

United States Department of the Interior  
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form

For HCRS use only

received SEP 13 1982

date entered

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

1. Name

historic St. James Catholic Church

and/or common

2. Location

street & number 622 <sup>1st</sup> First Avenue South not for publication

city, town Jamestown vicinity of congressional district 1

state North Dakota code 38 county Stutsman code 093

3. Classification

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

4. Owner of Property

name The Diocese of Fargo for St. James Catholic Church

street & number 622 First Avenue South

city, town Jamestown vicinity of state North Dakota

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Stutsman County Courthouse

street & number 506 Third Avenue SE

city, town Jamestown state North Dakota

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title N/A has this property been determined eligible?  yes  no

date N/A  federal  state  county  local

depository for survey records N/A

city, town N/A state N/A

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## 7. Description

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**Condition**

excellent  
 good  
 fair

deteriorated  
 ruins  
 unexposed

**Check one**

unaltered  
 altered

**Check one**

original site  
 moved    date \_\_\_\_\_

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

The St. James Catholic Church is an outstanding example of Gothic Revival architecture in North Dakota. According to the local newspaper in 1914, the church is "architecturally... striking in its design, and the interior corresponds in completeness and finish with the handsome exterior."<sup>1</sup>

Traditional in form, the church is built of dark pressed Hebron, North Dakota brick accented with New Bedford, Indiana limestone. Limestone is used on the quoins around the Gothic-arched windows, window sills, door and window arches, coping on the gable ends, and buttress caps. A band of sandstone creates a water table above the raised fieldstone foundation. The church is symmetrical with its rectangular plan crossed by a transept and terminated by a five-sided apse.

The church's most impressive feature is the twin square towers that flank the entry on the east facade. The towers are visually supported by three-step buttresses at each corner. Double windows light the first story, single windows are at the loft level, and double louvered windows punctuate the belfry. Rectangular panels created by recessed brickwork with a wood cornice of acanthus leaves above terminate the square towers. Rising from the cornice are four mini-steeple, one at each corner, between which a gabled roof shelters a single louvered window. Finally the octagonal roofs of the spires cap the towers and are crowned by 23 carat gold-leaf crosses.

A grand 32 foot wide stairway of granite steps approaches the triple entry on the east. Clusters of Corinthian-capped pilasters frame each side of the Gothic-arched entries. The main entry in the center consists of double four-panel wood doors with a stained glass transom of three tangential circles. Two smaller entries of single four-panel wood doors and transoms of three partial circles are on either side of the main entry.

Above the entrance a row of intricate brick corbelling visually separates the first story from the loft level. An impressive stained glass window of five panels and delicate tracery portrays St. Cecilia, the patroness of music, playing the harp. A niche above the window shelters a statue of the Virgin Mary, which according to church legend, was donated in 1935 by a traveler that spotted the empty opening. A byzantine cross caps the gable above the statue.

The north and south elevations are basically identical. Three evenly spaced Gothic-arched windows punctuate the bays formed by stepped buttresses between the towers and the transept. Each end of the gabled-roofed transept has recessed brick arches near the top of the gable ends and a small cross at the peak. Stepped buttresses support the corners of each end of the transept. A rood spire rises from the gable roof of the nave where the transept crosses the nave of the church. Double louvered windows are located on each side of this spire and the eight-sided roof of the spire is topped by a finial.

On the north, a small gable-roofed entry to the basement is centered on the transept and a small door in the east side of the transept is accessible by a flight of exterior steps from the ground level. Two small rooms that serve as offices and sacristy are on either side of the apse; a small hipped-roof extension on the north and a larger gabled-roof extension on the south.

A vestibule laid with black-and-white mosaic flooring opens onto the nave on the east and also provides access to the organ loft above and the bell-towers on either

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side. Within the church, eight octagon columns with plain caps, four on each side, define the nave from the side aisles. Springing from the columns are vaults with ridge ribs and tiercerons that peak 42 feet from the floor. The points of the vaults rest on carved figure-heads on the massive columns. 55 feet wide by 145 feet long, the church seats 650 people with the organ loft providing 200 additional seats. The organ loft houses the large original pipe organ.

Originally the walls were painted silver and gray, the ceiling cream, and stencils followed the line of the ribs on the vaults. In the sanctuary were paintings of Biblical scenes on the ceilings. The original floor coverings were heavy linoleum of dark green with carpet on the steps and floor of the sanctuary.

Woodwork throughout the church is oak with a dull gold natural finish. The ends of the pews are finished with a Gothic arch and have carved decorative panels. The original altar, communion rail, and side altars were elaborate furnishings in Gothic design with arches, spires, and finials which appeared to have been painted white with gold trim. The original communion rail was 52 feet long and constructed of oak with a white marble top rail. The baptismal font was also of carved oak.

