

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form



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This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional certification comments, entries, and narrative items on continuation sheets if needed (NPS Form 10-900a).

1. Name of Property

historic name St. Richard's Catholic School and Rectory

other names/site number _____

2. Location

street & number 4318 Fort Street, 4320 Fort Street

city or town Omaha

state Nebraska code NE county Douglas code 55 zip code 68111

☐ not for publication
☐ vicinity

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,

I hereby certify that this X 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 X meets does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

national statewide X local

Signature of certifying official Mike J. [Signature]

Date 01-23-2012

Director/CEO/SHPO, Nebraska State Historical Society
State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of commenting official _____

Date _____

Title _____

State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

☒ entered in the National Register

☐ determined eligible for the National Register

☐ determined not eligible for the National Register

☐ removed from the National Register

☐ other (explain): _____

Signature of the Keeper [Signature]

Date of Action 3/12/2012

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5. Classification

Ownership of Property (Check as many boxes as apply.)

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	private
<input type="checkbox"/>	public - Local
<input type="checkbox"/>	public - State
<input type="checkbox"/>	public - Federal

Category of Property (Check only one box.)

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	building(s)
<input type="checkbox"/>	district
<input type="checkbox"/>	site
<input type="checkbox"/>	structure
<input type="checkbox"/>	object

Number of Resources within Property (Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
2	0	buildings
		sites
4		structures
	1	objects
6	1	Total

Name of related multiple property listing (Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions.)

RELIGION: Religious Facility

RELIGION: Church School

RELIGION: Church-related Residence

Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions.)

VACANT: Not in Use

SOCIAL: Civic

7. Description

Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions.)

MODERN MOVEMENT: Ranch Style

Materials (Enter categories from instructions.)

foundation: Concrete

Precast Concrete, Brick, Stone: Marble,

walls: Aluminum and Glass Curtain Wall

roof: Synthetic: Rubber

other:

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Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance of the property. Explain contributing and noncontributing resources if necessary. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, setting, size, and significant features.)

Summary Paragraph

The St. Richard's Catholic School and Rectory is located in northeastern Omaha, a community of approximately 408,958 people located along the western bank of the Missouri River in Douglas County, Nebraska.¹ More specifically, the nominated property is located to the north of Fort Street, between 43rd and 44th Streets. The neighborhood in which St. Richard's Catholic School and Rectory is located is residential in character.

St. Richard's School is located on the east side of the site while St. Richard's Rectory is located to the west of the school building. The site is characterized by an open space made possible by the construction of one rubble stone and three white, split-faced Georgia marble retaining walls. A circular drive at the southeast corner of the site leads to the school while a second driveway and small parking lot is located between the school and rectory. The site slopes down dramatically to the north of these buildings. Both buildings retain excellent historic integrity individually and as a collection of two.

Narrative Description

St. Richard's School (Contributing Building)

This 180 foot by 160 foot precast concrete, brick masonry and glass building was designed in 1961 by architect Stanley J. How for the Omaha Archdiocese. Above the partial basement or garden level of the building is a rectilinear shaped main level. The main level contains sixteen classrooms which wrap around an interior courtyard and two-story gymnasium. The exterior skin of this Contemporary Styled building features an arcade of precast columns and beams with radius corners on the east, west and south facades. Set back from the arcade almost four foot are the exterior walls of the building. The exterior walls are a combination of aluminum and glass curtain wall or red-colored brick veneer laid in a running bond of stretcher courses. The two-story gymnasium is finished in the same brick veneer. Each roof is flat with an aluminum gravel stop sitting above the precast fascia/beam.

An entrance to the school is located off Fort Street on the garden level of the south façade. The modern aluminum and glass double doors are centered on this façade within the aluminum and glass curtain wall. The west bay of this façade is finished with the same white linear format, split-faced Georgia marble veneer that is used on the adjacent retaining wall. Individual metal letters spell "SAINT RICHARD'S SCHOOL" and are located on the stone veneer wall. Although the glass curtain walls at the garden and upper levels are located in the same plane, the modern precast concrete arcade at the upper story of this façade projects almost four foot beyond the exterior wall of the garden level façade. Behind the upper story arcade, the aluminum and glass curtain wall stretches the entire length.

The precast arcade and aluminum and glass curtain wall composition found on the upper level of the south façade is repeated on the west. The building's primary entrance is located on this façade. In the southernmost bays, the modern aluminum and glass double doors and adjacent aluminum and glass curtain wall are set back from two adjacent brick veneer panels.

A brick veneered gymnasium structure dominates the north façade. Flanking either side of the centrally located two-story gymnasium are single-story wings, which in addition to the brick veneer, feature a precast concrete fascia. Modern aluminum and glass double doors are located to either side of the gymnasium structure.

It is the east façade that reflects the partial basement and projecting main level best. To the north of this façade is a retaining wall faced with the same linear format white, split-faced Georgia marble found elsewhere. The retaining wall, brick veneer and a ribbon of windows located just below the projecting main level occupy three garden level bays on the north end of this facade. Aluminum and glass curtain wall fill the remaining garden level bays. The projecting main level features a precast concrete arcade and recessed aluminum and glass curtain wall along its entire length.

¹ U.S. Census Bureau. (2011, October 27). *State & county Quickfacts: Omaha, N.E.* Retrieved October 27, 2011, from <http://quickfacts.census.gov>.

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Interior

The interior of St. Richard's School has changed little since its construction in the early 1960s. An interior courtyard, a glass enclosed suspended stairway and restroom core are located at the center of the main level of the building. An interior hallway encircles the center core. Sixteen classrooms ring the east, west and south sides of the perimeter. To the north of the hall is a large gymnasium accessed by four door openings. A stage sits at the north end of the gymnasium and beneath the stage are locker room facilities. The corners of the rectilinear gymnasium are rounded and finished on the interior and exterior with brick masonry laid in a stacked stretcher bond.

In the classrooms unit ventilators and adjustable shelves sit in the spandrel space at the base of the aluminum and glass exterior curtain wall. A wood entrance door and wood wardrobes capped with transom windows stretch along the back (corridor side) interior wall. Blackboards and tackboards are located on the side walls. Ceilings are acoustic tile panels and the floors are typically terrazzo.

A large cafeteria, kitchen, library and additional support spaces are located on the garden level. Finishes are typical of the time: linoleum tile floors, acoustic tile ceilings and plaster walls.

St. Richard's Rectory (Contributing Building)

Constructed in the southwest corner of the site, this 93 foot by 43 foot rectilinear building was designed in the same vein as the school. This aesthetic visually ties the rectory to the school and was also designed by Stanley J. How. The building's two-story primary façade is located on the east and features the same projecting precast concrete arcade with rounded corners and recessed aluminum and glass curtain wall found on the east, west and south facades of the school building. This composition stretches the entire length of this façade. The roof is flat.

A red-colored brick veneer laid in a running bond of stretcher courses is used at the south and north building facades. At these facades a retaining wall located near the center of each facade holds back the earth to expose the entire height of the garden level wall. Both retaining walls are constructed of the same linear format white, split-faced Georgia marble veneer used on the school building and retaining walls elsewhere on the site.

The west façade features an aluminum and glass curtain wall on the northern bays. At the three southern bays a large overhead garage door fills each bay.

Interior

The garden level is used for office space while the upper level is residential in nature. A single modern aluminum and glass entrance door opens into a reception room at the center of the east façade. Offices, three on the left and two on the right, are located along the exterior wall at either side of the reception room. An interior corridor runs along the back of the offices. To the west of the corridor lays unexcavated space, crawl space, a mechanical room, vault and stair. High ceilings, terrazzo floors along with simply and cleanly detailed eight foot tall doorways create modern spaces.

At the main level of the rectory, a three car garage is located in the southwest corner. Along the east façade sit three suites, each include a bedroom, study, bathroom and closet. A large living room is located in the northeast corner of the building's footprint while the dining room, kitchen, housekeeping and guestroom can be found at the northwest. Each of these spaces retains the original finish materials, a combination of tile and carpet floors, high plaster walls and ceilings. Original cabinetry, appliances and fixtures are found in the kitchen, housekeeping and restroom areas.

Retaining Walls (Contributing Structure)

There are a total of four retaining walls used throughout the site to help stabilize the dramatically sloping topography and provide level areas to locate sidewalks and parking lots. Constructed of a linear format white, split-faced Georgia marble veneer, these retaining walls are integral to the overall design of the site and flow into the garden level finish on at least one façade of each building. The most substantial of these retaining walls is located off of the southwest corner of the school building. Another is located near the school's northeast corner. Two additional retaining walls are adjacent to the rectory building.

