

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

For NPS use only

received OCT 11 1984

date entered NOV 8 1984

National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form

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

1. Name

historic St. Matthew's School

and/or common St. Matthew's School

2. Location

street & number 7 W. Robie Street N/A not for publication

city, town St. Paul N/A vicinity of

state Minnesota code 22 county Ramsey code 123

3. Classification

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

4. Owner of Property

name Parish of St. Matthew

street & number 490 Hall Street

city, town St. Paul N/A vicinity of state MN 55107

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Ramsey County Courthouse

street & number 15 W. Kellogg Boulevard

city, town St. Paul state MN 55102

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Historic Sites Survey of St. Paul and Ramsey County has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date 1980-1982 federal state county local

depository for survey records Ramsey County Historical Society, 75 W. 5th St., #323

city, town St. Paul state MN 55102

7. Description

Condition

excellent
 good
 fair

deteriorated
 ruins
 unexposed

Check one

unaltered
 altered

Check one

original site
 moved date N/A

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

St. Matthew's School, built in 1901-1902 at 7 W. Robie Street, is located in a residential neighborhood on St. Paul's West Side, south of the Mississippi River. Adjoining the 1901-1902 school building are two newer wings, built in 1925 and 1928. The school complex shares a large corner site with St. Matthew's Church (1969) and a parking lot. A portion of the property is bounded by a Victorian cast iron fence.

St. Matthew's School is a 2½ story, seven bay building constructed of stretcher bonded, red pressed brick on a limestone foundation. The building was designed by St. Paul architect John F. Fischer, and is stylistically an eclectic Victorian design with a French Second Empire-inspired Mansard roof. St. Matthew's is one of the oldest school buildings still standing in St. Paul and is one of the few non-residential buildings in the city with a Mansard roof. It was built at an estimated cost of \$23,000. The building has a symmetrical design dominated by a central four story square entrance tower with a pyramidal slate covered roof topped by a cross. The roof of the tower has four small gabled dormers and round corner pinnacles with conical caps. The first story of the tower has a rounded arched entrance protected by a circa 1928 gabled roof entrance porch. Above the entrance is a limestone panel incised with the school's name. The second story level of the tower has a group of small rectangular double hung windows topped by a small statue of St. Matthew recessed in a rounded arched niche. The upper two stories of the tower feature rounded arched window openings and brick corbelling at the eaves. The outer bays of the main facade have segmental arched window openings at the first story and rounded arched window openings on the second story. The slate covered Mansard roof is broken by several gabled roofed dormers with rounded arched 2/2 sash. The four bay side walls feature rectangular window openings. The building has a smoothly dressed limestone water table and sills, and decorative brickwork beneath the eaves.

The 1901-1902 school building is in good condition and largely intact. Exterior alterations have included a new entrance porch and new doors, filling the main facade window openings with brick, and replacing the side wall windows. The building retains the original components of its design, including the slate covered Mansard roof with dormers, and the ornate entrance tower. In 1925 a school annex was constructed behind St. Matthews at an estimated cost of \$7,200. School facilities were expanded again in 1928 when a two story addition was constructed at the back of the original school building. The additions feature a Mission Revival style design and are confined to the rear of the original portion of the school. The architect(s) of the additions are unknown.

8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

Specific dates 1901-1902 **Builder/Architect** John F. Fischer

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

St. Matthew's School, built in 1901-1902 at 7 W. Robie Street on St. Paul's West Side, is architecturally and historically significant as one of the oldest school buildings standing in St. Paul, as an ornate Victorian school designed by prolific St. Paul architect John F. Fischer, and as a building which houses a parochial school established in 1887 to serve the West Side's large German immigrant community.

St. Matthew's parish was organized formally in March of 1886 to serve one of St. Paul's largest concentrations of German-speaking Catholic immigrants. In 1886-1887 the parish constructed its first church, a building designed by local architect Albert Zschocke (who also designed the Giesen-Hauser House at 827 Mound Street, a National Register site), and a rectory. The parish immediately established a parochial school housed in the upper basement of the church. This part of the building also was used as a residence for several Sisters of Notre Dame who taught at the school. About 1895, due to an increase in school enrollment, the basement school was expanded and the sisters moved into the rectory. The pastor, Reverend J.M. Solnce, moved into rented quarters to make it possible to convert the rectory into a convent.

In 1901-1902 St. Matthew's parish constructed the present school building next to the church. It was designed by a St. Paul architect, John F. Fischer, and built at an estimated cost of \$23,000. In 1925 a school annex was constructed at a cost of \$7,200. In 1928 the parish constructed a new two story school building linked to the original school. These alterations provided St. Matthew's School with a total of twenty classrooms, a gymnasium, stage, dressing rooms, and a kitchen. No significant alterations were made to the school complex after 1928. St. Matthew's 1901-1902 school building is the oldest structure still standing which was built by the parish. The convent was demolished in 1956 and the church was destroyed by fire in 1968. A new church was constructed on the site the following year.

The architect hired to design St. Matthew's School, John F. Fischer, first established a practice in St. Paul circa 1879. Fischer was a prolific architect who designed several houses, apartment buildings and commercial buildings in the city. He was also involved in the design of the Church of St. Agnes, constructed in 1910 at 550 W. Lafond Avenue and now on the National Register. Fischer worked alone and with various partners until his death in 1914 at the age of 62.

St. Matthew's School was included in a two year historic sites survey of buildings in St. Paul and Ramsey County conducted in 1980-1982. The survey identified St. Matthew's School as being one of the oldest and most ornate school buildings still standing in St. Paul. Other architecturally and historically significant buildings documented by the survey include nine public schools, seven private schools and three other parochial schools. Of the parochial schools, Assumption School at 68 W. Exchange Street is a National Register site. It is no longer in use as a school. St. Matthew's is more ornate and intact than the other two parochial schools: St.

(see continuation sheet)

9. Major Bibliographical References

- Building permit records, City of St. Paul Building Permits Division.
- Survey form and architect files, Historic Sites Survey of St. Paul and Ramsey County, Ramsey County Historical Society.
- Newspaper clippings file, St. Paul Public Library.
- Reardon, J.M. The Catholic Church in the Diocese of St. Paul. St. Paul, 1952.

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property Less than one

Quadrangle name St. Paul East Quad., Minnesota

Quadrangle scale 7.5

UTM References

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Verbal boundary description and justification

The nominated property is all that which is located on Lots 1 through 10, Block 78 in the addition to St. Paul entitled: "West St. Paul-Blocks 1-99."

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

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

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

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Susan Granger/Historic Sites Survey of St. Paul and Ramsey County

organization Ramsey County Historical Society

date March, 1984

street & number 75 W. 5th St.

telephone 612-222-0701

city or town St. Paul

state MN 55102

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national state local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

Russell W. Fridley

Russell W. Fridley

title State Historic Preservation Officer

date

9/26/84

For NPS use only

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

Entered in the
National Register

date

11-8-84

Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

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

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

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received

date entered

Continuation sheet St. Matthew's School

Item number 8

Page 1

Vincent's (now the American Indian Movement's Red School House) at 643 N. Virginia Street and St. Adalbert's at 260 Edmund Avenue. St. Matthews is one of the few non-residential buildings included in the survey with an eclectic Victorian design featuring a Mansard roof.