

265

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service  
National Register of Historic Places  
Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determination for individual properties and districts. See instruction 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 St. Thomas Episcopal Church

other names/site number 5AL.260

2. Location

street & number 607 Fourth Street [N/A] not for publication

city or town Alamosa [N/A] vicinity

state Colorado code CO county Alamosa code 003 zip code 81101

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this  nomination  request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant  nationally  statewide  locally. (  See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Georgina Cortez State Historic Preservation Officer 03/03/03  
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation, Colorado Historical Society  
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  See continuation sheet.

Edson A. Beall Signature of the Keeper 4-22-03 Date of Action

St. Thomas Episcopal Church  
Name of Property

Alamosa County, Colorado  
County/State

**5. Classification**

**Ownership of Property**

(Check as many boxes as apply)

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

**Category of Property**

(Check only one box)

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

**Number of Resources within Property**

(Do not count previously listed resources.)

Contributing

Noncontributing

1	0	buildings
0	0	sites
0	0	structures
0	0	objects
1	0	Total

**Name of related multiple property listing.**

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

N/A

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

0

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Function**

(Enter categories from instructions)

Religion:religious facility  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Current Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions)

Religion:religious facility  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**

(Enter categories from instructions)

Mission/Spanish Colonial Revival  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Materials**

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Concrete  
walls Stucco  
\_\_\_\_\_  
roof Asphalt  
other Terra Cotta  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Narrative Description**

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

St. Thomas Episcopal Church  
Name of Property

Alamosa County, Colorado  
County/State

## 8. Statement of Significance

### Applicable National Register Criteria

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

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

### Criteria Considerations

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

Property is:

- A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B** removed from its original location.
- C** a birthplace or grave.
- D** a cemetery.
- E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F** a commemorative property.
- G** less than 50 years 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 Buildings Survey  
# \_\_\_\_\_
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record  
# \_\_\_\_\_

### Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

Architecture

### Periods of Significance

1926

1930

### Significant Dates

1926

1930

### Significant Person(s)

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

### Cultural Affiliation

N/A

### Architect/Builder

Fisher, William Ellsworth

Fisher, Arthur Addison

### Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State Agency
- Federal Agency
- Local Government
- University
- Other

Name of repository:

Colorado Historical Society

St. Thomas Episcopal Church  
Name of Property

Alamosa County, Colorado  
County/State

### 10. Geographical Data

**Acreage of Property** less than one

#### UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1.     13     423440     4147100  
      Zone   Easting     Northing

2.           Zone   Easting     Northing

3.           Zone   Easting     Northing

4.           Zone   Easting     Northing

[ ] See continuation sheet

#### 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.)

### 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Tawney L. Becker / Executive Director (additional material by OAHF staff)

organization Alamosa Uptown & River Association                      date November 26, 2002

street & number Cole Park                                              telephone 719-589-3681 x.103

city or town Alamosa                                              state Colorado                      zip code 81101

### Additional Documentation

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 the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

### Property Owner

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

name Episcopal Diocese of Colorado (The Rt. Reverend William J. Winterrowd [Bishop])

street & number 1300 Washington Street                                              telephone 303-837-1173

city or town Denver                                              state Colorado                      zip code 80203-2008

**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, DC 20013-7127, and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 1

St. Thomas Episcopal Church  
Alamosa County, Colorado

---

**DESCRIPTION**

St. Thomas Episcopal Church is located just west of the northwest corner of State and Fourth Street, one block north of Alamosa's busy commercial and historic downtown area. The tan stuccoed building has two, asphalt-shingled, gabled front sections with smaller shed-roof and flat-roof side projections. Designed in the Mission Revival style, the gabled ends have curvilinear parapets highlighted by reddish brown coping and semi-circular window openings prevail. The building's highly irregular plan (a series of juxtapositioned rectangles) reflects its multiple uses and two construction periods. The prominent Denver architectural firm of William E. Fisher and Arthur A. Fisher designed the 1926 parish hall, its façade flush with the concrete sidewalk. The large elongated footprint of the parish hall includes an extension off the east containing classrooms and restrooms, and a slender elongated section to the west set back from the street containing the kitchen and boiler room. A small corridor west off the kitchen connects to the 1930 sanctuary addition. (Efforts to determine who designed the addition have not been successful.) While both the parish hall and sanctuary face south onto Fourth Street, the church's elongated footprint is set back from the street. A tan stuccoed wall (part of the 1930 construction) starts at the southwest corner of the parish hall, runs westward along the sidewalk, and then rises to create a flat-arched gated entryway in front of the sanctuary. Above this entry gate is a wooden sign with white lettering that reads "ST. THOMAS EPISCOPAL CHURCH 9:00 AM." Two decorative wrought iron panels form the double leaf gate that leads to a small garden area and the church's narthex. Despite a few alterations, the building retains its integrity of location, setting, design, workmanship, materials, feeling and association.

Parish Hall

The parish hall has a partial basement and is 95 feet long and 51 feet wide. The main portion of the parish hall is a closed eave gabled roof with smaller slightly pitched shed roof (almost flat) extensions off the east and west sides. A small stuccoed chimney straddles the ridgeline at the north end, while a taller stuccoed chimney pierces the west slope. Three pairs of small gabled-roof dormers pierce the gable roof near the eave line--one pair on the east slope and two pairs on the west slope. A very small gabled roof dormer pierces the west slope near the ridgeline behind the southern parapet wall. Each dormer contains a three-vertical-light window. With the exception of the west wall of the kitchen extension and the rear (north) elevation which have straight-headed windows, the rest of the building [including the classroom extension] has round-arched windows. The original windows are double hung sash with 6/6 lights; some have been replaced with a single fixed sash. All windows are wood frame with stuccoed brick sills. Although the stuccoed walls were repainted in the mid-1990s, the paint is peeling badly.

The parish hall faces south. A curvilinear parapet capped with terra cotta coping marks the slightly projecting central entrance bay. A variety of neutral colored ceramic tiles frame the central entrance, which is recessed. Decorative wrought iron at the upper corners of the vestibule create a round-arched effect. Providing a little surface ornamentation that breaks the expanse of the smooth stucco wall, the tile extends above the entry in a stepped pattern culminating in a Latin cross. Two small light fixtures flank this tile surround. Five steps within the alcove lead up to the double-leaf, eight-paneled wooden doors. There are three round-arched windows on the façade. A window penetrates each of the two slightly inset walls formed by the east and west slopes of the gabled roof. Another window penetrates the flat roofed parapeted wall of the classroom extension to the east.

**United States Department of the Interior**  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places**  
**Continuation Sheet**

St. Thomas Episcopal Church  
Alamosa County, Colorado

Section number 7 Page 2

---

The east side of the parish hall (the classroom extension) is punctuated with six evenly spaced windows, five large and one small. All these windows appear to have their original multi-light glazing.

The asymmetrical north (rear) elevation has a stepped gabled end. A coping of stuccoed "brick on edge" caps the stepped parapet wall. A small chimney extends through the peak of the coping. On each side of the chimney wall there is large window. Two more windows pierce the east wall--a tall narrow window with another smaller window piercing the wall of the classroom extension. To the west is the stuccoed wall of the boiler room that projects northward.

