

United States Department of Interior  
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 Saint Bernard's Church Complex  
other names/site number N/A

2. Location

street & number 100, 108 South Church Street, 111 South Montgomery Street N/A not for publication  
city or town Watertown N/A vicinity  
state Wisconsin code WI county Jefferson code 55 zip code 53095

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.)

*Alcia L. Curran*  
Signature of certifying official/Title

*October 9, 2003*  
Date

State Historic Preservation Officer: WI

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 commenting official/Title

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

Saint Bernard's Church Complex

Jefferson

Wisconsin

Name of Property

County and State

**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.

See continuation sheet.  
 removed from the National  
Register.

other, (explain:)

*Edouard A. Beall*

11.26.03

*Edouard A. Beall*

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

**5. Classification**

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

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

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

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

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

contributing	noncontributing
3	1 buildings
	sites
	structures
	objects
3	1 total

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

N/A

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

0

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions)

RELIGION/ religious facility  
RELIGION/ church-related residence  
RELIGION/ church school

**Current Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions)

RELIGION/ religious facility  
RELIGION/ church-related residence  
RELIGION/ church school

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**

(Enter categories from instructions)

Gothic  
Late Victorian

**Materials**

(Enter categories from instructions)

Foundation Stone  
walls Brick

roof Asphalt  
other Stone

**Narrative Description**

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

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Section 7 Page 1

Saint Bernard's Church Complex  
Watertown, Jefferson County, WI

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## Description

The Saint Bernard's Church Complex consists of three contributing buildings and one non-contributing building. The contributing buildings are the church, completed in 1876, the school, completed in 1892 with a non-contributing addition constructed in 1960, and the rectory, built in 1883. The non-contributing building is a circa 1980 automobile garage. Also currently part of the church complex is the former home of Dr. Albert F. Solliday. The home is not historically associated with the church and is not included in the boundaries of this nomination. It served as a private residence until 1958, when St. Bernard's acquired it for use as a convent.<sup>1</sup>

The present day Saint Bernard's complex occupies an entire city block. The church sits on the northwest corner formed by the intersection of Main and South Church streets and is raised above street level with a terraced entry court. Over the years, the church has lost land to road expansions and the north side of the church now sits close to the sidewalk. The two residential buildings of the complex are located on South Church Street. The old school is at the corner of Main and Montgomery streets and the school addition is on Montgomery Street.

### **St. Bernard's Church (contributing)**

In the fall of 1872, the pastor of St. Bernard's, Reverend W. Corby, engaged New York architect Patrick Keely to design a new church for the congregation of Saint Bernard's. The new brick and stone building replaced a smaller, frame church constructed in 1846. The cost for the new church was to be \$85,000. When it was completed in 1876, the estimated expense was \$100,000, paid for with money, work, and materials provided by the parishioners.

Saint Bernard's Church is a towering edifice located on one of the highest points in the city. It is constructed in brick and stone in the High Victorian Gothic style popular during the period. The building is of dressed limestone blocks to the level of the watertable with brick above. Polychromy in the upper portions of the building is attained by contrasting red brick with the prevailing cream brick walls. Bands of stone are likewise used to achieve a varied surface effect and to demarcate floor divisions. The general dimensions of the church are 167 feet in length and 76 feet in width. The height at the top of the steeple of its tower is estimated at 210 feet.

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<sup>1</sup> The former home of Dr. Solliday is the subject of a concurrent NRHP nomination.

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The church is of the central nave with side aisles plan; the interior is clearly expressed in the exterior massing of the building. The centrally positioned tower and spire dominate the symmetrically designed main, east-facing façade. This tower projects forward from the building and it has corner buttresses that extend upward for two-and-one-half-stories. The first story of the tower consists of the main entrance vestibule of the church. The paired main entrance doors are relatively small, compared to the scale of the building and they are paneled and are slightly recessed from the main wall surface. Marking the transition between the plane of the tower's wall surface and the recessed plane of the doors are small Gothic style columns with foliated capitals that support a section of a decorative cornice that runs along the wall to the corner buttresses of the tower and also a polychromatic pointed arch brick surround. The arched stone tympanum above the main doors that is enframed by this surround is carved with the coat of arms of the founding order of this church, the Congregation of the Holy Cross. A large, tracery filled, pointed arch window opening located above the central doors compensates for the doorway's lack of visual emphasis and size. This opening is filled with three tall separate windows, each with a decorative head and all set within a single large lancet opening. The pointed arch-shaped area above the three windows contains smaller windows of various shapes. Placed just above this large window opening is a band of brick polychromy that gives the impression of arcading. Above this are two pointed arch window openings. A small cornice projecting above the two windows indicates the termination of the façade and the beginning of the base of the tower. The base of the square plan tower consists of the belfry and features two pointed arch openings per side. Within the openings are louvers with a trefoil ornament set within the arch. A larger cornice above this level marks the beginning of the spire. Centered at the base of each of the four sides of this spire is a clock that is set within a tabernacle-like surround. The clock, with its four faces, was installed in 1905.

