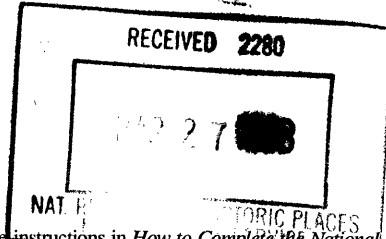


United State Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form



390

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 any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable". For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional 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 Immaculate Conception Church and School

other names/site number _____

2. Location

street & number 1024 South 24th St.

not for publication []

city or town Omaha

vicinity []

state Nebraska

code NE

county Douglas

code 055

zip code 68108

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, 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.)

Wanda Summer

Signature of certifying official

3/16/98

Date

Director, Nebraska State 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 this 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): _____

Sandra McClelland

5/6/98

Signature of Keeper

Date of Action

Immaculate Conception Church and School
Name of Property

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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	
3		buildings
		sites
1		structures
		objects
4	0	Total

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

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instruction)

RELIGION: religious facility.
church school.
church related residence
RECREATION AND CULTURE: auditorium

RELIGION: religious facility.
church related residence
RECREATION AND CULTURE: auditorium
VACANT/NOT IN USE

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)

LATE VICTORIAN: Romanesque Revival

foundation concrete
walls brick
roof asphalt
other steel, stained glass

Narrative Description

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

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 patters 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 a 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
EDUCATION
ETHNIC HERITAGE: European

Period of Significance

1912-1952

Significant Dates

1912, 1926, 1952

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above.)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Nachtigall, Jacob

Primary Location for Additional Data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository:

Immaculate Conception Church

Immaculate Conception Church and School
Name of Property

Douglas Co. NE
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property approximately 1

UTM References (place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet).

	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
1.	15	252960	4568680	3.			
2.				4.			

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 Sarah Esser, Intern Alley Poyner Architecture with technical assistance from Melissa Dirr, City Planning
organization Alley Poyner Architecture date December 1997
street & number 1213 Jones Street telephone (402)341-1544
city or town Omaha state NE zip code 68102

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 the SHPO or FPO.)

name/title Immaculate Conception Church
street & number 1024 South 24th Street telephone (402) 342-1074
city or town Omaha state NE zip code 68108

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 the 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 Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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Immaculate Conception Church and School

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DESCRIPTION

The Immaculate Conception Church in South Omaha was built in 1926. It is an accurate representation of Romanesque Revival Architecture in the American Midwest. The church sits on the southeast corner of Twenty-Fourth and Bancroft Streets. The property also contains a school, which was built in 1913, and an auditorium, built in 1952. The auditorium, while not quite 50 years old at the time of this nomination is a typical early 1950's building and contributes to the site as a whole. The auditorium sits behind the church to the west. The school building sits to the south of the church, with a parking lot separating the two buildings. A fence surrounds the eastern boundary of the property, paralleling Twenty-Fourth Street, and the northern boundary, paralleling Bancroft Street.

Church

Immaculate Conception Church was built in the Romanesque Revival style of architecture. The church is a red brick building, approximately two stories tall with two towers. The front is symmetrical about a center line. Between the two towers there is one apex. Running along the top is a decorative corbel. On the front there are three stained glass windows, including the giant rose window. The rose window was installed in 1932.

The towers have symmetrical massing and are about three stories tall (approximately 35 feet). Their roofs are concave pyramidal, which was evident in the revival of Romanesque architecture, but was not typical of Romanesque architecture. The towers have decorative bulls-eyes, quatrefoils, and cornices.

The church has a recessed central entry-way and arched windows, both typical of Romanesque Revival architecture. There are numerous string courses on the church, the lowest of which is a six inch wide belt course of poured concrete. The next string course runs atop the windows, which are semi-circle arches. These arched windows outlined with a string course are typical of Romanesque Revival architecture. This string course separates the Romanesque Revival from other types of architecture. In all there are three string courses on the church (more on the towers).

Though there have been repairs done to the brickwork, none of the changes are noticeable on the exterior of the church. The only significant noticeable change was to the roof. During the energy crisis of the 1970s the roof was rebuilt to enclose the six dormers. These dormers are no longer visible on the outside of the church, but on the inside the windows are still visible and are illuminated by light bulbs rather than natural light.