The west elevation of the parish hall is broken by the projecting kitchen extension. At the southwest end, three arched openings (two windows and one door) face the small garden area between the parish hall and the church. The paneled wooden door with its rounded top serves as secondary entrance to the parish hall. A single round-arched window pierces the stuccoed wall that projects at a right angle from the parish hall wall and is the south end of the kitchen. A stuccoed wall with a wooden gate fills the void between the west wall of the kitchen and the east wall of the sanctuary. The gate leads to a door that accesses the corridor connecting the sanctuary to the parish hall (via the kitchen). There are two windows on the west side of the kitchen extension.

### Sanctuary

Measuring 71 feet long and 28 feet wide, the south-facing sanctuary addition continues the Mission Revival style with curvilinear parapets and smooth stuccoed wall surfaces. (Although the church's "flattened" curvilinear parapet walls differ from the parish hall's rounded one). The concrete coping of the parapet is painted reddish brown in contrast with the tan stuccoed walls.

From the wrought iron gated entry, a wide concrete sidewalk and then a slight concrete ramp flanked by a metal pipe railing lead to the projecting central front entry (narthex). A simple curving parapet above the double leaf entrance marks the narthex. A simple wooden lintel surmounts the two carved wooden eight-panel doors. Two elaborate wrought iron pendant light fixtures flank the entrance, with another (original) wrought iron light fixture mounted to the wall above the doors. The wall of the sanctuary has a little more elaborate and broken curvilinear parapet and its symmetrical facade ends in two buttress-like projecting wall extensions. There is a round arched louvered vent on the sanctuary wall above the narthex, and a wooden modified Celtic cross straddles the roof's ridgeline.

Seven Gothic arched stained glass windows with diamond lights illuminate the east and west sides of the nave. Three were installed on the east side and four on the west side. These windows are from the 1882 church that was located east of the parish hall and was torn down the same year the sanctuary was built in 1930. There is an additional window on the east side of the sanctuary, a rectangular wood frame double hung sash (4 vertical lights over 1) that illuminates the corridor to the vestry.

On the north end (rear elevation) there are three openings framed in wide board surrounds. Centered on the back wall of the sanctuary is a rectangular wood frame window (double hung sash with six over six lights) with a smaller louvered vent above it in the gable end. The north wall of the corridor, which is recessed, contains a rectangular window (double hung sash with five vertical lights over one).

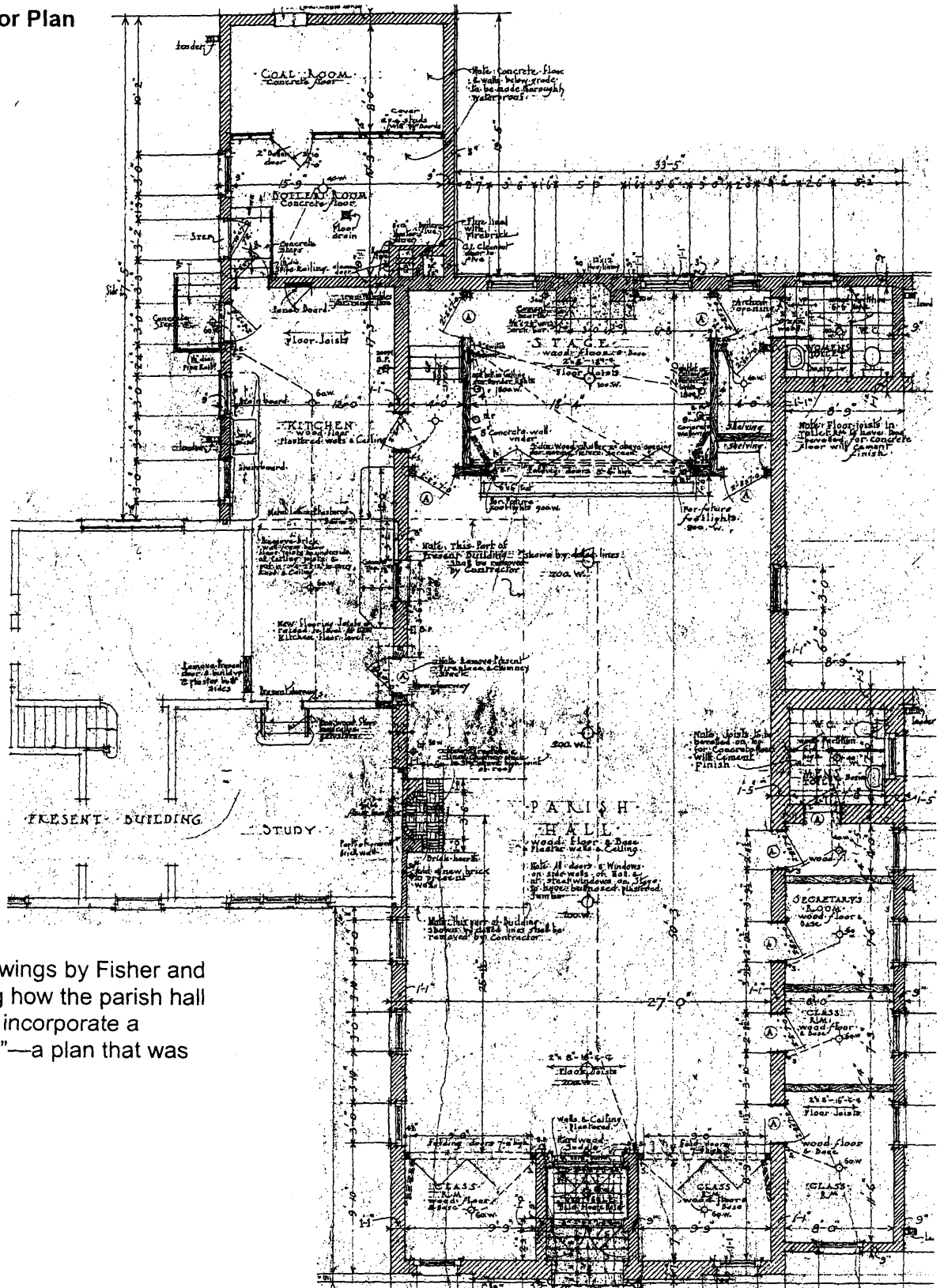
United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

St. Thomas Episcopal Church  
Alamosa County, Colorado

Section number 7 Page 3

Parish Hall Floor Plan



Architectural drawings by Fisher and Fisher illustrating how the parish hall was designed to incorporate a "present building"—a plan that was not realized.

**United States Department of the Interior**  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places**  
**Continuation Sheet**

St. Thomas Episcopal Church  
Alamosa County, Colorado

Section number 7 Page 4

---

Interior

The main interior space of the parish hall includes a fireplace with a stepped chimney breast on the west wall and a similar one on the north wall at the back of a stage area. This stage area to the north was partitioned in the late 1950s to create a library/office space. This office, which includes a walk-in closet and a bathroom (on a lower level, 2 steps down) on its east side, is accessed through a door and hallway with a short stair off the northwest corner of the large hall. The storage space for folding tables and chairs is still accessible at the bottom of this wall, below the former stage. The classroom extension runs along the east side of the main hall. This series of rooms includes two classrooms intended for Sunday school, a bathroom, and the vicar's office. At the south end of the building are sliding partitions that create small multi-purpose rooms on either side of the entrance vestibule. Each of the classrooms and these multi-purpose rooms contain original mounted blackboards. There is a dropped ceiling in place in the main hall that was installed in the 1970s.