Bell Tower & Benches (Non-Contributing Structures)

At the northwest corner of the school, the parish constructed a freestanding bell tower. It was designed by Kevin Rose, a St. Richard's parishioner, and constructed of pre-cast concrete in 1981.^{2 3} The tower rises 36 feet above grade. Four

² "The New Bell Tower." 1983 St. Richard's Parish Bulletin.

³ Smith, Father Robert J. 24 June 1981.

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columns, each approximately 24 feet in height, support a concrete cube. A half-circular opening penetrates each exterior wall of the cube and three bells salvaged from Holy Angels Church are situated inside.

Two brick masonry benches were also constructed during the same year. These benches are located at the base of the bell tower and incorporate matching keystones from Holy Angels and St. Richard's Parishes. The original historical cornerstone documents from Holy Angels were placed in the original buff-colored stone dated 1918. A new grey stone for St. Richard's was created, dated 1981. Items included in the cornerstone were a parish directory, information on the bells and tower and a scroll listing the names of the donors for the tower.⁴

⁴ Kusek, Patricia. "History of St. Richard's." 2010.

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8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- ☒ A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- ☐ B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- ☒ C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- ☐ D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- ☐ A Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- ☐ B removed from its original location.
- ☐ C a birthplace or grave.
- ☐ D a cemetery.
- ☐ E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- ☐ F a commemorative property.
- ☐ G less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions.)

ARCHITECTURE

COMMUNITY PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

EDUCATION

Period of Significance

1961-1963

Significant Dates

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

Cultural Affiliation

Architect/Builder

Stanley J. How and Associates

Cooper Construction Company

Period of Significance (justification)

The period of significance begins in 1961 when St. Richard's School was designed and constructed. It ends in 1963 with the construction of the Rectory.

Criteria Considerations (explanation, if necessary)

Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance and applicable criteria.)

The St. Richard's Catholic School and Rectory in Omaha, Nebraska is eligible for the National Register at the local level under Criteria A and C. Architecturally, the buildings' design reflects the Catholic Church's expansive reaction to suburban growth during the 1960s. In addition, the building speaks to changing philosophies in post-World War II

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American public and parochial educational architecture with its expansive building site, space for specialized uses like libraries or gymnasiums, classrooms designed to provide optimum flexible space, the careful treatment of natural, bilateral and multilateral light, and the use of newly developed building materials and technologies. Under Criterion A, the history of the parish and construction of the School and Rectory also illustrate how quickly Omaha demographics changed in a burgeoning North Omaha neighborhood.

Narrative Statement of Significance (Provide at least one paragraph for each area of significance.)

Criterion C: the Suburban Catholic Parish & Stanley J. How

Throughout the country a new movement in school architecture began to take shape following the end of World War II. Intensifying suburban development and swelling population growth created a need for more schools, public and private. The outward movement of city residents into suburban locations is a touchstone of urban studies and greatly impacted the way our cities grew during the twentieth century. The Catholic Church's reaction to these growth patterns, particularly throughout the mid-twentieth century, is no exception. Like other entities responding to peripheral migration, the church was at times a catalyst for suburban growth or a response to it. Although parish construction continues today, the proliferation of parishes founded in the outlying areas of our nation's cities through the 1950s, 1960s and early 1970s has not been matched. The development of the St. Richard's Parish parallels this phenomenon.

As a result of Omaha's early street car system, the city has always displayed a strong tendency towards decentralization growing from the original town plat along the bank of the Missouri River to the north, south and west.⁵ Omaha's original boundaries were 5.5 square miles in 1854 and grew to 34.6 square miles by 1917. Between 1925 and 1926 the city annexed an additional 830 acres.⁶ With the decline in construction and development during the Great Depression and World War II years, Omaha was ripe for further growth in the late 1940s and 1950s. Other factors played their part as well. The idolization of suburban life as a safe, peaceful and ideal place to raise a family prompted the so-called "white flight" of the affluent and middle-classes from our inner cities and the rapid growth of our suburbs. The increasing number of good roads and the independence fostered by the automobile facilitated such growth. The consequence was large and rapid suburban development and annexation. By 1950, the city covered 40.7 square miles, by 1960, 51.2 square miles, and by 1970, the total jumped to 76.6 square miles; nearly doubling its size within twenty years.

As our cities expanded nationally, so too did the Roman Catholic Church. The Church saw "tremendous parish construction in suburban locations following a critical period of migrations extending from the 1950s to the 1990s."⁷ A parish, defined as an ecclesiastical district or territorial division within the jurisdiction of an archbishop, can be served by a number of buildings such as a church, school, rectory, etc. The increased number of parishes organized in the suburbs is also evident in Omaha. Prior to 1949, there were approximately 36 Catholic parishes located in the urban areas of the city. Between 1950 and 1970, 14 Catholic parishes were founded by the Omaha Diocese, a 38% increase. Ten of these fourteen parishes constructed churches and/or schools in suburban Omaha, two were located in urban Omaha and two others were located in rural communities elsewhere in the diocese.

A Brief History of the Catholic School

Catholic education has been a part of American life long before the country was officially a nation. Such schools were in existence in Florida and Louisiana as early as the seventeenth century. By the 19th century, increasing immigration, along with a desire for Catholic education to provide stability of tradition and to promote the spread of the faith, spurred parish construction. Resistance to what was believed to be an increasing presence of Protestant values in public education also spurred an interest in constructing separate educational facilities. The importance of a Catholic education within the Church was further stressed by the acts of the 1852 First Plenary Council of Baltimore, which urged every Catholic parish in the nation to establish a school.

For the most part, parochial schools constructed for the Catholic Church were similar to public schools in architectural design and organization.⁸ Stylistically they were tied to the architecture and materiality of the church building, but organizationally they reflected the publicly accepted methods of organizing space for educational purposes. The only exception is some early Catholic schools were designed to separate genders by including separate entrances for boys

⁵ City of Omaha Planning Department. *A Comprehensive Plan for the City of Omaha*. (Omaha, NE: City of Omaha, November, 1988) 8.

⁶ City of Omaha Planning Department. *A Century of Progress Through Annexation*. (Omaha, NE: City of Omaha Planning Department, 197-) 4.

⁷ Welch, Bethany J. *The Catholic Church and Urban Revitalization: A Case Study of the Office for Community development of the Archdiocese of Philadelphia*. (Newark, DE: University of Delaware, 2008) 78.

⁸ McCormick, Virginia E. *Educational Architecture in Ohio: From One-Room Schools and Carnegie Libraries to Community Education Villages*. (Kent, Ohio: Kent State University Press, 2001) 38.

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and girls, outdoor play yards and some classroom space. As Catholic schools continued to proliferate and gender consternations eased, such gender separation fell more in line with public school design.

As the country expanded, the late nineteenth and early twentieth century saw considerable increases in Catholic elementary school populations, which grew from 405,234 in 1880 to 1,701,219 in 1920.⁹ Enrollment continued to climb and by the mid-1960s Catholic school populations reached "an all-time high of 4.5 million elementary school students and about 1 million students in Catholic high schools."¹⁰ Many of these later population increases were due to the construction of new schools in suburban areas. Between 1966 and 1968 nearly half of the Catholic elementary schools that were opened throughout the country were in the suburbs.¹¹ Furthermore, over half of the secondary schools that were founded during this time were also located in suburban areas.¹²

Mid-Century Catholic Schools in Omaha

Prior to 1950 there were 31 Catholic schools in Omaha with two being dedicated to secondary education. Similar to other parochial developments in the rest of the nation, growth in Omaha's population, coupled with a demand for more parochial schools, created a surge in the city's Catholic school populations. In 1948 there were approximately 16,892 students enrolled in the Omaha Archdiocese, by 1958 that number had almost doubled to 30,034.¹³ The rise in student population caused some schools to implement split-day programs where half the student population attended classes in the morning and the other half in the afternoon as a result of lack of space.

Starting in 1950, twelve elementary or secondary schools were constructed by the Omaha Archdiocese.¹⁴ Of these, nine were constructed in suburban Omaha. St. Richard's is the only school where a church was not constructed by the parish, either in conjunction with the school construction or in the years following.

School Design

Each of these schools reflected changes in school design and construction typical of mid-twentieth century architecture. A combination of changing philosophies in education and newly developed building materials and technologies made a great impact on all aspects of school design (public and parochial). Prior to World War II schools were often ornate, multi-story, pitched-roofed buildings. Schools constructed after the war were complete departures from the overall design and organization of past educational facilities.

