

**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

For NCRS use only

received JUN 1 8 1982

date entered

1. Name

historic Cathedral of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary

and/or common St. Mary's Cathedral (HL06-4)

2. Location

street & number 204 South Cedar Street N/A not for publication

city, town Grand Island N/A vicinity of congressional district Third

state Nebraska code 31 county Hall code 079

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> in process	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> religious
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
			<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name Church of St. Mary's of Grand Island

street & number 204 South Cedar Street

city, town Grand Island N/A vicinity of state Nebraska

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Register of Deeds, Hall County Courthouse

street & number 1st and Locust

city, town Grand Island state Nebraska

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Nebraska Historic Buildings Survey has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date On-going federal state county local

depository for survey records Nebraska State Historical Society

city, town Lincoln state Nebraska

7. Description

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

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Cathedral of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary is located in Grand Island, Nebraska (32,358, 1970 census), county seat of Hall County and third largest city in Nebraska. Grand Island is situated in the middle of the state, 150 miles west of Omaha, Nebraska.

The Cathedral is located a short distance (three blocks) southwest of the Hall County Courthouse (see NRHP, Grand Island, Nebraska, September 15, 1977) and the central Grand Island business district. The Cathedral's centralized location provides a balance between religion and the business/governmental aspect of the downtown area.

The Bishop James A. Duffy spent many months traveling and deliberating to find an appropriate architectural style for the Cathedral. Settling finally on the Gothic style, Bishop Duffy awarded the Cathedral's commission to the architectural firm of Henry W. Brinkman and J. Stanley Hagan of Emporia, Kansas. Little is known about this firm. The architects choice was the English Perpendicular or Late Gothic styling. As in most Revival designs, the architects retained the overall Late Gothic character while allowing for their own inventiveness.

Built between the years 1926-1928, the Cathedral is constructed of sandstone and is a modified Latin Cross in plan, 177' by 80' in exterior dimensions. Internal functions are intrinsic to external forms, as evidenced by the massing used to articulate the activities within. The functions expressed in external form are the baptistry on the east, the side altars and the confessionals at the ends of the transepts, the side aisles, the sacristies at the south and west corners, and the chancel at the southwest end of the nave. The nearly symmetrical northeast or main facade is adorned by stepped buttressing which increases in embellishment as it ascends. The northeast facade is complimented by a compound-arched entrance and a stone-tracery Perpendicular style window. The transept tracery windows are identical to the northeast facade tracery window. The walls of the nave are penetrated by four identical tracery windows of a smaller nature. The nave and transept facades are accented by reveals in the stone facing and on the buttressing, with dentils articulating the roof/wall connection. The crossing of the transept is crowned by a gargoyled fleche with a crocketed pinnacle, displaying a French gothic design influence also.

Entering the nave, the 75' high fan vaulted ceiling supported by engaged clustered columns is immediately impressionable, verticality being a main component of gothic architecture. The Cathedral's capacity exceeds 900 people, making St. Marys the largest church building in Hall county.

The Gothic detailed main altar is of white Italian marble. The baldacchino over the altar is of the same material, its piers adorned by statues of the four Evangelists atop the column capitals. The marble roof of the baldacchino is finished in a tile effect and reaches at apex a height of 31 feet. Five white Carrara marble altars from Italy, situated through the Cathedral, were installed by artisans who came from Italy especially for that purpose.

8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/ 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 checked="" 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 1926-28 **Builder/Architect** Brinkman & Hagan Architects

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Cathedral of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary, or more commonly, St. Marys Cathedral, is historically significant as a representation of the founding settlers of Hall County. St. Marys parish is the direct lineage of the original celebrants. Architecturally, St. Marys Cathedral is one of the finest Late Gothic church structures in the state.

The history of St. Marys parish began with the founding of Hall County, as some of the earliest settlers were of the Catholic faith. The first settlers entered the region in 1859, while the first priest visited the newly-formed county in 1861. The first mass was celebrated in Anthony Moore's log house. The Grand Island Daily Independent, November 1, 1938 comments on the significance of this first meeting place,

"It his here worthy of remark that Moores house in which the first mass of the county was said is the home of the Rev. Anthony Moore, the first priest ordained from Hall County."