In January 1985, there was a fire in the parish hall in the library/office [originally the stage area]. Shortly thereafter, the room was remodeled with new paneling and a lowered ceiling. Also at this time wrought iron bars were added to the west kitchen windows to prevent intruders. Through a doorway located near the northwest corner of this area is the large kitchen extension designed to accommodate community functions in the parish hall. There is a large pass-through serving window between the kitchen and the parish hall. Beyond this to the north and off the kitchen lies the entrance to the brick boiler room, which includes a basement level. The building is currently heated by a boiler and steam heat system, but a coal chute indicates that it was originally heated with coal. The rest of the parish hall has a crawl space rather than a full basement below it. At the northwest corner of the kitchen is a door to the corridor that connects to the east side of the sanctuary. Within this corridor there are two doors, one on the north that accesses the open parking area behind the church complex, and the other on the south that accesses the front garden area.

The interior of the sanctuary is notable for the striking dark wood trim, wooden railing, and a main cross-beam with a prominent centered wood crucifix that separates the nave from the chancel. The plaster walls are painted white, and non-original iron wall sconces and hanging light fixtures illuminate the area. Beyond the choir area lies the sacristy with the altar, which had to be refurbished after a fire in September 1984, in which the original Bishop's chair from Denver and the old organ was lost. Shortly afterwards, the back wall of the altar was moved back approximately three feet and lights were added on the side walls of this alcove. The pews and apparently the ceiling were replaced at this time as well. Along the east side of the building, running north, is a hallway that connects these areas to the vestment room, which lies behind the altar at the north end of the sanctuary.

Alterations

Unfortunate arson fires in 1984 and 1985 prompted many of the interior alterations, as indicated above. In addition to these changes, a few alterations have also occurred on the exterior. Both the parish hall and the sanctuary were constructed with red tile roofs. It is not known when the tiles were replaced, but in a photograph estimated to be from the mid-to-late-1960s and another from the early 1970s, asphalt shingles are covering both roofs. A single light, fixed sash replaces some of the round-arched double-hung 6/6 windows in the parish hall. The round arched secondary entrance door near the southwest corner is a 1989-1990 replacement.



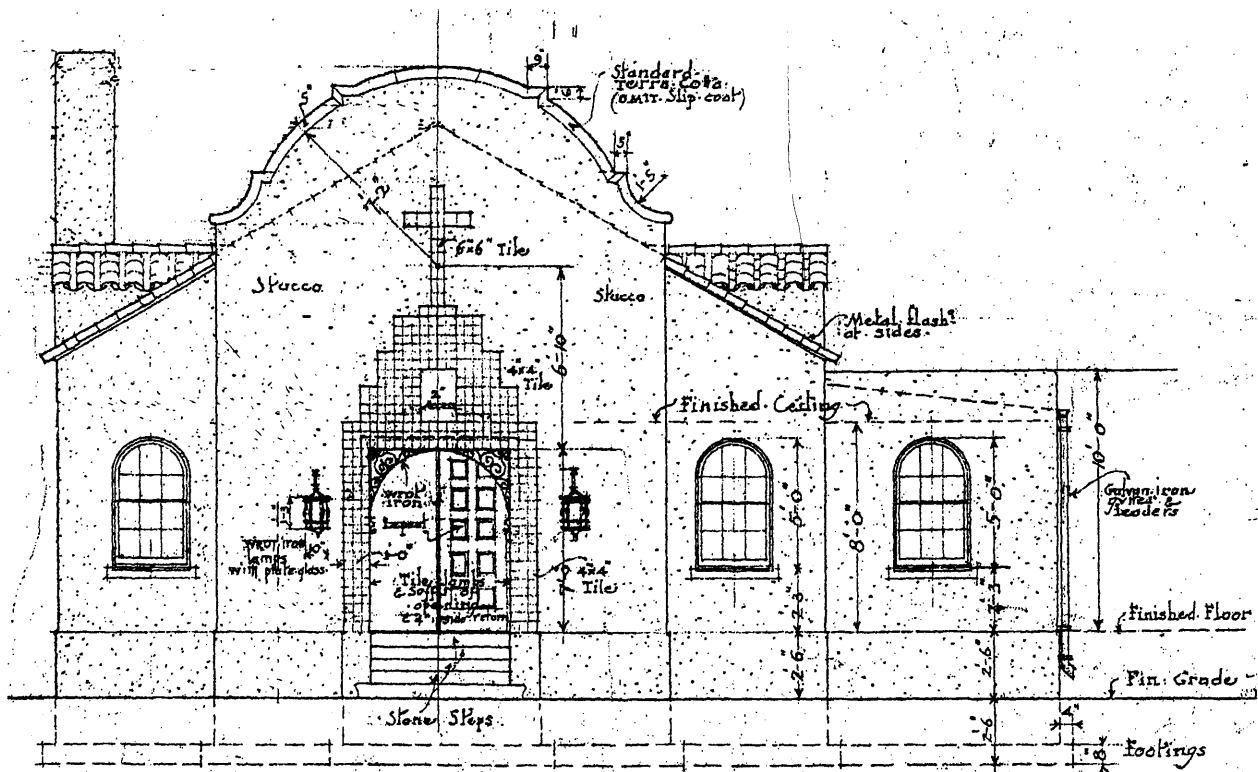
United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

St. Thomas Episcopal Church  
Alamosa County, Colorado

Section number 7 Page 5

The original architectural drawings and historic photographs from the 1930s and 1940s show the parish hall with two decorative wrought iron pendant light fixtures flanking the entrance. It is not known when these light fixtures were replaced with the current simpler and smaller ones. The two wrought iron pendant light fixtures currently flanking the sanctuary entry do not appear in the October 1930 consecration booklet photograph, although they look very similar to ones that mark the parish hall entry in the same photo. It is not known when the fixtures were re-located to the sanctuary. However in an early 1970s photograph, the light fixtures are gone from the parish hall and are visible on the sanctuary.



FRONT ELEVATION

This architectural drawing illustrates the decorative elements highlighting the entry of the parish hall.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

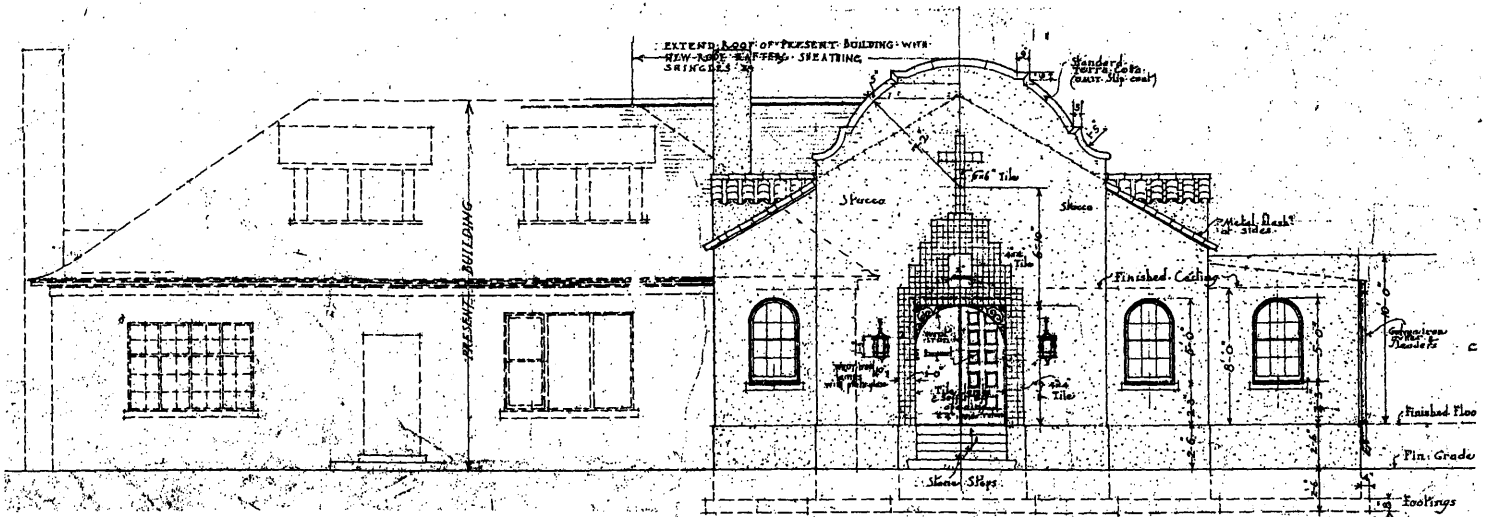
National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

