

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

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JUN 26 2015

Nat. Register of Historic Places  
National Park Service

### National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an 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 entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer to complete all items.

#### 1. Name of Property

Historic name STs. PETER AND PAUL ORTHODOX CHURCH COMPLEX

Other names/site number Sts. Peter and Paul Russian Orthodox Greek Catholic Church

#### 2. Location

Street & number: 40 Benzinger Street [ ] not for publication

City or town: Buffalo [ ] vicinity

State New York code NY county Erie code 029 zip code 14206

#### 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 as 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 [ ] nationally [ ] statewide [X] locally. ([ ] see continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Ruth A. Paupton DSHPO

6/18/15

Signature of certifying official/Title

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property [ ] meets [ ] does not meet the National Register criteria. ([ ] see continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

#### 4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

- entered in the National Register  
[ ] see continuation sheet
- determined eligible for the National Register  
[ ] see continuation sheet
- determined not eligible for the National Register
- removed from the National Register
- other (explain) \_\_\_\_\_

Edson B. Beall Signature of the Keeper  
date of action 8-10-15

**Sts. Peter and Paul Orthodox Church Complex**  
Name of Property

**Erie County, New York**  
County and State

**5. Classification**

**Ownership of Property**  
(check as many boxes as apply)

**Category of Property**  
(Check only one box)

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

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>4</u>	<u>0</u>	buildings
_____	_____	sites
_____	_____	structures
_____	_____	objects
<b>4</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>

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

**Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register**

N/A

N/A

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**  
(enter categories from instructions)

**Current Functions**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

RELIGION/ Religious Facility  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

RELIGION/ Religious Facility  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

**Materials**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

EXOTIC REVIVAL/Byzantine Revival  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

foundation Brick  
walls Yellow Buff Brick, stone accents  
\_\_\_\_\_  
roof Copper cupolas and trim, slate shingles  
other Asphalt shingles

**Narrative Description**

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets)

See attached sheets.

**Sts. Peter and Paul Orthodox Church Complex**

**Erie County, New York**

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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 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 that 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 boxes that apply.)

- 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 of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years

**Narrative Statement of Significance**

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

**9. Major Bibliographical References**

**Bibliography**

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more 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 Building Survey # \_\_\_\_\_
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # \_\_\_\_\_

**Primary location of additional data:**

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal Agency
- Local Government
- University
- Other repository: \_\_\_\_\_

**Areas of Significance:**

(Enter categories from instructions)

Architecture \_\_\_\_\_

Art \_\_\_\_\_

Social History \_\_\_\_\_

**Period of Significance:**

ca. 1912 - 1965 \_\_\_\_\_

**Significant Dates:**

Ca. 1912; 1932; 1933; 1948; 1965 \_\_\_\_\_

**Significant Person:**

N/A \_\_\_\_\_

**Cultural Affiliation:**

N/A \_\_\_\_\_

**Architect/Builder:**

Joseph E. Fronczak (church arch.) \_\_\_\_\_

Robert Zinter (parish hall) \_\_\_\_\_

Nicholas Zadorozhny (muralist) \_\_\_\_\_

**Sts. Peter and Paul Orthodox Church Complex**  
Name of Property

**Erie County, New York**  
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### 10. Geographical Data

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**Acreage of Property** 0.76 acres

#### UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1 117 679086 4750483      3                                
Zone    Easting    Northing      Zone    Easting    Northing

2                                    4                              

#### Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

#### Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

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### 11. Form Prepared By

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name/title Jennifer Walkowski, Historic Preservation Specialist

organization New York State Historic Preservation Office      date April 8, 2015

street & number Peebles Island Resource Center, PO Box 189      telephone (518) 268-2137

city or town Waterford      state NY      zip code 12188

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### Additional Documentation

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Submit the following items with the completed form:

#### Continuation Sheets

#### 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.

#### Photographs

Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

#### Additional items

(Check with SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

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

name \_\_\_\_\_

street & number \_\_\_\_\_ telephone \_\_\_\_\_

city or town \_\_\_\_\_ state \_\_\_\_\_ zip code \_\_\_\_\_

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**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. 470 *et seq.*)

**Estimated Burden Statement:** public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 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 Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, D.C. 20503

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Sts. Peter and Paul Orthodox Church Complex

Name of Property

Erie County, New York

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Narrative Description of Property

Site and Exterior

Sts. Peter and Paul Orthodox Church Complex is located at 40 Benzinger Street in the Lovejoy neighborhood of the city of Buffalo, Erie County, New York.<sup>1</sup> The church complex is located in the middle of the block, just north of William Street, and is accessible from both Ideal Street at the west and Benzinger Street at the east. Surrounding the church complex is a residential neighborhood composed mostly of single and multi-family free-standing houses from the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

The complex consists of four buildings, including a symmetrical, brick Byzantine Revival style, roughly 2-story church (designed in 1932 by architect Joseph E. Fronczak), a 1-story parish hall (designed in 1964 by Robert Zinter), a 2-story frame house that serves as a rectory, and a frame garage (both ca. 1912). The church building is located closest to Ideal Street, the parish hall is sited to its east near the middle of the parcel, while the rectory is positioned facing east toward Benzinger Street. The church is oriented so that the main entrance faces west onto Ideal Street and is set back approximately fifty feet from the street, nestled between a group of large evergreens. A wide, tiered concrete path, with a broad concrete pad set between the two runs of stairs, bridges the slight slope of the landscape from Ideal Street to the church.

The Sts. Peter and Paul Orthodox Church has a cross-in-square type plan, where a cross is formed within a roughly square footprint, based on Byzantine models. The church features two 3-story towers, which are set nearly flush to the front wall of the church narthex and the transepts at the north and south sides of the building, giving the building a compact, box-like massing. The rear (east) elevation of the building reveals a large curved apse. The building draws from Byzantine massing and forms and combines them with the simplicity and geometry of the Art Deco mode of the 1930s. The effect is both traditional and modern. The church is constructed primarily of yellow buff brick laid in a running bond, with copper and stone accents throughout.

The primary, west, façade features a two-story front-gabled slightly projecting narthex, set between towers. This wall surface consists of a broad, two-story compound arch containing a tripartite entry, with a paired central entrance door flanked by single entry doors. Above the entrances is a series of blind arches, set into the brick, and three round-headed windows, set with yellow-toned fiberglass thermo-window replacement windows that date to 1976. The use of a three-part organizational structure is a reference to the Holy Trinity in the tradition of Russian Orthodox design.<sup>2</sup> Each of the corner towers features a small blind niche at the lower level below an elongated round-headed blind arch with a smaller 1970s-era window set towards the bottom, set within a slightly recessed plane of the tower. This slight recess suggests corner buttressing for the tower but is

<sup>1</sup> The church has a mailing address of 45 Ideal Street.

<sup>2</sup> "About Orthodoxy." Orthodoxy in America. Accessed November 6, 2014. [http://orthodoxyinamerica.org/about\\_orthodoxy.html](http://orthodoxyinamerica.org/about_orthodoxy.html).

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streamlined and simplified. Above this arch, the open belfry has two round-headed arches on each of the sides of the square towers. A decorative narrow stone panel runs between these open arches from the parapet of the tower, which is marked with a stone band ornamented with geometricized helical and foliate patterning. Surmounting each tower is a faceted dome clad in copper, each with an Orthodox double-barred cross facing towards Ideal Street. Visible from all elevations of the building is the large central dome that marks the crossing inside the church. This octagonal dome rises from a patterned brick drum and is formed from ribbed terra cotta tiles. Surmounting this central dome is the base to a copper lantern, which was removed in 1977 due to severe storm damage. This main dome is an element of the church that is visible from other adjacent streets in the Lovejoy neighborhood, acting as a visual landmark.

The north and south elevations of the church are similar. Visible on these elevations is the raised brick basement with a continuous stone beltcourse, which wraps the entire building. The towers are located at the western corner and are detailed the same on the north and south elevations as on the primary west side. At the center of these elevations is a gabled transept which only slightly projects from the plane of the building. This transept is similarly articulated to the front entrance, containing a tripartite window unit set within a two-story recessed compound arch. Flanking these transepts are round-headed windows, set into the main body of the church.

The east elevation of the building varies slightly from the compact, box-like massing of the other sides, revealing a broad cylindrical projection which marks the location of the apse inside. This two-level curved wall is topped by a hemi-conical copper-clad roof set against a stone gabled parapet similar to those of the gabled transepts and entry pavilion. To the north and south of this curved apse are small entrance pavilions, each with a gabled form, mimicking the larger elements of the building. These entrance pavilions and their access stairs are set flush to the plane of the curved wall, emphasizing the compact massing of the building.

Interior - Church

The interior of Sts. Peter and Paul Orthodox church reflects a square, Byzantine Greek plan and consists of an entrance vestibule or narthex, which leads into the nave of the building, with the apse beyond. In the northwest and southwest corners (in the towers) two stairs are located. Windows in church are typically yellow-glazed and rectangular gridded, known as "fiberglass thermo-windows," which were installed in 1976.<sup>3</sup> No ornamental or stained-glass windows were ever installed in this church. The northeast and southeast corners of the building (which lead to the rear exit doors) contain the sacristy, or vestments room, and storage. Like the tripartite exterior elements, the interior of the building also makes references to the Holy Trinity. The general layout of the church revolves around a pattern of three and its multiples, from the spatial organization to the descriptive internal paintings; this references the Holy Trinity. The importance of this can also be seen in the colorful art

<sup>3</sup> Based on the historic images of the building, Sts Peter and Paul Orthodox Church never had any sort of stained-glass or pictorial windows installed. Early images and blue prints for the building suggest that the original windows were simple multi-light windows with clear glass panes.

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work on the backdrop of the apse, depicting the Father, Son and Holy Ghost. The basic layout of the entire structure of the church symbolizes the universe, with the central dome representing the open heavens above and the rectangular base of the church resembling the more grounded earth. The arched windows on the dome represent the light from heaven shining down onto the earth below.<sup>4</sup>

The church is laid out on the east-west axis with the entrance to the church on the west side. The entrance to the structure is through three wood panel doors on the west side. The internal spaces within the rectangular base of the church is further divided into the narthex, nave, transept, and altar. The narthex serves as the entry vestibule for the church, acting as a symbolic buffer between the “world” and “the kingdom of heaven.” The narthex is a simple space, with dark woodwork and textured stucco plaster walls. It includes a few simple tables containing church literature and serves as a space for some miscellaneous storage.

The nave of the church consists of a large, open square space with a broad center aisle and nine rows of pews on either side. Finishes are relatively simple in the space, which has a medium-tone oak floor and cream-colored textured stucco plaster walls. The interior of the dome is painted a soft sky blue color. In keeping with the Byzantine influence of the church, the sanctuary plan consists of the two shallow transepts which contain the three large windows and are defined on the interior by the use of large barrel vaults. Marking the crossing of these shallow, Byzantine cross-in-square plan transepts is a large central dome. The dome is set on a drum, which is supported by pendentives, which form simple square columns in the worship space. At the front (east) of the church is the altar and apse, which is on a raised dais. Typical of Orthodox churches, the altar is concealed behind an iconostasis. To the west, a large mezzanine choir loft is located under another broad barrel vault and features an oak paneled balustrade with a blind arcade motif. The higher location of the choir facilitates the a capella choir typical of the services. The height aids in the natural amplification of sound within the space and facilitates the proclamation/response that occurs during the sacred liturgy between the priest and choir.

The altar is the primary focus of the church and consists of two parts, the iconostasis and the sanctuary. The most prominent feature of the altar, and one of the most prominent in the church, is the iconostasis. In Orthodox churches, the iconostasis is a screen acting as a partition that separates the inner sanctuary and tabernacle (where the holy Eucharist is kept) from the nave and the rest of the church. This iconostasis is heavily ornamented compared to the rest of the church. It includes six inset arches with paintings of significant saints (including Saints Peter and Paul) and other biblical figures. It was created by Russian refugees, who decorated it in the style of the Russian artist Vaznelzoff.<sup>5</sup> The iconostasis also includes three doors, two of which are hidden in the second-most outer arched panels from either side, and one which is centrally located and elaborately

<sup>4</sup> "Library." Symbolism. Accessed November 5, 2014. <http://www.patheos.com/Library/Eastern-Orthodoxy/Ritual-Worship-Devotion-Symbolism/Symbolism.html>.

<sup>5</sup> “Colorful Ceremony to Mark Russian Church Dedication.” *The Buffalo Evening News*, October 2, 1933.

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decorated with grilled and gold-coated screen. The artwork on the iconostasis is very colorful, and the images on the iconostasis are also arranged in multiples of three, with twelve images on the top of the six bays and three images each on the either swing of the door leading to the sanctuary. The details of the iconostasis include Greek styled capitals with floral ornament, as well as foliated banding and bordering and inset wainscoting, much of which is painted in gold.

The central door on the iconostasis also has a curtain directly behind it that leads to the sanctuary in the apse of the church. Here in the sanctuary is a smaller altar that houses the tabernacle, the Eucharist, and holy relics specific to the church. The smaller altar consists of a preparation and central shrine table with the book of gospel at the center. The relics of an unknown saint are also embedded within the table, making the table sacred. As per practice in Orthodox churches, the central door leading to the sanctuary can be accessed only by the priest, while the two side doors can be accessed by men of the church in order to help maintain the space, as well as participate in the services. The sanctuary is considered the holiest place in the church, which is why it is shielded by the iconostasis and why rules were put in place to restrict access and views by the general public. The physical separation of the sanctuary and the rest of the church is apparent, but during the service, the opening of the central door in the iconostasis serves as a metaphorical door opening to the spiritual realm.

The simplicity of the cream-colored plaster wall surfaces contrasts with a series of brightly colored, gilded murals. Four murals are located in the pendentives that support the drum of the central dome. The largest mural is located in the half-dome above the sanctuary in the apse, behind the iconostasis. This fresco depicts the Holy Trinity, and was created by the by the Russian artist Nicholas Zadorozhny, which was completed in 1948.<sup>6</sup> It appears that the lower portion of the mural may have been a slightly later addition to the initial artwork in that space. Contrasting with the otherwise simple interior decoration, this vibrant mural is a key visual focus within the worship space. The murals in the pendentives are of the four evangelists, Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, as well as the symbols of the angel, winged lion, ox, and eagle that represent each evangelist, respectively. The circular drum that supports the dome includes Old Church Slavonic text, which describes the four evangelists.

