cartouches, festoons, medallions, and shell motifs, as well as marble statues set in wall recesses.

8) Marmion Hall, Kropp Bros., architect, contributing. Marmion Hall originated in 1886 as a two-story brick building approximately one-half the length of the present structure. One year after it was built an identical wing (designed by the same architect) was added to the west, doubling the building's size. The original fenestration - double hung windows with drip caps similar to St. Cecilia Hall, and brick pilasters - is visible only on the north wall. Open porches on the east and south elevations were enclosed in 1921, and a third story with a flat roof was added in 1938 to give the building its present configuration.

9) Scholasticate Hall, Buechner and Orth, architect, contributing. Immediately west of Marmion Hall, and separated by just a few feet is Scholasticate Hall, a 1923 four-story brick building with a flat roof, 1/1 double hung windows, and simple decorative brick detailing. Originally square in plan, it was enlarged in 1959 by the addition of a four-story wing to the south. An elevator was attached to the south wall in 1980. Scholasticate Hall is considered a contributing building with a non-contributing addition.

10) St. Walburg Hall, Buechner and Orth, architect, contributing. The rough-faced, coursed stone foundation and cellar for St. Walburg were completed in 1912 but the remainder of the 3½-story brick building was not finished until 1923. It is rectangular-shaped with a hipped roof, full height projection to the east, and a diminutive, one-story brick addition attached to the southeast corner (original). Both of these projections have entrances with bracketed hoods covered with red tile. The parapeted gable roof is pierced with four hipped dormers on the east and five on the west pitch. Windows are single and coupled 2/1 and 3/1 double hung sash. A narrow brick, four-story elevator was added to the south gable of St. Walburg in 1962.

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11) Ehresmann House, Andrew Ehresmann, architect and builder, contributing. Built in 1892, the Ehresmann House is a symmetrically arranged, two-story, gable roofed, buff-colored brick building accented by Victorian period detailing. The south-facing facade has a central entrance flanked by two 6/6 double hung windows with red brick drip caps and projecting stone sills. The entry is covered by a gable porch with curved underside supported by two pairs of Tuscan columns (altered at an unknown date). The north elevation is the same as the facade without a porch. Both gable ends have four double hung windows with red brick drip caps and stone sills; the east wall has a central entrance sheltered by a small gabled porch with two Tuscan columns (altered at an unknown date). Corbeled brick along the gable eaves and between the upper windows embellishes an otherwise plain exterior. The house was built as a residence for the family of Andrew Ehresmann, who was employed by the Convent as boiler house engineer, carpenter and mason. After the sisters of St. Benedict bought the property from a relative of Ehresmann's in 1922, it was used as a residence for the family of Anthony Dreawves, who worked as the dairy herdsman from 1922-40. After his retirement, the building served as a residence for convent chaplains, sisters on the faculty of the parish school, male employees, as a retreat house, and since 1982 as a gift shop.

12) Guest House, architect unknown, contributing. Built in 1903, this irregularly-shaped, two-story building is located on the northwest edge of the convent. The wood frame house originally stood just north of the Sacred Heart Chapel, but was moved in 1958 to its present location to allow for the 1959 addition of Scholasticate Hall. Original clapboard siding was covered with asbestos shingles after the move, although the original fenestration and architectural detailing remains intact. Two gabled sections with returned eaves, dentils, and simple frieze flank a central section with two flared, hipped dormers. Attached to the west wall is a full width hipped porch with dentils and four round Tuscan columns. Original 1/1 double hung sash and trim have not been altered; upper windows in each gable have original decorative wooden fanlights. Despite the recent move and new siding, the massing and design quality of the Guest House have not been permanently compromised, thus the building is considered a contributing element in the district.

13) Lourdes Hall, non-contributing. This two-story brick building was erected in 1958 and is considered a non-contributing property in the district.

14) Garage, Buechner and Orth, architect, contributing with a non-contributing addition. The "L"-shaped, two-story brick garage originated in 1924 as a rectangular building with a hipped roof. It was expanded in 1949 (Pineault, architect) with a two-story hipped section added to the east, and a one-story flat roofed wing on the rear. Five track style garage doors on the original building open to the north, while one faces north, east, and west on the

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addition. All windows are 2/2 double hung sash.

15) Water Tower, architect unknown, contributing. Built in 1907, the 100'-high steel water tower stands directly east of the garage.