St. Thomas Episcopal Church  
Alamosa County, Colorado

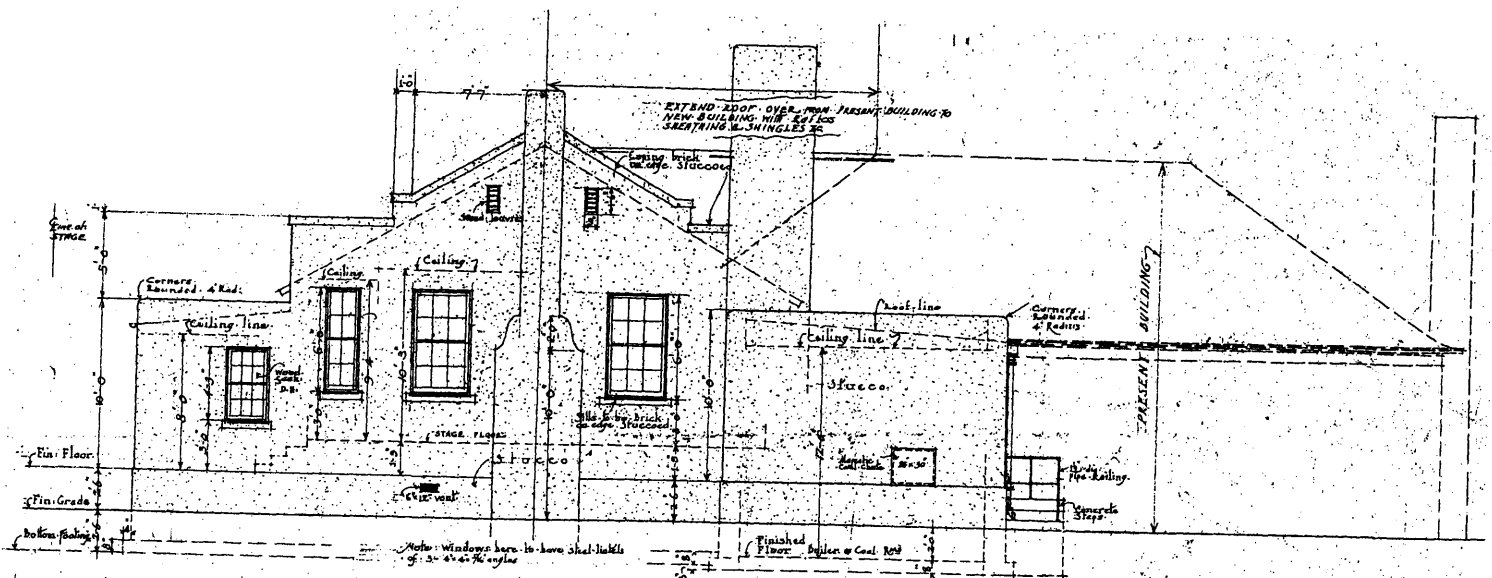
Section number 7 Page 6

Architectural Drawings for the Parish Hall

In 1924, Fisher and Fisher drew plans for the parish hall that incorporated an existing building. Two years later, the parish hall was built and the "present building" was gone.



