

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

For NPS use only

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

received **JUL 2 1985**  
date entered **AUG 1 1985**

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

**1. Name**

historic St. Mark's Episcopal Church, Guild Hall and Vicarage  
and/or common Same

**2. Location**

street & number 408 Park Avenue not for publication  
city, town Oconto vicinity of  
state Wisconsin code 055 county Oconto code 083

**3. Classification**

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

**4. Owner of Property**

name Trustees of St. Mark's Church; Rev. C. Walton Fitch, Pastor  
street & number 408 Park Avenue  
city, town Oconto vicinity of state Wisconsin 54153

**5. Location of Legal Description**

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Oconto County Courthouse  
street & number Washington Street  
city, town Oconto state Wisconsin 54153

**6. Representation in Existing Surveys**

title Wisconsin Inventory of Historic Places has this property been determined eligible?  yes  no  
date 1977  federal  state  county  local  
depository for survey records State Historical Society of Wisconsin  
city, town Madison state Wisconsin 53706

## 7. Description

<b>Condition</b>		<b>Check one</b>	<b>Check one</b>
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> moved
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		date <u>Guild Hall 1894.</u>

### Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The buildings of St. Mark's Church lie along the western edge of the block of Park Avenue between Congress and Washington Streets in Oconto, a small paper and logging city in northeastern Wisconsin. The location along one of the city's major north-south routes is a short distance east of the county courthouse and business district.

The church itself is a cross-gable NeoGothic design, with the simplicity of twentieth century churches and the fine proportion and detail more characteristic of the nineteenth century. The tall front (west) gable is set with a center rose window and projecting apsidiole beneath, and paired with a thick, crenelated corner tower. Projecting courses break the gradual slope of the tower from the corner vestibule to the belfry. Radiating voussoirs around the recessed doors on the ground level and lancet windows above break the continuity of the coursed gray limestone walls. Louvres are set into recessed squares in the belfry, overhung by large dentils and crenelation. Simple waterspouts mark the corners of the tower. Limestone and open iron crosses rise from the peaks of the asbestos roof on the front gable and tower. A small gabled projection on the north side enclosed a shrine. Short buttresses brace the low south wall beneath the lower slope of the broken gable. Triple casement windows are filled with diamond-leaded panels stained in hues of orange, green.

The simple axial plan of the interior is divided into nave, chancel, and sanctuary. Covered by a hammerbeam ceiling, the interior is dominated by a carved wood screen culminated by statues depicting the crucifixion. Paneling cut and carved with pointed arches lines the choir and sanctuary behind the altar. A tapestry reproduction of Rubens' "Adoration of the Magi" is hung on the reredos. A carved lectern, pulpit, font, and pews complete the church decoration completed in 1911. A choir loft was added at the west end in 1924. The lady chapel along the south wall between the vestibule and sacristy contains the dark oak pews and altar from the first St. Mark's Church.

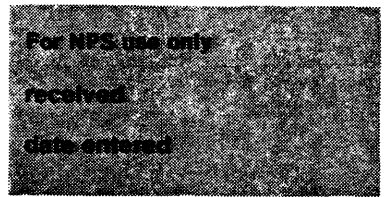
Located at the northwest corner of the church property at Park Avenue and Washington Street, the vicarage is an unusual accretion of original and added forms. Built by pioneer logger Edward Fitzgerald in 1871,<sup>1</sup> the house was enlarged with the addition of bay windows on the west (front) and north sides by subsequent owner Edward Davis. The parish of St. Mark's acquired the building in 1913, and has since made subtle changes in the interior to accommodate additional administrative needs. Essentially in its late nineteenth century form, then, the two-story house is characterized by its irregular roofline incorporating a jerkinhead on the northern projecting portion of the plan, and a polygonal half-turret and slopes over the two-story bay to the south. The building has a distinctively active surface of horizontal and bias-set clapboards, with triangular window heads, a shingle roof, and small brackets in the eaves. An open porch with balustrade and turned posts joined by a delicate valence spans the first story of the north portion of the house, covering a paneled double door and large front window with overlights.

The Guild Hall, purchased by the parish and moved to the site between the church and vicarage in 1894, is the former Methodist Church of 1866-67, and the oldest known church

<sup>1</sup>Oconto County Register of Deeds.