The wall surfaces of the main façade located to the left and right of the projecting tower are mirror images of each other. Secondary pairs of entrance doors that are set within their own pointed arch, recessed openings are centered on each wall surface and they correspond to the position of the side aisles inside. Placed above each pair of doors are two lancet windows and above them is a triangular window with a trefoil design. This entire window grouping is contained within a visually defined and slightly projecting gable end.

The two side elevations of the church are also very similar to each other. Both elevations are divided into bays by buttresses and placed between each pair of buttresses is a large, tall and narrow pointed-arch window opening that is filled with a pair of lancet windows. These lancet windows are filled with pictorial stained glass that depicts scenes from the lives of the saints, and the arched space above each pair is filled with a smaller stained glass window of quatrefoil shape.

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On the interior, the altar is located within a polygonal apse that is revealed on the upper rear elevation of the building. Originally, this space contained a highly decorative, Gothic Revival altarpiece installed in 1877. The altar was designed and built by Joseph Voigt of Milwaukee. Original stained glass windows from the mid-1870s remain in the apse.

Located behind and to the sides of the apse are a small chapel, a passageway, and the original vestry. The chapel, located on the south side, was originally entered directly from the outside. A small entrance vestibule has been added at the juncture of the chapel and the church proper. With the exception of the terracing at the front of the church, this is the only major exterior alteration to the church building. The interior of the chapel has been remodeled; however, the remainder of the rear portion of the building retains many original features, including stained glass and doors with decorative cutouts in the transoms.

In the early 1890s the interior of the church "was finely decorated with paintings and statues."<sup>2</sup> Hermann Michalowski, a German-born artist from Milwaukee, painted murals in the church. Michalowski had arrived in Milwaukee in 1885 after being educated in the art academies of Germany. He came to the United States to work on the giant mural paintings popular at the time. Michalowski's specialty was figure painting. He later gained a reputation as a portrait painter. Originally, the church had four murals by Michalowski in the area of the altar. The St. Francis mural, painted in 1892, and the St. Bernard mural, painted in 1893, are located in the small altar areas to the left and right of the apse. The murals of St. Patrick and St. Elizabeth are located in the first bays of the apse.<sup>3</sup>

The 1910s saw further improvements: a new heating plant, new stained glass windows, and an electric system were installed. Redecorating of the church was underway in 1917.<sup>4</sup> Conrad Schmidt of Milwaukee decorated the ceiling and walls with a Caen stone effect. A new altar rail of stone and marble was also erected.<sup>5</sup>

In addition to remodeling of the altar area, the church has had changes in the area of the main entrance vestibule. The former vestibule ran across the width of the façade of the building. In 1979 the vestibule

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<sup>2</sup> "Rev. Father Condon Leaves for Paris," *Gazette*, 30 July 1895, in Charles J. Wallman, *Built on Irish Faith: 150 Years at St. Bernard's* (Watertown, St. Bernard's Catholic Church, 1994), 220.

<sup>3</sup> These two murals, together with faces of angels in the alcove near the ceiling at the sides of the altar, were painted over circa 1960. In 2003 they are in the process of restoration. In the 1960s, the original Gothic Revival style altar was also removed.

<sup>4</sup> "Rev. Father Hennessey Leaves Watertown," *Gazette*, July 1917, in Wallman, *Built on Irish Faith*, 278.

<sup>5</sup> Both the altar rail and the painting of the walls were lost to later remodeling of the interior.

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was enlarged, extending into the space under the choir loft, and modern etched glass doors were added to separate the vestibule from the church proper. However, the volume of the main body of the church remains intact, with piers faced with columns supporting the springing of the vaults of the ceiling of the nave and aisles. The upper portion of the choir loft also remains intact, with the balcony wall composed of cut-out ornamentation over a solid background.

In 1974 a fire broke out in the steeple. Fortunately, it was extinguished without damage to the remainder of the building. After the fire, the steeple was restored to its original appearance.

**St. Bernard's School (contributing)**

The two-story St. Bernard's school building at the corner of Main and Montgomery streets was completed in 1892 and replaced an earlier school building that had been constructed behind the church in 1857. The new Richardsonian Romanesque Revival style-influenced school was almost entirely paid for by one of the parish's main benefactors, Dr. Edward Johnson. Based on newspaper accounts, the new school building met the prevailing pedagogical designs. The newspaper reported: "The school is one of the finest in the city. The architecture is very fine, and the building is well ventilated and lighted and children who attend the school will find everything pertaining to the physical and intellectual wants well looked after..."<sup>6</sup>