During the late nineteenth century the consolidation and grading of schools created a need for large buildings featuring separate classrooms for different age levels. The tendency was to increase the number of classrooms along a vestibule or central corridor. As the vestibule or central corridor gradually widened to facilitate multiple uses, it eventually became a common space used for general assemblies or to teach some classes. This resulted in the "central-hall plan" with classrooms leading off a large hall on three or four sides. The buildings could be one or multiple stories in height.

Near the turn of the twentieth century and shortly after, "alphabet plans" with their double-loaded lateral corridors, became prevalent. The floor plans took the form of letters of the alphabet, with the most popular plans being the "H", "I", "T" and "U." The symmetrical layout is the most distinguishable feature of these buildings and like the central hall schools, the structures could be one or multiple-stories in height.

After World War II the need for more schools, including St. Richard's Catholic School, created by the baby boom, was unprecedented. The pattern of urban development dramatically affected school design, since a large number of new schools were being constructed on the peripheries of towns where more spacious sites were available. This resulted in sprawling one-story schools with floor plans that could easily handle increasing student populations. "Quadrangle plans" (classrooms arranged around a series of quadrangles), "finger plans" (similar to alphabet plans but typically "E" shaped, these buildings feature an absence or minimization of corridors and allow direct access to school grounds) and "unit plans" (composed of a small series of units that could be easily duplicated and expanded to increase classroom space) were typical of the time. The popularity of the International and Contemporary Styles along with the sprawling, one-story, flat-roofed residential ranch house also made an aesthetic impact on educational buildings constructed during the mid-twentieth century.

⁹ Hunt, Thomas C., Thomas Oldenski, Theodore Joseph Wallace. *Catholic School Leadership: An Invitation to Lead*. (New York: Garland Inc., 2000) 39.

¹⁰ National Catholic Educational Association. "A Brief Overview of Catholic Schools in America." Web. 24 March 2011 <<http://www.ncea.org/about/historicaloverviewofcatholicshoolsinamerica.asp>>.

¹¹ Hunt, 43.

¹² Hunt, 42.

¹³ "3 New Buildings Completed; Cost \$4 Million." *True Voice: Official Newspaper of the Archdiocese of Omaha*. 13 September 1961. 1.

¹⁴ Two schools were not associated with a particular parish, instead they were high schools constructed by the Archdiocese to be used by the entire Catholic community. The remaining ten schools were constructed for a particular parish.

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In 1949, the National Education Association published *American School Buildings*, detailed guidelines on all aspects of school design. Designed to take advantage of new technologies and materials, the early modern school also reflected fundamental changes in the philosophy of education. A 1954 design guide states "curricula has become broader and more fluid and teaching methods have become increasingly varied."¹⁵ Classrooms became larger to facilitate a greater variety of activities. "Several arrangements existed within these room sizes, offering different layouts for storage closets and chalkboards."¹⁶

Designing for proper lighting also became a focus. This meant not only providing the right amount of light, but also distributing it evenly without glare. To investigate light distribution, studies focused on primary and secondary light sources. "It was determined that a combination of natural, bilateral and multilateral light (light from more than one side of a room) along with supplemental lights was most desirable."¹⁷ In addition strip windows were preferred to punched-hole openings because they produced more natural light.¹⁸ Since such large expanses of windows were being used, many schools were equipped with shielding devices, such as screens, arcades or overhanging roofs, to insure that the light was distributed evenly.

Since schools during this time were being constructed at an increased rate, economic considerations played an important factor in their design. The economy of school structures was discussed at great length just as it was in general architectural design throughout the mid-century. Architects strove to use materials such as masonry and concrete honestly, leaving them exposed and restraining from covering them in plaster or stylistic slipcovers such as classical ornament. In addition to the economy of the materials chosen, architects utilized repetitive structural units, quick erection techniques and modular construction to impact the cost of educational buildings.¹⁹

St. Richard's Catholic School reflects all of the educational design strategies mentioned. The siting of the building provided for a substantial addition, which is indicated on original architectural drawings in anticipation of future population increases. Large classrooms with carefully detailed wardrobes and chalkboards which are integral to the perimeter classroom walls insured the main volume remained flexible for classroom use. A separate gymnasium, library and cafeteria provided areas for specialized activities. Use of the "quadrangle plan" incorporated a centrally located light court that allowed natural, bilateral and multilateral light in the classrooms. Strip windows are shielded from excessive heat build-up with an overhanging roof and precast concrete arcades. The building's structural organization is economical with its repetitive structural bays. In addition, brick and cinder block masonry remain free of plaster or gypsum board, honestly exposed.

The Rectory

Historically rectories, vicarages, parsonages and presbyteries were built by parishes to provide a place for the clergy to live and work. They have been used throughout the history of many religions including Catholic and "come in an astonishing variety of shapes and sizes. There is no such thing as a typical parsonage...they are half-timbered, Tudor, Renaissance, Palladian, Neo-classical, Neo-Gothic, Neo-Georgian and modern."²⁰ These buildings are typically constructed in the same architectural style as other buildings found on the parish plant, but others may deviate and instead reflect architectural styles popular at the time of their construction.

Designed by Stanley J. How and Associates and constructed in 1963 St. Richard's Rectory reflects the same architectural style of the school. The building was designed to house both the administrative offices of the parish on the garden level and the residence of the parish priest on the upper level. Additional working and living spaces for visiting clergy was also provided on the upper level. The architecture reflects many features of the school, including an overhanging roof, precast concrete arcades, repetitious structural organization, and honestly exposed building materials. At the interior meticulously detailed built-in cabinetry blends into the rooms and is reflective of the cabinetry found in the classrooms. In comparison, modern styled eight foot tall doors add a feeling of monumentality to the office and residential spaces differentiating it from the school.

Stanley J. How

In the mid-last century, the newly founded eponymous firm Stanley J. How and Associates was abreast of current design trends and were responsible for implementing such newly developing school design ideas as those embodied at St.

¹⁵ Caudill, William W. *Toward Better School Design*. (New York: F.W. Dodge Corporation, 1954) 2.

¹⁶ Ray & Associates. "Public Elementary and Secondary Schools in Georgia, 1868-1971, Multiple Property Document." 31.

¹⁷ "Public Elementary and Secondary Schools in Georgia, 1868-1971." 32.

¹⁸ Caudill, 59.

¹⁹ Caudill, 103.

²⁰ Jennings, Anthony. *The Old Rectory: The Story of the English Parsonage*. (London: Continuum International Publishing Group, 2009) 1.

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Richard's. Born in Council Bluffs, Iowa in 1928, How moved to Omaha, Nebraska in the 8th grade. He attended Benson High School and later went on to receive a degree in architecture from Iowa State University. After graduating, he accepted a job with Leo A. Daly. In 1959, Mr. How founded the firm Stanley J. How and Associates in Omaha, Nebraska.

After starting his own firm, How has stated that he was blessed with a number of wealthy clients.²¹ These clients were often quite influential within the Omaha community. This gave How the opportunity to design large projects, often in a modernist style which was growing in popularity at the time. Such exposure made his firm an attractive option for potential work. The Omaha Archdiocese often selected different firms throughout the region to design new facilities, regardless of religious preference. In 1961 they selected How to design St. Richard's Catholic Parish complex at 43rd and Fort Streets. Although St. Richard's School and Rectory were successful in the eyes of those involved, they were the only buildings How designed for the Omaha Archdiocese.

The simple modern design of the current school and rectory was not the first version presented to the Archdiocese. In February of 1961, the design featured a complex of buildings highlighting arcades of gothic arches. A few months later this design was replaced with a gentler arcade of modern arcs seen today. Designed in the Contemporary Style, the buildings and site feature rectangular footprints and low rooflines despite being two stories in height.

Linear retaining walls speak to How's ability to incorporate the landscape into the overall design and purposefully manipulate the processional approach to both the school and the rectory. How utilized the dramatically sloping topography of the site to enhance the character of separate building functions. The retaining wall and railings at the southwest corner of the school building provide a definitive separation between the more formal south school entrance and the informal west entrance. The same is true of the retaining walls adjacent to the rectory. The east entrance is at the same elevation as the public parking lots. It is inherently public and formal while the west residential entrances rise above the public areas and are private in nature. His manipulation of topography to separate formal and informal, public and private is also manifest in other projects such as the upscale Swanson Tower development in the Indian Hills development at 205 South 89th Street in Omaha (DO09:0769-005) and many of his early residential projects. In addition to these projects a few other have also been identified as potentially eligible for the National Register of Historic Places including the Indian Hills Inn (DO09:0769-002).

As time progresses the significance of Stanley J. How's architectural talents will be determined. As a result of the broad range of his work and his modern aesthetic, his impact on mid-century modern architecture in Omaha is emerging. The thoughtful design and excellent historic integrity of St. Richard's Catholic School and Rectory stands as a wonderful example.