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Continuation sheet . St. Mark's Episcopal Church,  
Oconto Item number 7

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7. DESCRIPTION

building in Oconto.<sup>6</sup> The simple frame rectangular building is connected to the church building by a one-story gable-roofed<sup>3</sup> passageway. Raised on the three-foot stucco-covered concrete foundation in 1924<sup>2</sup> and fitted with a stage at the east end and hardwood floors for recreation, the building still bears the returning cornices and tall semicircular windows of the original form. This oldest of the three church-owned buildings on the site, served as the main parish sanctuary from 1894 to 1900.

<sup>2</sup>Richard L. Hall, Centennial History of Oconto City and County, 1976, p.34.

<sup>3</sup>St. Mark's Parish Register, p.7.

# 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 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 checked="" 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 See Continuation Sheet Builder/Architect A.H. James' (church)<sup>1</sup>

### Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

In a city often cited for its impressive churches, St. Mark's Episcopal Church, a good example of Neo Gothic design, is distinguished by the textural quality of its coursed, rock-faced gray limestone walls, its picturesque Gothic decoration, and the Splendid carved woodwork in the interior. This prototypical English country church serves as a contrast with its Gothic Revival (First Church of Christ Scientist, 1886), Romanesque Revival (St. Peter's, 1899), and High Victorian Gothic (St. Joseph's 1870) medieval-inspired cousins in Oconto, two of which were previously nominated to the National Register. Attached to the north of the church building, the Guild Hall, Oconto's oldest church building, still retains its hallmark Greek-revival returning cornices and round-headed openings. More unusual in design, the adjacent Vicarage is a visually-striking late nineteenth-century cottage with picturesque two-story bays and an irregular roofline.

St. Mark's Church was designed by "A.H. James (address at time of building 909 Baltimore Avenue, Kansas City, Mo.) ecclesiastical architect in England (land of his birth) and America."<sup>1</sup> James "materially assisted" the parish and builder J. A. Silver of Clintonville, Wisconsin in the construction of the church during a visit to Oconto shortly after his plans were approved. Of the partnership of James & James, Arthur H. James oversaw the Kansas City office while his brother remained in New York to supervise commissions there. In The Two Kansas Cities, author Andrew Morrison wrote "Mr. A.H. James was associated with the late H.H. Richardson of Boston, whose works mark an era of achievement in American architecture, and the Pittsburgh Court House, one of Richardson's finest efforts, shows traces of Mr. James handiwork." Before emigrating to the United States, James "... was also with Pocock in England, the architect of Spurgeon's Tabernacle, and he assisted in designing Carpenter's Hall, London, also."<sup>2</sup> The firm's Kansas City works James & James also produced plans for the Toronto Board of Trade Building, and placed second in competition for the City Hall in St. Louis; such large public structures were said to be their speciality.

An impressive amount of attention was devoted to interior redecoration in 1911 when a new maple reredos, high altar, wood screen, lectern, pulpit, font and pews, all "stained a dark mission," were installed. Bishop Charles Grafton commissioned the Lang family of Oberammergau, Germany to carve the Crucifixion group atop the screen. The sheer coloristic richness of the interior elements (full chancel with choir, diamond leaded windows, brass and silver vessels and instruments, tapestry, and hammerbeam ceiling) illustrate an awareness of the historical roots and tenets of the faith. Simpler furnishings from the original church of 1869 which once stood on the corner of Third Street and Connins Avenue in Oconto are preserved in the lady chapel of St. Mark's along the south side of the nave.

# 9. Major Bibliographical References

St. Mark's Church Parish Register No. 3.  
Souvenir Year Book and Reference Manual of St. Mark's Church, Oconto, Wis., 1911.  
Wailer, Rt. Rev. R.H., History of the Diocese of Fond du Lac, Wisconsin, 1925.

# 10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property .038  
Quadrangle name Oconto East, Wis. Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

### UTM References

A	<u>16</u>	<u>431760</u>	<u>4970690</u>	B	<u>  </u>	<u>  </u>	<u>  </u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
C	<u>  </u>	<u>  </u>	<u>  </u>	D	<u>  </u>	<u>  </u>	<u>  </u>
E	<u>  </u>	<u>  </u>	<u>  </u>	F	<u>  </u>	<u>  </u>	<u>  </u>
G	<u>  </u>	<u>  </u>	<u>  </u>	H	<u>  </u>	<u>  </u>	<u>  </u>

### Verbal boundary description and justification

Lots 23, 24, 25, and 26 and west 38 feet of Lot 27, Union Addition to the City of Oconto, Oconto County, Wisconsin.