The building's design is fairly utilitarian, with room divisions revealed on the exterior by the placement of banks of windows. The current windows are all modern replacements and a number of the original window openings on the main façade have now been bricked shut. Visual interest is added to the main, north-facing Main Street façade by the use of a cut stone water table and brick belt courses that mark window and floor levels. The building rests on a raised cream brick-clad basement story, the main walls above are also clad in cream brick, and an overhanging cornice supported by small brackets encircle the edge of the school's hip and deck roof. The centered main entrance on Main Street is given visual prominence. The entry pavilion steps out slightly from the main wall surface of the façade. A short flight of steps leads to the semi-circular-arched main entrance opening, which contains a pair of entrance doors surmounted by a multi-light arched transom. Placed above the entrance opening is a pair of tall, narrow windows whose common lintel consists of a cut stone name and date plaque that reads "St. Bernard's School 1892." These windows extend from the level of the top of the first floor windows to just below the level of the encircling cornice. Projecting above the level of the cornice is a pedimented gable containing a large semi-circular multi-light window that is identical in size and

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<sup>6</sup> Gazette newspaper article recorded in Charles J. Wallman, Built on Irish Faith: 150 Years at St. Bernard's, 210.

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design to the transom above the main entrance doors. Attached to the sides of the entry pavilion, beginning at a level just below the heads of the second story windows and extending upward to the middle level of the pedimented gable, are cylindrical brick projection with rounded ends. A stone cross caps the pediment.

The architect of the 1892 school building is unknown but the building contractor was Mat Franzen.<sup>7</sup> In the 1910s the school building was enlarged by excavating underneath the building and adding a play hall. A second major remodeling took place in 1929. The building was expanded to the south by 13 feet and the building was brought up to modern code and fireproofed. The building also received a new kitchen and hall.

A large, non-contributing, Modern Movement style, one-story addition was constructed to the south of the 1892 school building in 1960. A connecting vestibule joins the two parts.

**Rectory (contributing)**

The Watertown cream brick-clad St. Bernard's Rectory was constructed in 1883-1884 at a cost of \$3389 and replaced an earlier rectory built on the same site in 1847. The current house began as a two-story gabled ell form building that had a one-story extension at the rear. Sanborn maps, however, show that by 1890 this rear wing had been expanded to its current dimensions and that a second story had been added to it.

On the main east-facing façade of the building, a one-and-one-half story entrance vestibule joins the two main wings of the building. The first floor of this vestibule is constructed of cream brick while the shed-roofed half story above is clad in wood shingles.<sup>8</sup> The two-story upright portion of the main façade contains a single large window on the first floor, with two paired windows on the second floor above. All of the window openings have stone sills. The original first story of the two-story ell portion located to the left of the upright is now obscured by a modern one-story shed-roofed frame addition that was built between 1974 and 1986.<sup>9</sup> The second floor of the ell contains a centered pair of windows. The side elevations are utilitarian in design with windows balanced on the facades. The first story of the south elevation of the ell features a projecting bay that has metal cresting encircling its flat roof.

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<sup>7</sup> The Watertown Gazette: April 8, 1892, p. 1.

<sup>8</sup> While the 1884 Sanborn indicates an entry at this location, its depicted relationship to the house changes in the 1890 map. The current vestibule configuration may date from this time span.

<sup>9</sup> A porch at this location is indicated on the 1890 Sanborn.

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The main two-story portion of the rectory is notable for its decorative roofline. This part of the building has a coved cornice with flat decorative brackets supporting a hipped roof. As the hips rise to meet the main ridgeline they do so at a lesser slope, creating small, gabled projections.

A photograph in the 1980 publication Our Heritage of Homes<sup>10</sup> indicates that most of the exterior alterations to the main façade have taken place since that time. At the time of publication, the original front extension across the first story of the ell still retained its Italianate details. Three tall, narrow windows were separated from each other by narrow, pilaster like frames topped by bracketed capitals and the lintels over these three windows were each decorated with small modillion blocks. The flat roof of the extension was capped by ironwork cresting. The front entrance vestibule at that time was also more Italianate in appearance, there being a very shallow entrance porch attached to its main façade that had decorative piers at the corners joined by arches. This porch's roof also featured metal cresting, but the entire original entrance porch has also now been replaced with a modern one.

The Sanborn maps and the building's known history indicate numerous changes to the rectory building. According to a local newspaper, in the Spring of 1893, Father Condon had the parlor of the parsonage enlarged by adding a bay window to its east side.<sup>11</sup> This is probably the Italianate style one-story projection that is visible in the 1980 photographs of the building mentioned above.

The interior of the rectory has also been extensively remodeled; however, several original features remain, including the original staircase with balusters, and the original door and window surrounds. The room configurations likewise remain original. The house has a central entry hall with staircase. To the left is the parlor and to the right is a room probably intended as an office. It now serves as a chapel. Behind the parlor is a second small parlor and the dining room. The area behind the chapel is the service wing that includes the kitchen, storage rooms, and the back stairs.

The building currently serves as a convent. While it has been altered on both the interior and exterior, the building retains sufficient integrity to contribute to the significance of the St. Bernard's complex.

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<sup>10</sup> Evelyn Ruddick Rose, Our Heritage of Homes (Watertown: Watertown Historical Society, 1980), 22.

