

**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 Immanuel Lutheran Church

and/or common

2. Location

street & number 1215 Thomas Street ___ not for publication

city, town Seattle ___ vicinity of congressional district 3rd - Don Bonker

state Washington code 053 county King code 033

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 | <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 Immanuel Lutheran Church

street & number 225 Pontius Avenue North

city, town Seattle ___ vicinity of state Washington 98109

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Department of Assessments

street & number 708 King County Administration Building

city, town Seattle state Washington 98104

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

Seattle Inventory of Historic Resources, July 1979
title Designated Seattle Landmark, has this property been determined eligible? ___ yes ___ no

date April 1980 ___ federal ___ state ___ county local

depository for survey records Office of Urban Conservation, 400 Yesler Building

city, town Seattle state Washington 98104

7. Description

| | | | |
|--|---------------------------------------|---|---|
| Condition | | Check one | Check one |
| <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 _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> fair | <input type="checkbox"/> unexposed | | |

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

Immanuel Lutheran Church was designed in 1907 by architect Watson Vernon, in a style reminiscent of Germanic/Scandinavian Protestant churches of masonry construction. It is built entirely of frame construction on concrete foundations. The external form of the church is rectangular and incorporates a massive square based tower and spire at the entrance facade which dominates the composition. A simple pitched roof, broken by clerestories at each side, shelters the main portion of the church. A two and three story addition, built between 1919 and 1920 at the back of the church houses a gymnasium and a variety of church-related spaces. The addition is covered by flat roofs but is compatibly detailed in elevation.

The exterior is completely clad in wooden building materials which are handled to suggest masonry forms and details. At the basement level, wide horizontal siding, sealed at the seams with narrow horizontal battens, creates the impression of sharply-defined stone coursing. Above the basement, the exterior is sheathed in regular horizontal courses of shingles which simulate the scale and texture of bricks. Tapered pseudo-buttresses, also covered with siding and shingles, separate the bays of the side elevations and are angled at the corners of the entrance facade and tower. Fenestration includes round arched windows in the side aisle bays, and lunettes in corresponding positions in the clerestories. The basement story is fenestrated with pairs of slightly recessed, double-hung, sash windows, one pair to a bay. A striking rose window is placed in the front of the tower at the clerestory level, and shinglework above it is arranged in five concentric rings which simulate a large brick arch. A group of four elongated, rectangular windows and a series of four square windows also open into the front of the tower. Understated entrances to the church are located on either side of the tower, well below the main floor, and concrete stairs, with rounded sidewalls, provide access to each.

The interior of Immanuel Lutheran combines the characteristics of a Protestant meeting hall with those of a nave and side aisle arrangement. The nave space is formed beneath a high barrel vault, supported upon four square piers. The half-round clerestory windows are recessed within the vault between transverse arches. Adjacent side aisle spaces are identified by narrower widths and lower vaults. Seating on the main floor consists of simple rows of straight pews. Balcony seating, located under the rose window and opposite the altar, curves into all three internal spaces in a manner characteristic of auditorium seating. An altar with a semi-circular balustrade is formed at the end of the nave, and a choir is situated above the altar in a recessed continuation of the barrel vault. A paneled balcony with flanking staircases projects from the choir, and a pipe organ and altarpiece are located behind the choir seating. Originally the altarpiece was part of the altar, but was moved to its present location during an early remodelling of the west end of the sanctuary. Pews, wainscoting, fixtures and interior finishes are in an original and well-preserved condition. A social hall is located in the basement level beneath the sanctuary, and an apartment, choir room, auditorium and a gymnasium are housed within the 1920 addition.