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

state	code	county	code
state	code	county	code

# 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Diane H. Filipowicz, Architectural Historian

organization State Historical Society of Wisconsin date November, 1980

street & number 816 State Street telephone (608) 262-2970

city or town Madison state Wisconsin 53706

# 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 *Jeff Dean*

title HISTORIC PRESERVATION DIVISION, Director, State Historical Society of Wisconsin date June 13, 1985

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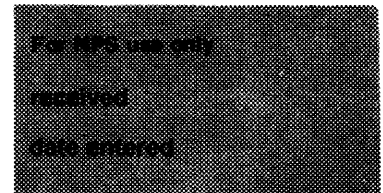
I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

*J. Melores Byers* Entered in the date 8-1-85  
Keeper of the National Register National Register

Attest: \_\_\_\_\_ date \_\_\_\_\_  
Chief of Registration

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8. Significance

The neighboring Guild Hall and Vicarage both represent earlier architectural traditions within the city. Built in 1866-67 for the pioneering Methodist congregation in the community, the Guild Hall is representative of some of the earliest design forms found in the isolated Oconto area. Greek Revival in style, the simple rectangular structure still features much of its original clapboard siding, distinctive cornice returns and semicircular window heads, and stylish attic fanlights. The present site of the Guild Hall had been purchased by the St. Mark's congregation in 1886, but it wasn't until 1894 that the church body finally purchased and moved the former Methodist church building across the street to its new home.

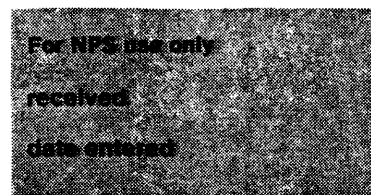
Along with the original St. Joseph Catholic Church (non-extant), the Guild Hall had been one of the earliest church buildings to be built in Oconto and is the only one still in existence from that pioneering period. The Hall is currently used for religious meetings, church affairs, dinners and receptions, public dances and vestry meetings.

During the late 19th century Park Avenue became an increasingly affluent residential area within the city. The St. Mark's vicarage, built for local lumberman Edward Fitzgerald in 1871, is representative of the playful and sometimes exuberant design forms realized during that period. The property was purchased from Fitzgerald by Edward Davis, a prosperous clothing merchant, in 1873. Davis' additional work on the buildings appears to have been meant to create a true "show place" of the building on Park Avenue. Purchased by the St. Mark's congregation in 1913 to complete their block along Park Avenue, the house has seen only minor changes and still stands out as one of the better Victorian era residences on the Avenue in the small isolated community.

As a group, the three buildings making up the St. Mark's Church complex reflect strongly the growth and developmental forces which impacted the Oconto community at the turn of the century. Reaching its peak as a lumber and sawmilling center between 1890 and 1900, the Oconto area swelled to a population over 6500 by 1900 (Present day population is around 5000). This rapid growth taxed many of the community's private and public institutions to their fullest and brought about a rash of new construction. During the period the city realized the erection of new church buildings for the Presbyterian and Catholic congregations, numerous new commercial and industrial sites and the completion of a new, sizable county courthouse. Aware of the region's growth Bishop Grafton of the Episcopal Diocese of Fond du Lac allocated the funds for the completion of the present St. Mark's Church edifice in 1900, to replace the Guild Hall facility which had quickly proved inadequate for the growing congregation. The St. Mark's parish complex in Oconto still exists as a thriving congregation in the local area.

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- <sup>1</sup> St. Mark's Parish Register, No. 3 page 8.
- <sup>2</sup> Andrew Morrison The Two Kansas Cities, 1891, p.70.
- <sup>3</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>4</sup> Souvenir Year Book and Reference Manual, St. Mark's Church, Oconto, WI  
1911, unpagued.

