

FORM B - BUILDING

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
Office of the Secretary, State House, Boston

In Area no.

Form no.

1/9-81

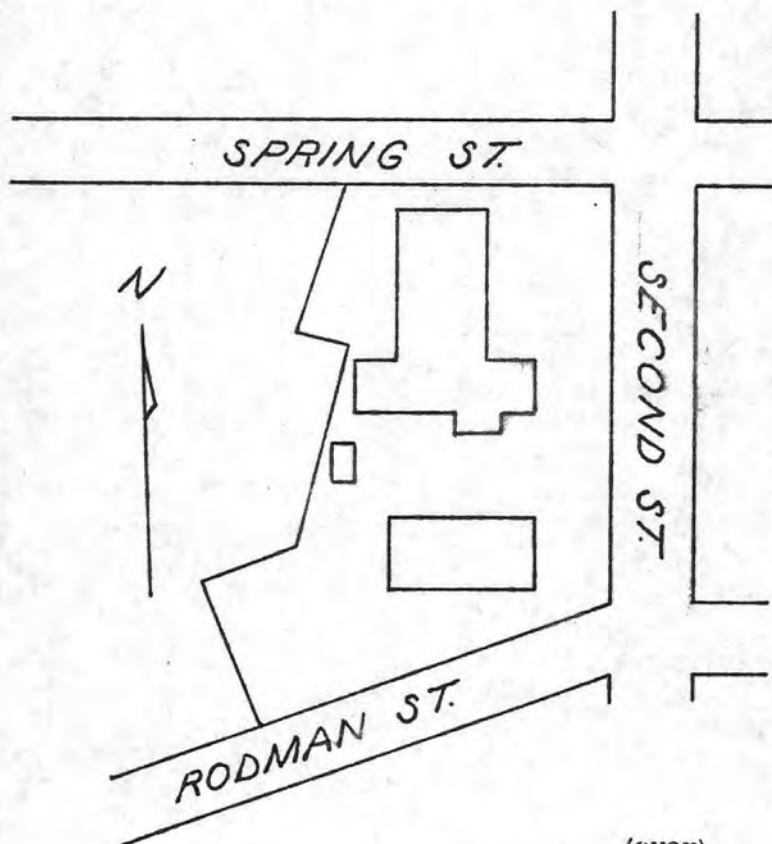
1/9-1/ 499

2. Photo (3x3" or 3x5")

Staple to left side of form

Photo number INST. 6-#3

4. Map. Draw sketch of building location
in relation to nearest cross streets and
other buildings. Indicate north.



1. Town Fall River, Mass.

Address 407 Spring Street

Name St. Mary's Cathedral

Present use church

Present owner Roman Catholic Bishop of
Fall River

3. Description: stone church w/tower & spire
at n e corner

Date 1852-56

Source date stone, parish history

Style Victorian Gothic

Architect Patrick C. Keely

Exterior wall fabric Fall River granite rock-
faced, random ashlar.

Outbuildings (describe) Rectory on Second St.

Other features sq. side tower w/4-sided
stone-sheathed spire, pointed arch windows
w/ wood mullions. Entrance set in shallow
gabled frontispiece, rose window in main
north gable.

Altered Rectory Date 1927

Moved _____ Date _____

5. Lot size: 68,474 sq. ft.

One acre or less _____ Over one acre X

Approximate frontage _____

Approximate distance of building from street _____

6. Recorded by Pat Giza

Organization FROHP

Date 2/13/81

(over)

7. Original owner (if known) St. Mary's

Original use Church

Subsequent uses (if any) and dates Cathedral (1904)

8. Themes (check as many as applicable)

Aboriginal	☐	Conservation	☐	Recreation	☐
Agricultural	☐	Education	☐	Religion	☒
Architectural	☒	Exploration/ settlement	☐	Science/ invention	☐
The Arts	☐	Industry	☐	Social/ humanitarian	☐
Commerce	☐	Military	☐	Transportation	☐
Communication	☐	Political	☐		☐
Community development	☒				

9. Historical significance (include explanation of themes checked above)

The oldest Catholic Church in Fall River, St. Mary's Cathedral is a key Fall River landmark and visually dominates the adjacent Corky Row Historic District. An early commission of Patrick Keely, America's first major Catholic ecclesiastical architect, St. Mary's is a fine example of the Gothic Revival style. The parish house which completes the complex was designed in the same style by yet another firm well-known for its work for the Catholic Church, Maginnis and Walsh.

During the early 19th century there were few Catholics in New England, and the first Catholics to settle in Fall River beginning in 1822 had to depend on visits from traveling clerics because they numbered too few to form a parish. In late 1834, Father Corry, pastor for both Fall River and Taunton, attempted to set up a church organization in Fall River. In 1835 the sum of \$659 was paid to Peter McLarrin for the land where the present church now stands, and a wooden chapel was built which opened in 1837 and was dedicated to St. John the Baptist. During the 1840's large numbers of Irish immigrants came to Fall River to work in the mills. The number of new Catholics made it impossible to accommodate all the people at church services, and the pastor at the time, Father Murphy, saw the need for a new church.

Work was begun on the present St. Mary's in 1852 and completed in 1855 except for the steeple, which was added in 1858. It was designed by Patrick C. Keely, a noted Brooklyn, New York architect who designed more than 500 churches in the United States and Canada and whose work constitutes the primary 19th century Roman Catholic architectural heritage. His first Fall River commission was St. Mary's, followed by St. Patrick's (1881-9) and St. Joseph's (1880). According to parish tradition, Keely drew the plans for the church without seeing the site, and the actual construction was accomplished partly by parishioners after work. The granite church which measures 126' long and 76' wide was constructed around the old chapel, which was used until just before the cathedral was roofed and then was dismantled, (cont'd)

10. Bibliography and/or references (such as local histories, deeds, assessor's records, early maps, etc.)

Atlas 1895: structure shown
1883: structure shown
1871: structure shown
1858: structure shown
1850: Old Church shown

St. Mary's Cathedral, A Parish History, 1976

(Cont'd)

INVENTORY FORM CONTINUATION SHEET

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
Office of the Secretary, Boston

Community:

Fall River, Mass.

