

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

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National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form

NATIONAL
REGISTER

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in *Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms* (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

1. Name of Property

historic name Church of the Sacred Heart (Catholic)
other names/site number N/A

2. Location

street & number 110 3rd Ave. N.E. not for publication N/A
city, town Freeport vicinity N/A
state Minnesota code MN county Stearns code 145 zip code 56331

3. Classification

Ownership of Property	Category of Property	Number of Resources within Property	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	Contributing	Noncontributing
<input type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input type="checkbox"/> district	<u>1</u>	<u> </u> buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> public-State	<input type="checkbox"/> site	<u> </u>	<u> </u> sites
<input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<u> </u>	<u> </u> structures
	<input type="checkbox"/> object	<u>1</u>	<u>0</u> Total

Name of related multiple property listing:
N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, 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. See continuation sheet.

Signature of certifying official Ian R. Stewart Date 6/6/91
Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer
State or Federal agency and bureau Minnesota Historical Society

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet.

Signature of commenting or other official _____ Date _____
State or Federal agency and bureau _____

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register.
- See continuation sheet.
- determined eligible for the National Register. See continuation sheet.
- determined not eligible for the National Register.
- removed from the National Register.
- other, (explain:) _____

Sharon Byers Entered in the National Register 7/12/91

Signature of the Keeper _____ Date of Action _____

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Religion: religious structure

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Religion: religious structure

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(enter categories from instructions)

Second Gothic Revival

Romanesque Revival

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation Sandstone

walls Brick

Stone

roof Asphalt

other

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

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Church of the Sacred Heart (Catholic), Freeport, Stearns Co., MN

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Sacred Heart Church is a large religious edifice constructed in 1905-06 and located in Freeport, a town of 563 in central Minnesota's Stearns County. The building is executed in a cruciform plan and exhibits features of both the Gothic Revival and Romanesque Revival Styles. Built on a raised, coursed, rough-faced foundation of Mankato Sandstone which is pierced at regular intervals by paired 2/2 double hung windows, the church has walls made of St. Cloud brick decorated with buff-colored polished Mankato stone.

The symmetrical building is dominated by a square steeple centered in the facade which enhances the verticality of the building. At the base is a portal with a pair of wooden doors and a stained glass transom flanked by Corinthian columns set in a stone pointed arch. Centered in the facade is a large stained glass rose window with tracery, below which are five pointed arch stained glass windows; above this Gothic opening is a statue of Christ in a pediment. Atop the first stage of the tower on three sides are black faced clocks (purchased in 1915 from the Hoffman-Pollhause Clock Manufacturing Company of St. Louis for \$1,156). The tower is of a form common to both Gothic and Romanesque Styles, and features Gothic louvered windows which fill the octagonal second stage of the tower, which is brick and features a miniature tower at each corner and steeply pitched dormers below the octagonal spire and pinnacle.

Flanking the tower on the west-facing facade are six tall, pointed arch stained glass windows with tracery set in recessed panels with a continuous polished stone sill. Two-tiered buttress support each corner of the building. Raised brick panels feature bands of Romanesque corbelling which accentuate the gable up to the raking parapet, which is capped with molded metal.

The identical north and south elevations have two primary entrances (both covered by brick porches added in 1978). Above each entry into the narthex are two tall, narrow pointed arch windows. The remaining five bays of the nave are divided by brick buttresses with each bay containing a large stained glass window in a pointed arch. There is a corbelled table below each eave. Each transept gable is buttressed at the corners and contains a window of similar shape and design as the one in the tower. An oculus lights the upper gable around which are corbels below the

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parapet. A fleche centered above the transept rises from the gable roof. The seven sided apse has a conical roof and four stained glass windows. Surrounding the lower half of the apse is a seven sided ambulatory featuring 2/2 double hung sash with segmental brick arches, and a service entrance with a modern overhead garage-style door in the raised foundation.

Although it was painted in 1979, the interior of the Church of the Sacred Heart retains its characteristic Gothic-inspired design. Walls are decorated with a variety of original stencil patterns that encircle most of the interior. The vaulted ceiling is painted sky blue and adorned with gilt detailing; rounded plaster ribs in an ivory tint terminate at capitals carried by round plaster columns. The stained glass windows (added in 1911 by the Ford Brothers Glass Company of St. Paul) on the north wall depict the Old Testament, while those to the south represent the New Testament. Other original decorative elements include wooden pews (constructed by Herman Hollerman of Melrose), the main altar, side altars, Stations of the Cross, and statues (installed by the Daprato Statuary Company in 1909). The building's finished basement features a decorative pressed metal ceiling.