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Upon entering the main doors of the church, the Narthex is revealed. To the right (on the north side) stairs lead up to the choir loft. The choir loft houses the three stained glass windows located on the front of the building. The two smaller windows picture two saints with musical instruments. The larger rose window is unique in that the center pictures the head of the boy Jesus a typical depiction used by the Franciscans; and not Jesus on the crucifix, which is the typical Jesuit depiction of Jesus. There are sixteen quatrefoils in the window, and thirty-two triangles. The choir loft is equipped with an organ. There are six stained glass windows on both the north and south sides of the sanctuary. These stained glass windows depict saints. Interestingly, all the windows on the north side of the sanctuary picture female saints, whereas the south side is dedicated to male saints. This may be due to an old Polish custom which states that women must worship on the north, the men on the south. The stained glass windows were added to the church in 1932.

There is a marble altar in the front and center of the sanctuary. There is also a marble slab on the floor of the sanctuary at the entrance from the Narthex. The decorations in the church are simple and distinguished. There are ten columns in the central portion of the church as well as ten attached columns. The original altar was incredibly ornate. This altar faced the wall and was changed during Vatican II. The choir loft has since been rebuilt, and the organ replaced. All the columns are original though they have been repainted.

In 1949 the galvanized iron coverings were taken off the roofs of the towers, and they were replaced with sixteen-ounce soft copper. The first remodeling of the church occurred in 1960. At this time, the roof was reshingled, and the dormers removed. From the interior, the windows appear to show through to the outside, when in actuality they are back-lit. The old chimney was taken down and a new 20 foot one was constructed.

In September 1967, the interior underwent a major renovation. The church updated itself as prescribed by Vatican II. The altar was moved away from the back wall and turned around so that the priest could face the congregation during service. The new altar is made of marble. The Tabernacle was removed from the altar, and recessed in the back wall. Another lectern was added to the sanctuary for the lay lecturer. The sanctuary was also redecorated. Everything was repainted and new carpet installed. A marble slab was put on the floor in the entrance to the sanctuary. The last rows of pews were taken out to put in a Narthex. The Narthex went under the new choir loft, which was rebuilt because of age. Other mechanical alterations include compliance with fire codes in 1988. In 1991 the electrical systems for the school and church were separated. Air conditioners were donated to the church at this time as well. In July of 1993 the bell system was repaired after lightning struck the bell tower.

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SCHOOL

The school has no specific architectural style. It is a two-and-a-half story red brick building. The exterior sports three string courses, which mirror those of the church. The string courses from both match, which helps unite the buildings as one property. The entry way is recessed, and has a keystone atop the doorway. The keystone is reiterated above the upper windows on the school. There is a decorative cornice near the top of the exterior.

The interior classrooms are organized on a split level plan with central stairs. The first floor housed four classrooms as did the second. The basement has a boy's and girl's club meeting room, and a larger pastor's residence was on the first floor, both at the rear of the building. An addition was constructed in 1954. It contained kindergarten facilities, bathrooms, a laundry room, four additional rooms for nuns, a small library, chapel, and sacristy. The addition was made on the rear of the school.

In 1957 the school was remodeled. The front doors were replaced with doors with panic bars. The bathroom doors were also replaced with fireproof doors and windows with wire glass. Heavy metal grates were placed over the windows on the north side of the school building. The Polish sign on the front, stating the name of the school in that language, was covered by a decorative sign saying "Immaculate Conception". On the interior new supports were added to the stairs, and the classrooms were modernized, to some extent. Despite these alterations, the interior of the school remains intact, though it is no longer an active school or mother house. The building is currently not in use, but it retains a high degree of historic integrity.

AUDITORIUM

In 1950 the existing auditorium (which was the moved old church) was torn down so that a new one could be built. The existing auditorium was built in 1952 and is located north and west from the church with an alley dividing the two buildings. It is a typical 1950's structure, made out of steel, brick and concrete. The one story blonde brick building has banded windows. There is a steel cross on the front or north facade of the building. Also, a vintage 1950's neon sign advertising the bowling alley located in the basement is original to the building. The interior houses several meeting rooms, a recreation facility with a stage, and in the basement, the bowling alley. This building was constructed at a cost of \$301,752.31. The only alteration to this building is the resurfacing of the gym floor in 1989. Currently the auditorium is still used by the church, and the bowling alley recently reopened to the public.