FRONT ELEVATION



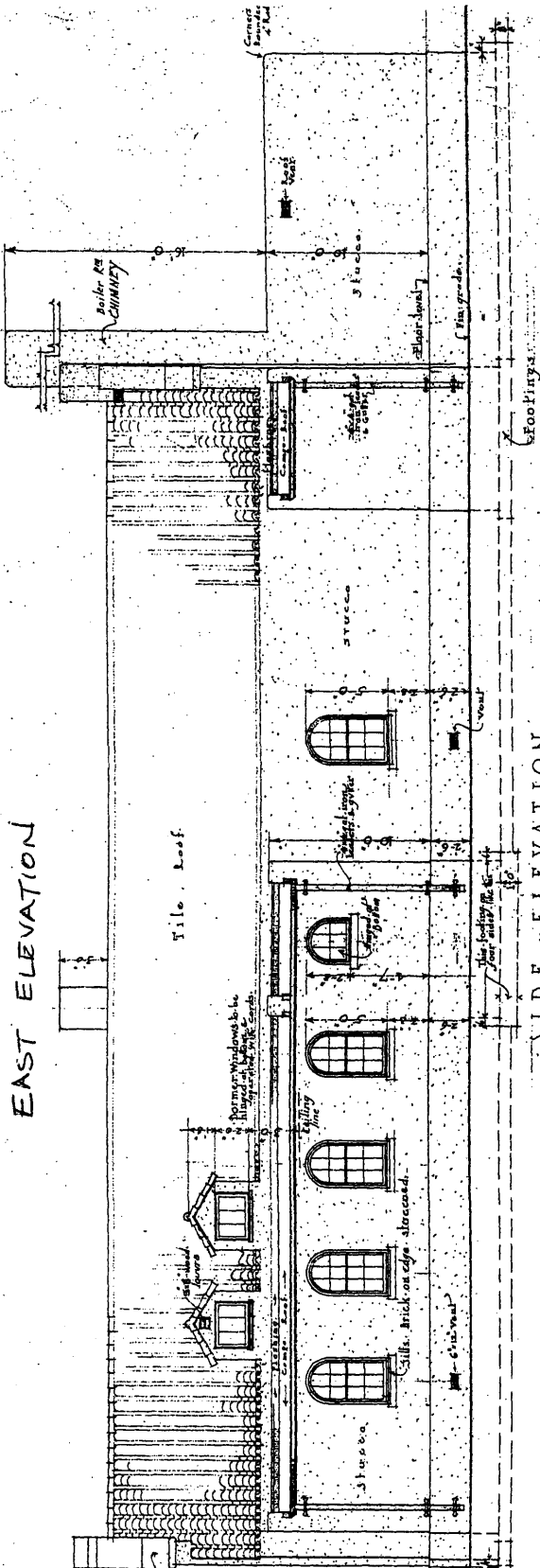
REAR ELEVATION

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

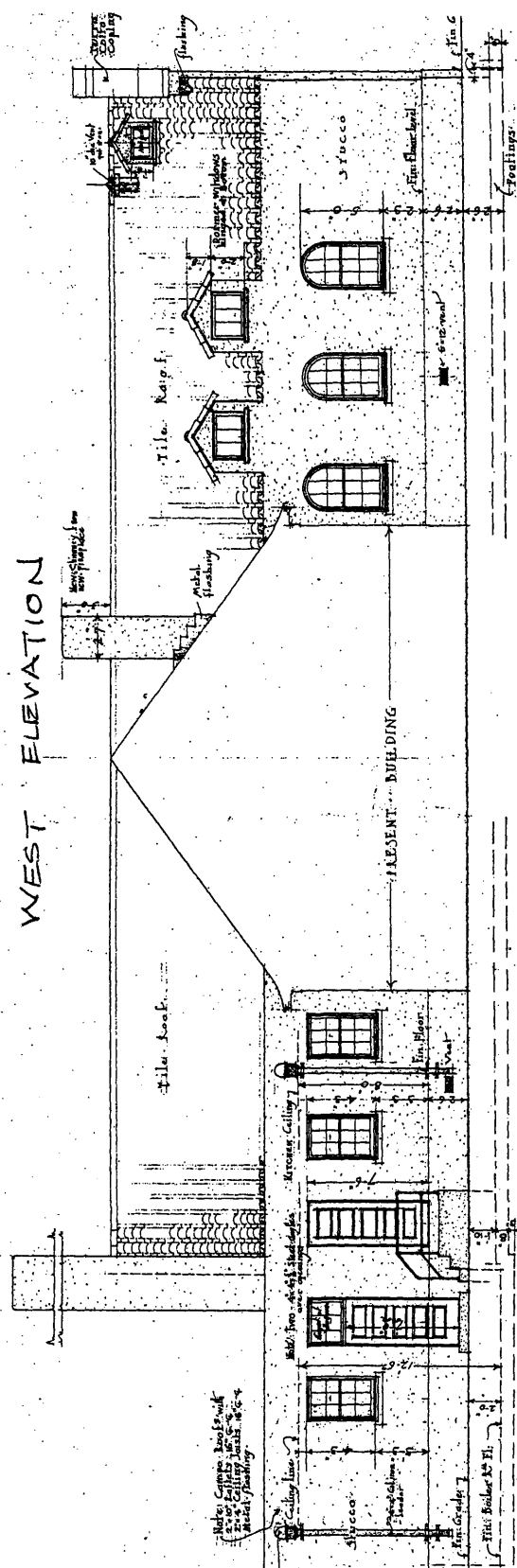
National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 7

St. Thomas Episcopal Church  
Alamosa County, Colorado



SIDE ELEVATION



WEST ELEVATION

**United States Department of the Interior**  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places**  
**Continuation Sheet**

St. Thomas Episcopal Church  
Alamosa County, Colorado

Section number 8 Page 8

---

**SIGNIFICANCE**

St. Thomas Episcopal Church is eligible for listing in the National Register under criterion C for its architectural significance. The building possesses the distinctive characteristics of the Mission Revival Style with its curvilinear parapets, smooth stuccoed walls, and round-arched window openings. The building represents the work of the prolific Denver architectural firm of William E. Fisher and Arthur A. Fisher, and it is the only identified example of their work in Alamosa County. The building is one of the few religious properties designed by this partnership, which was noted more for the fine residences and commercial buildings it created for Denver's social and financial elite. The use of the Mission style was unusual for the architectural firm, which was renowned for its Mediterranean style designs. When the firm did utilize the Mission style, it was with an infusion of classical elements that created an eclectic design. As a religious property that derives its primary significance from architectural distinction, criteria consideration A applies.

The numerous Spanish missions constructed between 1769 and 1823 throughout California by Franciscans and native labor provided the inspiration for a new architectural style that emerged at the end of the nineteenth century. The "California Building" designed in 1893 for the World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago introduced the Mission Style. Popular for domestic and public architecture, the Mission Revival style is easily recognized by the curvilinear-shaped gabled wall and the semicircular arched openings used in windows, doors and arcades. The style is characterized by simplicity with smooth walls that are usually stuccoed or plastered and devoid of any ornamentation. St. Thomas Episcopal Church is one of four examples of the Mission style identified in Alamosa County, all of which are in the town of Alamosa, and each presenting its own distinctive interpretation of the style.

Two other examples of the style are located one block west on Fourth Street, and both are listed in the National Register. The 1937 Alamosa County Courthouse (the largest WPA project in the county) exemplifies the Mission Revival style. The U-shaped red brick courthouse with its tile roof is the largest expression of the style. Sacred Heart Catholic Church was constructed between 1922 and 1928 in a cruciform plan with stuccoed walls and an arcade connecting it to the rectory. The Catholic church possesses Spanish Baroque wall surface ornamentation and elaborately shaped (*rosa*) clerestory windows that make it more representative of Spanish Colonial Revival architecture. Another example of the Mission Revival style can be found on the campus of Adams State College. Rex Gymnasium, a 1939 PWA project, is a large stuccoed brick building painted white with a tile roof and numerous straight-headed windows. Despite its almost endless gently curving parapet wall, the building confines the use of the round arch to blind arches over the five doorways. St. Thomas is the smallest and simplest expression of the Mission Revival style, but it also possesses an unusual twist. The 1930 sanctuary addition (constructed several years after the Fisher-designed 1926 parish hall) incorporates the pointed-arched windows from the old 1882 church. It is not known why the addition deviated from the round-arched windows that are so prominent on the parish hall. The re-use of these Gothic windows could have been homage to the old church or a cost saving measure during the financially hard times brought on by the Depression. Whatever the reason, these uncharacteristic windows are not readily evident from the street and do not detract from the building's overall expression of the Mission Revival style. A large two-story building filling the adjacent lot to the west obscures the west side of the sanctuary. Vegetation, stuccoed garden walls, and the longer Parish Hall make a view of the sanctuary's east side difficult.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

St. Thomas Episcopal Church  
Alamosa County, Colorado

Section number 8 Page 9

---

Historical Background

The history of St. Thomas Episcopal Church begins with the early history of Alamosa, the largest town in the San Luis Valley, which was founded by railroad interest in 1878. Although Bishop John Spalding had visited the young cattle and railroad town several times for services, the first regular service of the Episcopal Church in Alamosa was held on Christmas Day 1881. Reverend Melvin Honeyman, a deacon of four day's standing who went to Alamosa at the request of the Bishop, officiated holy communion in the Occidental Building (which was located at the corner of Main and State Street, where the American National Bank Building now stands). In the following weeks, there was considerable activity which resulted in the organization of St. Thomas Mission on January 16, 1882 "by signatures of twelve gentlemen." In October of that year the town of Alamosa gave the church certain lots at the corner of State and Fourth streets with the requirement that a church be built within eighteen months. Construction of a rectory was begun on October 23 and completed in a little less than a month at a cost of \$548.11. Then work began on the church, described as "made of a combination of adobe bricks and boards." The cost of the church was \$976.24, which included not only the building, but also the pews and an organ. Eventually a new brick rectory was constructed behind (to the west of) the church and the first rectory became the Guild Hall. But more ambitious construction plans were on the horizon.

According to architectural drawings dated September 1924 (and revised twice in November that same year), the Denver architectural firm of William E. and Arthur A. Fisher was contracted to draw plans for a parish hall incorporating the brick rectory. However, when the parish hall was built, the rectory was not a part of the project and it does not appear on the 1929 Sanborn Map. The parish hall was constructed in 1926 immediately west of the 1882 church. The city of Denver provided more than the architects for the project. Included in the architectural drawings is a proof sheet from the Denver Terra Cotta Company for the coping along the parapet.