Criterion A: St. Richard's and a North Omaha Neighborhood

The early development of St. Richard's School and Rectory represents the demographic shifts in the areas of community planning and settlement in Omaha, Nebraska during the city's first burst of suburban growth around the mid-twentieth century. The construction of the school and rectory along with the history of the associated parish illustrates how quickly Omaha demographics changed in a growing North Omaha neighborhood. The curtailed growth of the parish complex also stands in stark contrast to the typical developments of other suburban Omaha Catholic parishes during that time.

Development of St. Richard's

The planning for St. Richard's Parish began long before a physical building was open to parishioners. On December 12, 1950, Archbishop Gerald T. Bergan authorized the Byron Reed Company to purchase 7.7 acres at 4320 Fort Street with the intent to start a new parish in the area. Possession of the property was taken by the Omaha Diocese on February 15, 1951.

In May of 1956, Reverend Msgr. Daniel E. Sheehan from the chancery offices of the Archdiocese of Omaha requested a storm sewer in the vicinity of the 4320 Fort Street property. Four years later in 1960, the law firm of Hotz, Hotz & Taylor, representing the Catholic Archbishop of Omaha, addressed a letter to the City of Omaha Sidewalk Department regarding construction of a proposed sidewalk along the same piece of property. The Archdiocese requested a year's grace because "definite plans are in the process of materializing which will lead to construction by the Archdiocese within a year" of a new parish school.

In early 1961, the Archdiocese of Omaha officially announced the establishment of a new parish named St. Richard in memory of the third bishop of Omaha, Reverend Richard Scannell. Parish boundaries were established roughly between

²¹ Stanley J. How. Interview by Christina A. Jansen. December 3, 2010.

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42nd and 60th Streets and Boyd to Read Street. The Reverend Joseph S. Micek, the first pastor of the new parish, began his parochial organization work on June 15th of that year.

During the summer of 1961, the diocese contracted with architect Stanley J. How and Associates for design of the new parish plant. During that same year, some earthwork was begun on the steeply sloping site.²² In July of 1962, eleven years after purchasing the parish site and one year after the start of architectural design work, construction documents were completed for a school. Included in those documents was a master plan for the site showing locations for future construction of a church, bell tower, rectory, convent and large school addition.

After selecting Cooper Construction Company as the general contractor, ground was broken for the school on August 23, 1962. Referred to as the "first phase" the initial construction program included the erection of a 16-room school with a combination gym and auditorium. The gym and auditorium were to serve as a temporary church until the second phase, the church, rectory and convent, was completed. In April of 1963 drawings were completed for the campus' rectory. The rectory design remained true to the aesthetic put into place by the school building.

Built at a cost of approximately \$900,000, the 43,500 square foot school structure opened its doors in August of 1963 to 385 elementary students.²³ By 1968 the school's enrollment increased to nearly 600 students, due in part to the Catholic Archdiocese's reorganization of North Omaha's urban parochial schools.²⁴ The gymnasium of the school was used to hold church services until the second phase of the building program, the church and convent, could be constructed.

Neighborhood Shifts

Early on it was clear that the second phase of the building program was abandoned due to financial reasons.²⁵ A parish budget is funded primarily by contributions and fundraisers that are largely supported by the parish population. Since the parish population never grew to the extent predicted, neither did the funding for the next phase of the building program. The parish continued to use the school's gymnasium to hold mass.

The parish's growth slowed because of many factors, the most significantly of which was, ironically, further suburban flight in the early 1960s. A 1976 newspaper article stated that "movement out of the neighborhood has been a problem for St. Richard's since the beginning...the parish's original builders moved west."²⁶ Such movement was the result of the overall demographic and economic shifts of the neighborhoods surrounding St. Richard's School and Rectory.

The demographic changes that would eventually impact St. Richard's Parish began even before it was constructed and were in part due to the growth of the African-American population, a population that is typically non-Catholic. Prior to 1950, much of Omaha's African-American population was located in the Near North Side of Omaha, just north of the downtown area.²⁷ This population continued to grow and between 1950 and 1960 African-American families began migrating north towards Ames Avenue and west towards 40th Street.²⁸ By 1970 "the black population advanced well to the north and northwest of Ames Avenue."²⁹

Such migration greatly changed the demographics of northwest Omaha neighborhoods including those embraced by St. Richard's Parish. Many new neighborhood residents were not of the Catholic faith. Integration within the parish was evident early on with the enrollment of many African-American students, most non-Catholic.

Although racial tensions during the 1960s and early 1970s may have "quickened white movement to the suburbs," the economic character of the neighborhood also impacted the parish population.³⁰ Built in an area supporting primarily moderate income homes, there were "more people in trade occupations in the parish than in other fields."³¹ As Omaha transitioned from "a blue-collar to a white-collar community" starting in the 1950s and 1960s with the dwindling of the meatpacking industry and restructuring of the railroads, other job opportunities emerged.³² Growth in the insurance, telecommunications, financial and the service sector began to provide the largest source of employment in Omaha. Many

²² Stanley J. How. Interview by Christina A. Jansen. December 3, 2010.

²³ "St. Richard's Catholic School is Lighted for Learning." St. Richard's Scrapbook. 1963.

²⁴ "Students, Parents, Faculty Adjusting Well to Growth at St. Richard's School." *North Omaha Sun*. 13 September 1968: 6.

²⁵ "Priest Leads Drive to Keep Everything Open." *North Omaha Sun*. 9 September 1971: 7.

²⁶ Salem, Julie. "Saves Souls, Yes, but Save Some Money, Too." *North Omaha Sun*. April 22, 1976: 24.

²⁷ Prior to 1950, Omaha's African-American population centered in an area north of Cuming Street, south of Lake Street, west of 16th Street and east of 30th Street (City of Omaha Planning Department. *Omaha Population Study*. Omaha, NE: City of Omaha, 1 July 1965).

²⁸ City of Omaha Planning Department. *Omaha Population Study*. (Omaha, NE: City of Omaha, 1 July 1965) 23.

²⁹ Larsen, Lawrence H. and Barbara J. Cotrell. *The Gate City: A History of Omaha*. (Boulder, CO: Pruett Publishing Company, 1982) 308.

³⁰ Larsen, 278.

³¹ Salem, 24.

³² Larsen, 297.

Saint Richards School and Rectory

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of these "new employment opportunities were heavily concentrated in the west" further enticing people to move beyond 72nd Street, considered by many to be the dividing line between east (old) and west (new) Omaha.³³

Closing of St. Richard's

By the 1990s parish demographics had changed considerably. When the parish was founded in the early 1960s there were 525 families registered. By 1997 that number had dropped to 142, with 61 of those households outside the parish boundaries.³⁴ Like many parish schools, it is the generosity of the parishioners who keep a school funded. In 1997 newspaper articles stated that the parish contributed \$300,000 toward the \$425,000 annual budget of the financially struggling school. Such donations were significant since many of the parishioners were retirement age and on a fixed income. In fact, 31% of St. Richard's parish members were over the age of 70.³⁵

As parish membership rates continued to decline, so too did the funding to keep the school running. By 2005, 89% of the students enrolled at St. Richard's were non-Catholic and the tuition of almost 30% was paid for through the Omaha Archdiocese Children's Scholarship Fund. On March 6, 2009 the Omaha Archdiocese announced that St. Richard's School would close at the end of the school term. Neighboring Catholic parish schools absorbed St. Richard's student population after its closing.

Only a few weeks later, on March 29, 2009, news that the Archdiocese was closing the parish was announced. Like the school, the parish could not be sustained financially by a shrinking membership which continued to drop. The final mass was held on June 7, 2009 and was attended by more than 400 people.

Conclusion

Constructed during a period of great Omaha suburban development, the demographics of Saint Richard's neighborhood had already begun to shift. Unlike all other Catholic parishes constructed by the Omaha Archdiocese during this time, movement of parishioners out of the neighborhood kept the parish from completing construction of over half the parish plant. This curtailed growth stands in stark contrast to the typical developments of the Catholic parish system of growth and allows the St. Richard's Catholic School and Rectory to best represent unrestrained, suburban development of Omaha.

In addition to its association with the growth of Omaha's suburbs, construction of St. Richard's School speaks to the popularity of Catholic education during the 1960s. The building also reflects changing philosophies in parochial and public school architecture and modern design in post-World War II America. Under the artful hand of architect Stanley J. How, this modern aesthetic carries through both the School and Rectory buildings. Together, the buildings of St. Richard's Parish in Omaha retain excellent historic integrity and are a "significant and distinguishable entity," eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A and C.

³³ Larsen, 312.