Besides the murals, other artwork in the church takes the form of numerous icons and religious art located throughout the worship space. They are of differing subjects, but generally depict biblical figures or events. Many of them were gifts from parishioners or friends of the church. One specific icon was a “generous gift from artist Natalia Gorkovenko to Mariya Rubleva during her visit to the Art Gallery exhibition at Christ the Savior Cathedral in Moscow, Russia in 2012.”<sup>7</sup> The origin of other icons is mostly unknown, with the icons usually only labeled as “gift of \_\_\_\_\_” with a given year.

<sup>6</sup> William Folger, "Largest Russian Orthodox Church in WNY to Celebrate Anniversary." *Buffalo Courier-Express*, September 14, 1969.

<sup>7</sup> "Icon Gift," Sts. Peter and Paul Church 120th Anniversary, December 1, 2014.



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The simple wood pews are a later addition to the church. Originally, the building contained no seats, as worshippers would have stood through the majority of the service. The presence of pews on either sides distinguishes the church organization from traditional Orthodox churches in Russia, and shows an adaptation to the practices of other churches in the United States, as well as a simple practical addition made over the years.

The lighting fixtures in the nave and the central chandelier that is suspended from the circular dome are all original to the building in the 1930s. The lighting fixtures are mainly simple, lantern style fixtures affixed to the exterior walls. The central chandelier, hung from the center of the dome, is more elaborate than the rest of the fixtures and also provides a significant amount of light to the space.

Located within the towers of the church are cast bronze bells, originally cast in 1903 and used in the old church building. These bells, originally installed at the old church in a purpose-built wooden tower, were operated by hand to signal the time to come to services or for other special events. They were moved into the new church and are located in the northern tower facing Ideal Street. They are still in use and continue to be operated by hand from ropes accessed from the choir loft.

Parish Hall

Located behind the church, just to the east, is the parish hall, which was constructed in 1964 to the designs of Robert Zinter, a Buffalo architect whose wife was a long-time parishioner of the church.<sup>8</sup> The hall is a good example of a modest mid-century designed building. It is a one-story rectangular buff brick building on a poured concrete foundation with a metal cornice which complements the coloring and simplified detailing of the original church. The building features a series of slightly recessed bays, marked with small brick pilasters, each containing a paired metal casement window. Flanking the entry on the east elevation is a poured concrete stair with pipe handrail, and the paired metal entry doors are flanked by mid-century double-cone wall mounted lights.

On the interior, the church hall is simply detailed. The primary room in the building is the large hall/auditorium located at the western end of the building. The auditorium has a VCT floor, concrete blocks with pilasters, and a suspended acoustical ceiling. The focus of the auditorium is a raised stage, which retains its mid-century medium toned wood paneling and is surrounded with decorative cast concrete blocks as a proscenium detail. The hall also contains a full kitchen, as well as restrooms, located off of the main auditorium space. Located near the side entrance to the church hall, between the auditorium and the kitchen, is a relatively large U-shaped bar area. Like many other church halls, especially ones with full kitchens and bars, the space is used for special church events as well as regular functions.

<sup>8</sup> "Robert L. Zinter, City of Buffalo Senior Architect," Buffalo News, April 30, 2014, accessed April 08, 2015.

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**Rectory and Storage Building**

On the extreme east side of the site, fronting Benzinger Street, is a two-story frame house with a detached garage/storage building, typical and similar in appearance to other residences in the area. The rectory was built around 1912 to serve as the parsonage for the church and serves as the church's rectory, the general office, as well as the home of the current priest and his family. The rectory is an example of a two-and-a-half story wood frame American Foursquare residence with aluminum siding and a hipped, asphalt shingle roof. A full-width front porch is partially enclosed and features four square wood columns with recessed panels and a simple open wood baluster. The rectory has generally replacement windows and a polygonal oriel is located at the south elevation. The rear (west) of the building has a small projection, possibly once an open porch, and a panel bridges the small gap between the parish hall and the rectory to provide some covered access between the two buildings. The storage building is a small one-bay, front gambrel structure with paired wood doors.

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**Statement of Significance:**

Overview

Sts. Peter and Paul Orthodox Church Complex is significant as the primary Russian Orthodox church located in the City of Buffalo, New York. The congregation is the oldest Orthodox Church in Western New York and the oldest church still in operation in the Diocese of New York and New Jersey.<sup>9</sup> The parish is significant as it is the only Orthodox church located in the Lovejoy neighborhood and one of the few located within the City of Buffalo.

The history of the church correlates with the history of Russian immigration to America and in Buffalo, which occurred in three main phases, reflecting the religious persecution and upheaval occurring in Eastern Europe throughout the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The congregation was first established in Buffalo's Lovejoy neighborhood in 1894 by a group of Russians who had fled persecution in their homeland. Atheistic movements, such as the Bolshevik Revolution, greatly influenced the number of immigrants fleeing Russia to freely practice their religion in the United States during the early twentieth century. During this era, Buffalo's Russian/Russian-American population swelled to more than 35,000 by 1920, precipitating the need for a larger and more substantial worship space, which was constructed in 1932-33.<sup>10</sup> The church represents the history of the Russian community in Lovejoy during these eras, but also served a large Russian population throughout the Buffalo/Niagara region. Because of its strong associations with Buffalo's growing Russian and Eastern European immigrant community, the Sts. Peter and Paul Orthodox Church is significant under Criterion A in the area of Social History.

In addition to its cultural significance, Sts. Peter and Paul Orthodox Church also satisfies the requirements of Criterion C in the area of architecture. The church itself, designed in 1932 by local architect Joseph E. Fronczak, is as a good, locally significant example of a Byzantine Revival style cross-in-square plan church. The ornamentation of the building derives from the complex, highly detailed Byzantine architectural tradition, but also reflects the simplification and geometric forms of the Art Deco era. The complex also contains a good example of a mid-twentieth century Modern designed parish hall, and a rectory and garage reflects early twentieth century residential architecture. The period of significance begins with the construction of the earliest extant building associated with the church complex, the parish house and storage building built ca. 1912, and ends in 1965 with the construction of the Parish Hall, encompassing the era in which the present church complex was developed.

<sup>9</sup> Mary Ann. Bulko and John Shimchick, *Who, What, and Where We Are: A History of the Diocese of New York and New Jersey* (Bronxville, NY: Diocese of New York and New Jersey, 1995).

<sup>10</sup> *Fourteenth Census of the United States Taken in the Year 1920*, vol. I (Washington, D.C.: Dept. of Commerce, Govt. Print. Off., 1920), 1013.

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History of the Lovejoy Neighborhood and the Russian Immigrant Community

Sts. Peter and Paul Russian Orthodox Church is located in the city of Buffalo's Lovejoy neighborhood, part of the larger East Side area of the city. The neighborhood is roughly bound by Broadway Street to the north, Goethe Street to the east, William Street to the south, Central Avenue to the southwest and Milburn Street to the northwest. The neighborhood is also loosely bound by railroad tracks on all sides giving rise to its nickname, "Iron Island." The neighborhood gets its official name from Henry Lovejoy, a surveyor whose name was attached to the land that was once owned by Millard Fillmore. In 1850, Fillmore sold the property to Joseph Churchyard for use as farmland, but by 1877 the land was converted into a residential area and divided into building lots.<sup>11</sup>

The first major phase of Russian immigration began in the late 1800s, when people east of the Urals suffering from economic deprivation, famine, and sickness decided to make the journey to America. Russians began to settle in the Lovejoy neighborhood starting about 1880. Carpenters and mechanics were attracted by work in the nearby railroad car-shops.<sup>12</sup> The New York Central, Erie, DL&W, and Lehigh rail lines and associated enterprises such as Pullman Car Works and the Buffalo Stockyards on the city's East Side thrived near the residential area of Lovejoy.

The houses that the immigrants built in the area were small, workman's cottages. Immigrant housing was often an extended family endeavor, with two flat housing or two small houses sharing a single lot. There was the expectation of moving on to a separate house as fortunes improved. Housing often was kept in the family, as parents would pass on a house to newlyweds.<sup>13</sup> Similar to the adjacent Broadway-Fillmore neighborhood, storefronts were added to existing residential structures, making Lovejoy a mixed-use residential and commercial area.<sup>14</sup> A firehouse, police station, library, park and elementary school (Public School 43) were all built within the neighborhood. Railway trestles and tracks isolated the "Iron Island," causing it to become somewhat self-contained and by 1938 the neighborhood included shops, schools, churches, theaters, grocers, bakeries, doctors' offices, restaurants, bars, barbers and beauty salons.<sup>15</sup>

In 1890, 35 percent of the population of Buffalo was foreign born.<sup>16</sup> Immigrant groups settled, often in neighborhood groups, and tried to retain their customs, habits, and languages of the old country. In the early twentieth century, some immigrants often expected to return to their home country eventually. Religious and cultural traditions were retained with the establishment of ethnic churches and parochial schools within

<sup>11</sup> Marge Thielman Hastreiter, *Lovejoy Memories*, vol. I (self-published, n.d.).

<sup>12</sup> "Map Shows City's Development," *Buffalo Courier Express*, February 11, 1934.

<sup>13</sup> Marge Thielman Hastreiter, Iron Island Museum, November 7, 2014.

<sup>14</sup> "Broadway-Fillmore, Buffalo, NY," accessed December 7, 2014, <http://buffaloah.com/surveys/bf/bf.html>.

<sup>15</sup> Hastreiter, *Lovejoy Memories*.

<sup>16</sup> "Tech Paper 29: Table 19. Nativity of the Population for the 50 Largest Urban Places: 1870 to 1990," accessed November 24, 2014, <http://www.census.gov/population/www/documentation/twps0029/tab19.html>.

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residential neighborhoods. In Lovejoy there were nine churches serving different ethnic groups. The largest of these groups practiced Roman Catholicism. St. Agnes Roman Catholic Church served families of German descent and St Francis of Assisi Roman Catholic Church was founded to serve Italian families. The Sts. Peter and Paul congregation was established to serve Russian and other eastern European families who practiced Orthodox Christianity. During this era, the church was the center of family life and identity, serving as a hub of culture, language and customs for these new immigrant communities.

A second phase of immigration occurred around 1920 following the events occurring during World War I, such as the Russian Revolution, in which an atheistic socialist state persecuted Orthodox Russians for their religious beliefs. As a result, many of the new immigrants coming into America emigrated from the Russian Republic, and other eastern European countries such as Serbia, Poland, and Bulgaria.<sup>17</sup> However, as these new immigrants were arriving in the United States, native-born Americans became increasingly suspicious of Russians. During this time period, known as the Red Scare, there were perceived threats of communism, anarchy, and atheism associated with the Russians. With this communist, anti-Western attitude prevalent in the communist states, Russian immigrants were perceived to be non-Christian, communist, and anti-American, thus provoking much suspicion and loathing toward the Russians and other immigrants alike. In the Lovejoy neighborhood, Sts. Peter and Paul strove to overcome these perceptions by sponsoring musical evenings with choral performances including Russian teas and dance recitals by Russian performers. These events helped to raise awareness of Russian culture that was not at all associated with communism, anarchy, and atheism but, rather, included many deep-rooted religious traditions and practices.<sup>18</sup>

The third phase of immigration occurred in the 1940s due to the events of World War II, which forced thousands more to make the move from Eastern Europe to settle in the United States. During the first half of the twentieth century, the Lovejoy area remained attractive because of its proximity to manual labor jobs in the stockyards and railroad industries. Eastern Europeans who arrived during the three phases of immigration settled within their own ethnic enclaves, eventually dispersing from Sts. Peter and Paul to establish their own ethnic churches.<sup>19</sup>

The post-World War II time period brought many challenges to Buffalo and the Lovejoy neighborhood. The increased prosperity, which occurred through the mid-twentieth century in the United States, led to a change in transportation patterns resulting in an increase in automobile and truck use that greatly contributed to the decline of the railroads. Stockyard and rail yard jobs, which had long served as the backbone of the local

<sup>17</sup> Elizabeth O'Mara. "Church hopes status as landmark will enhance restoration efforts." *Buffalo News*, July 11, 1992.

<sup>18</sup> W.C. Wandell, "Undisturbed by Reds Buffalo's Little Russia Goes Peacefully to Orthodox Church, Unmindful of Soviet Effort to Eradicate Christianity." *The Buffalo Evening News*, March 23, 1930.

<sup>19</sup> "Russians to Bless New Cornerstone." *The Buffalo Evening News*, December 17, 1932.

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economy in the neighborhood, began to disappear and the tracks themselves were beginning to show signs of wear and disrepair. New jobs for the parishioners in surrounding communities provided an incentive for them to move out of the neighborhood, and with fewer members living in close proximity to the parish, the vitality of the church began to decline.

Despite this decline, Sts. Peter and Paul Orthodox Church remains as tangible evidence of the cultural and religious significance of the Russian Orthodox church in the Lovejoy neighborhood. The church continues to provide services for an increasingly diverse neighborhood and uses modern ideas and technology to serve their parishioners. Fr. Volodymyr Zablotsky, the church's current acting rector, and his wife host a series of online cooking shows, named the "Orthodox Christian Cooking Show," demonstrating Lenten recipes and traditional foods. While the surrounding Lovejoy community may no longer be dominated by Eastern Europeans, Sts Peter and Paul Church continues to reach out to the local community, especially encouraging the participation of children in services. In a neighborhood where crime, poverty and delinquency is often a concern, the church acts as a support for families by providing a safe haven for neighborhood youth. The church also operates a Facebook page, as a means of connecting with the younger generation. In fact, the congregation reports that attendance of young neighborhood residents at Vespers increases when Fr. Vlad announces on the Facebook page that he'll be serving his famous sour dough pizza after Vespers service.

History of Sts Peter and Paul Orthodox Church and Congregation

Because of the growing Orthodox community emerging in the Lovejoy neighborhood at the end of the nineteenth century, eight members hailing primarily from Russia and Greece formed a congregation of the church in 1894.<sup>20</sup> Meeting at a home on Broadway on April 1, 1894, this first meeting formed an executive board to develop the new church and elected Nicholas Stefansky as president. Soon, a visiting priest was located, who came one a month to administer the sacraments. The newly formed group, operating under the name Sts. Peter and Paul Greek-Russian Free Church Association, purchased four parcels of land in the Lovejoy neighborhood with the intention of erecting a modest wooden church.<sup>21</sup> By the end of 1895, the burgeoning congregation erected a small wooden church, where worship was held once a month under the leadership of visiting priests. This church became known as the Saints Peter and Paul Greek Russian Orthodox Church.<sup>22</sup> The early congregation faced challenges in maintaining its size, as the number of Russian immigrants settling in Buffalo was far smaller in comparison to other ethnic groups, such as the Polish and Italians. According to church records, there were only 78 dues-paying members as of 1901. The congregation was so small that the church was unable to construct an elementary school for the children of the congregation.