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FENCE

The property, including the church and the school, is enclosed by a fence that extends down 24th Street. The fence starts at 24th and Bancroft, and continues south for approximately two-thirds of a block, as well as attending west for approximately 116 feet. The fence was constructed in 1926 to tie the site together, in the same year the existing church was built. The fence is comprised of 15 brick pillars approximately two-and-a-half feet tall connected with simple wrought iron balusters. The fence serves to unite the complex as a whole.

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Immaculate Conception Church and School complex (including church - 1926, school - 1912, auditorium - 1952) is eligible for nomination to the National Register under criterion A. The site as a whole contributes to the Polish ethnic heritage and settlement of this portion of South Omaha while the school is also significant for its contribution to Omaha's private educational system. The church itself is significant not only under criterion A, but also under criterion C as a representative example of Romanesque Revival architecture. The school educated the primarily Polish youth in the congregation during the historic period. The three buildings encompass approximately two-thirds of a block, north to south; a bit more east to west. The church is located on the northeast corner of that block, facing east, the school is to the left or south of the church, also facing east, and the auditorium is behind the church and the school across a narrow alley dividing the property. A fence encompasses the perimeter of the church and school.

HISTORY

Polish immigrants began settling in South Omaha before 1900. This area was especially attractive to them because of the employment opportunities provided by the booming livestock industry and packing houses. South Omahan's could also find work at Union Pacific Railroad. South Omaha was an independent city organized in the 1880s and prospered because of the livestock and packing industries. South Omaha was annexed into the city of Omaha in 1915.

Many Polish people in South Omaha attended the Franciscan order St. Joseph's German Catholic Church (because of the Prussian occupancy of Poland, the Polish were able to understand the German mass with little trouble). The Polish population became so prominent that the Franciscans granted them their own parish. The new congregation bought land lots at the intersection of Twenty-Fourth and Bancroft Street, less than one mile from St. Joseph's church. There they built the original church in the early 1890s. It was a two-story wood frame building that contained

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classrooms and pastor's quarters in the basement, and the sanctuary with choir loft on the first floor.

By 1901 a new school building was needed, because the population outgrew the classrooms in the basement. The new school was built next to the church (south). It, too, was a small wood framed structure. The church population again boomed when in 1912 a viaduct was opened at Bancroft Street. This united Polish people from both sides of the Union Pacific train tracks that so divided their community. The sudden influx of parishioners prompted the congregation to replace the frame school building with a new and more permanent brick school house. The original one was razed, and in its place they built the existing two story brick school. It has minimal architectural detail and was designed by Omaha architect Jacob M. Nachtigall.

As the Polish community grew, their settlement became more permanent. This led to the construction of the existing church. The church was built just north of the original frame church, which was moved to the site of the current auditorium to be used as a meeting house. They continued to use the meeting house until 1950. In that year it was torn down and the existing auditorium was completed in 1952 on the same site. The new brick church was designed by Jacob M. Nachtigall, in the Romanesque Revival style. At the same time the church was built, a fence encompassing the church and the school was also constructed which tied the site together as one unit.

The church which was originally built to house the Polish parish has seen many changes in its surroundings and congregations, yet that parish is still strong. It currently caters to a wide mix of denominations, in a primarily Hispanic community. The church continues to bring communities closer together. The school and the auditorium also housed the meetings and provided the space for the Polish community to educate their youth and gather and enjoy social occasions. The school educated the students in the Polish community providing a culturally unique student population. This was the only parish in the area established by the Polish immigrants with the sole purpose to serve their language and culture needs. The school provided the atmosphere in which to do this.

ARCHITECTURE

Immaculate Conception Church was built in 1926 in the Romanesque Revival style which was predominant during the ninth through the twelfth centuries. The revival peaked in the 1860s in Europe. It peaked in the 1910s in America. Of the six thousand buildings in Omaha that have been surveyed, only fourteen are churches. Immaculate Conception is the only surviving church surveyed as Romanesque Revival. The church's exterior integrity is very strong and its interior integrity sufficiently conveys the building's architectural style to be eligible for the National Register

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Romanesque Revival Architecture is classified as mimicking the earlier Romanesque style which was predominant during the 9th through the 12th centuries. Although the revival peaked in the 1860s in Europe and the 1910s in America on the east coast, it took much longer for the style to prosper in the Midwestern states. Romanesque Revival architecture is known for arched windows and doorways. It is also known for having two towers, not necessarily of symmetrical massing, though usually. Romanesque Revival also, typically contains one apex between the two towers. The towers can be topped with either spires or concave pyramidal roofs, the latter being more popular. Rose windows are common in churches built in this style. Another common feature on Romanesque Revival is to top off the arched windows with a decorative string course.