Sacred Heart Church retains good design integrity and is unaltered except for a few interior changes which include carpeted aisles and sanctuary, new lighting, a contemporary granite altar, and the installation of protective Lexan glass over the stained glass windows in 1979.

8. Statement of Significance

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

nationally statewide locally

Applicable National Register Criteria A B C D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions) A B C D E F G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)
Social History

Period of Significance
1905-1941

Significant Dates
1905

Cultural Affiliation
N/A

Significant Person
N/A

Architect/Builder
Parkinson, Albert and Dockendorff,
Bernard, architects
Koshiol, Paul, builder

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

See continuation sheet

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Sacred Heart Church in Freeport Minnesota is significant within the state context of Railroads and Agricultural Development, 1870-1940 and National Register criterion A in the area of Social History. The Catholic church is extremely important in the central Minnesota cultural region as a whole, and nowhere is that importance demonstrated more clearly than in Freeport. This particular building, the third church building for this parish, demonstrates the perserverance of this community and the dedication of parishoners and villagers to the continued existence of their town.

Freeport lies near the heart of what Ingolf Vogeler and other geographers call the "Catholic culture region" in central Minnesota (Vogeler, Dockendorff). German immigrants have dominated the region since the earliest days of Euro-American settlement, many coming to the territory as a direct result of missionary activities undertaken by the Catholic church. Father Francis X. Pierz, missionary to the Ojibway, also wrote many broadsides and prospectuses in German-language newspapers in Europe and North America (Mitchell, 195-215). Vogeler has demonstrated that the ethnic and religious pattern established in the 1850s has persisted to the present, with many areas of Stearns County containing between 70 and 100 per cent German majorities (Vogeler, p. 72).

Since its beginnings, the town of Freeport has been heavily Catholic. The settlement was founded in 1876 when Joseph Hoeschen settled along the Great Northern railroad tracks on land he bought from Henry Wahls. Wahls had acquired land in central Stearns County from the United States government and had farmed in the area for seven years. In 1872, when the railroad came through this part of Stearns County, it crossed land owned by Wahls and by his neighbor to the west, Frank Benolken. Although Hoeschen wasn't the first landowner to settle in the area, the businesses he and his brother founded formed the nucleus of Freeport.

Freeport grew quickly, largely because of the presence of the railroad and the growth of the surrounding farming country. By 1881, the townspeople petitioned the diocese for a church, a request which was granted. The first church was built in 1882.

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Concurrently, the town's commerce prospered, with two business blocks platted in the mid-1880s. Other elements of the town grew as well, and the village was incorporated in 1892. Four years later, the Freeport Creamery Association was established, and the bank soon followed (Mitchell, 363, 1298).

Throughout this economic and civic activity, the Church of the Sacred Heart remained the spiritual and social center of the town. The first sidewalk in the village was laid in 1894, connecting the church and the Wolking Hotel (Mitchell, 1297). The growth pattern in Freeport validates the observation made by historian Richard M. Chapman, who notes "For many of the state's ethnic groups, the immigrant church was the hub around which community life rotated (pp. 508-509)." The church's importance was reinforced in 1896 when the parish built a larger, brick church to replace the older frame building (Mitchell, 224). The first building was then moved to the nearby town of St. Rosa, where it became the nucleus for a new parish. The building in St. Rosa was subsequently replaced with a bigger church edifice (Heritage of Faith).

Misfortune struck Freeport in the autumn of 1904, however, when the brick church burned to the ground on October 12 (Mitchell, 224). Immediately, the townspeople rallied to save the parish and erect a new building. Within weeks, plans had been drawn for a new, still larger church building, even though insurance did not fully cover the cost of replacing the old building ("Freeport's New Church Edifice," Freeport in the Twentieth Century). The fact that the parish raised \$23,000 on its own, coupled with the rapidity of the commitment to rebuilding, provides clear evidence of the importance the town placed in this church. In addition to being the spiritual and social hub of the community, the church was becoming integral to the identity of Freeport as a town.