16) Summer House, architect unknown, contributing. The north court Summer House is a small, wood frame, screened enclosure with an asphalt shingled mansard roof and scalloped bargeboard. Built in 1900, it is the only remaining summer house of three that originally stood on the convent grounds.

17) Stone Wall, contributing. A three-part granite stone wall about five feet high with two sets of iron gates is located just south of the Guest House, extending east to Scholasticate Hall. Constructed in 1926, it marked the formal entrance from Minnesota St. before the addition of other convent buildings.

18) Statues, contributing and non-contributing. St. Joseph statue (1925), St. Benedict statue (ca.1927), and three other statues (1926) located east of the south Cloister walk are considered contributing objects in the district. Two other statues carved in 1959 are considered non-contributing objects.

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)

ARCHITECTURE

EDUCATION

RELIGION

Period of Significance

1882-1938

Significant Dates

1882

1892

1914

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Significant Person

N/A

Architect/Builder

Steil, Gregory, O.S.B., architect

Stauduhar, George, architect

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

Associated with the historic context Agricultural Development and Railroad Construction, St. Benedict's Convent and College Historic District is significant in American history for the vital role it has played in meeting the religious and educational needs of German Catholic immigrants in Stearns County, Minnesota, as well as thousands of others throughout the country who have benefitted from the largest community of Benedictine women in the world. The Convent gains architectural significance as a diverse collection of relatively intact late-19th and early 20th century brick buildings which illustrate the initial growth and continued prosperity of a religious institution.

The Sisters of the Order of St. Benedict came to Stearns County in 1857 to establish a convent five years after they had arrived in Pennsylvania from St. Walburg's Convent in Eichstätt, Bavaria. Answering a request to assume responsibility of schools in the recently-populated German settlements, the nuns originally worked out of St. Cloud until transferring their motherhouse to St. Joseph in the fall of 1863. When the Convent moved to St. Joseph, the sisters initially lived, worshipped, and taught in a 30' x 56' wood frame building that had been constructed explicitly for their use (it subsequently burned in 1886).

Since the Convent traditionally kept a small number of boarders, many of whom were candidates for the sisterhood, and regularly accepted young women to be educated, the provision of adequate housing and teaching facilities became necessary by the late-1870s. By June 1879 the Convent consisted of forty-five choir sisters and novices, and fifteen lay sisters and novices. As a result, St. Cecilia Hall opened in 1882 as a combined convent and academy with thirty-six pupils. After the new building was constructed, the number of students attending St. Benedict's increased and the school established a reputation as a superior institution of higher education for young ladies. Far more than a mere boarding school, St. Benedict's was the only Catholic finishing academy west of St. Paul in the late 1800s, and for this reason it attracted students from Minnesota, Dakota Territory and other Midwestern states, as well as Utah, Montana, Idaho and Canada. The majority of girls were from influential, wealthy families who apparently valued the benefits of a well-rounded education based on Christian principles.

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As the number of students continued to grow, so too did the size of the Convent. By the turn of the century, four additional multi-storied brick buildings had been linked to the original Convent to fulfill classroom and housing needs. One of these buildings, Marmion Hall, originally served as St. Benedict's Industrial School for Chippewa Indian Girls, which was operated by the sisters from 1884-1896. The first year thirty girls were lodged, fed, and instructed at the Industrial School, but by the 1890s the number had increased to over 100.

The establishment of, and assistance to parochial and rural district schools has historically been of paramount concern to the sisters of St. Benedict. They have also responded to the demand for higher education by staffing and operating various academies, parochial schools, orphanages, and a college. In 1878 members of St. Benedict's were sent to the White Earth Reservation in northwestern Minnesota to operate the mission school; in the same year other sisters went to Bismarck, Dakota Territory and Minneapolis to direct parochial schools. The Red Lake Minnesota Indian Reservation mission school also was organized through St. Benedict's. In St. Joseph they have staffed or managed St. Joseph Parochial School from 1862 to the present; St. Benedict's Academy, 1880-1973; St. Benedict's Orphan Asylum, 1882-1893; and St. Benedict's Boys School, 1897-1938. By 1913 the development of a structured college curriculum resulted in the official recognition of the College of St. Benedict, also managed by the sisters in St. Joseph. Numerous other educational institutions in St. Cloud, the Twin Cities, and other Minnesota communities, as well as Wisconsin, Washington, Oregon, and Utah have benefited from the contributions of the sisters of St. Benedict's. Foreign missions with links to St. Benedict's exist in China, Japan, Brazil, Puerto Rico, and the Bahamas.