Seven years later, the parish erected the first Catholic church building in Grand Island. Unfortunately, this building was destroyed by a windstorm before it was ever used. It was not until 1877 that the settlers were again able to build a small frame church structure. As the years passed, this building proved to be too small for the ever-increasing Catholic population. Therefore, during the mid 1880's, Bishop O'Conner of Omaha sent Fr. Wolfe to Grand Island to make arrangements to build a new structure. With this end in view and through Fr. Wolfe's perseverance, St. Marys Congregation was incorporated, and in 1889 a new brick structure was erected and dedicated.

In 1897, St. Marys parish, along with five Omaha parishes, was raised to the distinction of permanent rectorship. Another honor was granted the Grand Island parish when twenty years later the Episcopal See of Kearney was transferred to Grand Island by approval of the Holy Father. The Episcopal residence was also transferred to Grand Island, thus raising St. Mary's to cathedral status.

These incidents renewed the faith of the Grand Island parishioners and they then set out to build a new cathedral to,

"Give to their Bishop an evidence of Love and Fealty worthy of their forefathers." (Grand Island Herald, November 1, 1938).

Their task was accomplished in 1928, when the present cathedral was dedicated and consecrated. Dignitaries at the ceremony included,

9. Major Bibliographical References

Buechler, A. F., History of Hall County, Western Publishing and Engraving Co., Lincoln, Nebr., 1920.
Grand Island Daily Independent, September 27, 1937.
The Grand Island Herald, November 1, 1938.

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property less than 1 acre
Quadrangle name Grand Island, Nebr.

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UMT References

A	<u>14</u>	<u>555380</u>	<u>4530000</u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing
C			
E			
G			

B			
	Zone	Easting	Northing
D			
F			
H			

Verbal boundary description and justification

Lots 1, 2, 3, Block 100, Railroad Addition, Grand Island, Hall County, Nebraska, and all of the historically associated real estate.

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

state	<u>N/A</u>	code	county	code
state		code	county	code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title James D. Fagler, (Intern Architect)

organization Nebraska State Historical Society date _____

street & number 1500 R Street telephone 402/471-3850

city or town Lincoln state Nebraska

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 Marion W. Knell 6/8/82

title Director, Nebraska State Historical Society date _____

For HCRS use only

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

John Shelton Ryan Entered in the date 7/15/82
Keeper of the National Register National Register

Attest: _____ date _____
Chief of Registration

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED

DATE ENTERED

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"The presence of Patrick Cardinal Hayes of New York, and a score of Archbishops and Bishops. It is one of the few cathedrals to be consecrated free from debt, at the time of dedication." (Grand Island Daily Independent, September 27, 1937).

St. Marys Cathedral serves as a physical monument to the fortitude of the original settlers of Hall County, a symbol of their perseverance to establish the land as their own. The church is a landmark to Grand Island and serves as a visual tie with the Hall County Courthouse (see NRHP, Grand Island, Nebraska, September 15, 1977), uniting the central core of the city.

Architecturally, St. Marys Cathedral is one of the finest examples of a Late Gothic Revival edifice in the state, exhibiting most prominently English Perpendicular Gothic tendencies. The architects adopted a vernacular creativity rather than an archeological accuracy attitude towards the design of St. Marys Cathedral. The vertical emphasis and fan vaulted roof structural system are typical Perpendicular features, while the wall and ceiling treatments and exterior massing are more of a result of the architects individual bias.

St. Marys is the cathedral for the western Catholic diocese in Nebraska. For the two other diocese in Nebraska, St. Cecilians (see NRHP, Omaha, Nebraska, January 25, 1979) is one cathedral and the third was built within the last ten years.

The contract for the erection of the altar was given to the Frederick Pustet Company, of Cincinnati, Ohio, whose artists in this line of work at the time were considered among the best in America. The altar was valued at \$15,000 at the time of its installation.