<sup>20</sup> "Church to be Completed for Easter Rites." *Courier Express*, December 19, 1932.

<sup>21</sup> Vasily Lickwar. A History of the Church of Sts. Peter and Paul in Buffalo, New York.

<sup>22</sup> O'Mara, 4.

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Despite its small size, Sts Peter and Paul Orthodox Church played a prominent role in the local community. The church served as a hub for those of the Russian community, helping keep Russian traditions and culture alive in their adopted homeland of Buffalo, while serving as a bridge between the American and Russian communities. The church provided religious education, both in Russian and English, and taught Russian culture through music, theater, folk songs and other creative expressions. Beginning in 1929, Sts Peter and Paul Orthodox Church hosted the Choral R Club, a group that did readings and sang Russian songs.

In 1903 Sts. Peter and Paul received a triple-barred cross and a bell cast in bronze from Chaplain Fulton Manufacturing Company in Pittsburg, Pennsylvania, to be housed in a cupola located atop the church. His Grace, The Most Reverend Archbishop Tikhon, consecrated the bell on April 23, 1903.<sup>23</sup> In 1906 “improvements” were made the church, which may have included an expansion of the worship space as well as the construction of a new front tower with an onion dome in order to accommodate the new bell.<sup>24</sup> In 1912, a parish rectory and one-story school building were added to the property, allowing the church to establish a Mission Seminary School in which it could educate Orthodox seminary students in various church disciplines such as church history, scripture, pastoral relations and liturgical practices.<sup>25</sup> The children of the congregation attended church school every day for two hours after school. They learned about traditional Russian songs, dances and most important, Church Slavonic, which was used in the liturgical services.<sup>26</sup>

It wasn't until the sudden arrival of post-World War I immigrants during the second phase of immigration that the congregation decided it was necessary to build a new and larger church for the growing congregation. At this time, the church itself, the only Russian Orthodox parish in Western New York, claimed approximately 5,000 members and 225 families in a parish that stretched from Lockport in Niagara County to Hamburg to the south of Buffalo. In preparation for a new building, parishioners established a fund-raising committee in 1925. In 1928 Father Erast Wolkodoff was assigned to Sts Peter and Paul Russian Orthodox Church.<sup>27</sup> At that time,

<sup>23</sup> “Orthodox Russians Consecrate Church,” *The Buffalo Evening News*, October 9, 1933. Bishop Tikhon was a prominent figure in the Russian Orthodox church. Born in Russia, Tikhon is credited with as the “Enlightener of North America,” helping to establish and build Russian Orthodoxy in the United States. He established churches in New York City in 1901, and was made Archbishop of the American Mission in 1905. After his return to Russia in 1907, Archbishop Tikhon became a powerful critic of growing Bolshevik atheism, and in 1917 was raised as a Metropolitan, a rank above archbishops, of Moscow. In October 1989, he was glorified by the Council of Bishops of the Russian Orthodox Church glorified, becoming known as Saint Tikhon. For more, see “Past Primates: His Grace, Bishop Tikhon (Belavin) of Moscow,” Orthodox Church in America, accessed April 23, 2015, <http://oca.org/holy-synod/past-primates/tikhon-belavin>.

<sup>24</sup> “Church Blessed by Archbishop,” *Buffalo Morning Express*, November 19, 1906.

<sup>25</sup> Taken from “Chronology of Sts. Peter and Paul Orthodox Church in America,” compiled by Restoration Fund Committee, Anne Krafchak, Helen Montesano, Paul Moskaluk, Irine Zinter

<sup>26</sup> W.C. Wandell, “Undisturbed by Reds Buffalo's Little Russia Goes Peacefully to Orthodox Church, Unmindful of Soviet Effort to Eradicate Christianity,” *The Buffalo Evening News*, March 23, 1930.

<sup>27</sup> Sts. Peter and Paul Orthodox Church, “About our Parish.” <http://www.peterandpauloca.com/about/>.

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Joseph E. Fronczak was commissioned to design a new church for the growing Russian Orthodox congregation. Four years later, Fronczak designed the new church in a Russian-Byzantine architectural style, to be constructed with a buff brick facade and slate tile dome roof.<sup>28</sup> The desire to erect a building reminiscent of those being destroyed in Soviet Russia during the 1920s and 30s further emphasized the congregation's pride in its traditional Russian culture and art. In order to prepare for the building of the new church, the old wood frame church was moved just to the south, serving as a temporary worship space during construction. Ground was broken for the building in November 1932, and the cornerstone was laid with a traditional blessing ceremony on December 18, 1932.

The new church was completed in 1933, in time to experience the third wave of growth. On October 9, 1933, the church was consecrated amongst great pomp and ceremony. More than 3,000 people attended the dedication, including several leaders of the Russian Orthodox Church in the United States. After a procession that wound its way around the neighborhood and into the church, a two hour long service was held that included a Russian dedication and Russian choral music including two sacred numbers composed by Niikolai Kedroff of the famous Kedroff quartet.<sup>29</sup>

Unfortunately, this was not necessarily a golden age for the congregation, as the new church suffered financial setbacks, being built in the midst of the Great Depression. The presence of stained glass windows typically found in churches is absent from this particular building. Fronczak intended that the church should have "antique colored glass patterns," created by the local stained glass artist Joseph C. Mazur; however, the economic downturn prevented it.<sup>30</sup> On the interior, the church includes frescos by the Russian artist Nicholas Zadorozhny, which were completed in 1948.<sup>31</sup> The main mural above the altar, with the depiction of the Trinity, was painted as a tribute to a similar mural painted in Christ the Savior Church, an Orthodox church in Moscow. This church, a large and grandiose structure, complete with large marble reliefs and intricate murals and artwork, was demolished by the Soviet state in 1931, a devastating blow to the faithful Orthodox in the Soviet states as well as those now living in the United States. With the new Sts Peter and Paul church being constructed in Buffalo, the mural was painted in memory of Christ the Savior Church and the beautiful imagery it held, imagery that many of the immigrants had in their recent memory.<sup>32</sup>

<sup>28</sup> O'Mara, 4.

<sup>29</sup> "Dignitaries of Russian Church at Ceremonies." *Buffalo-Courier-Express*, October 9, 1933.

<sup>30</sup> "Russian Orthodox Church Cornerstone Service Today," *Buffalo Courier-Express*, December 11, 1932.

<sup>31</sup> "Largest Russian Orthodox Church in WNY to Celebrate Anniversary," *Buffalo Courier-Express*, September 14, 1969.

<sup>32</sup> "The Russian Orthodox Church - The Cathedral of Christ The Savior," The Russian Orthodox Church - The Cathedral of Christ The Savior. <http://www.xxc.ru/english/>.



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By the 1940s and 50s, a third wave of Russian and Eastern European immigrants were arriving into Western New York, fleeing the war-torn region. With this influx of new members, the church looked to expand its 1912 school building with a new modern parish hall that could serve not only as classroom space, but also as a social hall. The Buffalo Choral R Club, which had been chartered in 1929 as a member of the Federated Russian Orthodox Clubs of America and held its meetings in the church, initiated a fund for a new hall. The new building was designed in 1964 by Robert Zinter, an architect for the City of Buffalo whose wife was a long-time parishioner at the church. On July 18, 1965, the Archbishop Nikon of Brooklyn dedicated the new parish hall, named in honor of Father Erast Wolkodoff, who offered his assistance to Russian refugees left in destitution following World War II.<sup>33</sup>

The church assumed its current name, Sts. Peter and Paul Orthodox Church, in 1970. At that time, the Russian Orthodox Church in America no longer reported to a bishop in Russia, rather they began self-governing under local bishop jurisdiction. Despite the name change, the church still continues to hold a strong connection for Russian immigrants and those of Russian descent.

Architect Joseph E. Fronczak

Joseph E. Fronczak, one of four children born to Josef and Katarzyna Fronczak, was born in Buffalo in 1894. Joseph Fronczak's parents were both Polish immigrants who came to settle on Buffalo's East Side. Fronczak attended Canisius College, graduating in 1919. He then continued his studies at the University of Michigan's School of Architecture, from which he received his Bachelor of Science degree in Architecture in 1924. Following his graduation from University of Michigan, Fronczak was employed at the architectural firm of Carl Schmill & Son and, later, at Oakley and Schallmo. Both of these firms were recognized for their designs of churches.<sup>34</sup>

Joseph E. Fronczak is credited with designing numerous high profile buildings in Western New York, such as Villa Maria (a building complex in Cheektowaga consisting of an academy, a convent, and the Heart of Mary Chapel) and St. Joseph's Intercommunity Hospital, also in Cheektowaga. Amongst the most prominent churches Fronczak designed were St. Joseph's Greek Catholic Church in Cleveland, Ohio, St. Barbara's Catholic Church in Lackawanna, (demolished), in addition to the SS. Peter & Paul Orthodox Church in Buffalo. Like Sts. Peter and Paul Orthodox Church, Fronczak's design for St. Barbara's Catholic Church combined historical styles with the simplicity and geometric ornament derived from the Art Deco style. At St. Barbara's Church, Fronczak referenced a more traditional, basilica plan Gothic Revival church, including a tall tower and front gabled façade, but streamlined and simplified the brick detailing by recessing and projecting the bricks in a manner

<sup>33</sup> Folger, 3.

<sup>34</sup> Edward Szemraj and Wanda Slawinska., "The Polonian Legacy of Western New York," (Buffalo, NY: Canisius College Press, 2005), 45-80.

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reminiscent more of the Art Deco style. Since the church in Lackawanna has been demolished and the church in Cleveland has suffered deterioration, Sts. Peter and Paul Orthodox Church remains as a one of the best examples of Fronczak's ecclesiastic architecture.<sup>35</sup>

Later in Fronczak's career, from 1943 to 1945, he served as president of the Western New York chapter of the American Institute of Architects. He was later nominated as a member to Buffalo Board of Building Appeals, serving from 1953 to 1965. In 1963, Fronczak was instated as a fellow of the AIA. Fronczak passed away in 1966 at the age of 72 at the Carlton Nursing Home in Buffalo.<sup>36</sup>

Byzantine Revival Architecture

Many of Fronczak's religious buildings were designed drawing on Byzantine or Renaissance architecture. The Byzantine architectural style dates back to the middle ages in the Eastern Roman Empire. Perhaps the most identifiably Byzantine style church is the Hagia Sophia, located in what is now Istanbul, Turkey. The Hagia Sophia was originally built as an Eastern Orthodox Church, designed with arches adopted from Ancient Roman architecture and a massive dome, influenced by Islamic Mosques. On the exterior, Byzantine churches had a heavy appearance to them, with a series of round domes piled atop each other, with a prominent central dome erupting at the center of the building. Byzantine style churches were frequently ornamented with layers of abstract geometrical decoration, reminiscent of Islamic patterns, and layered in rich, bold colors with golden, gilded accents.<sup>37</sup>

Early domed buildings, such as the Pantheon, required a circular floor plan in order to support a non-angular roof. Byzantine architecture brought new innovations, enabling domes to be placed atop rectangular churches and joined to the sanctuary through the use of pendentives (a form of wedge-shaped vaulting exemplified in both Hagia Sophia and Sts Peter and Paul Orthodox Church). These pendentives were often used to showcase religious murals or artwork. As seen at Sts Peter and Paul Orthodox Church, these pendentives, as well as the half dome of the apse, are used as a canvas for artwork of the Apostles and Holy Trinity; however, the imagery is rendered in a more realistic style, as seen in the Cathedral of Christ the Savior in Moscow, than would have been common during the Byzantine era. By contrast, some of the unfixed religious Icons that Sts. Peter and Paul Church had received in donations over the years were crafted in the abstracted Byzantine style.<sup>38</sup>

The Byzantine Revival movement emerged in Russia during the mid-nineteenth century and had become a prominent style for churches under the rule of Emperor Alexander II, as his predecessor, Nicholas I, had a disliking for Byzantine art and architecture. Byzantine Revival architecture differed from historical Byzantine

<sup>35</sup> Szemraj and Slawinska, 45-80.

<sup>36</sup> Szemraj and Slawinska, 45-80.

<sup>37</sup> Yu Savelyev, *Byzantine style in architecture of Russia*, (Saint Petersburg, Russia: 2005).

<sup>38</sup> Yu Savelyev, 2005.

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architecture in that the exterior of a building frequently was of exposed brickwork, whereas traditional Byzantine architecture required a building's masonry to be clad in stucco. The masonry often consisted of bands created by the use of two different colored bricks or thick layers of mortar along the brick's stretcher.<sup>39</sup> This banding is suggested in the brickwork of Sts. Peter and Paul Orthodox Church, notably at the large compound arches and at the drum of the dome, where the same-colored buff-brick is simply rotated, projected and repeated for multiple rows.

Sts. Peter and Paul Orthodox Church, while drawing from the general Byzantine style influence in its massing and plan, also demonstrates the influence of the Muscovian architectural tradition, according to architect Joseph E. Fronczak. The Muscovian tradition, as defined by Fronczak, was characterized by simple, chaste lines for the dome and towers of the building. This is in contrast to the Petrograd style, which emphasized bulbous projections, such as onion domes.

Nicholas Zadorozhny, Muralist

Nicholas Stepanovich Zadorozhny was born in 1901 in the Chita / Trans-Baikal region of Russia, a land north of Mongolia and bordering China to the east. Nicholas was one of five brothers, four of whom studied the art of iconography and collectively were known as the Zadorozhnii artist brothers. From 1916-1920 Nicholas studied at the Chita Industrial Arts School and a school of iconography named after Archpriest John of Kronstadt in the City of Novo-Nikolaevske. In Chita he taught fine arts in a girls school and at other educational institutions.<sup>40</sup>

In 1920 he moved to Harbin, Manchuria (China) with his family and brothers to flee the communists and civil war. In Harbin, Nicholas taught art in secondary schools and professionally engaged in portrait painting and iconography. He focused much of his creativity in composing sacred-historical themes with his iconography work. At the same time he was able to paint very fine details in inspired faces that were able to transmit peace, goodness and inner spiritual beauty. People came to life in his icons, murals and portraits illuminating beautiful faces and life-like expressive eyes. These artistic talents along with his original compositions contributed greatly to Nicholas' notoriety and the continuing revival of religious art in the twentieth century.<sup>41</sup>

In Harbin, China, Nicholas Zadorozhny and his brother Peter created over 20 wall paintings and icons for the iconostasis for the church of St. Nicholas in the backwater. Nicholas developed his own compositions when he created the murals entitled *Christmas*, *Christmas of the Virgin*, *Assumption of the Blessed Virgin*, *Descent of the Holy Spirit upon the Apostles* and others in this church. He later created numerous icons for the iconostasis of

<sup>39</sup> Yu Savelyev, 2005.