When the church was built, both direct and indirect lighting was utilized. Three bronze chandeliers hung from the center of the nave and four smaller chandeliers were in the arches of the side aisles. Bracket lamps on the columns and side walls and a row of small arc lights behind the sanctuary arch completed the lighting.

The windows of the church were temporarily fitted with plain glass with the intention of later replacing them with stained glass. In 1918, stained glass windows constructed by the Pittsburgh Plate Glass Company were installed. The windows were termed to be "of a most elegant and beautiful description."<sup>2</sup> Scenes from events in the life of Christ are depicted by the stained glass. Beginning at the altar on the left and proceeding down the south wall of the church, the scenes are: 1) Annunciation, 2) Visitation, 3) a five-panel window showing the Nativity, 4) Presentation of Christ in the Temple, 5) Christ Among the Children, and 6) Christ Among the Doctors. Continuing up the north wall towards the altar: 7) Christ and the Rich Young Man, 8) Resurrection, 9) Ascension, 10) a five-panel window featuring events from local history; Albert Monk, Sr. with a spade during the ground-breaking ceremony for the church, Anton Klaus tendering a deed of the church property as a gift, and the church dedication, with the last two panels showing the descent of the Holy Ghost on the Apostles, 11) Assumption, and 12) Coronation. The windows cost approximately \$5,000.00 and according to Mrs. Mallick, a former St. James Catholic Church historian, the windows were a gift of Pierce Blewett, a prominent Jamestown citizen, although no other record of this transaction exists.

From 1956 to 1958 the St. James Catholic Church was renovated during a three-phase building program. A new and larger rectory, designed by Hills, Gilbertson and Hayes of Minneapolis, Minnesota, was built south of the church and connected to the church just west of the transept. The basement was converted to a functional parish center.

The final phase of the remodeling took place on the church interior. The walls of

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the nave were lightly texturized and the ceiling painted gold with graduated shades to meet the rose tan color of the walls. Gold leaf was used to cover the paintings in the sanctuary dome, and the walls behind the side altars, formerly exposed concrete block, were recovered with a damask texture in deep blue and gold.

New statuary, altar, side altars, communion rail, sanctuary furniture, and baptismal font of oak in simple and rectangular forms replaced the original furnishings. Behind the new altar is an oak reredos marked with four symbols of the Mass and centered with a large crucifix which bears an Italian hand-carved lindenwood corpus. A canopy above the altar is inscribed "The Mystery of Faith."

The church was completely rewired and recessed lighting installed in the sanctuary. Hanging lantern fixtures of bronze in a Gothic design, two in the nave, one in each side of the transept, and smaller fixtures in the side aisles, replaced the original fixtures. The floor was retiled in beige and the kneelers were padded. Doors from the sanctuary to the sacristy were moved slightly and a new public address system was installed. Asphalt shingles of medium brown were installed on the roof, and it is not known whether the original wood shingles are still in place under the asphalt.

Restoration work in 1977 included careful tuck-pointing and washing of the masonry. The shingles were repaired and the metal ridges of the spires that once contrasted with the shingles were painted to match the shingles. The exterior crosses were removed, repaired, a new coat of gold leaf put on the surface, and reinstalled.

Although the remodeling in the late 1950's removed or covered original furnishings and stencils, the church retains a great amount of architectural integrity. Of sound construction, the masonry has not cracked, and because of careful and loving maintenance over the years, the church is in excellent condition. With its upward lines, soaring elements, vaulted ceilings, spires, steeples, and towers all pointing towards Heaven, the St. James Catholic Church provides an extraordinary reminder of the Gothic Revival style of design as used in church architecture in North Dakota.

<sup>1</sup> Jamestown Daily Alert, November 30, 1914.

<sup>2</sup> Jamestown Weekly Alert, April 4, 1918.

## 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** 1910–1914

**Builder/Architect** Hancock Brothers

### Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The St. James Catholic Church has been a visual and spiritual focal point in Jamestown since 1914. The Gothic Revival building with its towering 125 foot spires, together with the Gothic Revival Stutsman County Courthouse (National Register 1976), provide a dramatic impact on the skyline of Jamestown.

The history of the Catholic Church in Jamestown began with celebration of the first mass on January 10, 1879. For three years the congregation met in hotels, school-houses, and meeting halls, with several pastors serving the Church. Father Flannigan was installed as pastor in 1882 and under his pastorship, \$6,000.00 was raised to build a simple 86' by 60' frame church and a small rectory, which were completed in June, 1882. Anton Klaus, who is referred to in local history as the "Father of Jamestown" because of his building activities during the early development of Jamestown, donated the block for the location of the church and rectory. (The church was moved after 1914 to St. John's Academy campus and burned in 1933. A new rectory replaced the original rectory in 1956.)