³⁴ Moerles, Katrina. "St. Richard's Seeks to Bring Christ's Presence to North Omaha." *The Catholic Voice*. 24 January, 1997: 13.

³⁵ Moerles, 13.

Saint Richards School and Rectory

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Name of Property

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9. Major Bibliographical References

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(See Continuation Sheets)

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 # _____
☐ recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # _____

Primary location of additional data:

☒ State Historic Preservation Office
☐ Other State agency
☐ Federal agency
☒ Local government
☒ University
☐ Other
Name of repository: _____

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 9.78115129

(Do not include previously listed resource acreage.)

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1 15 250643 4577164
Zone Easting Northing

2 _____
Zone Easting Northing

3 _____
Zone Easting Northing

4 _____
Zone Easting Northing

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

St. Richards Campus Lot 1, Block 0, Lot 2 Block 0, Lot 3 Block 0 and Lot 4 Block 0. See also Douglas County GIS Map for further illustration.

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

This includes all of the property historically associated with Saint Richard's School and Rectory

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Christina A. Jansen, Assoc. AIA

organization Alley Poyner Macchietto Architecture

date July 2011

street & number 1516 Cuming Street

telephone 402.341.1544

city or town Omaha

state Nebraska zip code 68102

e-mail cjansen@alleypoyner.com

Saint Richards School and Rectory
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Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Continuation Sheets**
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items.)

Photographs:

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map.

(See Continuation Sheets)

Property Owner: (Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name Holy Name Housing Corporation

street & number 3014 North 45th Street

telephone (402) 453-6100

city or town Omaha

state NE

zip code 68104

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 460 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Saint Richards School and Rectory

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Section number 9 Page 1

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Section number 9 Page 2

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National Park Service

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Saint Richards School and Rectory

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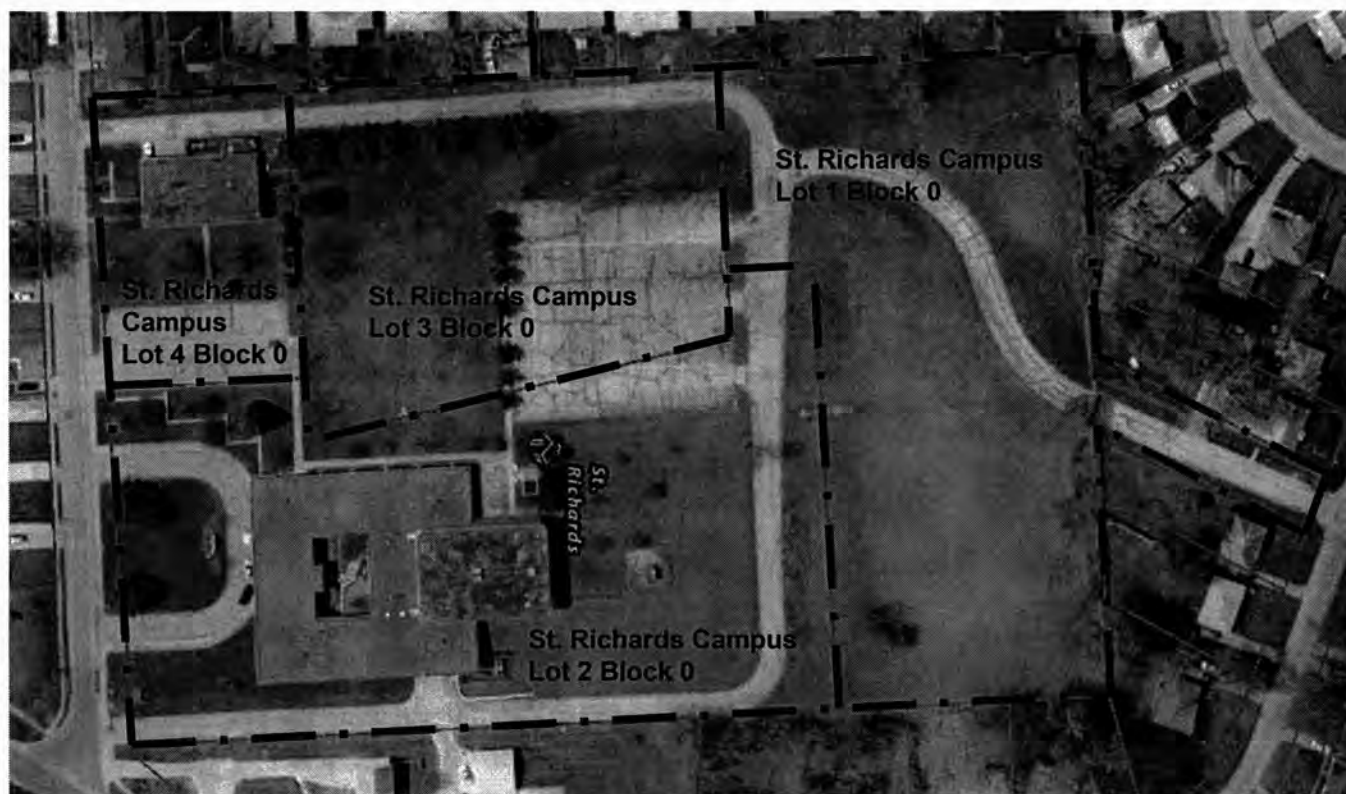
County and State

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Section number 10 Page 1

10. Geographical Data (Continued)

Verbal Boundary Description



Aerial photograph illustrating existing property lines of St. Richard's School and Rectory. St. Richards Campus Lot 1 Block 0 (5435 St. Richards Plaza), Lot 2 Block 0 (4318 Fort Street), Lot 3, Block 0 (5315 St. Richards Plaza) and Lot 4 Block 0 (4320 Fort Street) included in property's Verbal Description.

Source: Douglas County GIS website, <<http://www.dcgis.org/dogis/>>. Accessed December 2011.

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Saint Richards School and Rectory

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Section number Photographs Page 1

Photographs:

Photograph	Description of Photograph
1.00	Saint Richard's School and Rectory / Omaha / Douglas County / Nebraska / Office of Alley Poyner Macchietto Architecture / September 6, 2011 / South and East Facades Looking Northwest
1.01	Saint Richard's School and Rectory / Omaha / Douglas County / Nebraska / Office of Alley Poyner Macchietto Architecture / November 24, 2010 / School - South Façade Looking Northeast
1.02	Saint Richard's School and Rectory / Omaha / Douglas County / Nebraska / Office of Alley Poyner Macchietto Architecture / September 6, 2011 / School - Composite of West Façade Looking East
1.03	Saint Richard's School and Rectory / Omaha / Douglas County / Nebraska / Office of Alley Poyner Macchietto Architecture / September 6, 2011 / School - North Façade Looking South
1.04	Saint Richard's School and Rectory / Omaha / Douglas County / Nebraska / Office of Alley Poyner Macchietto Architecture / November 24, 2010 / School - East Façade Looking Northwest
1.05	Saint Richard's School and Rectory / Omaha / Douglas County / Nebraska / Office of Alley Poyner Macchietto Architecture / May 28, 2010 / School - Interior Courtyard from Corridor Looking North
1.06	Saint Richard's School and Rectory / Omaha / Douglas County / Nebraska / Office of Alley Poyner Macchietto Architecture / November 28, 2011 / School - Typical Corridor Looking North
1.07	Saint Richard's School and Rectory / Omaha / Douglas County / Nebraska / Office of Alley Poyner Macchietto Architecture / November 28, 2011 / School - Typical Corridor Looking Northwest Showing Light Shelves
1.08	Saint Richard's School and Rectory / Omaha / Douglas County / Nebraska / Office of Alley Poyner Macchietto Architecture / November 28, 2011 / School - Typical Classroom Showing Wardrobe/Tack Boards
1.09	Saint Richard's School and Rectory / Omaha / Douglas County / Nebraska / Office of Alley Poyner Macchietto Architecture / November 24, 2010 / Rectory - East Façade Looking Northwest
1.10	Saint Richard's School and Rectory / Omaha / Douglas County / Nebraska / Office of Alley Poyner Macchietto Architecture / November 24, 2010 / Rectory - West Façade Looking Northeast
1.11	Saint Richard's School and Rectory / Omaha / Douglas County / Nebraska / Office of Alley Poyner Macchietto Architecture / May 28, 2010 / Rectory - Second Floor Looking North

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Photograph Key Plan



Source: Google Maps, Omaha, Nebraska, 2011

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National Park Service

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Saint Richards School and Rectory