<sup>40</sup> "Zadorozhnii Nikolai Stepanovich." The Russia Database, Encyclopedia of Russian Artists from c. 1700 – 2015. Russiadb.com. Accessed March 25, 2015.

<sup>41</sup> Sadovskaya, Grau R, "Report of the Artist NS Zadorozhnogo," *New Russian Word*, April 12, 1968.

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many other churches in the Harbin area.<sup>42</sup>

After the great Japan earthquake of 1923, Nicholas Zadorohny spent nearly 7 years creating over 60 icons and murals to help restore Resurrection Cathedral in Tokyo which was devastated by the quake. At the end of 1930 he founded a Russian art school in Tianjin, China, a major metropolis in northern China and taught there for more than 10 years. While there he also completed several murals for Holy Protection Cathedral in Tianjin.<sup>43</sup>

In 1933 he went to Shanghai and organized exhibitions of his works including the portrait of Japan's Metropolitan Sergius of Tokyo, AA Tatarinov, spouse Vaysher of Qingdao, General GI Clerjus of Mukden, his sister Mary Zadorozhny, Mr. Goroshevich from Harbin, spouse de Gerardi from Shanghai, and KV Plyaskin. By 1934 he also had his own studio in Shanghai where he displayed all of his works and also brought his iconography talents to several Orthodox churches there as well. By this time, the press in Manchuria, China, and Japan gave high praises to Nicholas Zadorozhny and raved about his works and artistic style. He did not copy already known works of religious art, but rather created his own compositions thus continuing as an original icon artist in the styles of the famous nineteenth century Russian artists M.V. Nesterov and V. Vasnetsov. As a result, Nicholas Zadorozhny had become a well-known and highly regarded Russian iconographer.<sup>44</sup>

In 1947, he moved permanently from Shanghai to the San Francisco area where his mother, sister and a few brothers also immigrated. His notoriety expanded as he continued his very prolific career in iconography and religious art in the United States. He was commissioned to work in many Orthodox churches throughout the United States and Canada including churches in Buffalo, Detroit, Ohio, Washington, Toronto, Vancouver, Seattle, California and Binghamton. During his time in the US, Nicholas "anglicized" his last name and went by the name Nicholas Roadway. Late in his career he settled in Miami, Florida and continued to create many more large icons and iconostasis in the Orthodox churches in Florida.<sup>45</sup>

Conclusion

Sts. Peter and Paul Orthodox Church Complex is significant as a largely intact collection of ecclesiastic buildings with strong historical and cultural ties to the Lovejoy neighborhood. The growth of the congregation

<sup>42</sup> "St. Nicholas Church in the backwater. Harbin, China" Accessed March 25, 2015. Also, L. Zharov, "In the footsteps of Vasnetsov and famous Russian artists. The iconostasis of the church in Harbin; works by the artist NS Zadorozhnogo," *Harbin*, 1931, No. 38, section 16-17.

<sup>43</sup> "Creative artists NS Zadorozhnogo. The new composition of the Holy Protection Cathedral in Tianjin," *Harbin*, 1943, No. 2, p. 18-19.

<sup>44</sup> Zharov, 16-17. Also, Argus. "NS Zadorozhnjy Portrait Artist: News in the work of a talented artist," *Harbin*, October 13, 1934.

<sup>45</sup> "Icon Display Near End Here," *The Miami News*, November, 21, 1964. Also, "Russian Church Redecoration Project Started," *Binghamton NY Press Grayscale*, April 8, 1961. Also, "Russian Church of All Saints in Burlingame, California." Accessed April 3, 2015. <http://allrussiansaintsburlingame.org/newsletter/JulyAug2014.pdf>

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and the construction of the buildings correspond to several eras of increased immigration and growth in the Orthodox community in western New York. Designed by notable local architect Joseph E. Fronczak, the church building reflects the combination of the Byzantine Revival style with the simplification and geometric ornament popular during the Art Deco era. Later buildings reflect the growth of the Orthodox congregation during the mid-1900s. Today, the church continues to engage with the local community, through encouraging new programs and embracing modern technologies.

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**Verbal Boundary Description**

Please refer to attached boundary maps with scale.

**Boundary Justification**

The boundary includes the present church, church hall and church rectory (located east of the church) on the block that expands from Ideal Street to Benzinger Street. This boundary, consisting of three city plots that have been joined together (listed as 40 Benzinger Street). This boundary encompasses all land historically and presently associated with the church buildings, and includes the site where the former wood frame church building was relocated ca. 1932 before it was demolished in the mid-1930s.

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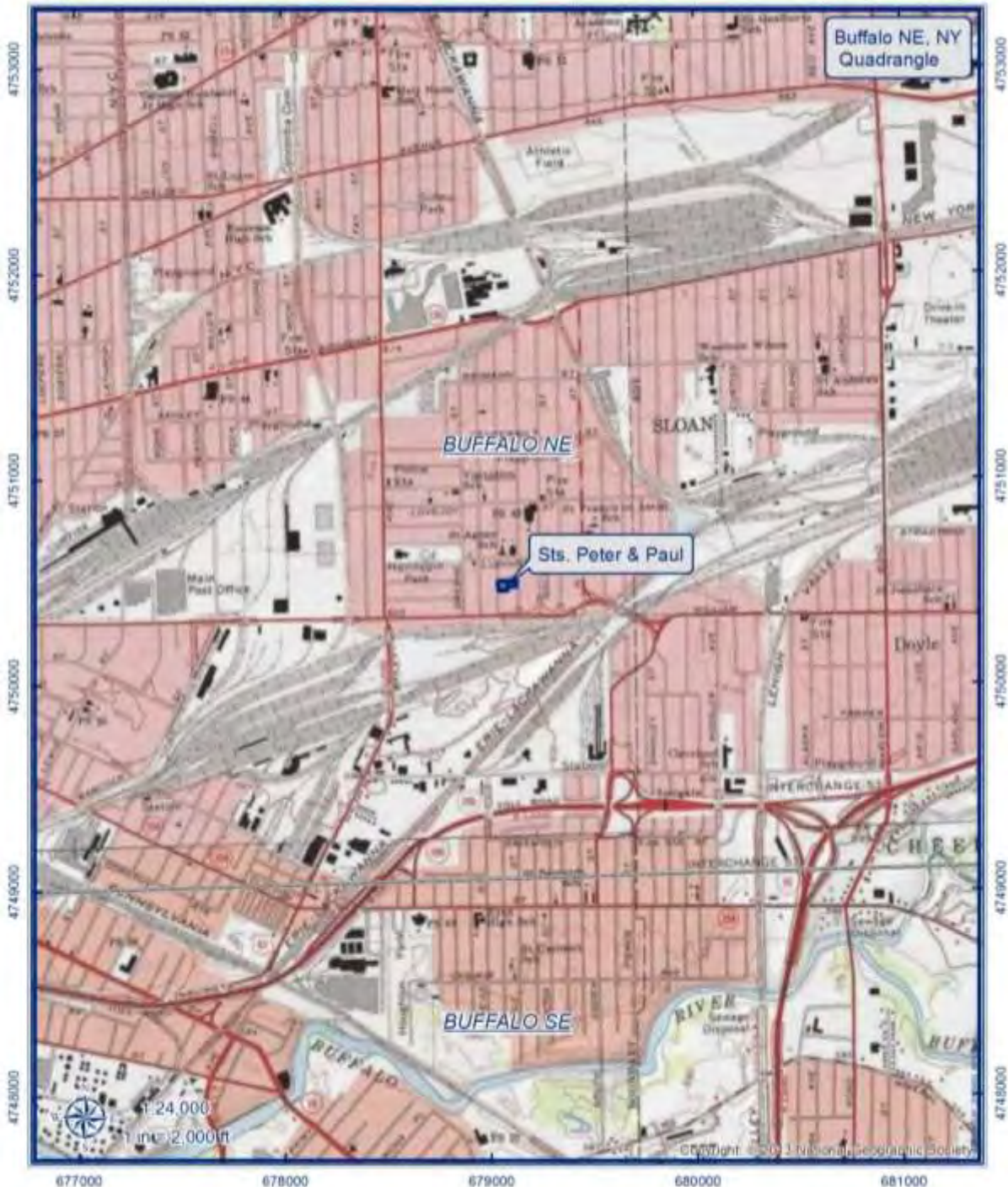
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Sts. Peter & Paul Orthodox Church Complex  
City of Buffalo, Erie Co., NY

40 Benzinger Street  
Buffalo, NY 14206



Coordinate System: NAD 1983 UTM Zone 17N  
Projection: Transverse Mercator  
Datum: North American 1983  
Units: Meter

0 5501,100 2,200 Feet



Sts. Peter & Paul



Parks, Recreation  
and Historic Preservation

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Sts. Peter & Paul Orthodox Church Complex  
City of Buffalo, Erie Co., NY

40 Benzinger Street  
Buffalo, NY 14206



Coordinate System: NAD 1983 UTM Zone 17N  
Projection: Transverse Mercator  
Datum: North American 1983  
Units: Meter



Sts. Peter & Paul



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and Historic Preservation

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Sts. Peter & Paul Orthodox Church Complex  
City of Buffalo, Erie Co., NY

40 Benzinger Street  
Buffalo, NY 14206



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Sts. Peter and Paul Orthodox Church Complex

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Additional Information

**Photo Log:**

Name of Property:	Sts. Peter and Paul Orthodox Church Complex
City of Vicinity:	Buffalo
County:	Erie County
State:	New York
Name of Photographer:	Jennifer Walkowski, NYSHPO
Date of Photograph:	August, 2014; April 14, 2015
Location of Original Digital Files:	NYS OPRHP, Peebles Island Resource Ctr, PO Box 189, Waterford, NY 12188
Number of Photographs:	12

**Photo # 1** (NY\_Erie County\_Sts Peter and Paul Orthodox Church\_0001)

View of church from Ideal Street, looking northeast

**Photo # 2** (NY\_Erie County\_Sts Peter and Paul Orthodox Church\_0002)

Primary west elevation of church, looking east

**Photo # 3** (NY\_Erie County\_Sts Peter and Paul Orthodox Church\_0003)

Detail, church tower showing ornament, looking southeast

**Photo # 4** (NY\_Erie County\_Sts Peter and Paul Orthodox Church\_0004)

Cornerstone, showing Cyrillic and English text

**Photo # 5** (NY\_Erie County\_Sts Peter and Paul Orthodox Church\_0005)

Primary east elevation of Parish Hall, looking southwest

**Photo # 6** (NY\_Erie County\_Sts Peter and Paul Orthodox Church\_0006)

Front elevation of Parish House on Benzinger Street, looking northwest

**Photo # 7** (NY\_Erie County\_Sts Peter and Paul Orthodox Church\_0007)

Interior, main church sanctuary, looking east from balcony

**Photo # 8** (NY\_Erie County\_Sts Peter and Paul Orthodox Church\_0008)

Interior, church sanctuary, looking west to vaulted balcony

**Photo # 9** (NY\_Erie County\_Sts Peter and Paul Orthodox Church\_0009)

Iconostasis in main sanctuary, looking east

**Photo # 10** (NY\_Erie County\_Sts Peter and Paul Orthodox Church\_0010)

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Apse Mural depicting Holy Trinity

**Photo # 11** (NY\_Erie County\_Sts Peter and Paul Orthodox Church\_0011)

Main sanctuary central dome

**Photo # 12** (NY\_Erie County\_Sts Peter and Paul Orthodox Church\_0012)

Interior, Parish Hall, main meeting space

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Initial draft nomination prepared by students from:

Documentation and Field Methods in Historic Preservation, a core course for the Advanced Graduate Certificate in Historic Preservation and MS. Arch in Historic Preservation at the State University of New York at Buffalo

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Vivek Thanumalayan

Additional research assistance provided by Anne Ettipio.



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Ideal Street

Benzinger Street

**Aerial view, showing location of buildings of Sts. Peter and Paul Orthodox Church Complex (2014)**

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Historic Photos:



A RUSSIAN CHURCH IN BUFFALO: THE ORTHODOX GREEK CHURCH ON IDEAL STREET.

**First Church of the Orthodox Greek Church (March 12, 1905)**

This image shows the original church building, a modest 1-story wood frame building with a small vestibule, located on the Ideal Street site. This building was built in 1894, and expanded with a tower and rear addition around 1906. This church was used by the congregation until the present edifice was constructed in 1932. This small building was moved just to the south of the current church. It was demolished a few years after the new church was built, sometime around the mid-1930s.

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View of the old church, showing bell tower addition (ca. 1906-1917)

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**Architect's Sketch of New Russian Orthodox Church (ca. 1931)**  
This sketch is remarkably similar to the church as it was constructed.