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/ humanitarian |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1700–1799 | <input type="checkbox"/> art | <input type="checkbox"/> engineering | <input type="checkbox"/> music | <input type="checkbox"/> theater |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1800–1899 | <input type="checkbox"/> commerce | <input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement | <input type="checkbox"/> philosophy | <input type="checkbox"/> transportation |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900– | <input type="checkbox"/> communications | <input type="checkbox"/> industry | <input type="checkbox"/> politics/government | <input type="checkbox"/> other (specify) |
| | | <input type="checkbox"/> invention | | |

Specific dates 1907-1912 **Builder/Architect** Watson Vernon, architect

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

Immanuel Lutheran Church, a designated Seattle Landmark, is of architectural, social and cultural significance to the City of Seattle. From an architectural standpoint, the 1907 design of the church is stylistically reminiscent of the Norwegian congregation's Scandinavian and Germanic traditions, and embodies much of the architectural character of its European relatives. Its massive tower base and tapered buttresses convey an impression of stability and weight, while the exterior siding and shingles are handled in imitation of masonry construction. The spire, with its diminutive dormered vents, is also particularly characteristic of Germanic architecture. The architect, Watson Vernon, is also known to have designed a variety of buildings in Washington and Idaho, including the Grays Harbor County Courthouse in 1911, and several apartment buildings, schools and residences.

Immanuel Lutheran is also one of only two frame church structures remaining in the vicinity of downtown Seattle and is the only such structure still used as a house of worship. Together with St. Spiridon's Cathedral and an old wooden church at 1900 Boren, no longer used for religious purposes, it lends a unique and symbolic presence to an ever increasing backdrop of urban anonymity. In addition to its strong visual prominence and contrast in the townscape, it represents one of the last recognizable elements of the once culturally rich Cascade community, formerly the home of substantial numbers of Norwegian, Swedish, German and Russian immigrants. The residential character of the community began to change following the completion of the Lake Washington Ship Canal and the subsequent industrial and commercial development of the Lake Union shoreline and basin.

In addition, the church is significant from the standpoint of its social and cultural contributions to the city during its ninety-year history. The church was organized in 1890 by thirty-three individuals of Norwegian origins, and their first house of worship was built in 1891, at the corner of Minor Avenue and Olive. Although it was raised in 1899 to accommodate a basement, the congregation quickly outgrew this first home, and in 1907 a lot was purchased at a new location on Pontius Avenue. Plans were drawn up in 1907, and by 1908 the basement of the present church was completed, allowing the congregation to hold their first church services in the new building. Construction became delayed until 1911 when a substantial loan was obtained from church officials in the East. When the dedication of the completed sanctuary was finally held in 1912, the congregation and the pastor were honored with impressive ceremonies and the presence of two bishops from the Norwegian State Church. At the time of its completion, it was considered to be one of the largest and finest Norwegian churches on the Pacific Coast.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Silver Jubilee Souvenir (Immanuel Lutheran Church History), June 1928.
 "Seattle Churches as known through Seattle Newspapers" (Manuscript), Ida Grace Corkey,
 1939. pp. 355-356.
 Seattle Office of Urban Conservation case files.

10. Geographical Data

Acreege of nominated property less than one

Quadrangle name Seattle South

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UMT References

A

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| Zone | | | | Easting | | | | Northing | | | | | | |

Verbal boundary description and justification

The nominated property is located at the southwest corner of Thomas Street and Pontius Avenue North, and occupies Lot 12, Block 11 of the Homestead Association Plat in Seattle, Washington.

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 Staff Edited by Florence K. Lentz, Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation, Olympia, Washington

organization Office of Urban Conservation date February 1980

street & number 400 Yesler Building telephone (206) 625-4501

city or town Seattle state Washington 98104

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 Jacob E. Thom

title date 1/20/82

| | |
|---|---------------------|
| For HCRS use only | |
| I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register Entered in the National Register | |
| <u>Allous Byers</u> | date <u>2/25/82</u> |
| Keeper of the National Register | |
| Attest: | date |
| Chief of Registration | |

for acting

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Continuation sheet

Item number

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In 1915, a contribution from Andrew Carnegie made possible the purchase of a Kilgen pipe organ. The congregation grew rapidly necessitating the construction of an addition including a gymnasium in 1919. The gymnasium has over the years been extensively used by neighborhood youth of all faiths and has itself represented an important focus of community life. The congregation continued to grow over the years until at one point during the record fifty-four year pastorate of Pastor Stub, five Sunday services were necessary. Despite the changing complexion of the Cascade community, Immanuel Lutheran is one of only a handful of churches in the vicinity of downtown still serving the religious and social needs of the inner city. Although most of the original families which founded the church have since migrated to other areas of Seattle, many remain active in the affairs of the church.