In 1890, only 350 of Jamestown's 1,500 residents belonged to the Catholic Church, yet Jamestown was chosen as the see city for the newly created diocese of North Dakota. Bishop John Shanley, pastor of the Cathedral of St. Paul, Minnesota, was appointed the first bishop of North Dakota and arrived in Jamestown on January 23, 1890. His entire diocese include 33 priests, 60 churches, and 14 Catholic schools across the state. Bishop Shanley turned his attention to expanding the Catholic Church in Jamestown by establishing St. John's Academy, adding a sacristy to the church building, and renovating the rectory. He convened the first Catholic Congress of the Dakotas in 1891, a meeting of Indian societies, that became an annual event and was the first of his efforts to aid the Indian peoples of North Dakota.

Within a year, Bishop Shanley determined that it was inconvenient to govern the diocese from Jamestown and moved the see to Fargo, where he remained until his death in 1909. During his administration, the Cathedral on North Broadway in Fargo was built, Catholic hospitals in Grand Forks, Devils Lake, Bismarck and Fargo were established, the number of priests grew to 106, and the number of churches increased to 225.

Father Edward J. Geraghty became Jamestown's resident pastor in 1905 and served there for close to fifty years. During Father Geraghty's long service as pastor, he encouraged the growth of both the church and community. He was elevated to Right Reverend Monsignor by Pope Pius VII, in recognition of his outstanding work for the Catholic Church. Under his guidance, the St. John's Academy was expanded, the Sisters of St. Joseph purchased the local hospital to operate it under the name of Trinity Hospital, and the Knights of Columbus was established as a center of parochial activity.

The need for a larger church was evident in 1910 and through Father Geraghty's efforts the new church was constructed. A building committee headed by Michael

# 9. Major Bibliographical References

See continuation sheet

# 10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property 2.8 acres

Quadrangle name Jamestown

Quadrangle scale 1: 24000

### UMT References

A 

1	4	5	2	2	2	1	0	5	1	9	4	1	7	0
Zone		Easting				Northing								

B 

Zone		Easting				Northing								

C 

Zone		Easting				Northing								

D 

Zone		Easting				Northing								

E 

Zone		Easting				Northing								

F 

Zone		Easting				Northing								

G 

Zone		Easting				Northing								

H 

Zone		Easting				Northing								

### Verbal boundary description and justification

Lots 1-12 of Block 66 of Klaus Second Addition, Jamestown, North Dakota

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

state	N/A	code	N/A	county	N/A	code	N/A
state		code		county		code	

# 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Bonnie J. Halda, Historical Architect and Mary Young

organization State Historical Society of North Dakota date June, 1982

street & number North Dakota Heritage Center telephone (701) 224-2672

city or town Bismarck state North Dakota

# 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

title State Historic Preservation Officer

date August 17, 1982

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

Keeper of the National Register

date 10/22/82

Attest:  
Chief of Registration

date

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Murphy, a local banker and contractor, hired the Hancock Brothers from Fargo to design the new building. George and Walter B. Hancock had arrived in Dakota Territory in 1882 to set up an architectural practice which soon flourished. Their firm designed a wide variety of building types, always in the current architectural fashions of the time. In addition to St. James Catholic Church, the Hancock Brothers designed St. Michael's Catholic Church in Grand Forks, the south wing of the former State Capitol in Bismarck (burned 1929), and numerous structures for state institutions at Jamestown, Grafton, North Dakota State University in Fargo, and Mayville State College. The St. James Catholic Church is an unusually fine example of their Gothic Revival style of architecture.

Jeff Shelde, a contractor from Litchfield, Minnesota, was chosen to construct the new church. Shelde's other works in Jamestown include the Armory, Gladstone Hotel addition, Citizen's Bank Building, and several houses, but building the St. James Catholic Church was probably the most ambitious endeavor of his construction career.

The foundation for the church was laid in 1910 and during the following three years construction proceeded until by 1913 the building was "beginning to take shape and give an indication of the architectural beauty and symmetry which will characterize the completed structure."<sup>1</sup> Bishop James O'Reilly of Fargo officiated at the dedication of the church on November 29, 1914, after which Father Geraghty addressed the congregation to thank them for loyal cooperation and generous support which made the new church possible.

St. James Catholic Church is a highly visible reminder of a small parish that has become the largest Catholic parish in North Dakota. The church building is significant for its association with the Jamestown parish, and also for its architecture. The Gothic Revival structure, with its elaborate ornamentation, is recognized as a landmark not only in Jamestown, but in the state of North Dakota. The statement made in 1914 that the church "tells its own story of the progress and growth of the society...it is a church building of which the city can well be proud"<sup>2</sup> is still true nearly seventy years later.

<sup>1</sup>Jamestown Daily Alert, November 30, 1914.

<sup>2</sup>The Catholic Bulletin, October 18, 1913, reprinted in Highlights of Fifty Years in the Holy Priesthood, Thielen Printing Company, Minneapolis, Minnesota, 1947, page 6.

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Thielen Printing Company, Minneapolis,  
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Ronald L. M. Ramsey, Professor of Architecture, North  
Dakota State University, Fargo, North Dakota,  
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