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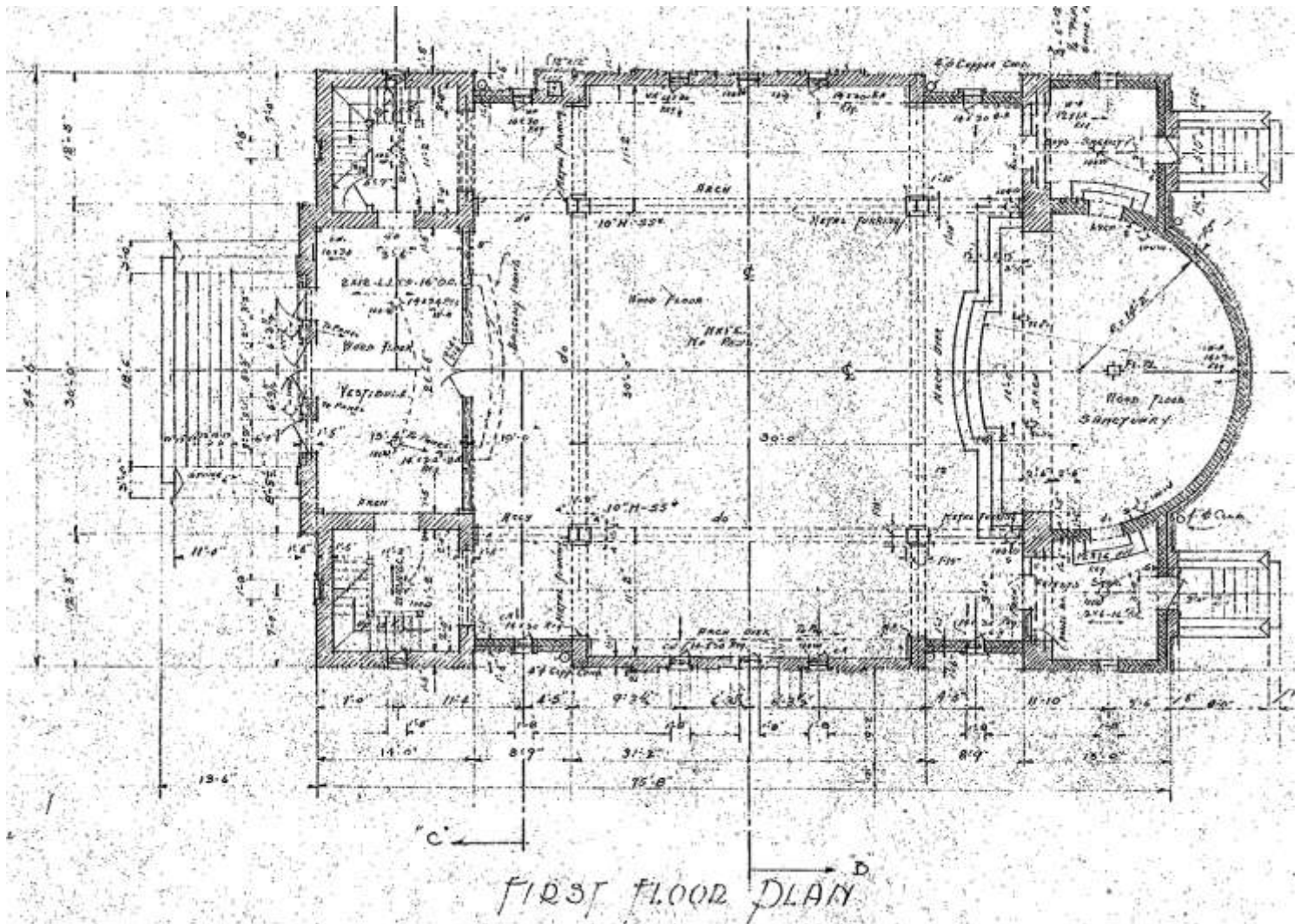
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**Detail, First Floor Plan, "Church Building for Sts. Peter and Paul Parish" (October 1, 1932)**

Detail of architectural plans for the building prepared by architect Joseph E. Fronczak. This floor plan remains intact.

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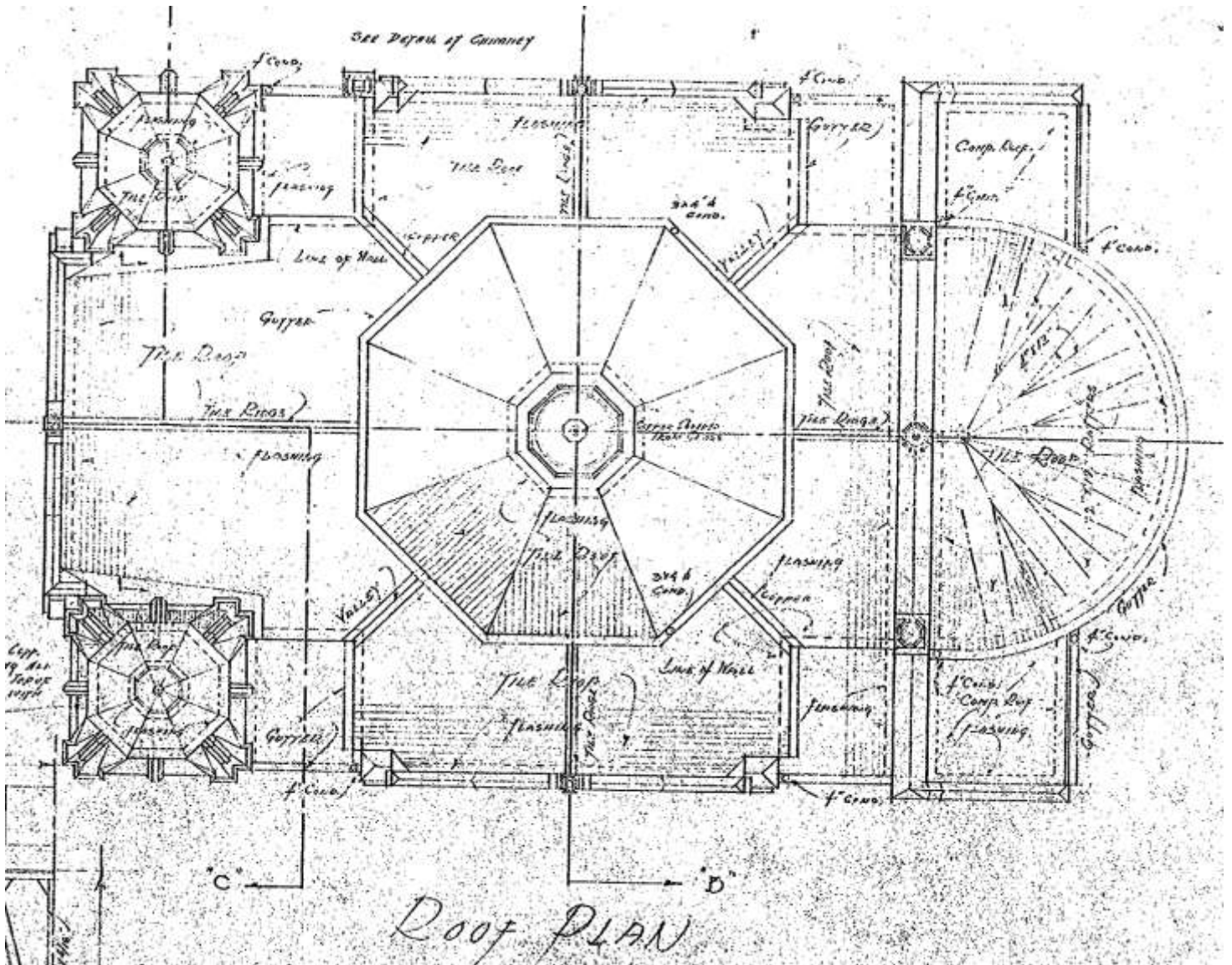
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**Detail, Roof Plan, "Church Building for Sts. Peter and Paul Parish" (October 1, 1932)**

This plan shows the intricate design of the roof of the building, including the Art Deco spires of the two towers (at left).

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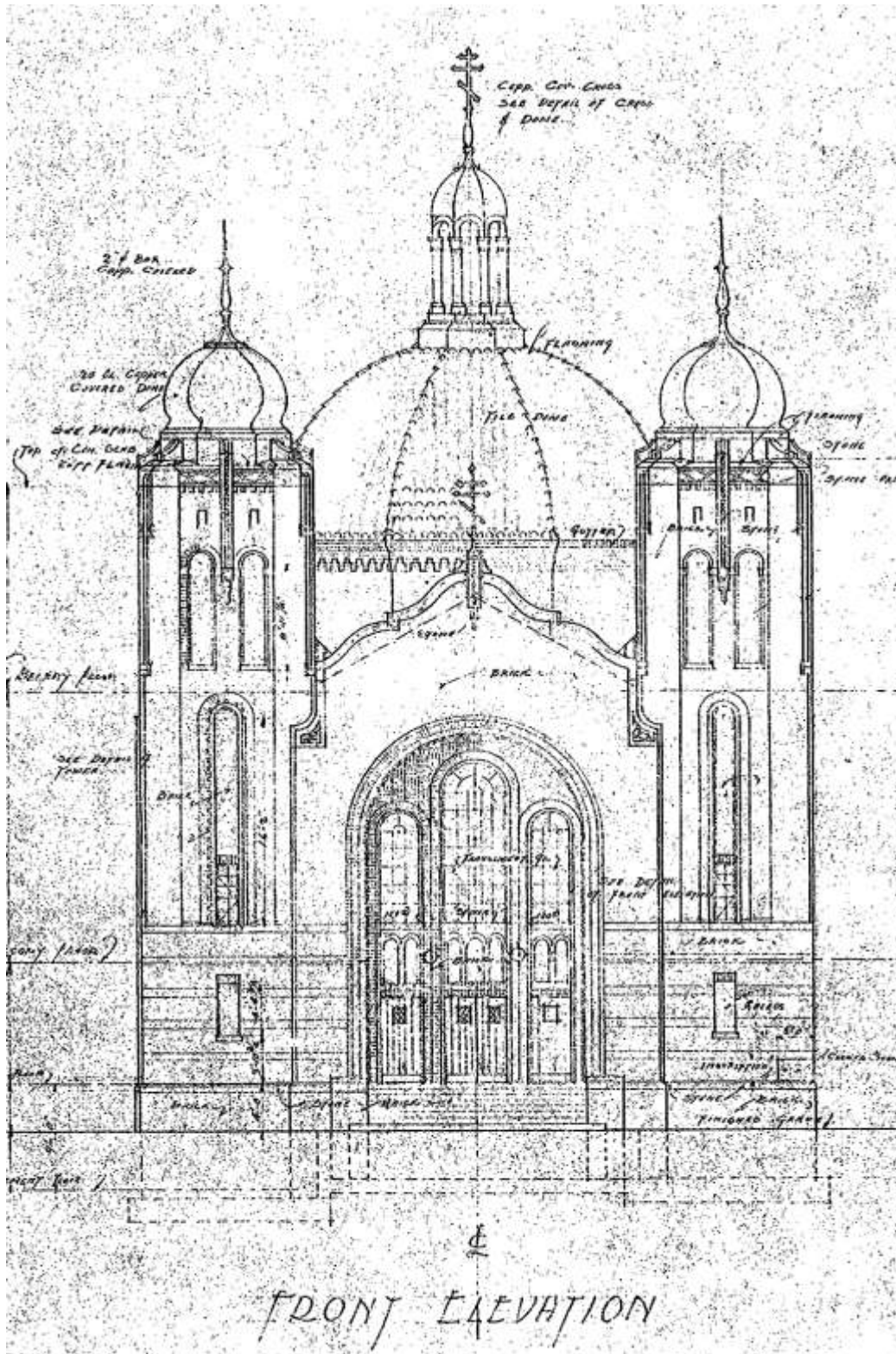
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Detail, Front Elevation,  
"Church Building for Sts.  
Peter and Paul Parish"  
(October 1, 1932)

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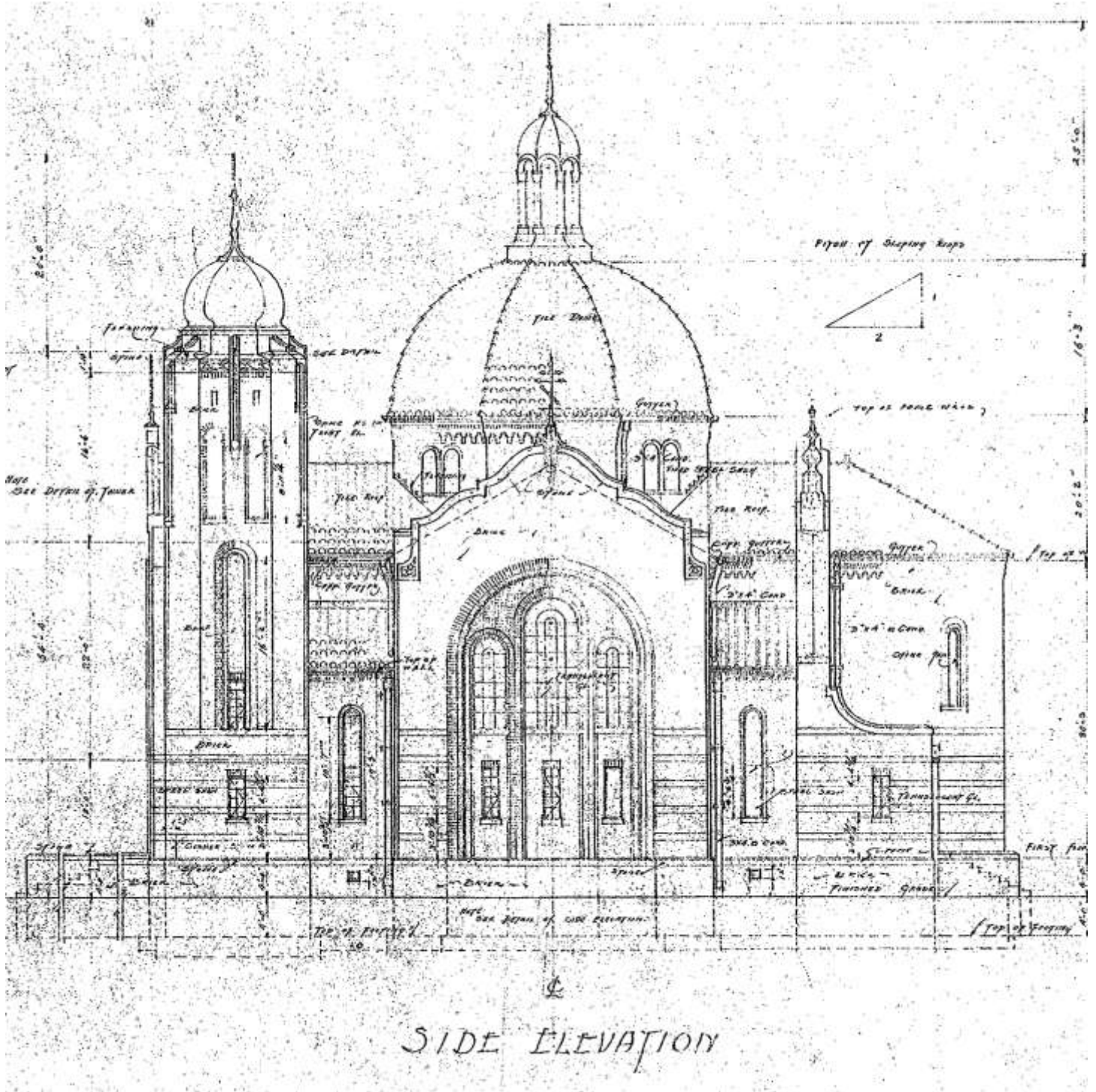
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Detail, Side Elevation, "Church Building for Sts. Peter and Paul Parish" (October 1, 1932)