8. Specific Dates:

St. Mark's Church: 1900; <sup>1</sup>interior redecoration 1911<sup>2</sup>  
Guild Hall: 18~~66~~<sup>66</sup>-73  
Vicarage: 1871<sup>3</sup>

11. Research Assistance By:

George E. Hall, Eunice Leneau, Mrs. William Stewart  
1105 Park Avenue  
Oconto, Wisconsin 54153

February , 1980  
(414) 834-2930

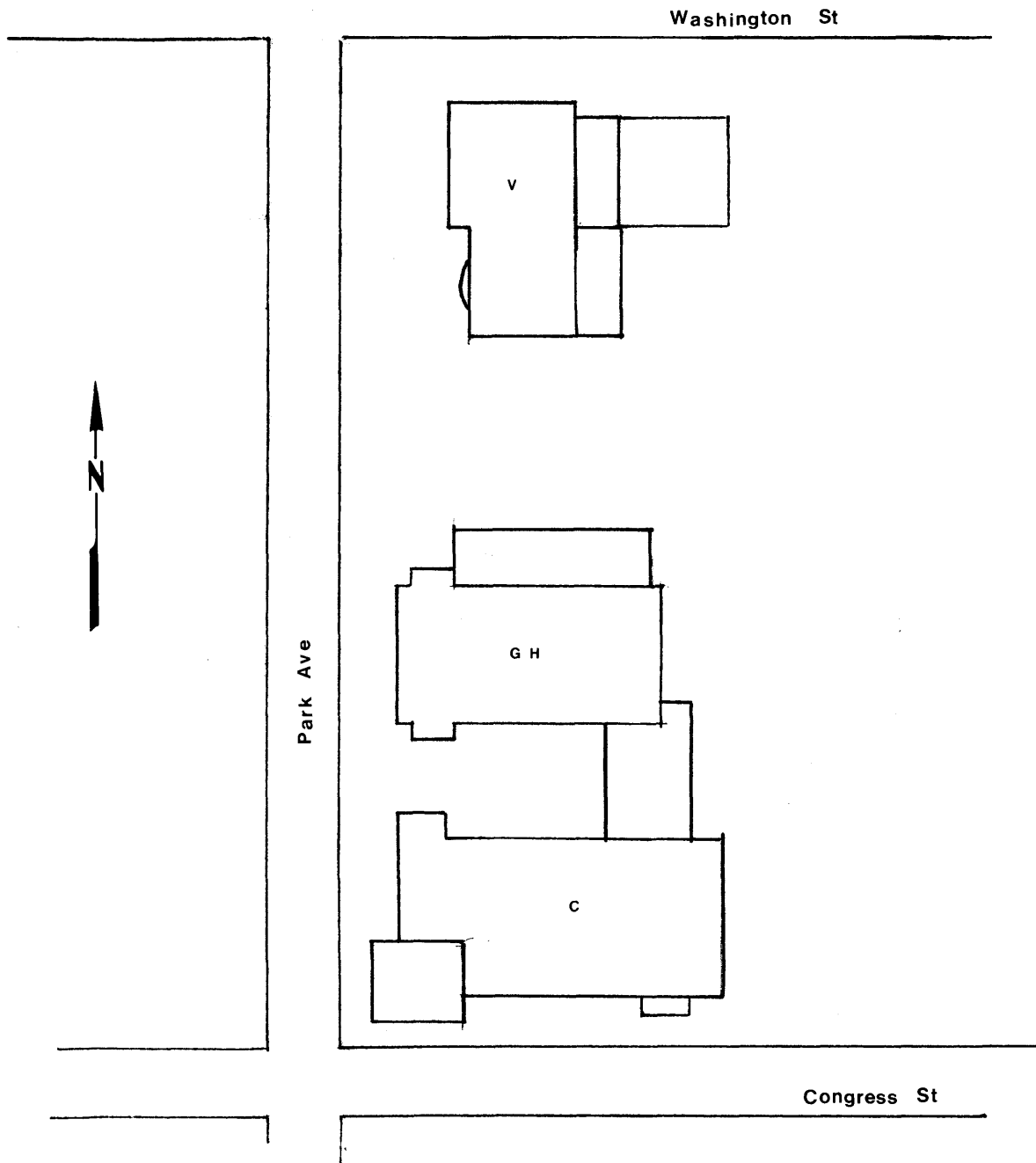
Mrs. Jean Ragin  
308 Collins  
Oconto, Wisconsin 54153

November, 1980  
(414) 834-4260

- <sup>1</sup> Cornerstone.
- <sup>2</sup> Church records
- <sup>3</sup> Abstracts of Title.

The St. Mark's Church site has not changed perceptively since the enclosed photographs were taken in 1981. The photos still accurately convey the present physical appearance of the site.

# ST. MARK'S CHURCH



Sketch map  
not to scale