Name of Property

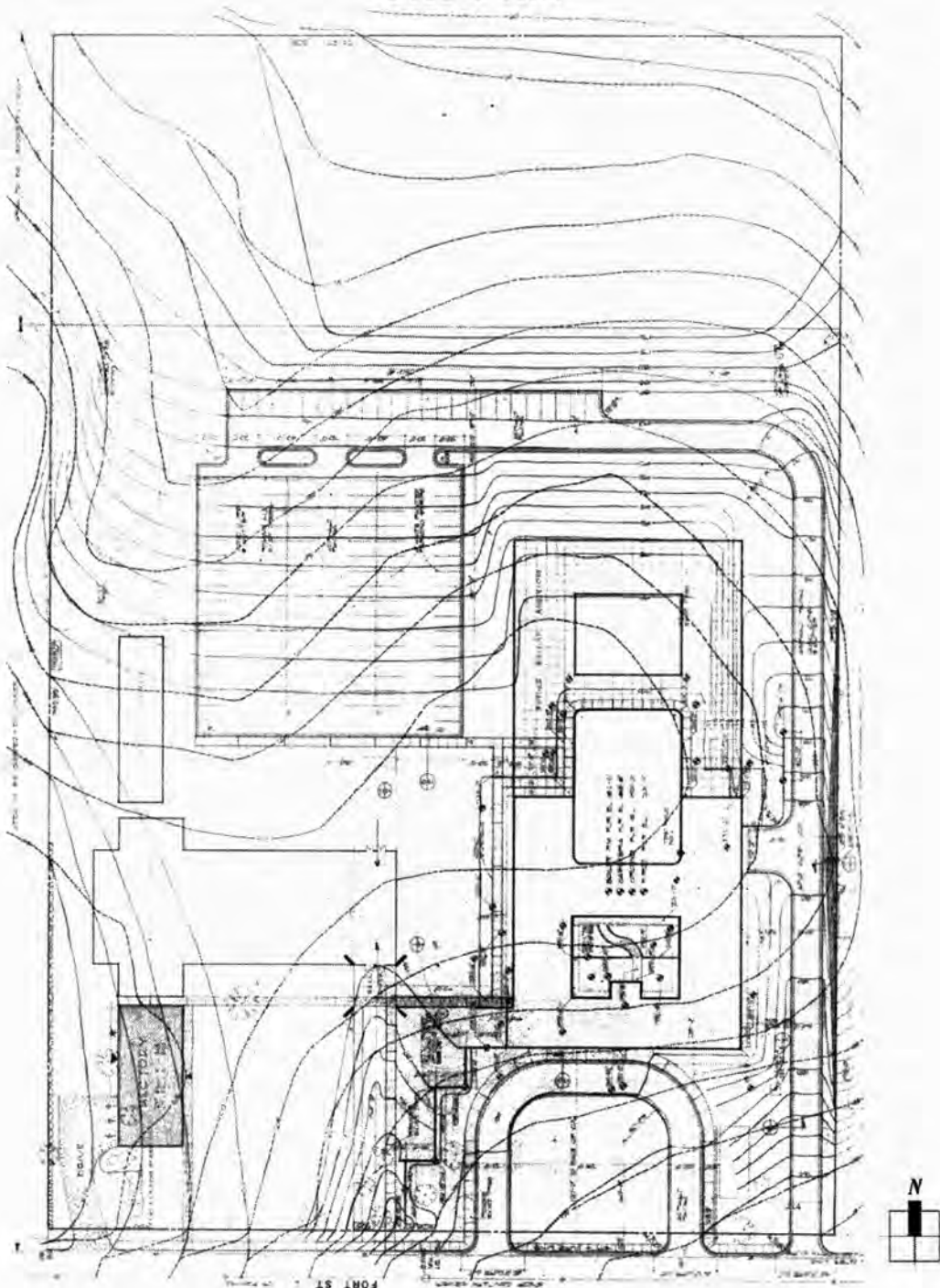
Douglas, NE

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Section number Additional DocumentationPage 4

Site Plan



Source: Original design drawings, Stanley J. How and Associates Inc., July 1962.

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Saint Richards School and Rectory

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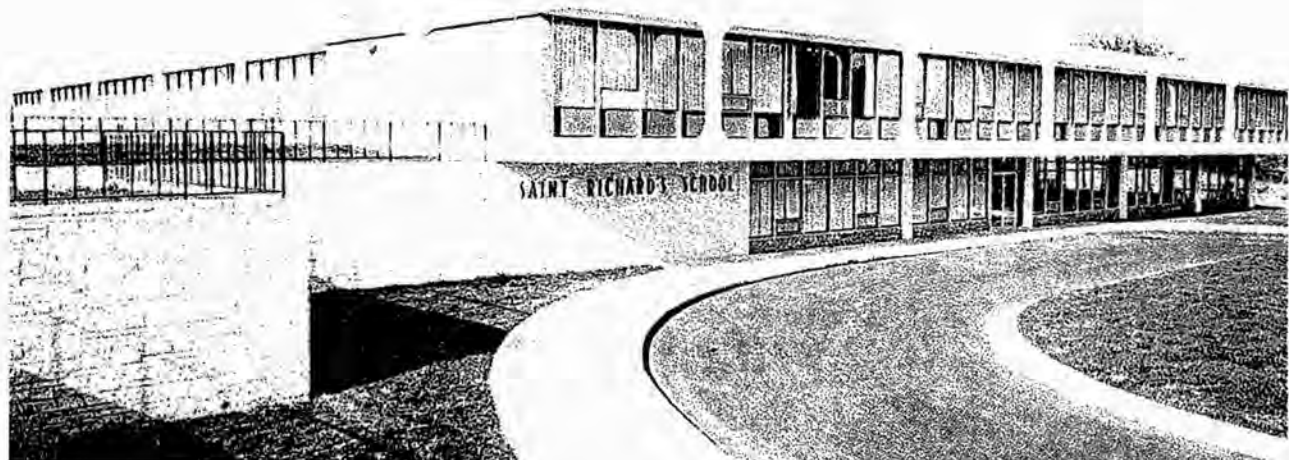
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Section number Additional Documentation Page 5

Saint Richard's School



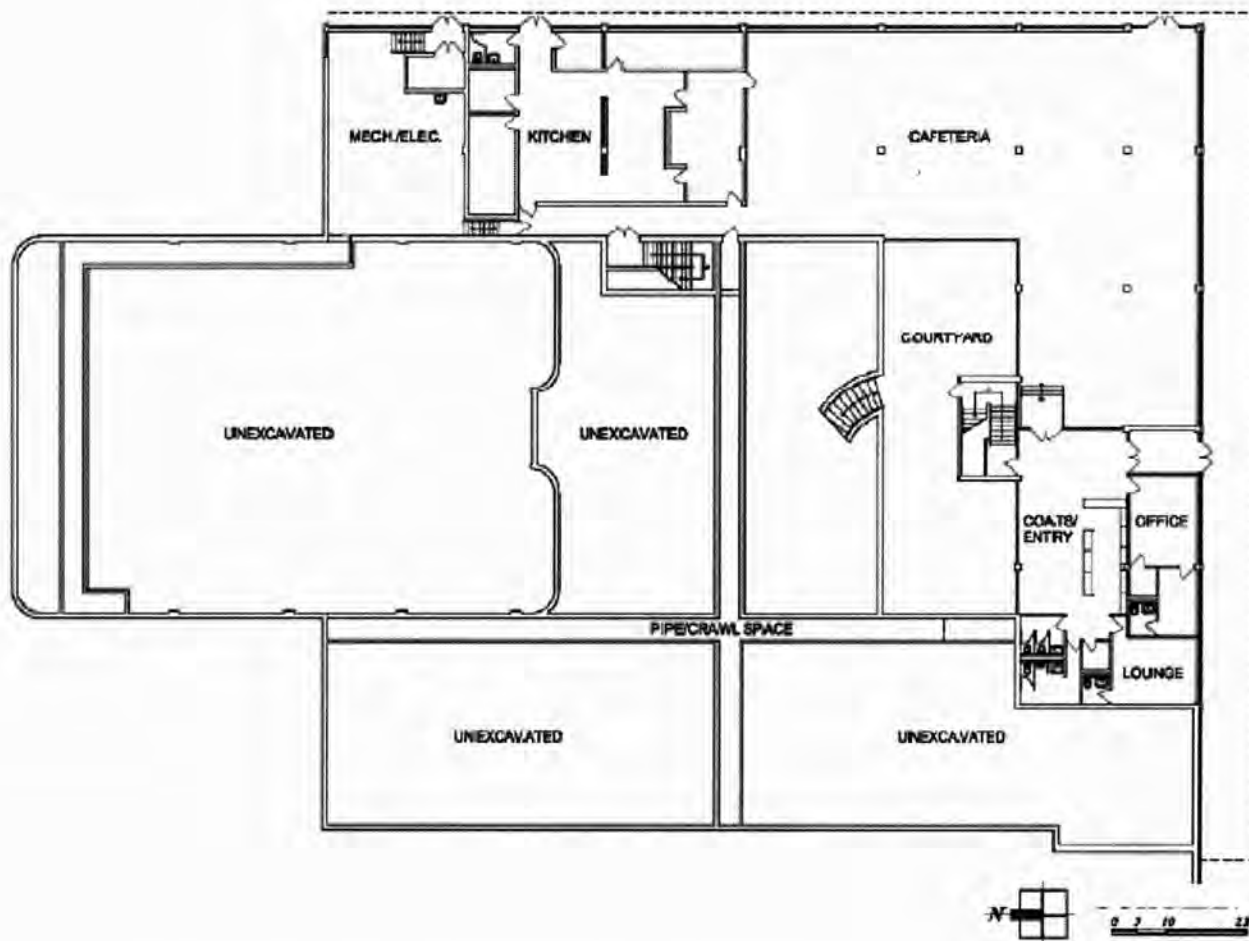
These photographs show the school building shortly after construction was complete, circa 1963.