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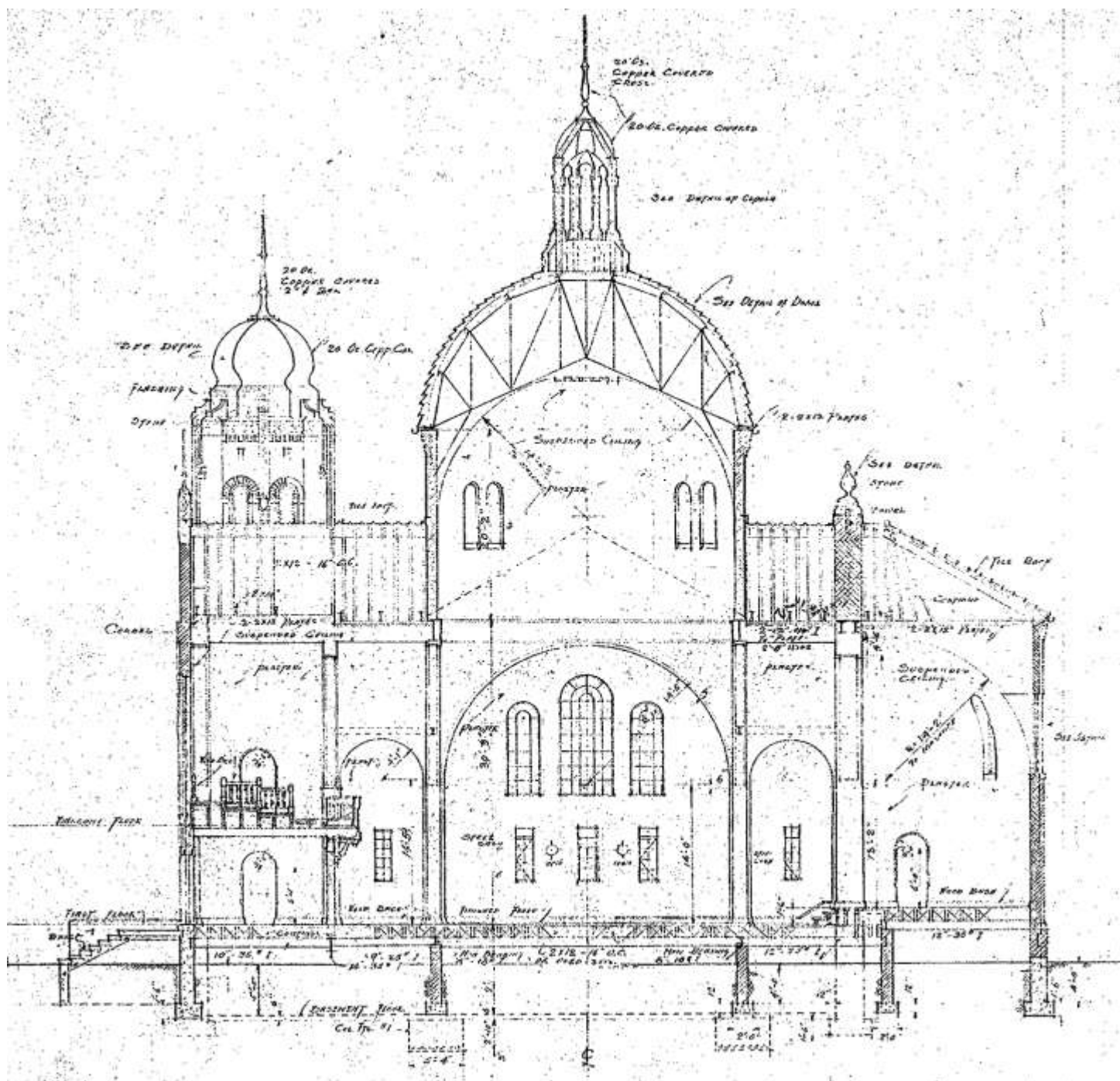
Sts. Peter and Paul Orthodox Church Complex

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Detail, Building Section, "Church Building for Sts. Peter and Paul Parish" (October 1, 1932)

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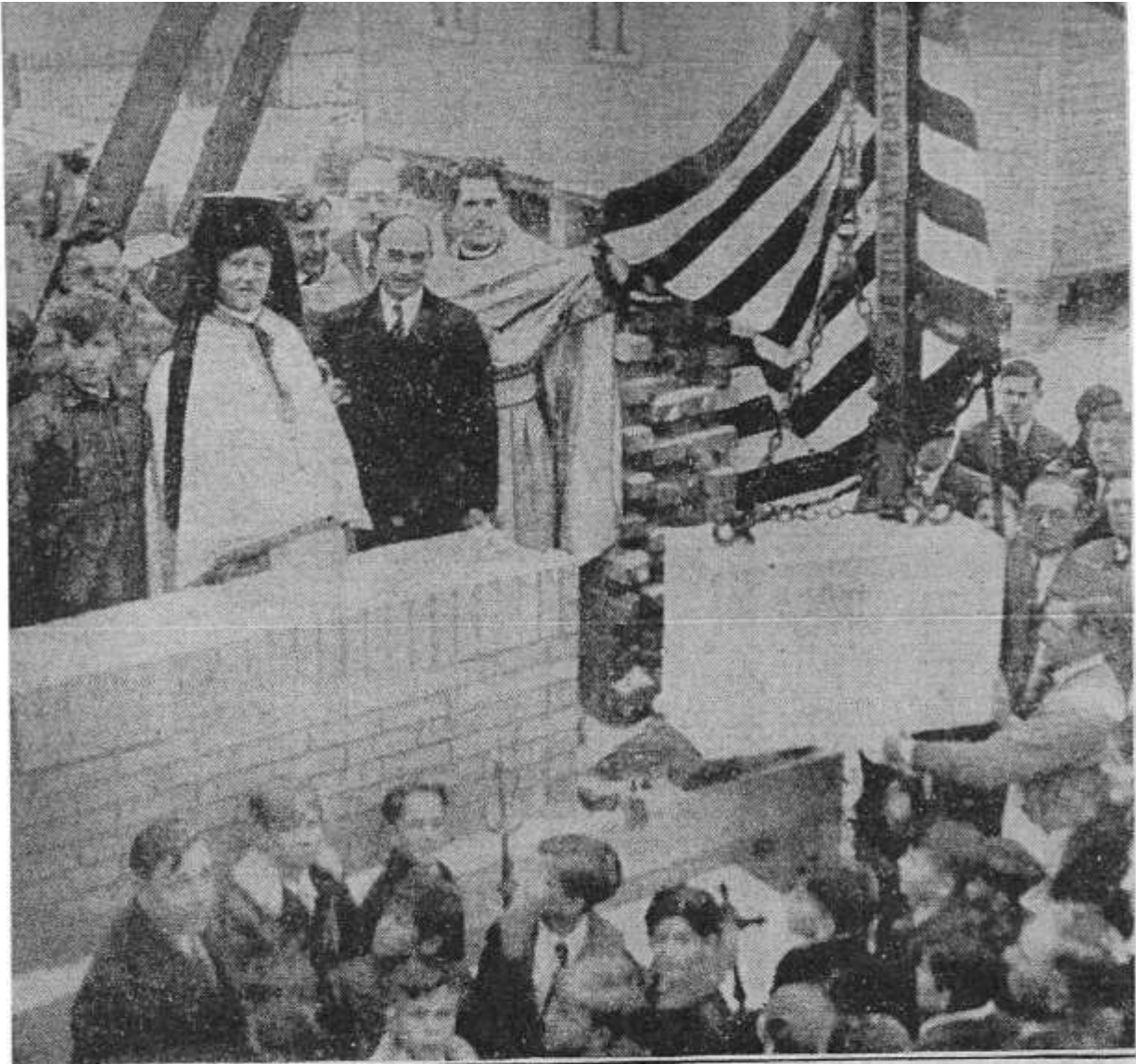
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—Evening News Staff Photo.

**RUSSIANS BLESS NEW CHURCH.** Simple but impressive ceremonies Sunday noon marked the blessing of the cornerstone of the new Byzantine building of SS. Peter and Paul Russian Orthodox church, in Ideal street. Principals in the ceremonies, shown before the brick wall, are, left to right: Vladimir E. Wolkodoff, the Rev. Igor Rechinski, the Rev. Michael Gelsinger, Peter H. Bryll, contractor, George E. Phillis, and the Rev. Ernest Wolkodoff, pastor of the church.

Laying of the cornerstone at the new Sts Peter and Paul Orthodox Church (December 19, 1932)

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**Sts. Peter and Paul Church Dedication (October 8, 1933)**

Many of the more than 3,000 people who celebrated the dedication of the church had to wait outside during the service, as the sanctuary only held about 400 people.

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**The New Sts. Peter and Paul Orthodox Church (ca. 1932)**

This view of the church appears to date to shortly after its construction. Note the original shaped gable parapets, which were rebuilt in the 1990s due to water infiltration and instability issues. This view also shows the original open lantern, which was damaged by wind in 1977 and removed. This photo also shows the relocated older church building, at the left.

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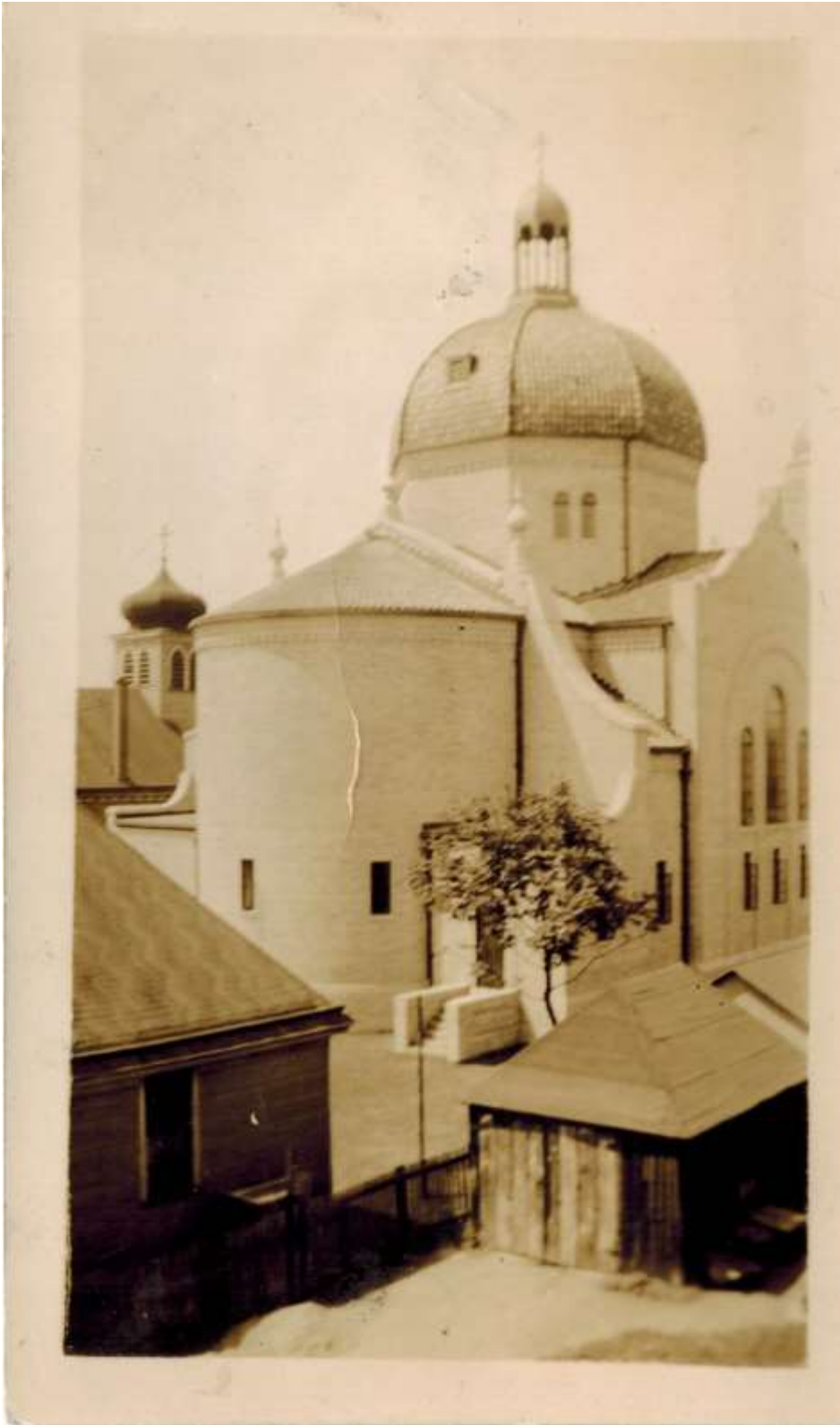
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**View of Sts. Peter and Paul  
Orthodox Church (Aug, 1933)**

This view shows the curved apse  
of the building, as well as the one-  
story school building (lower left).

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**View of Sts. Peter and Paul  
Orthodox Church (1935)**

This oblique view highlights the patterned Art Deco-inspired brick work of the building. While the parapet has been altered out of structural concerns, much of this detailing remains intact.

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**Interior view of Sts. Peter and Paul Orthodox Church (ca. 1930s)**

This image shows the appearance of the church and the apse prior to the 1948 frescos. Here, the iconostasis is shown with its natural wood tones, before it was painted white at a later date.