The church exhibits arched windows, in accordance with Romanesque Revival ornamentation. There are numerous stained glass windows, one of which is a rose window. The rose window is located on the front (east) facade of the church. The church has two towers. The front facade is symmetrical about a center line. There is one apex between the two towers.

The school has no distinct style, but many distinguishing characteristics, such as the poured concrete beltcourse, which is mirrored in the church. Not to mention the upper stringcourse, which is also reiterated in the church. The auditorium is a typical 1950s building, made out of light brick, concrete, and steel. It has two unique characteristics. The first is a large steel cross located on the front facade of the auditorium. The second is a large neon sign attached to the side of the building, which advertises the bowling alley.

The church and school have one more unifying characteristic. The fence which is comprised of brick pillars (approximately three feet high) and wrought iron balusters and extends along the front of the complex, and along the side of the church. It was also built in 1926.

CONCLUSION

Omaha retains a wide variety of architectural styles. However, a majority of the churches are built in the Gothic style. Immaculate Conception is the best example of Romanesque Revival architecture in Omaha. Immaculate Conception, built for the Polish community has been adopted to accommodate religious, cultural and demographic changes, but still retains its historic integrity.

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Education in Omaha's public and religious schools generally catered to the student population's religious and ethnic heritage. Many private schools, especially religious schools, were organized to instill a sense of importance of their heritage. Immaculate Conception School was organized because of the needs of the parishioners to educate their children. The name of the school was engraved in concrete band above the main entrance in Polish and masses were regularly performed in Polish. Immaculate Conception was a spur of an existing German church; however this was not the education desired by parents for their children. Their new school and church fulfilled their needs and catered to their neighborhood.

The auditorium, though four years short of 50 years old, is a logical and important part of the story that is the history of the Immaculate Conception parish. The building evolved from the needs of the parish and though it is not yet 50 years old its contribution to the site is important in that it symbolizes the successful organization and abilities of the church to maintain and service their population. Before this building was erected the old frame church was used for an auditorium space as this was always an important ideal for the congregation. The construction of the current building contributes to the site because of this association.

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BIBLIOGRAPHY

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Fletcher, Bannister. A History of Architecture: Edition 17. Charles Scribner's Sons, New York, 1963.

City Planning Architects File. Nachtigall, Jacob M.

City Planning Survey

Harris, Cyril. Historic Architecture Sourcebook. McGraw Hill Book Company, New York, 1977.

Olson, James C. History of Nebraska. University of Nebraska Press, Lincoln.

Nebraska: A Guide to the Cornhusker State. Federal Writers Project. University of Nebraska Press, Lincoln.

BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The Immaculate Conception Church complex resides on lots one through eight and the north one-half of lot thirteen and lots fourteen through sixteen. These lots encompass the church, school, and auditorium and is the legal description of the property.

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

The boundary chosen includes the land historically associated with the church and its growth. It also is the present day boundary of the property.

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The following information is the same for all photos: Immaculate Conception Church and School; Douglas County, Nebraska; Sara Esser, photographer; September, 1997; City Planning Department. The following is site specific information for each photo:

1.
Immaculate Conception Church
View of east facade, camera facing west
2.
Immaculate Conception Church
View of south east facade, camera facing northwest
3.
Immaculate Conception Church
View of interior side altar
4.
Immaculate Conception Church
View of interior side altar
5.
Immaculate Conception School
View of east facade, camera facing west
6.
Immaculate Conception School
View of southeast facade, camera facing northwest
7.
Immaculate Conception School
View of date block, northeast corner, camera facing west

8.
Immaculate Conception Church and School
view of fence, camera facing northwest
9.
Immaculate Conception Auditorium
view of north, camera facing south
10.
Immaculate Conception Auditorium
view of north, camera facing south