Upon its completion, the parish hall was described as "an ornate building of Spanish design, highly ornamental as well as useful." Indeed, the use of the parish hall was not confined to church purposes. It was also used by the Rotary and Kiwanis for club meetings, and for general municipal dinners. One local newspaper provided the following glowing assessment of the building:

The Parish House has been called '*multum in parvo*,' being scientifically designed to minister to a multitude of community uses—Sunday school, Scout work, daily vacation Bible School, musicales, banquets and social gatherings. Its seating capacity is 340. In the kitchen is \$1,000 equipment with a steam table to insure hot dishes.

The parish hall was only the first unit in a grand building plan designed by Fisher and Fisher, which would not be realized during the Great Depression. A new church would be built, not on the grounds of the old one as the architects projected, but to the west on the land where the second rectory had stood. The 1882 church, described by local newspapers as "one of the oldest buildings in Alamosa," held its last services on Sunday, June 8, 1930. Demolition of the old church began the following week, when construction of the new sanctuary on the other side of the parish hall began. The parish hall was used temporarily until the new church was completed.

**United States Department of the Interior**  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places**  
**Continuation Sheet**

Section number 8 Page 10

St. Thomas Episcopal Church  
Alamosa County, Colorado

The old church was torn down to make room for a filling station. Funds from the lease of the site financed the building of the new sanctuary. According to newspaper accounts, the old church was to be replaced "with a modern auto service company filling station to be established by a nationally known oil company under a ten year lease." The rector, Rev. Harry S. Kennedy, arranged for the building of a replacement house of worship to be constructed using funds obtained from the oil company lease of the corner property. One newspaper stated that "as a result the congregation will soon have a highly artistic and modernized house of worship built on the Spanish type of architecture." (Although there is no mention of who designed the new sanctuary.) Another newspaper article noted the interesting objects found beneath the foundation of the old adobe and frame church. Workmen found more than 100 old-brand whiskey and beer bottles, a pair of old-fashioned crutches, three sets of coal oil lamps and brackets, and copies of newspapers so old that they crumpled when exposed to the air.

While the old church was being dismantled, construction on the new sanctuary began. Both projects took very little time to complete. The first services in the new church were held on Sunday, September 7, 1930. The dedication/consecration services on Sunday, October 5th received some good press coverage, along with a photograph.

The new edifice is of a Spanish type of architecture in conformity with a connecting parish house built four years ago, the two buildings have a combined frontage of about seventy-five feet on Fourth street, just off of State street....An ornamental high wall, surmounted with an arched gateway in the center, surrounds an open area-way thru [sic] which the worshipers reach the entrance to the church proper. A red tile roof covers both buildings. The rector's study, Sunday school rooms, conference rooms and an auditorium and stage are included in the church and parish house, all equipped and furnished to meet the needs of the members....The dedication of the new church was featured by special musical and song offerings, the reading of a historical sketch of the activities of the members during the last forty-eight years and a special sermon by the Rev. Mr. Kennedy [the rector]. Many pioneers who rode horseback or in horse-drawn vehicles to celebrate the opening of the original Episcopal church were present at the dedication.

The parish hall and the sanctuary have been in continuous use by the congregation and have been an active part of the community.

*William E. Fisher and Arthur A Fisher, Architects*

[The book *Denver: The City Beautiful and its Architects, 1893-1941*, provides biographical information on the two architects, from which the following was taken.] William Ellsworth Fisher (1871-1937) arrived in Denver in 1885, and by 1890 was listed as a draftsman in the offices of Balcomb & Rice, who designed many of Denver's late 19<sup>th</sup> century residential and commercial buildings. William opened his own office in 1892 with early projects that included remodeling office buildings and designing "Dutch Colonial Revival 'bride delights.'" He worked alone until 1901 when he formed a partnership with Daniel Riggs Huntington. The next five years were busy designing residences, apartments, terraces, commercial structures and club buildings. Huntington moved to Seattle, Washington in 1905.

**United States Department of the Interior**  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places**  
**Continuation Sheet**

Section number 8 Page 11

St. Thomas Episcopal Church  
Alamosa County, Colorado

William's youngest brother, Arthur Addison Fisher (1878-1965), joined the firm in 1907. In 1910, Arthur became a full partner and the firm was known thereafter as William E. Fisher and Arthur A. Fisher, Architects until the suicide of William in 1937. Arthur's travels in southern Europe brought a refinement of Mediterranean style design, for which the firm became renowned.

During the new firm's first decade, it gained a reputation for design ability and received commissions for several notable commercial structures. The firm designed the (1910) Railway Exchange Building, the (1911) Denver City Tramway Building, the (1911) A. C. Foster Building, and the (1919) McPhee & McGinnity Building (all listed in the National Register). They designed residences for many prominent Coloradoans, including the (1916) Charles Boettcher Summer Home (also listed in the National Register).

By 1920, the firm had become one of the largest and most influential architectural firms in the Rocky Mountain region. The firm continued to design major commercial structures in Denver's central business district and important new residences in Polo Club and Cherry Hills Village. The firm was also chosen to design (1921) Morey Junior High School and (1926) South High School. Hospital design, which would later become a specialty of the firm, began during this period with the (1925) University of Colorado School of Medicine, (1926) Presbyterian Hospital, and (1926) B'nai B'rith Infirmary of National Jewish Hospital.

Among other achievements, William E. Fisher served as president of the Colorado A.I.A. in 1915, was elected Regional Director of the A.I.A. in 1922, and was honored as an A.I.A. Fellow. William also founded the Mountain Division of the Architects' Small House Service Bureau, which sold low-cost, well-designed house plans throughout the United States. Arthur served on the Executive Committee of the Denver Planning Commission after its creation in 1929, and he helped prepare many of its publications.

Despite the long list of credited buildings, it is interesting to note how few churches or church-related structures the firm designed. These include the (1909) St. Stephens Episcopal Church in Denver, a brick "Jacobean-inspired design"; the (1911) Issac Solomon Synagogue at the Jewish Consumptive's Relief Society in Lakewood; and the (1926) Tower of Memories at Crown Hill Cemetery also in Lakewood (and listed on the National Register). There is some irony in this as Arthur had a love of church architecture that prompted him to form a bureau and issue a publication on the design of small churches for the Church Art Commission of the Episcopal Diocese of Colorado. Both he and his wife were active in the Church of the Ascension, which he designed.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