<sup>11</sup> Wallman, Built on Irish Faith, 214. This is the approximate dimension of the current extension of the room. However, Sanborns indicate a porch rather than a bay window at this location.

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**Garage (Non-Contributing)**

A large, non-contributing garage was constructed between the former rectory and the Solliday house circa 1980.

**Integrity**

While the buildings of the complex have been altered and had additions over the years, the overall integrity of the complex is good. The main building of the complex, St. Bernard's Church retains a high degree of architectural integrity on the exterior. The interior alterations are primarily ones of decoration and reflect changes in taste. The interior murals are being restored, returning some of the church's historic decorative features.

**8. Statement of Significance**

**Applicable National Register Criteria**

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for the 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.

**Areas of Significance**

(Enter categories from instructions)

Architecture

Ethnic Heritage

**Period of Significance**

1873-1953

**Significant Dates**

1873-76

1883

1892-93

**Significant Person**

(Complete if Criterion B is marked)

N/A

**Cultural Affiliation**

European

**Architect/Builder**

Keely, Patrick Charles

**Narrative Statement of Significance**

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

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## Statement of Significance

The Saint Bernard's Church Complex is eligible, locally, for listing in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) under both National Register (NR) Criteria A and C. The church is a fine example of High Victorian Gothic architecture and is a part of a church complex that contains a church, a rectory and a school. As a complex it is representative of the building types typically constructed to meet the needs of the typical Roman Catholic congregation in Wisconsin in the late nineteenth century. The church is also significant for its associations with the Irish population of Watertown in the area of ethnic heritage. The church served as a unifying element of the local Irish population and directly and indirectly supported activities that fostered this Irish identity and that served the Irish community. The period of significance begins in 1873 with the laying of the church's cornerstone and continues to 1953, corresponding to the 50 year end of the historic period.

### Early History of Watertown

The first white settlers arrived in the vicinity of Watertown in 1836. By 1837, Watertown had two log houses and a sawmill. The period of the 1840s was a time of growth and expansion for Watertown. John and Luther Cole erected the first store on the corner of Main and Second streets in 1841. Other stores and a gristmill followed. In 1840, 218 people were living in the community and the numbers continued to grow throughout the 1840s with the arrival of new settlers and immigrants.<sup>12</sup> The two most important of these immigrant groups were the Germans and the Irish. The majority of these immigrants were German political refugees who made up a large proportion of Watertown's residents. The story of St. Bernard's is tied to the history of the minority immigrant group, the Irish Catholic population of Watertown.

### History of St. Bernard's Church

The congregation of St. Bernard's was founded in 1843, soon after the settlement of Watertown.<sup>13</sup> Beginning in the fall of 1842, Father Martin Kundig began coming to Watertown from Milwaukee and said mass at the Bernard Crangle-home.

In January of 1846, Patrick Rogan and his wife purchased four lots on Block 25 from Lynde and

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<sup>12</sup> Charles J. Wallman, Built on Irish faith: 150 Years at St. Bernard's (Watertown, St. Bernard's Catholic Church, 1994), 23.

<sup>13</sup> This founding date is based on an item in the Milwaukee Sentinel of March 22, 1843. It noted the participation of St. Bernard's congregation of Watertown in the city's St. Patrick's day temperance celebration. In Built on Irish Faith, p.16.

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Cramer. Three weeks later they sold two of the lots, numbers 9 and 10, to Bishop John Martin Henni, in trust of the Roman Catholic Congregation of Watertown, for \$1.00. The first church was constructed on a portion of these lots ca. 1846.<sup>14</sup> When first built, the church measured 27'x 36' and it had Gothic style windows and doors. A local resident, Edward Dunn, constructed the church. The building was later expanded to a T-shape with a final dimension of 33'x 45'. The first resident pastor (1845-1846) was the Rev. Patrick McKernan, a native of Ireland who also served as the pastor of St. Raphael's church in Madison at the time. By 1860, as recorded in the United States Census records, Roman Catholicism was the second largest denomination in Watertown with a church seating 788 and property valued at \$5000. The Catholics were surpassed only by the German Evangelical Lutheran Church, which had a church seating 800, and a value of \$6000.

Reverend William Corby began his first pastorate at St. Bernard's in September 1872. By all accounts, Corby was a man of tremendous energy and talents. During the Civil War, Corby joined the Irish Brigade as a chaplain under General Meagher. Corby is noted for his blessing of the troops and the granting of general absolution to the soldiers prior to the battle in Gettysburg. After the war, Corby returned to his seminary at Notre Dame, Indiana, and by 1866 was named the president of the school. During his tenure, the Holy Cross Order (which runs the school) commissioned architect Patrick Keely to prepare drawings for a new Sacred Heart Church on the campus. Because the estimated cost was over \$100,000, the church was never built. In 1872, Corby was sent to Watertown with two assignments: to be pastor of St. Bernard's and build a new church, and to establish the College of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart in Watertown. Rev. Corby's previous contact with Keely was undoubtedly responsible for the architect receiving the commission to design the new St. Bernard's in Watertown as well.