Source: Courtesy of The Catholic Voice, the official newspaper of the Archdiocese of Omaha.

Saint Richards School and Rectory
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Saint Richard's School Garden Level Floor Plan

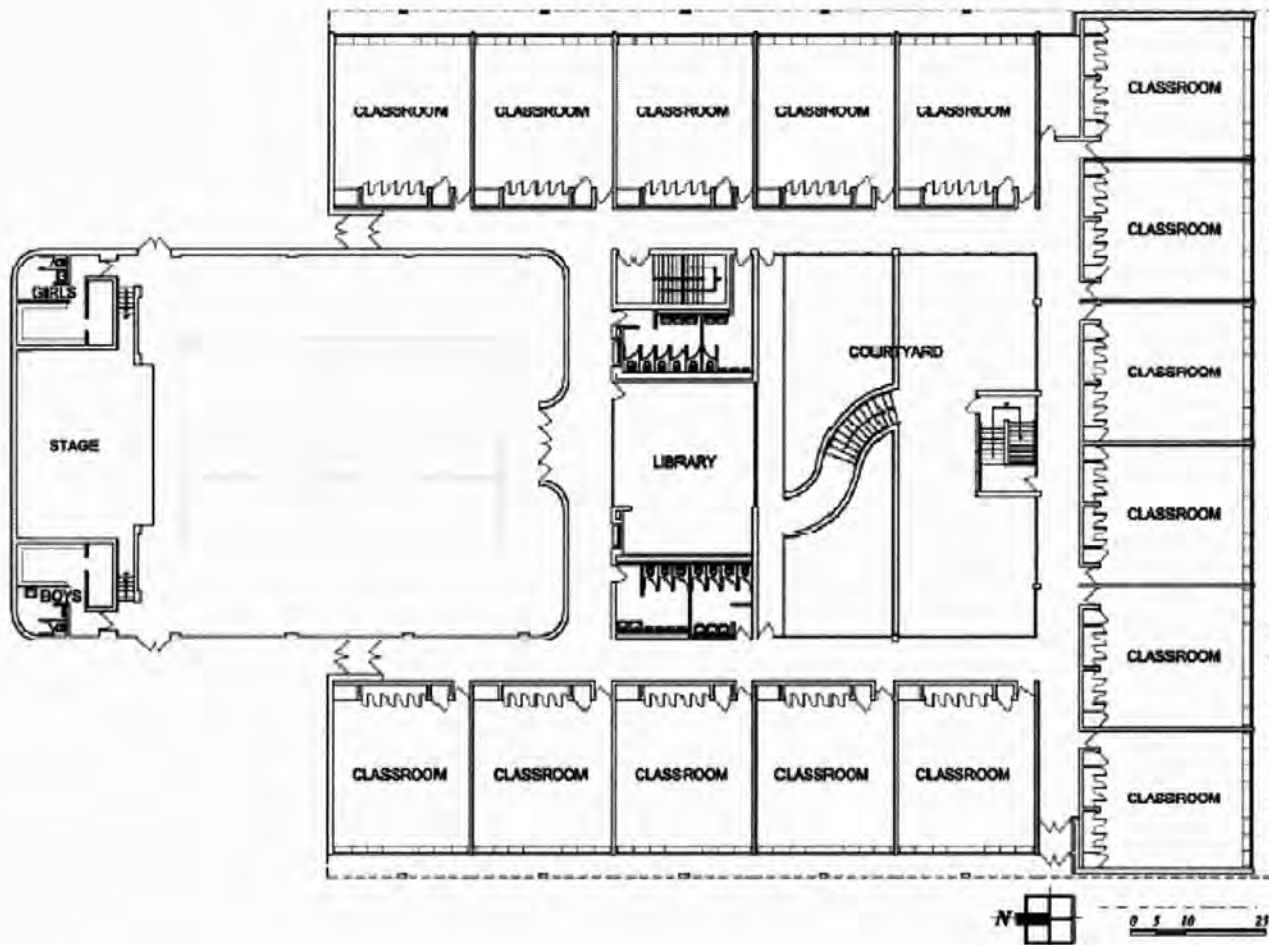


Source: Office of Alley Poyner Macchietto Architecture, Omaha, Nebraska, 2011

Saint Richards School and Rectory
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Saint Richard's School Upper Level Floor Plan

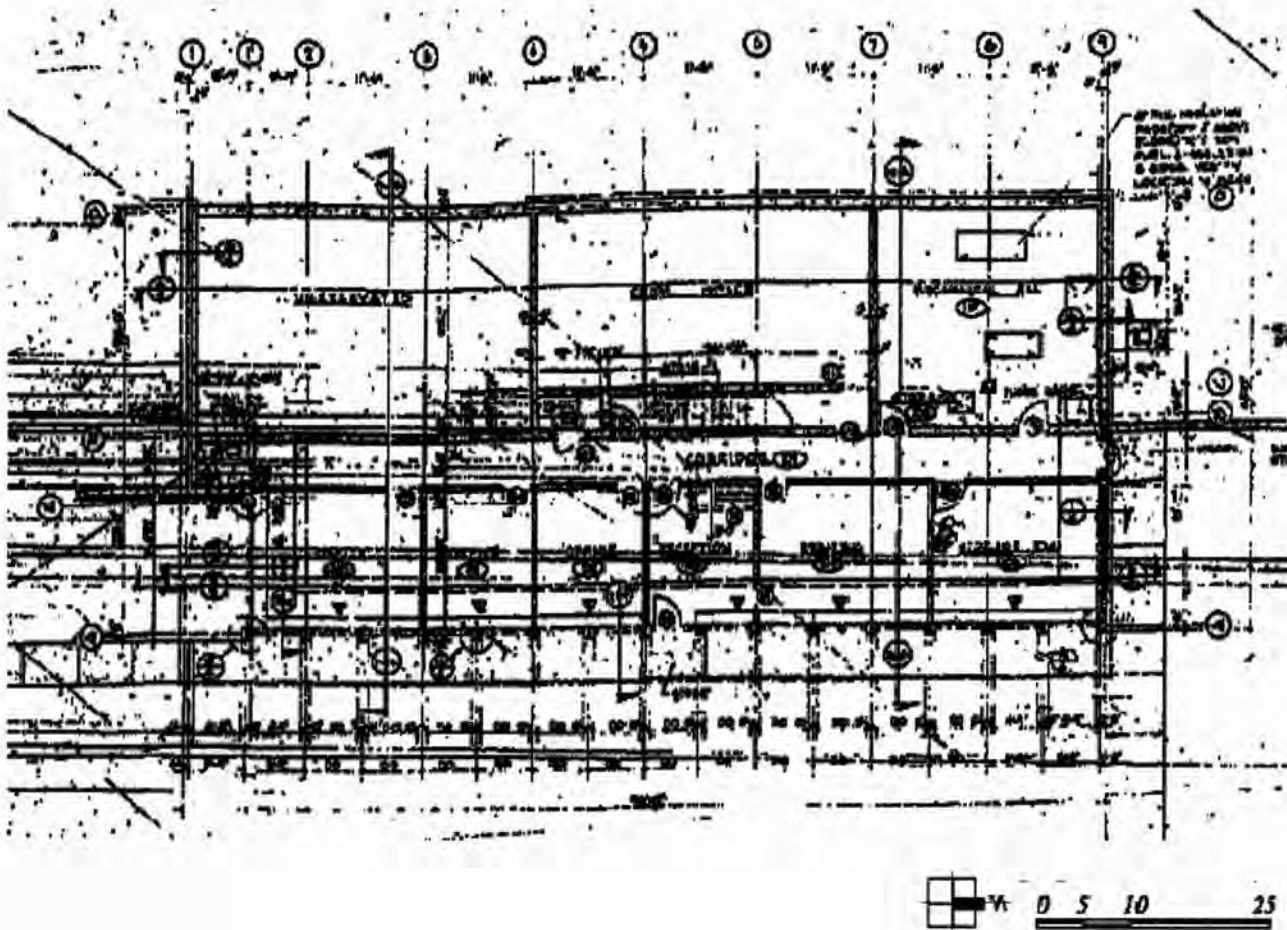


Source: Office of Alley Poyner Macchietto Architecture, Omaha, Nebraska, 2011

Saint Richards School and Rectory
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Saint Richard's Rectory Garden Level Floor Plan