St. Thomas Episcopal Church  
Alamosa County, Colorado

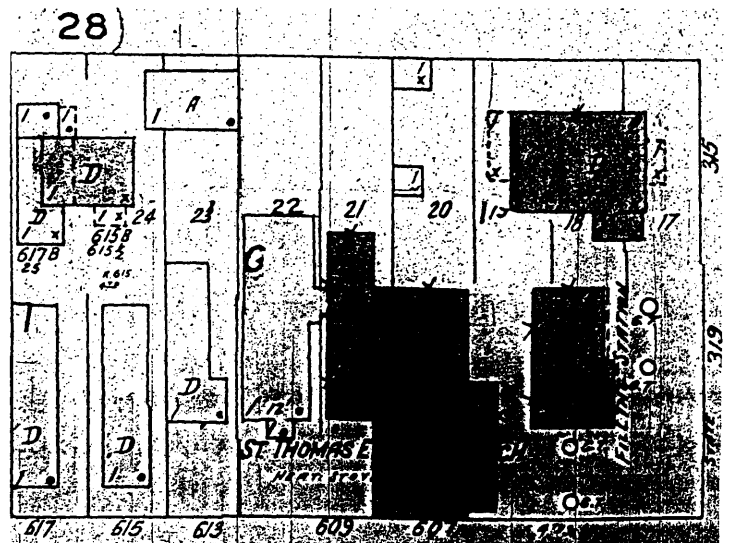
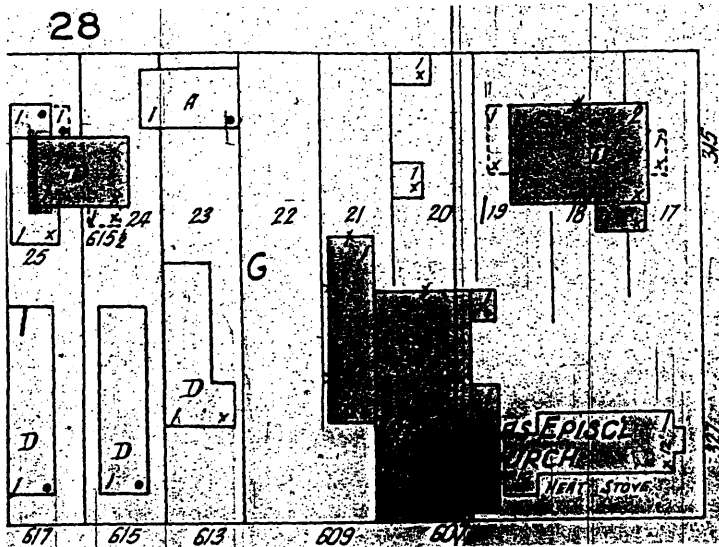
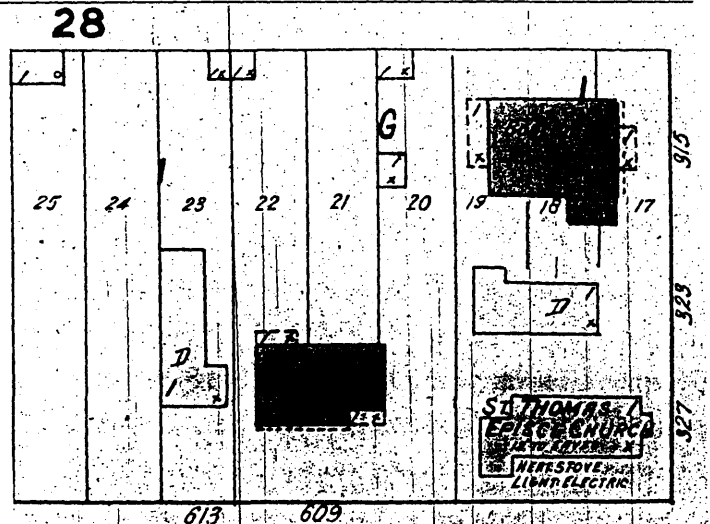
Section number 8 Page 12

Sanborn Maps

October 1919 (at right)

November 1929 (below)

March 1946 (bottom right)





United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number 9 Page 13

St. Thomas Episcopal Church  
Alamosa County, Colorado

---

**BIBLIOGRAPHY**

Breck, Allen Du Pont, Ph.D. *The Episcopal Church in Colorado, 1860-1963*. Denver: Big Mountain Press, 1963.

DeSouchet, Leota and DeSouchet William, compilers. "A History of St. Thomas Episcopal Church at Alamosa, June 1992." Copy on file at the Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation, Colorado Historical Society, Denver, Colorado.

Noel, Thomas J. and Norgren, Barbara S. *Denver: The City Beautiful and its Architects, 1893-1941*. Denver: Historic Denver, Inc., 1987.

Sanborn-Perris Map Co. "Alamosa, Colorado." Pelham, New York: Sanborn-Perris Map Co.

Whiting, Robert W. "Saint Thomas, Alamosa, 1977-1961," *Coloradoan Episcopalian*. 21 (March 1961):16.

Newspapers

"Episcopal Church Opened at Alamosa," *Alamosa Daily Courier*, 6 October 1930.

"New Church to be Dedicated Here Tomorrow," *Alamosa Daily Courier*, 4 October 1930.

"Church News: St. Thomas Episcopal Church," *Alamosa Journal*, 3 October 1930.

"Church News: St. Thomas Episcopal Church," *Alamosa Journal*, 5 September 1930.

"Saint Thomas Church Is Being Dismantled," *Alamosa Daily Courier*, 9 June 1930.

"St. Thomas' Church Will Be Taken Down," *Alamosa Journal*, 6 June 1930.

"Parish House is First Unit of Building Plan," *Alamosa Journal Prosperity Journal*, 1927.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

St. Thomas Episcopal Church  
Alamosa County, Colorado

Section number 10 Page 14

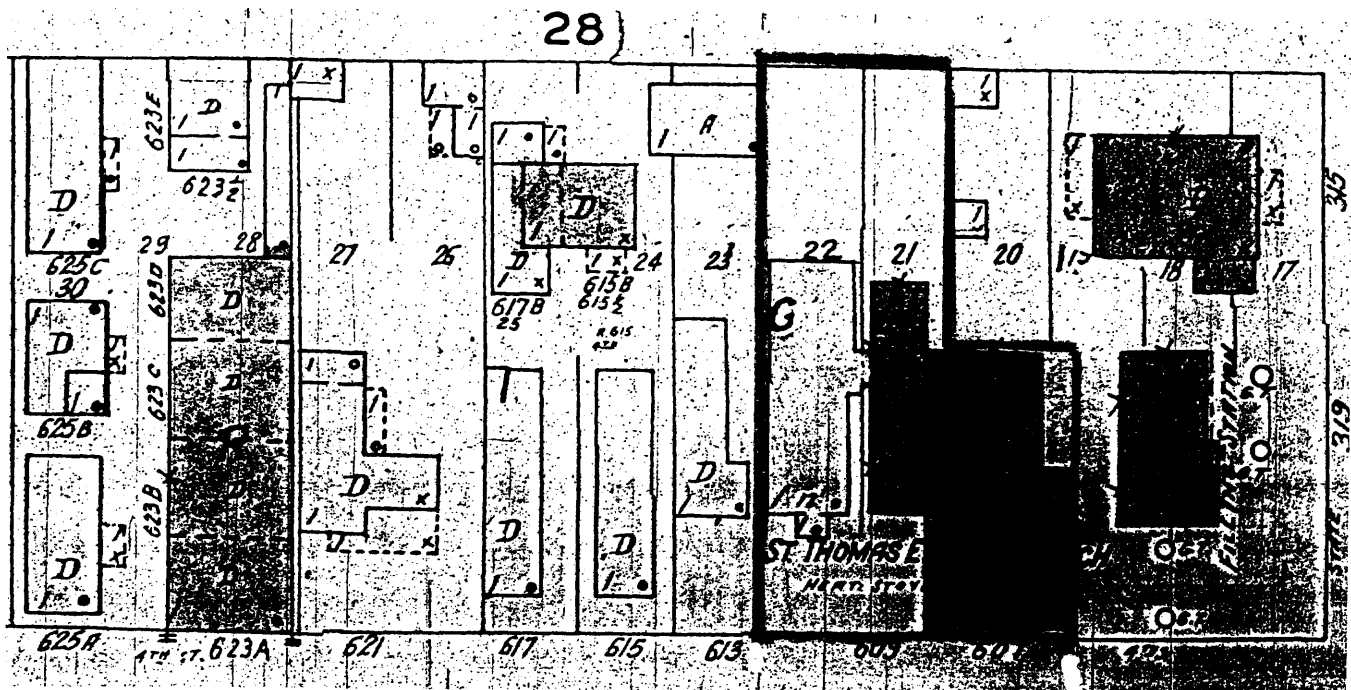
GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The west 8.9 feet of the south half of Lot 19, the south half of Lot 20, and all of Lots 21 and 22, Block 28, Original Townsite of Alamosa

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

The nominated property includes the parcel of land historically associated with St. Thomas Episcopal Church.