The parish's close association with its Irish identity is revealed in the cornerstone of the church, laid in 1873. The stone was carved in Ireland from a part of the Rock of Cashel. The Rock of Cashel is located in County Tipperary, Ireland, and is a historic fortification of great religious and historical significance to the Irish. For 900 years it was the seat of Irish kings and later of medieval Roman Catholic bishops.

### **Architecture**

The church building is significant as a very fine example of the High Victorian Gothic style. The context chapter in Cultural Resource Management indicates that the style was found in Wisconsin between 1865 and 1900 and that examples are relatively rare. The High Victorian Gothic is primarily

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<sup>14</sup> The cornerstone of this building was inscribed with the date 1843 leading to speculation of the construction date in light of the date of the purchase of the land. The date, in fact, probably refers to the founding of the congregation.

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thought of as an ecclesiastical style, although it is found on larger, institutional buildings both in the United States and in England. The High Victorian Gothic was English in origin and drew its theoretical basis from the works of John Ruskin, especially the 1849 Seven Lamps of Architecture and the 1851 Stones of Venice. A model of the style, appearing contemporaneously with the books, was William Butterfield's All Saints Margaret Street, built in London, 1849-1859. The style, at its most basic, is characterized by the use of Gothic vocabulary and polychromy, both characteristics of which are very much in evidence in the design of St. Bernard's.

St. Bernard's Catholic Church was begun in 1873 to the designs of architect Patrick Charles Keely. The church was completed and dedicated on the 12<sup>th</sup> of November 1876. The church is an excellent representative example of the High Victorian Gothic style in its use of Gothic vocabulary and polychromy. While the styles of buildings in Wisconsin tend to lag behind the national periods for their use, St. Bernard's was constructed during the peak of the High Victorian Gothic style's popularity, which reached its highest popularity in the United States in the years 1860 to 1880.

Other examples of Gothic Revival style church architecture are also found within the city of Watertown. Large scale examples include the 1904 St. John's Lutheran Church (North Fifth and Cady streets), the 1888 Saint Mark's Evangelical Lutheran Church (215 N. Sixth Street), and the 1904 Moravian Church (510 Cole Street). All have had some degree of exterior alteration or major additions.

### **Patrick Charles Keely**

The St. Bernard's Church gains further significance as the only known Wisconsin work of noted architect Patrick Charles Keely. Keely was a Brooklyn, N.Y.-based architect who specialized in designing buildings for the Roman Catholic Church. Keely was born in August 1816 in Thurles, County Tipperary, Ireland. His father was a builder and Keely was associated with him until 1841/1842 when he emigrated to the United States. His first architectural commission was the Church of Saint Peter and Saint Paul, dedicated in 1846, in Brooklyn, New York. The majority of Keely's commissions were in New York city and state, New England, and Canada, and one source states that at least 500 Catholic churches and cathedrals were built from his plans in New York State, exclusive of New York city, although this number cannot be confirmed. At the time of his death, he was credited with the design of all the cathedrals in the state of New York, with the exception of the one in New York City. His projects include the Jesuit Church of St. Francis Xavier in New York City; the Cathedral of Saints Peter and Paul in Providence, Rhode Island; the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception in Portland, Maine; Saint Mary's Cathedral in Halifax, Nova Scotia; and the Cathedral of the Holy Cross in Boston, Massachusetts. Keely, like many architects of his day, worked in a variety of styles. His first parish

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churches were in the English Gothic style. After the Civil War, he also designed a few Romanesque Revival and Second Empire style buildings, although the majority of his commissions drew upon Gothic sources.<sup>15</sup> Keely died on 11 August 1896, and his church in Watertown is his westernmost identified project.

### **Church Complex**

From its earliest days, St. Bernard's Church has been part of a complex of buildings that served the needs of its congregation. A church-run school was seen from the first as being a necessary part of the church's mission. The first school on the site was begun in 1857 and was one of the earliest parochial schools in the city. It was designed by local architect, Louis Charboneau, and was two stories tall.<sup>16</sup> In 1860 the school had the second largest enrollment of students in Watertown and the census records record 175 pupils at the Roman Catholic school with three teachers.<sup>17</sup> The original school stood until 1892, when it was moved to make room for the new and larger school building that is still part of the complex today. When the new building was completed in the fall of 1892, the Gazette reported: "The school is one of the finest in the city. The architecture is very fine and building is well ventilated and lighted and the children who attend the school will find everything pertaining to the physical and intellectual wants well looked after..."<sup>18</sup> While several parochial schools continue to operate in Watertown, St. Bernard's is the only one that still retains its historic school building.

With the growth of the congregation came the necessity for more space. From the original two lots for the church sold to the Bishop by the Rogans, St. Bernard's now occupies the entire city block. Lots two and three were donated for a school playground in 1909. These lots now contain the 1960 school addition. In 1925, Dr. Solliday gave the parish a part of his yard to be used as a playground. The church purchased the remainder of the block in 1958, when the Solliday home was acquired for use as a convent, and it is now used as the parish offices and rectory.