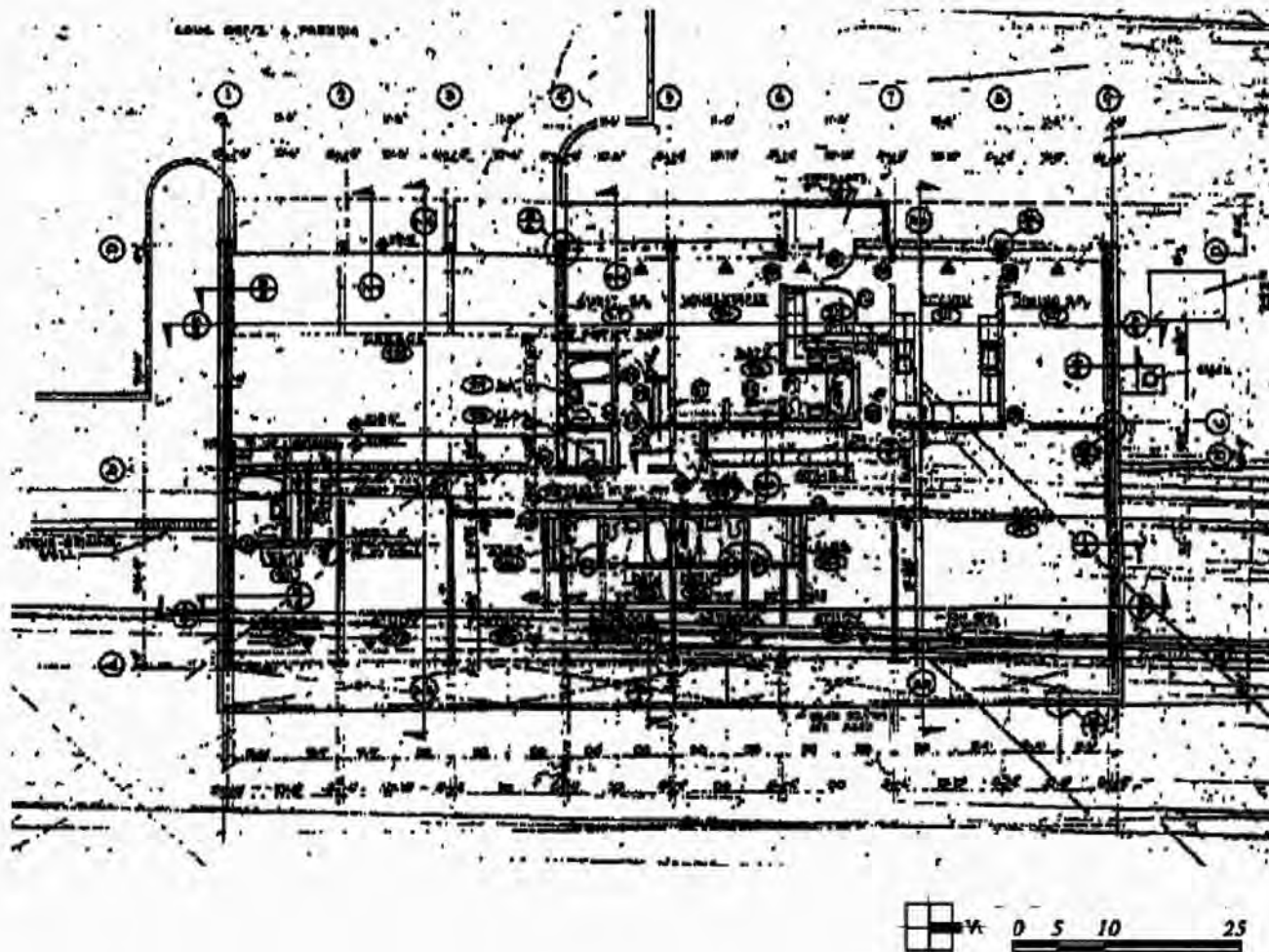


Source: Original design drawings, Stanley J. How and Associates Inc., 1963.

Saint Richards School and Rectory
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Saint Richard's Rectory Upper Level Floor Plan



Source: Original design drawings, Stanley J. How and Associates Inc., 1963.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION

PROPERTY NAME: St. Richard's Catholic School and Rectory

MULTIPLE
NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: NEBRASKA, Douglas

DATE RECEIVED: 1/27/12 DATE OF PENDING LIST: 2/23/12
DATE OF 16TH DAY: 3/09/12 DATE OF 45TH DAY: 3/13/12
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 12000103

REASONS FOR REVIEW:

APPEAL: N DATA PROBLEM: N LANDSCAPE: N LESS THAN 50 YEARS: N
OTHER: N PDIL: N PERIOD: N PROGRAM UNAPPROVED: N
REQUEST: Y SAMPLE: N SLR DRAFT: N NATIONAL: N

COMMENT WAIVER: N

☒ ACCEPT ☐ RETURN ☐ REJECT 3/12/2012 DATE

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

Dishonored Modernist School, built in response to the
increased suburban growth of Omaha and the overall effects
of the Baby Boom

RECOM./CRITERIA

REVIEWER

DISCIPLINE

TELEPHONE

DATE

DOCUMENTATION see attached comments Y/N see attached SLR Y/N

If a nomination is returned to the nominating authority, the
nomination is no longer under consideration by the NPS.



St. Richards School & Rectory

Photo 1 of 12



St Richards School & Rectory

Photo 2 of 12



St. Richards School & Rectory

Photo 3 of 12



St. Richards School & Rectory

Photo 4 of 12



St Richards School & Rectory

Photo 5 of 12



St Richards School & Rectory

Photo 6 of 12





St. Richards School & Rectory

Photo 7 of 12



St. Richards School & Rectory

Photo 8 of 12



St. Richards School & Rectory

Photo 9 of 12



St. Richards School & Rectory

Photo 10 of 12



St. Richards School & Rectory

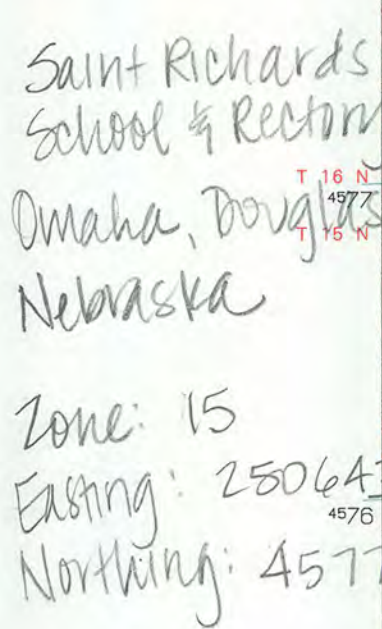
Photo 11 of 12



St. Richards School & Rectory

Photo 12 of 12

OMAHA NORTH QUADRANGLE
NEBRASKA-IOWA
7.5 MINUTE SERIES (TOPOGRAPHIC)



COMPLIES WITH U.S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY STANDARDS FOR SPATIAL ACCURACY - CLASS 2
FOR SALE BY U.S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, DENVER, COLORADO 80225, OR RESTON, VIRGINIA 22092
AND IOWA GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, IOWA CITY, IOWA 52240
A FOLDER DESCRIBING TOPOGRAPHIC MAPS AND SYMBOLS IS AVAILABLE ON REQUEST



January 23, 2012

J. Paul Loether
National Register—National Historic Landmarks Programs
National Park Service
1201 "I" Street NW, 8th Floor
Washington, DC 20005

RE: St. Richard's Catholic School & Rectory
Omaha, Douglas County, Nebraska

Dear Mr. Loether:

Please find enclosed the National Register of Historic Places nomination form for the above resource. This form has met all notification and other requirements as established in 36 CFR 60.

If you have any questions concerning this nomination, please let me know.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Bob Puschendorf".

L. Robert Puschendorf
Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer

Enclosure

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