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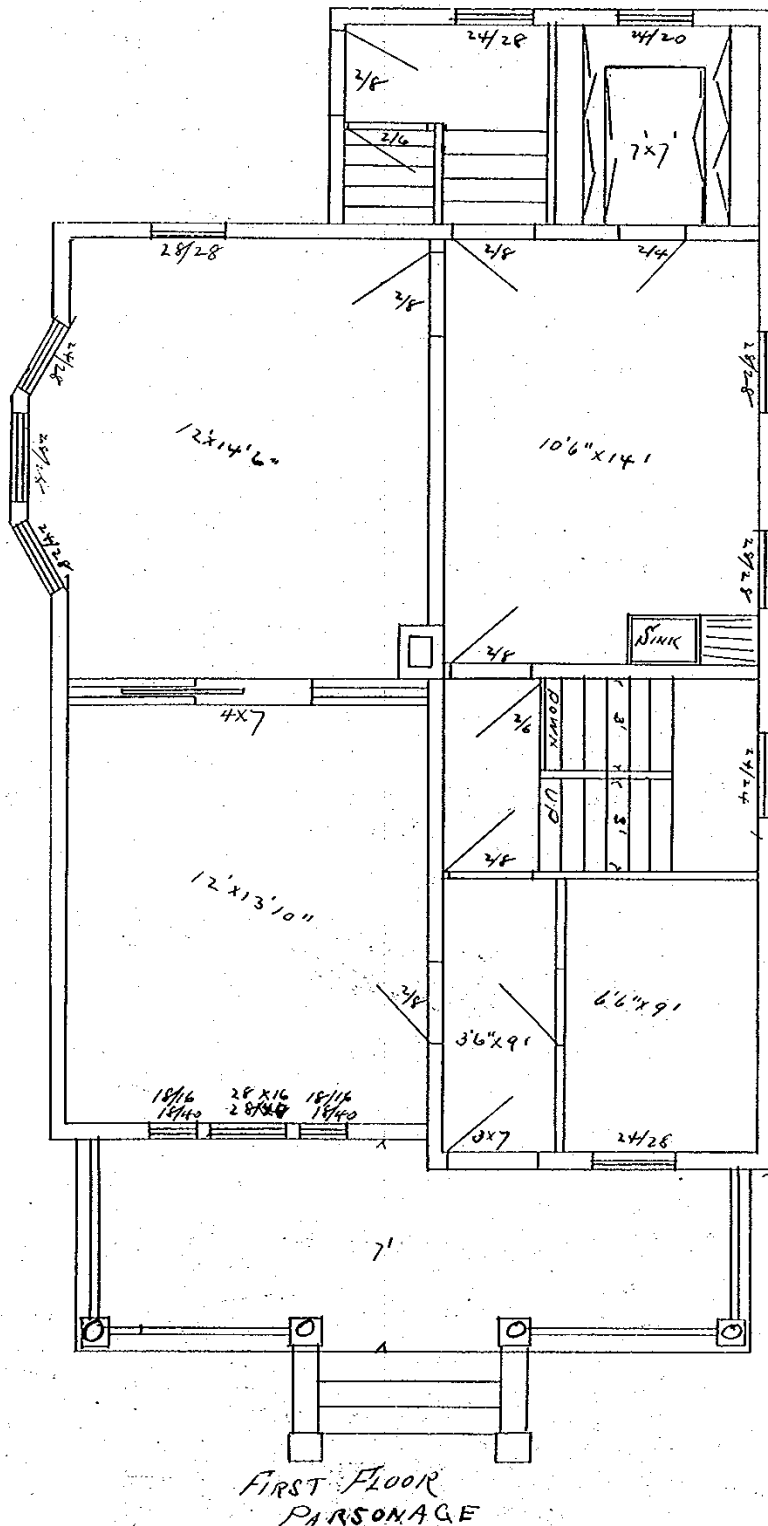
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**First Floor Plan, Parsonage (ca. 1912)**

This floor plan reveals that, while the parsonage was designed specifically for religious use, it utilized a fairly typical residential floor plan from the early twentieth century.



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**Rendering, Church Parish Hall, Sts. Peter and Paul Orthodox Church (ca. 1964)**

This rendering is oriented facing north-west and shows the design of the parish hall. The canopy at the far right shields the passage between the Hall and the Parish House, provided covered access between the buildings. It remains highly intact to this drawing.

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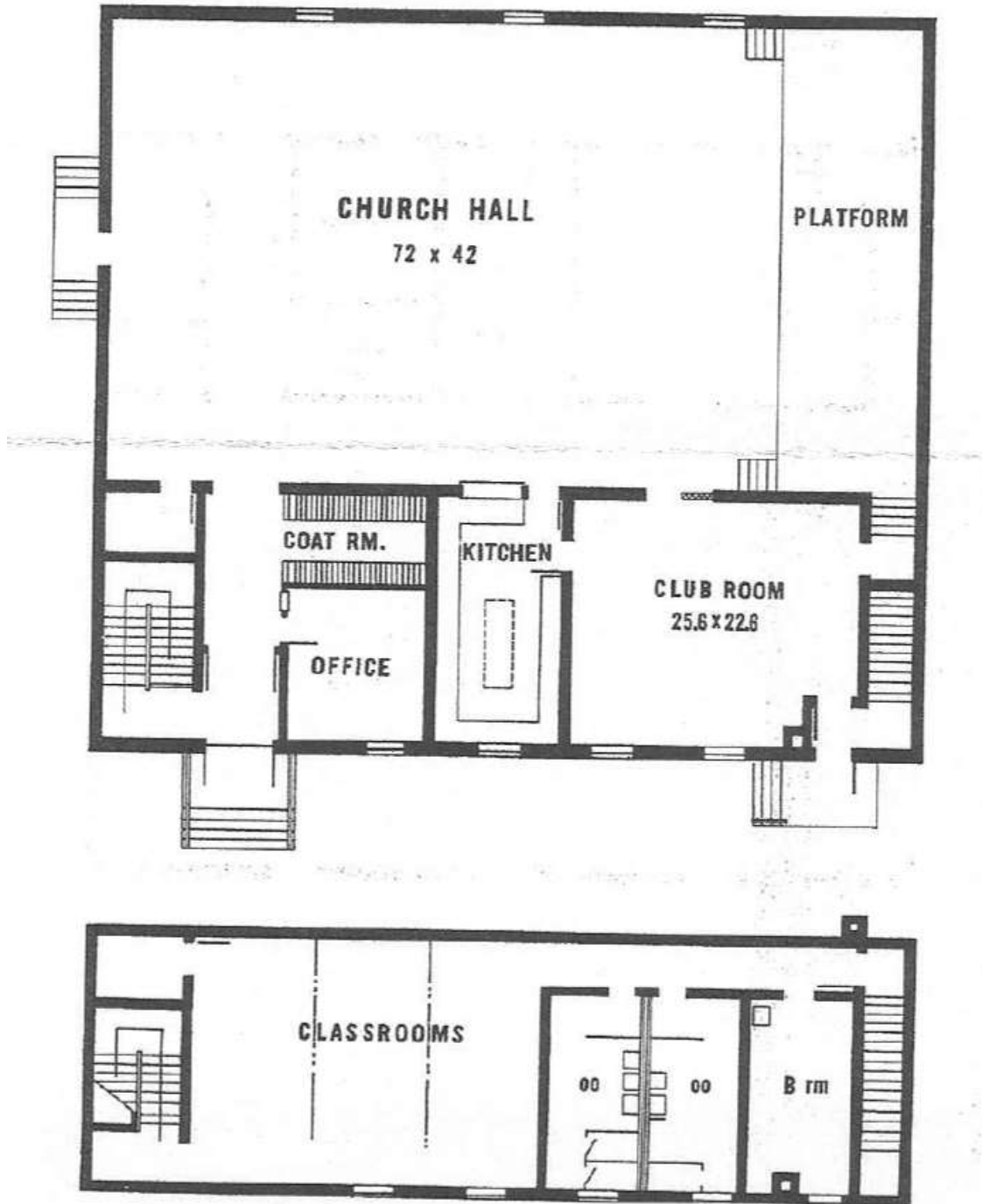
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**Floor Plans, Church Parish Hall, Sts. Peter and Paul Orthodox Church (ca. 1964)**

These plans show the diverse spaces in the building, including a multi-purpose church hall with stage, a kitchen and classrooms.

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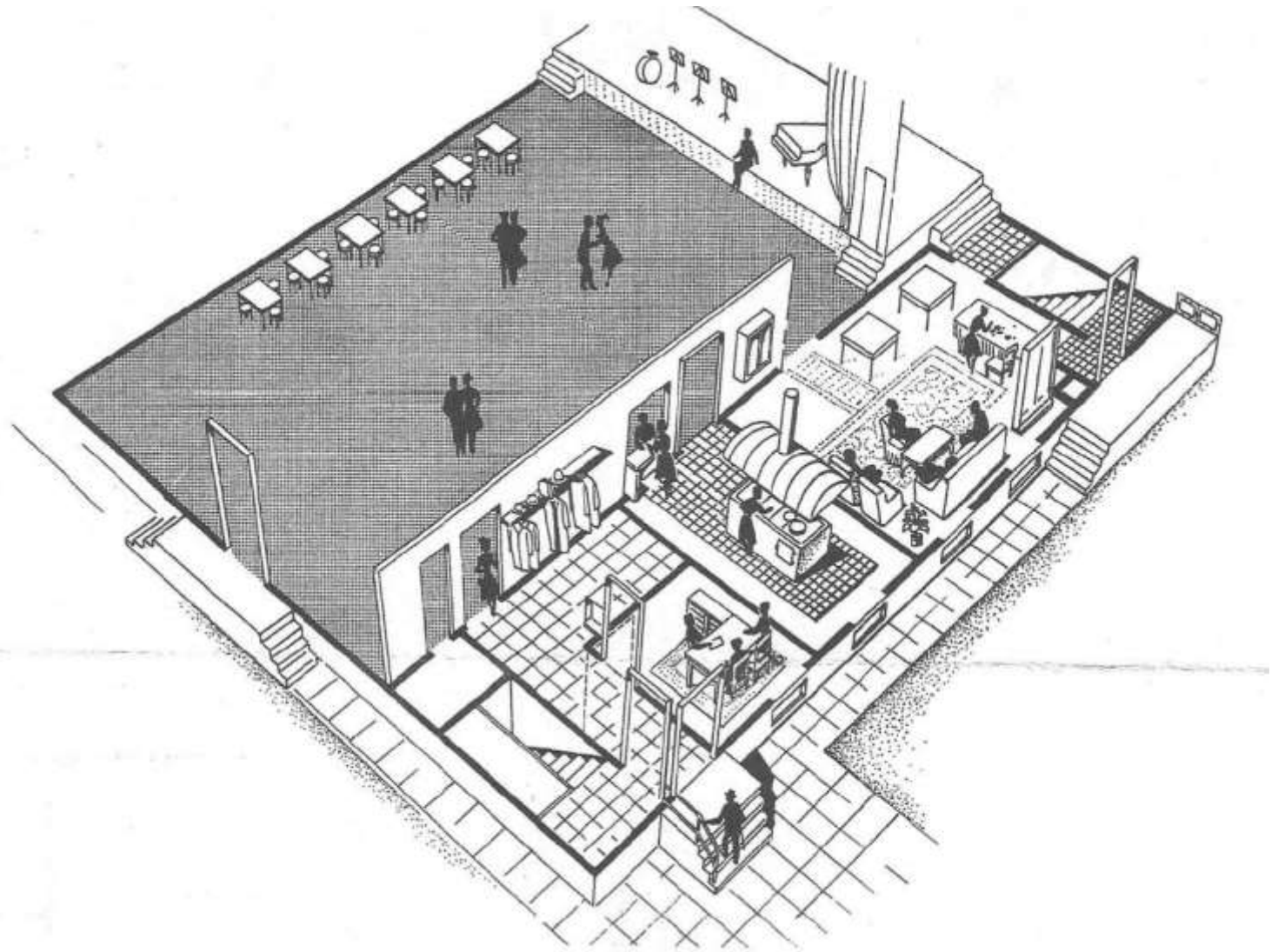
Sts. Peter and Paul Orthodox Church Complex

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**Axometric drawing, Church Parish Hall, Sts. Peter and Paul Orthodox Church (ca. 1964)**

Much of the original spaces of the parish hall remain intact, although a new curved bar in the Club Room appears to be a later addition.

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Students learning to play the balalaika in the Parish Hall (1969)

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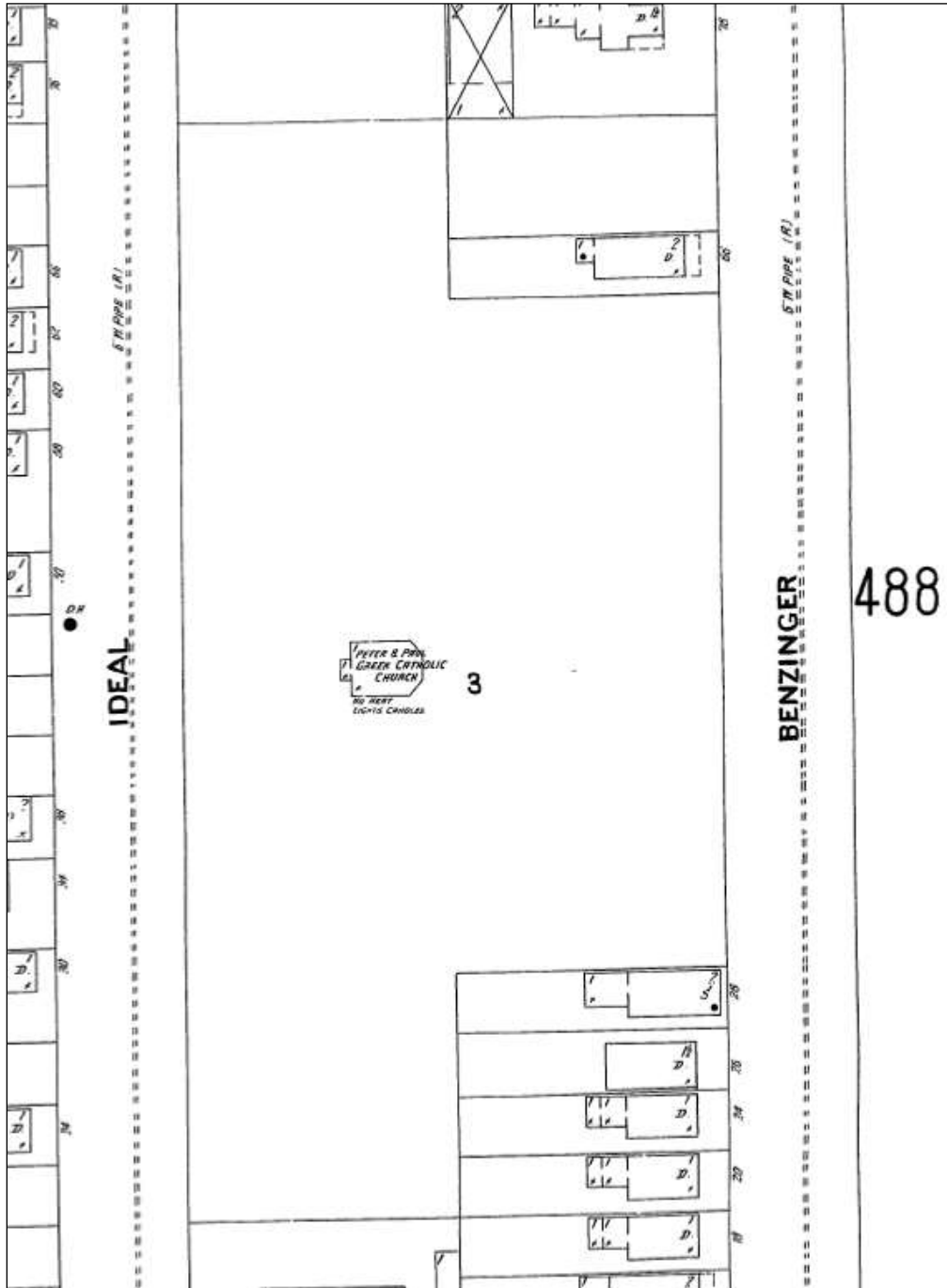
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Detail, Sanborn Map (1900)