As an intact and complete collection of historic period buildings, complete with a school and parsonage, St. Bernard's Church Complex is both representative of other Catholic church complexes in Wisconsin and is the only extant example of its type in Watertown. Its significance is further enhanced

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<sup>15</sup> Macmillan Encyclopedia of Architects, vol. 2 (New York: The Free Press, 1982), 556-557. See also: Henry Withey and Elsie Rathburn Withey, Biographical Dictionary of American Architects (Deceased) (Los Angeles: Hennessey and Ingalls, Inc., 1970), 333. The Macmillan entry states that explicit documentation can only be found for approximately 150 buildings.

<sup>16</sup> "The New School House," Watertown Democrat, 11 June 1857, quoted in Wallman, Built on Irish Faith, 58.

<sup>17</sup> The public schools had the largest enrollment with 831 students and 13 teachers. United States Census. 1860.

<sup>18</sup> Quoted from the Gazette in Wallman, Built on Irish Faith, 210.

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by the highly intact state of its historic resources.

**Ethnic Heritage**

As the spiritual home of the Irish community in Watertown, the St. Bernard's Church Complex is also eligible under Criterion A in the area of ethnic heritage. As a minority population in the 75% German speaking city, St. Bernard's served as a gathering spot and as a social focus for the city's Irish Catholic population. In addition to other functions, the church was the annual sponsor of the festivities in honor of Saint Patrick. Through the 1880s St. Patrick's Day activities usually included a parade, a high mass, and a luncheon or dinner and a program at the local Turner Hall or other large hall. The local newspaper in 1876 gave a program for the day's festivities:

To-morrow is St. Patrick's Day and it will be enthusiastically celebrated by the members of St. Bernard's Church.... [A] grand procession will march through the streets, bright with beautiful regalia, and proceed to Turner Hall, where a dinner will be given. In the evening, Rev. W.F. O'Mahoney will deliver a lecture at the church, which will close the proceedings.<sup>19</sup>

The celebration of the feast day of St. Patrick by the congregation was cyclical. By the end of the nineteenth century interest in the celebration had waned. Interest revived again in 1909, and again in 1922, and yet again after World War II.<sup>20</sup> Another annual event was the Christmas Fair, which continues to the present.

While not directly related to the parish, the Watertown Irish Relief Association drew its membership from St. Bernard's. This organization sought to provide aid to the Irish National Land League based in Dublin. In the 1880s the organization had as its regular meeting place the St. Bernard's School after mass. In 1882 the association hosted a ball to raise funds pledged by the league. Other organizations associated with the parish or its congregation include the Catholic Total Abstinence group. The society was founded in 1867 as the St. Bernard's Temperance and Benevolent Society. In 1872 this group became part of the Catholic Total Abstinence Union which met at Watertown to form a statewide organization. The temperance and Irish nationalist groups sponsored lectures or presentations held at the church. The church also had the usual Catholic parish organizations, including a Holy Name Society, ladies' societies, an ushers group, and others. The parish also had a Literary Society that explored Irish history and themes in its readings.

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<sup>19</sup> "To-Morrow is St. Patrick's Day," Watertown Democrat, 16 March 1876.

<sup>20</sup> Wallman, Built on Irish Faith, 300.

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St. Bernard's was also widely noted for its musical talent. In addition to its own popular choir, the church was the location of numerous concerts and musical programs. The newspapers carried accounts of the programs and talents of the church's Cecilian Choir. These events undoubtedly served as a focus of social life of the St. Bernard's community.

The church history also relates the importance of the church for funerals. On occasion, bodies of former parishioners were returned to St. Bernard's for burial. In other cases, Irish deceased from outlying communities would be buried from St. Bernard's. Irish funerals were huge events with countrymen from the surrounding area gathering in Watertown. Mourners were transported by wagons in which planks were placed across the backs of farm wagons. The number of such wagons of mourners was often recorded. C. Hugo Jacobi, a Watertown historian, recalled that it was not unusual to see a line of 88 or more wagons in the funeral procession.<sup>21</sup> While it cannot be directly demonstrated, these gatherings of the Irish community must have served to bind the local Irish population together and to foster its ethnic identity.

The Irish Settlement chapter in the Cultural Resource Management in Wisconsin points out that Irish immigrants tended to be scattered and somewhat transitory. The founding and construction of St. Bernard's gains added significance when these facts are considered. The United States census of 1870 records between 500 and 1500 Irish living in Jefferson County.<sup>22</sup> The church was founded and its construction, as well as the construction of the other complex buildings, was paid for by an established Irish population in the region. However, as discussed above, the Irish were a minority population in the city, and the church undoubtedly played an important role not only in the spiritual lives of the Catholic congregation, but also an important role in reinforcing and maintaining their Irish cultural identity.