Sanborn Map - March 1946

**United States Department of the Interior**  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places**  
**Continuation Sheet**

St. Thomas Episcopal Church  
Alamosa County, Colorado

Section number \_\_\_\_ Page 15

---

**PHOTOGRAPH LOG**

The following information pertains to all photographs:

Name of Property: St. Thomas Episcopal Church  
Location: Alamosa, Alamosa County, Colorado  
Photographer: Tawney Becker  
Date of Photographs: March 2002  
Negatives:

Photo No.                      Photographic Information

---

- 1 Façade (south end) of Parish Hall, with low wall and gate; camera facing NW
- 2 Facade (south end) of Parish Hall with Sanctuary to the west; camera facing N
- 3 Façade of Parish Hall with kitchen and wall partially visible to the west; camera facing N
- 4 Parish Hall entrance; camera facing N
- 5 Façade (south end) of Parish Hall with Sanctuary visible to the west; camera facing NW
- 6 East side of Parish Hall; camera facing W-NW
- 7 East side of Parish Hall, camera facing NW
- 8 South façade of complex; camera facing NE
- 9 Partial view of west side of Parish Hall; camera facing E
- 10 South end of kitchen with gateway to connecting corridor between Sanctuary and Parish Hall; camera facing N
- 11 South façade of Sanctuary through opening in stucco wall; camera facing N
- 12 Detail of Sanctuary entrance; camera facing N
- 13 North end (back) of complex; camera facing S
- 14 North end (back) of complex; camera facing S-SW
- 15 Interior - west wall of Parish Hall with fireplace and windows; camera facing W-SW
- 16 Interior - southwest corner of Parish Hall with original folding panels to temporary classroom and west exit; camera facing W-SW
- 17 Interior - southeast corner of Parish Hall. Note folding panels, doorways to classrooms to the east and dropped ceiling; camera facing SE
- 18 Interior - window in classroom on east side of Parish Hall; camera facing E
- 19 Interior - classroom window on east side of Parish Hall; camera facing SE
- 20 Interior - north end of Parish Hall, showing conversion of the stage area into a library/office through the addition of a wall; camera facing N
- 21 Interior - northwest corner of kitchen in Parish Hall with doors to boiler room and connecting corridor to Sanctuary; camera facing NW
- 22 Interior - fireplace on north wall of library/office (formerly the stage area); camera facing NW
- 23 Interior - the chancel of the Sanctuary; camera facing N
- 24 Interior - close-up of chancel showing 1980s alterations; camera facing N

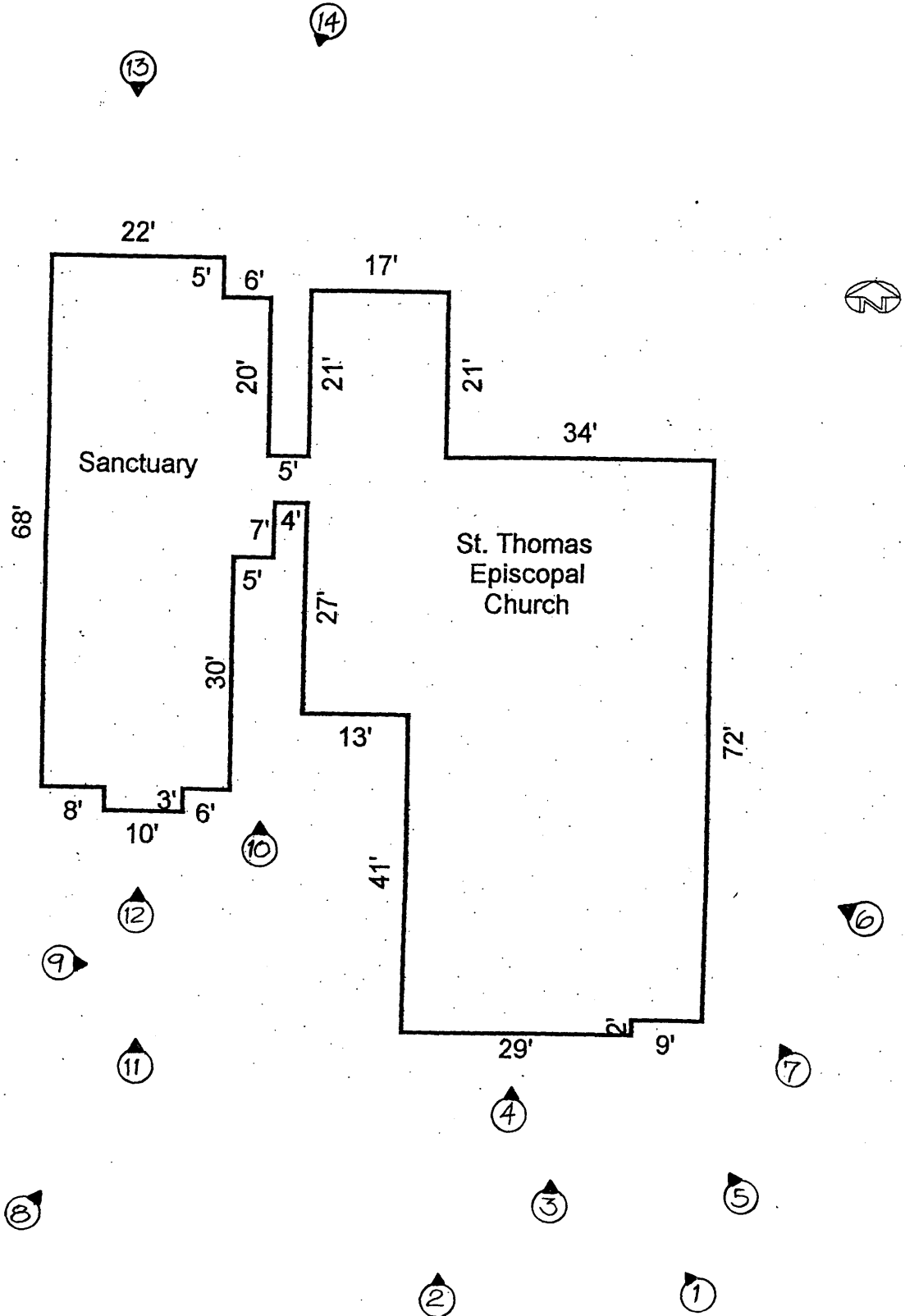
United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

St. Thomas Episcopal Church  
Alamosa County, Colorado

Section number \_\_\_ Page 16

Footprint of building with photograph arrows



United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

St. Thomas Episcopal Church  
Alamosa County, Colorado

Section number \_\_\_ Page 17

USGS TOPOGRAPHIC MAP  
Alamosa East Quadrangle, Colorado  
7.5 Minute Series