Form No:

119-81
119-1/499

Property Name: St. Mary's Cathedral

Indicate each item on inventory form which is being continued below.

9. HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE (Cont'd)

removed and rebuilt on a nearby site. The interior, which was originally drab and plain, has been enriched over the years with richly carved wood furnishings, a marble floor, and stained glass windows.

In 1855 the name of the church was changed to St. Mary's. In 1904 "old St. Mary's" became the Cathedral with the formation of the new Fall River Diocese, the first diocese established by Pope Pius X. The present granite rectory, which dates from 1927, replaced a large Victorian stick-style rectory dating back at least to 1871

As the oldest Catholic Church in Fall River, housed in an outstanding early Gothic Revival granite building designed by one of America's foremost Catholic ecclesiastical architects, St. Mary's meets criteria A and C of the National Register, individually

10 BIBLIOGRAPHY (cont'd)

The Diocese of Fall River, 1974, p. 18
Fall River Herald News, Sept. 20, 1976

Staple to Inventory form at bottom

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

For NPS use only

received

115/83

date entered

Continuation sheet

Item number

Page 9 of 10

Multiple Resource Area
Thematic Group

Name Fall River Multiple Resource Area
State MA

Nomination/Type of Review

Date/Signature

81. St. Joseph's Orphanage

Substantive Review

Keeper

2/16/83 *[Signature]*

Attest

82. St. Louis Church

Entered in the
National Register

Keeper

2/16/83 *[Signature]*

Attest

83. St. Mary's Cathedral and Rectory

Entered in the
National Register

Keeper

2/16/83 *[Signature]*

Attest

84. St. Patrick's Church

Entered in the
National Register

Keeper

2/16/83 *[Signature]*

Attest

85. Stafford Mills

Entered in the
National Register

Keeper

2/16/83 *[Signature]*

Attest

86. Union Mills

Entered in the
National Register

Keeper

2/16/83 *[Signature]*

Attest

87. Valentine-French House

Entered in the
National Register

Keeper

2/16/83 *[Signature]*

Attest

88. Wampanoag Mills

Entered in the
National Register

Keeper

2/16/83 *[Signature]*

Attest

89. Winslow, Luther Jr., House

Entered in the
National Register

Keeper

2/16/83 *[Signature]*

Attest

90. Woman's Club of Fall River

Entered in the
National Register

Keeper

2/16/83 *[Signature]*

Attest

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

St. Mary's Cathedral and Rectory (Fall River MRA)
Bristol County
MASSACHUSETTS

Working No. 115/83-15

Fed. Reg. Date: 2.7.84

Date Due: 2/3/83 - 2/19/83

Action: ☒ ACCEPT 3/16/83

Entered in the ☐ RETURN

National Register ☐ REJECT

Federal Agency: _____

- ☐ resubmission
☐ nomination by person or local government
☐ owner objection
☐ appeal

Substantive Review: ☐ sample ☐ request ☐ appeal ☐ NR decision

Reviewer's comments:

Recom./Criteria _____

Reviewer _____

Discipline _____

Date _____

see continuation sheet

Nomination returned for: ☐ technical corrections cited below
☐ substantive reasons discussed below

1. Name

2. Location

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
	Public Acquisition	Accessible	

4. Owner of Property

5. Location of Legal Description

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

Has this property been determined eligible? ☐ yes ☐ no

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one
☐ excellent	☐ deteriorated	☐ unaltered	☐ original site
☐ good	☐ ruins	☐ altered	☐ moved date _____
☐ fair	☐ unexcavated		

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

- ☐ summary paragraph
☐ completeness
☐ clarity
☐ alterations/integrity
☐ dates
☐ boundary selection

8. Significance

Period _____ Areas of Significance—Check and justify below

Specific dates _____ Builder/Architect _____

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

- _____ summary paragraph
- _____ completeness
- _____ clarity
- _____ applicable criteria
- _____ justification of areas checked
- _____ relating significance to the resource
- _____ context
- _____ relationship of integrity to significance
- _____ justification of exception
- _____ other

9. Major Bibliographical References

10. Geographical Data

Acres of nominated property _____

Quadrangle name _____

UNIT References _____

Verbal boundary description and justification _____

11. Form Prepared By

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

_____ national _____ state _____ local

State Historic Preservation Officer signature _____

title _____ date _____

13. Other

- _____ Maps
- _____ Photographs
- _____ Other

Questions concerning this nomination may be directed to _____

Signed _____ Date _____ Phone: 202 272 - 3504

Comments for any item may be continued on an attached sheet



NAME: St. Mary's Cathedral

LOCATION: 407 Spring Street
Fall River, Mass.

PHOTO CREDIT: Pamela Shields (1981)

NEGATIVE FILED AT: Fall River Office of Historic
Preservation
One Government Center
Fall River, Mass.. 02722
(PSNR-6-1)

IDENTIFICATION: St. Mary's Cathedral
photo # 1 of 2
3/4 View, looking south



ST. MARY'S CATHEDRAL (FRONT) 4 Rectory
407 SPRING ST.

Inst - 6 - #3

Fall River MA, MA

Please refer to the map in the
Multiple Property Cover Sheet
for this property

Multiple Property Cover Sheet Reference Number: 64000279