A tangible reminder of the congregation's Irish roots is the church's cornerstone, carved from a piece of the Rock of Cashel, sent from Ireland. As the building neared completion, a newspaper article recalled the arrival of the stone:

On the 20<sup>th</sup> of June, 1873, our Irish citizens were thrown into a state of excitement...when it was announced that a large piece of the "Rock of Cashel" had arrived...and that it was destined to form the cornerstone of the new church. Crowds of the sons and daughters of Erin flocked into the city from miles of the adjoining country

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<sup>21</sup> Wallman, Built on Irish Faith, 193-194.

<sup>22</sup> Map depicting distribution of population in Barbara Wyatt, ed., Cultural Resource Management in Wisconsin, vol. 1 (Madison: State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1986), Settlement 10-10.

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to view a fragment of that Rock, that is so celebrated and revered in Irish history, song and story.<sup>23</sup>

**Conclusion**

Saint Bernard's Church is eligible for listing in the NRHP under NR Criterion C as a fine example of the High Victorian Gothic style. The church is noteworthy for its use of polychromy and extensive Gothic detailing. Locally, the building serves as a visual landmark because of the towering height of its spire. While other Gothic church buildings are found in Watertown, including Saint Bernard's contemporary Saint Paul Episcopal on South Second Street, these buildings lack both the size and level of detailing found at Saint Bernard's. Many have also had exterior alterations. The church is also significant as the only Wisconsin work of Patrick Charles Keely, an Irish-born church architect who designed many of the nineteenth century Roman Catholic Cathedrals in New York and throughout New England. The church, however, is only one building of the complex that served the Saint Bernard's congregation. The church complex also includes a historic period rectory and school. Together, the buildings in the complex are representative of the types of buildings typically found in Roman Catholic church complexes of the period that were thought necessary in order to serve the needs of the church and its congregation.

The complex is also significant under NR Criterion A in the area of ethnic heritage. The church and its congregation formed a central meeting point for the city's Irish Catholic population. Through its annual Saint Patrick's Day festivities, the indirect sponsorship of Irish organizations, and the gathering of individuals for funerals and cultural events, Saint Bernard's helped define the Irish identity in Watertown from the mid-nineteenth through the mid-twentieth centuries.

**Criterion Consideration A**

While buildings owned by religious institutions are usually not eligible for listing, an exception may be made if the significance of the building or site meets one of the criteria considerations. The Saint Bernard's Church complex meets the requirements of Criterion A; this is a religious property deriving its primary significance from architectural distinction and from its historical importance to the community.

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<sup>23</sup> "St. Bernard's New Church," Watertown Democrat, 14 September 1876.

Saint Bernard's Church Complex

Jefferson

Wisconsin

Name of Property

County and State

**9. Major Bibliographic References**

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

**Previous Documentation on File (National Park Service):**

- 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 #

**Primary location of additional data:**

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

Name of repository:

**10. Geographical Data**

Acreeage of Property 1.74 acres

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

1    16      359520                  4783620  
       Zone    Easting                  Northing

3    \_\_\_\_\_  
       Zone    Easting                  Northing

2    \_\_\_\_\_  
       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**

<b>name/title</b>	Daina Penkiunas/Timothy F. Heggland	<b>date</b>	6/06/01
<b>organization</b>	Museum Archaeology Program, Wisconsin Historical Society	<b>telephone</b>	608-261-9366
<b>street &amp; number</b>	816 State Street	<b>zip code</b>	53706
<b>city or town</b>	Madison	<b>state</b>	WI

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Verbal Boundary Description:

All of the land contained within Block 25, Original Plat, City of Watertown, with the exception of Lot 6 and a portion of Lot 7. The excluded portion of the block corresponds to the boundary of the concurrent NR nomination for the Dr. Albert F. Solliday House, as indicated on the attached map.

Boundary Justification:

This is the current extent of the property owned by St. Bernard's parish, excluding the area immediately surrounding the former Solliday house at the corner of South Church and Emmet streets. While the church currently owns the Solliday House, it is not historically associated with the parish.

Saint Bernard's Church Complex

Jefferson

Wisconsin

Name of Property

County and State

**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.)

<b>name/title</b>		<b>date</b>	6/06/01
<b>organization</b>	St. Bernard's Catholic Congregation	<b>telephone</b>	920-261-5133
<b>street&amp;number</b>	114 South Church Street	<b>zip code</b>	53094
<b>city or town</b>	Watertown	<b>state</b>	WI

**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.

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Watertown, Jefferson County, WI

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**Photographs**

The following information is the same for all of the photographs:

Saint Bernard's Church Complex

Watertown, Jefferson County, Wisconsin

Photographed by Daina Penkiunas and Timothy F. Heggland

Negatives at the Wisconsin Historical Society

**PHOTOS 1-7: Saint Bernard's Church**

- #1 Façade, facing west  
June 2000
- #2 Front central door detail, facing west  
June 2000
- #3 Rear elevation detail  
June 2000
- #4 Interior, view from balcony to apse  
September 1999
- #5 Interior view  
September 1999
- #6 St. Francis mural by Hermann Michalowski  
September 1999
- #7 Interior doorway detail  
September 1999