Because the Benedictine doctrine allows flexibility in membership activity, many sisters became involved in health care by building and staffing hospitals, schools of nursing, and homes for the elderly. During a brief three-year span from 1885-1887 three hospitals - St. Alexius in Bismarck, St. Benedict's in St. Cloud, and St. Mary's in Duluth - were opened and staffed by sisters from St. Benedict's. In 1887 the Convent was incorporated and authorized to establish academies, orphanages, hospitals, and homes for the aged.

The five interconnected buildings of St. Benedict's illustrate the success and dramatic growth of the Convent over its 130-year history. Each of the four original buildings - St. Cecilia, St. Benedict, St. Scholastica, and St. Gertrude - share similar massing and design qualities, and were constructed using the same red brick. While not identical, these buildings form a complementary ensemble of relatively unaltered Second Renaissance Revival and Romanesque Revival styles which evoke symmetry and formalism.

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What can be considered the second major building phase of the Convent roughly coincided with the official recognition of the College of St. Benedict in 1913. At this time three new buildings, including the imposing Sacred Heart Chapel, were erected based on designs by the same architect. While the Beaux Arts style Chapel became the focal point of the Convent, the more subdued Cloisters harmonized with the Chapel and earlier buildings, creating a physical and figurative link to St. Teresa and Marmion Halls. Sacred Heart Chapel is an excellent example of Beaux Arts design with its rusticated masonry walls, central towering mass, and highly elaborate ornamentation. Interior sculpture and a multitude of marble in floors, columns, and bases further characterize the style.

Other buildings within the district indicate how the Convent responded to its rapid and continued growth. The Ehresmann House, for example, provided shelter for the Convent's all-important maintenance manager and his family. It has since functioned as a guest house and gift shop. The 1903 Guest House was originally built as an infirmary, converted for use as a retreat house for lay people, and then modified as a permanent lodging facility. St. Walburg Hall initially was used for making vestments and later became a residence for members of the community.

Altogether the fifteen buildings arranged throughout the northeast corner of St. Benedict's Convent and College form a cohesive grouping that represent the importance and impact of the Benedictine sisters. Despite the alteration of a few original buildings with later additions, the district still retains very good historic integrity. Through their life and work as teachers, nurses, and missionaries, the sisters of St. Benedict's have generously contributed to the religious life of the Catholic communities wherever they have served, in Stearns County, throughout Minnesota, and in other locations in the U.S. and the world.

9. Major Bibliographical References

- Blegen, Theodore C. Minnesota: A History of the State. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1975.
- McDonald, Sister Grace. "A Finishing School of the 1880s: St. Benedict's Academy" Minnesota History 27/2 (June 1946): 96-106.
- McDonald, Sister Grace. "Pioneer Teachers: The Benedictine Sisters at St. Cloud" Minnesota History 35/6 (June 1957): 263-271.
- McDonald, Sister Grace. With Lamps Burning. St. Joseph, MN.: St. Benedict's Priory Press, 1957.
- Mitchell, William B. History of Stearns County Minnesota. Volume I. Chicago: H.C. Cooper, Jr., & Co., 1915.

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 Approximately six acres

UTM References

A 1,5 | 39,7 | 1,1,0 | 5,0 | 4,6 | 0,6,0
Zone Easting Northing

C 1,5 | 39,7 | 2,3,0 | 5,0 | 4,6 | 2,0,0

B 1,5 | 39,7 | 0,9,0 | 5,0 | 4,6 | 1,9,0
Zone Easting Northing

D 1,5 | 39,7 | 2,4,0 | 5,0 | 4,6 | 0,7,0

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

The boundary of St. Benedict's Convent and College Historic District is shown as the dotted line on the accompanying map entitled "St. Benedict's Convent and College Historic District, Stearns Co., MN."

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

The boundary includes the Chapel and major Convent buildings that have historically been associated with St. Benedict's Convent and College and that maintain integrity. The northern and eastern boundaries roughly correspond to Minnesota St. and College Ave., respectively, the southern edge is delineated by a dense barrier of trees and a break in land use from open space to a cemetery, and the western boundary parallels a Convent street.

See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Michael Koop / Historic Preservation Consultant

organization N/A date January 1988

street & number 615 Jackson St., NE telephone 612-623-8356

city or town Minneapolis state MN zip code 55413

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