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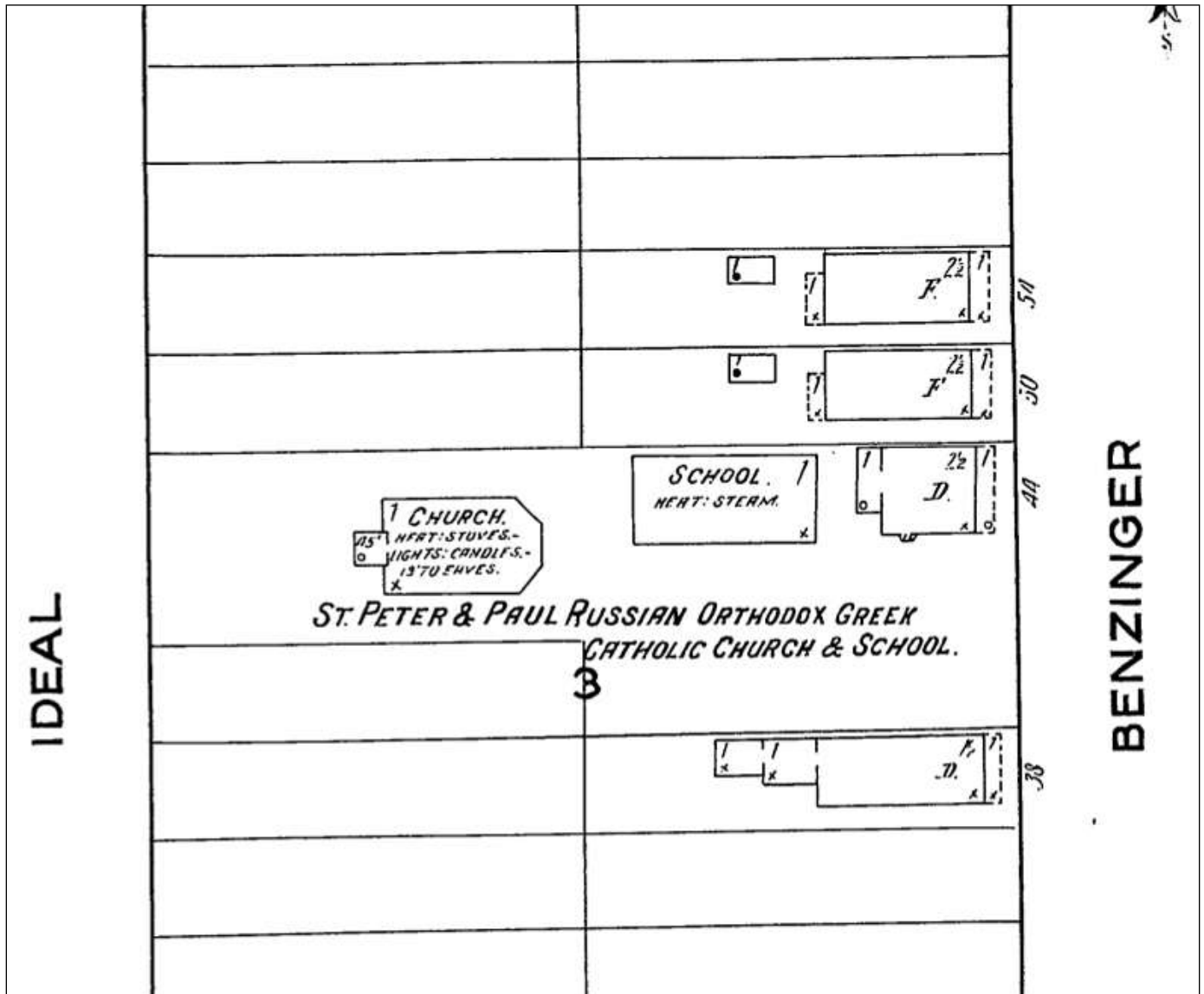
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Detail, Sanborn Map (1917)

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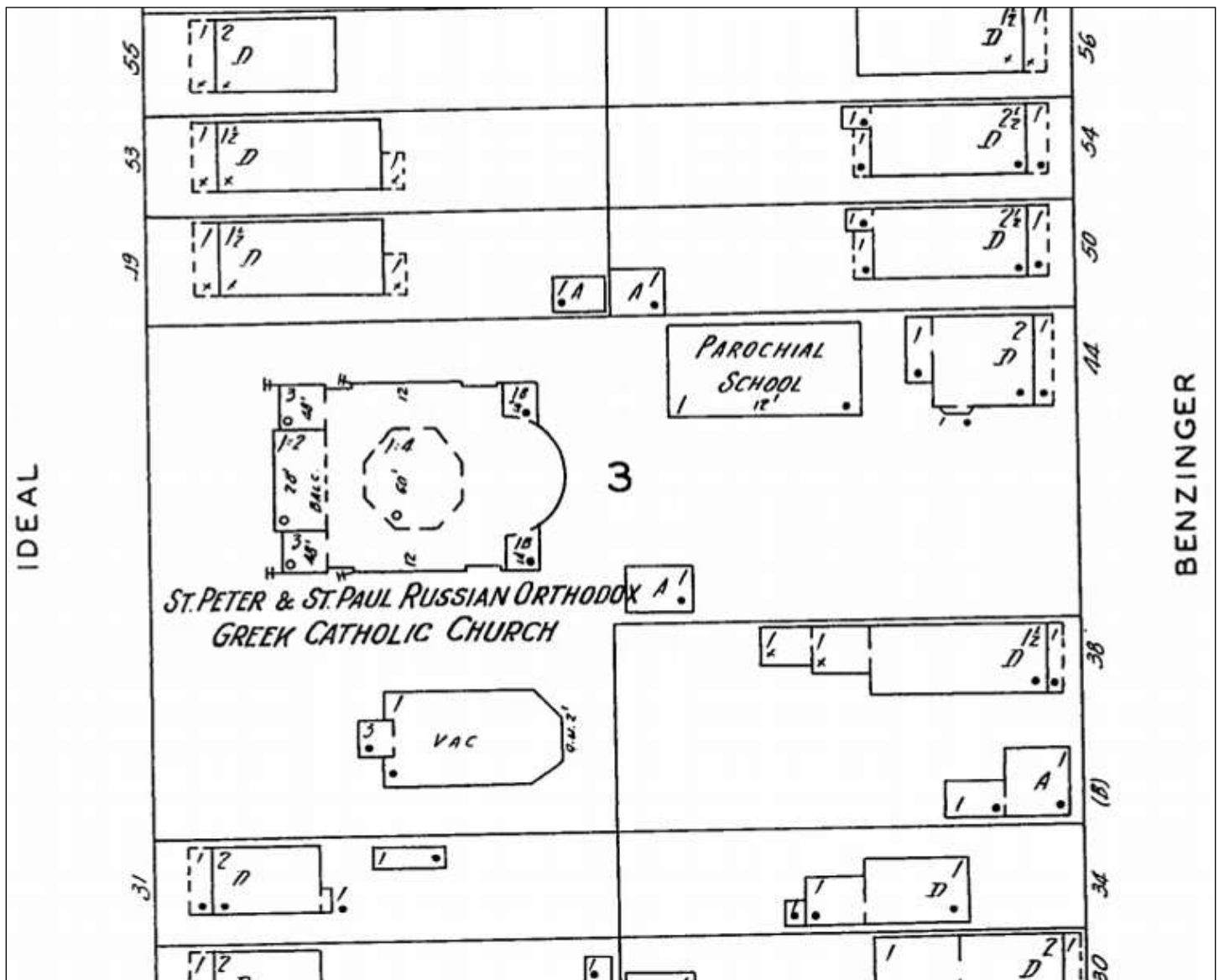
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**Detail, Sanborn Map (1939)**

This image shows the location of the present church, facing Ideal Street. Notice that the older wood frame church was relocated to the south of the new edifice. The one-story school building would be replaced by the larger parish hall in the 1960s. Also notice the development of the surrounding area which was largely complete by the late 1930s.

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Aerial view, showing church, parish hall and rectory (2015)

*Courtesy bing.com*







RUSSIAN CATHOLIC CHURCH  
ST. PETER AND PAUL  
RUSSIAN CATHOLIC CHURCH  
ESTABLISHED 1904



РУССКАЯ



ПРАВОСЛАВНАЯ  
ГРЕКО КΑΘΟΛΙΚΗ  
ΕΚΚΛΗΣΙΑ ΑΓΙΩΝ ΠΕΤΡΟΥ ΚΑΙ ΠΑΥΛΟΥ

St. PETER & PAUL  
RUSSIAN ORTHODOX  
GREEK CATHOLIC CHURCH  
1894 — 1932



FATHER WOLKODOFF  
MEMORIAL HALL

Peat Moss

LOWE'S





БЛАГОСЛОВИМЪ ТѢ СЛАВА ВЪ ВЫШНИХЪ БО  
СВ. ЕВАНГ. ІОАННЪ СВ. ЕВАНГ. МАТФ. ЕЙ



ПРЕСВЯТАМ ТРОИЦЕ, БОЖЕ НАМ СЛАВА ТБВ





И МИРЪ. ВЪ ЧЕЛОВЪЦ

МАРКЪ







ПРЕСВѢТАЯ ТРОИЦЕ, БОЖЕ НАШЪ, СЛАВА ТЕБѢ

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СВ. ЕВАНГ.

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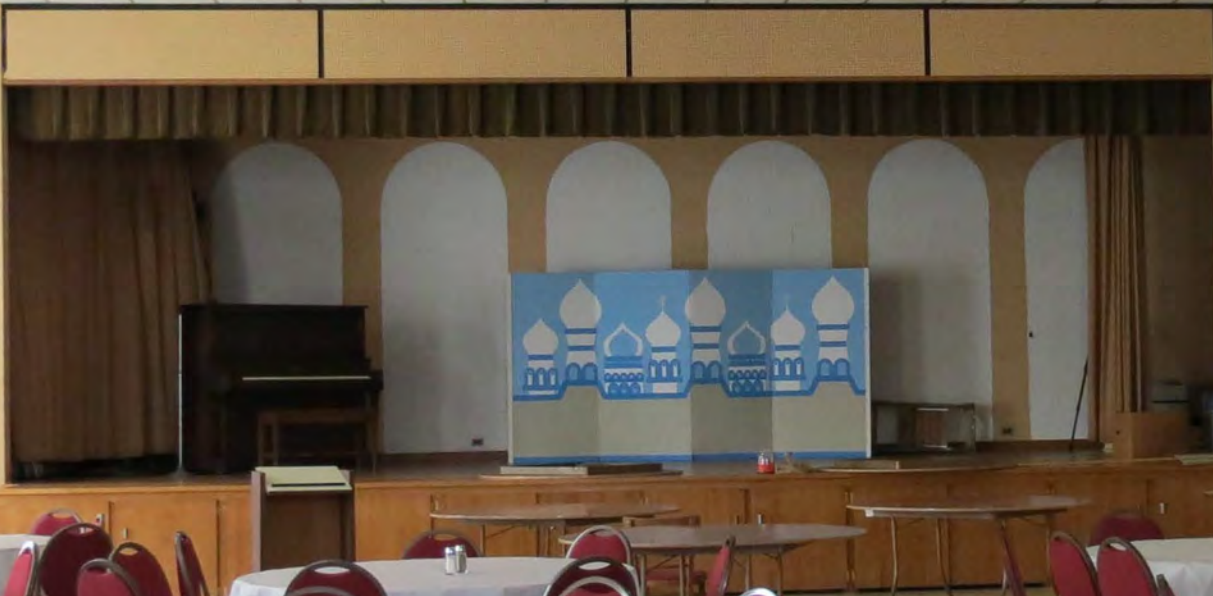
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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION

PROPERTY NAME: Sts. Peter and Paul Orthodox Church Complex

MULTIPLE NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: NEW YORK, Erie

DATE RECEIVED: 6/26/15      DATE OF PENDING LIST: 7/21/15  
DATE OF 16TH DAY: 8/05/15      DATE OF 45TH DAY: 8/11/15  
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 15000513

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: N SAMPLE: N SLR DRAFT: N NATIONAL: N

COMMENT WAIVER: N

ACCEPT     RETURN     REJECT    8-10-15 DATE

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

Entered in  
The National Register  
of  
Historic Places

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.



**Parks, Recreation  
and Historic Preservation**

ANDREW M. CUOMO  
Governor

ROSE HARVEY  
Commissioner

RECEIVED 2280

JUN 26 2015

Nat. Register of Historic Places  
National Park Service

22 June 2015

Alexis Abernathy  
National Park Service  
National Register of Historic Places  
1201 Eye St. NW, 8<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Washington, D.C. 20005

Re: National Register Nominations

Dear Ms. Abernathy:

I am pleased to submit the following eight nominations, all on disc, to be considered for listing by the Keeper of the National Register:

Babylon Library, Suffolk County  
Barna C. Roup Residence, Wyoming County  
Main School, Rockland County  
St. Francis de Sales Parish Complex, Ontario County  
Cottage in the Pines, Orange County  
Sts. Peter and Paul Orthodox Church Complex, Erie County  
East Hill Historic District, Erie County  
Daniel and Henry P. Tuthill Farm, Suffolk County

Please feel free to call me at 518.268.2165 if you have any questions.

Sincerely:

Kathleen LaFrank  
National Register Coordinator  
New York State Historic Preservation Office