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**Photos 8-10: Former Rectory**

#8 Façade, looking west  
June 2000

#9 Looking NNW  
June 2000

#10 Side elevation, looking south  
June 2000

**Photos 11-13: Saint Bernard's School**

#11 Front elevation, looking south  
June 2000

#12 Side elevation, looking east  
June 2000

#13 Non-contributing addition to school  
June 2000

**Photo 14: Non-contributing garage**

#14 Looking northeast  
June 2000

S. MONTGOMERY

Sheet 22

8" W/PIPE

8"

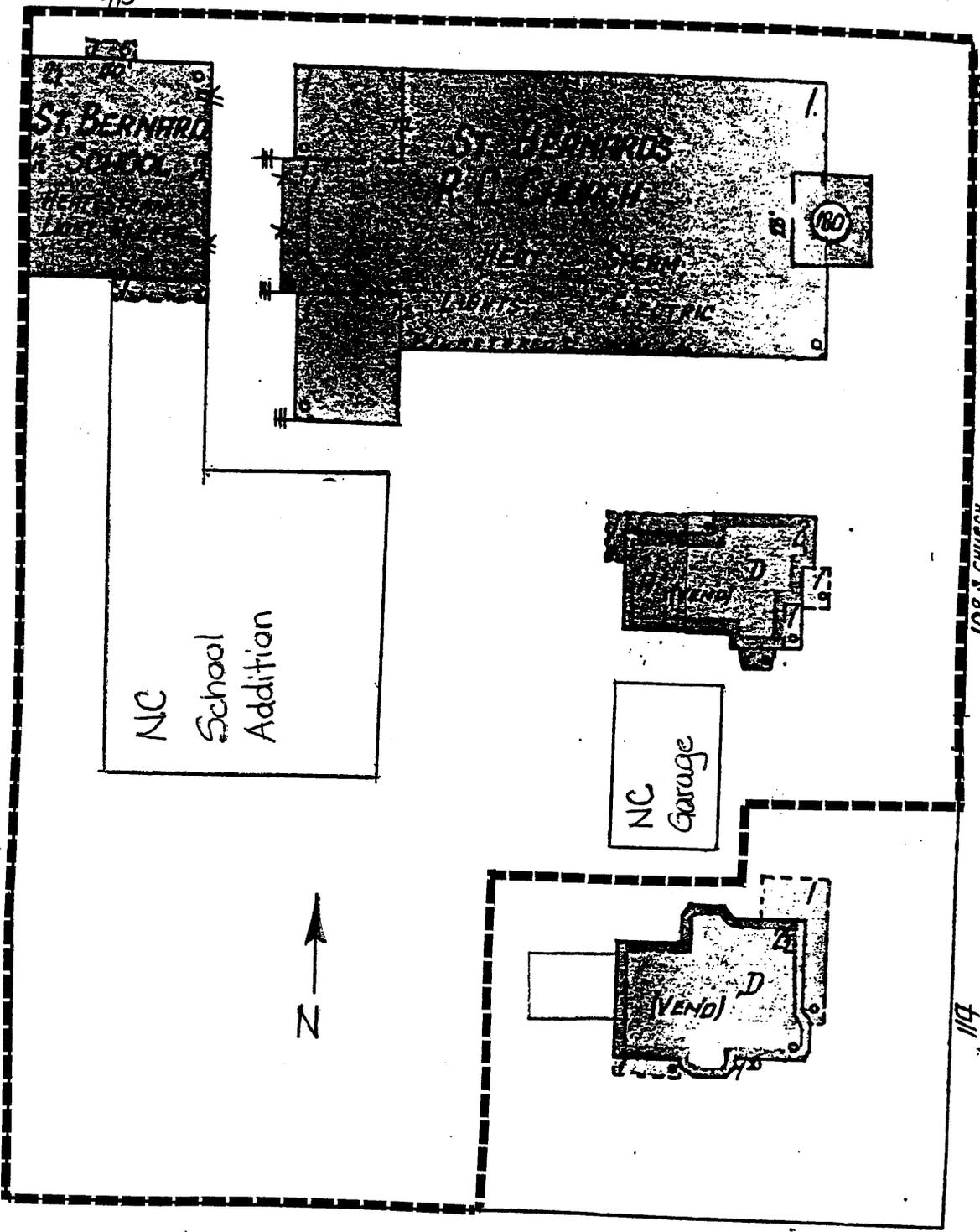
415

100

108 S. CHURCH

S. CHURCH

117



**ST. BERNARD'S CHURCH COMPLEX**      **WATERTOWN, JEFFERSON CO., WI**  
 Site Map - No scale

 Contributing  
 Non-Contributing Buildings and Additions  
 Boundary