By 1910, when the new church building was consecrated, Freeport was a village of 450 people supporting some two dozen businesses. Furthermore, the church was the cultural institution that held the town together. All of the leading businessmen, from the banker, the creamery owner, and the storekeepers, to the most prosperous farmers in the area, were members of the parish

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at the Church of the Sacred Heart. According to contemporary records in the holdings of the Minnesota Historical Society and the Stearns County Historical Society, the only people in town who were not parish members were day laborers, itinerant railroad workers, the town physician, and the barber.

After 1910, Freeport entered a period of a flattening growth curve. It is true that some civic amenities continued to develop, most notably the addition of an electric company and electric lights in 1913. More important, many of the services and institutions that had once distinguished Freeport from other towns began to disappear. The doctor tried to establish a hospital in 1909, but gave up and moved away in 1913. The newspaper closed in 1922 after trying to survive for a decade (Freeport in the Twentieth Century). A disastrous fire in 1917 destroyed much of the town's brick business district and threatened to engulf the entire town ("Business Block in Freeport Entirely Destroyed by Fire"). Largely in response to these setbacks, population grew very slowly; by 1952, the town population numbered only 600. Freeport, which had once promised so much as a town, had become a location for basic services to surrounding farmers only, and was unable to compete with nearby larger regional retail and government centers.

During this period, the time between 1910 and World War II, the Church of the Sacred Heart served as the single most important institution that kept people tied to this village. Freeport's commercial activity, the mill, small stores, and banks, was not substantial enough to provide jobs to attract population growth. The people who were there, mostly the descendants of the first generation of families who built the town in the latter part of the 19th century, stayed on, largely because of the presence of the church and parish.

Throughout the first half of the 20th century, the Church of the Sacred Heart provided the sole continuity in social, spiritual, and physical terms to hold the town of Freeport together. This church building, which arose out of the crisis of the 1905 fire and was dedicated in the town's "heyday" of 1910, represents the importance of religious life, and Catholicism in particular, in the history of Freeport Minnesota.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

See continuation sheet

Primary location of additional data:

- State historic preservation office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Specify repository: _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of property less than 1

UTM References

A

15	3	6	8	6	6	0	5	0	5	7	7	4	0
Zone	Easting			Northing									

B

Zone	Easting			Northing									

C

Zone	Easting			Northing									

D

Zone	Easting			Northing									

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

The boundary of the Church of the Sacred Heart is shown as the solid dark line on the accompanying map entitled, " Certificate of Survey for: SACRED HEART CHURCH, Freeport, Minn." 1988

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

The boundary includes all that portion of Block 9 and Lot 42 that has historically been associated with the property.

See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By See continuation sheet

name/title _____
organization _____ date _____
street & number _____ telephone _____
city or town _____ state _____ zip code _____

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"Business Block in Freeport Entirely Destroyed by Fire." Melrose Beacon November 8, 1917 p. 1.

Chapman, Richard M. "Religious Belief and Behavior," pp. 507-538 in Clifford Clark, (ed.) Minnesota in a Century of Change. St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society, 1989.

Dockendorff, Thomas P. "Upper Mississippi Valley Landscape: A Legacy of German Catholic Settlement in Central Minnesota." Pioneer America Society Transactions 8 (1985): 85-90.

Freeport in the Twentieth Century. videotape. 18 minutes. collections of Stearns County Historical Society.

"Freeport Village." Sandborn Fire Insurance Map. 1952.

"Freeport's New Church Edifice" St. Cloud Times December 7, 1904. p. 6.

Heritage of Faith: Centennial 1881-1981. Freeport, MN: privately printed, n. p., 1981.

Mitchell, William B. History of Stearns County, Minnesota. v. 1 Chicago: H. C. Cooper, Jr. and Co., 1915.

Parish register, Church of the Sacred Heart, Freeport. Minnesota.

United States Department of Commerce and Labor, Bureau of the Census. Thirteenth Census of the United States: 1910 Population. Freeport Village, Stearns County, Minnesota.

Vogeler, Ingolf. "The Roman Catholic Culture Region of Central Minnesota." Pioneer America 8 (1976): 71-83.

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Michael Koop/Historic Preservation Consultant
615 Jackson Street N.E.
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55413
612-623-8356
February, 1990

Patrick Nunnally/Review and Compliance Assistant
Minnesota Historical Society/State Historic Preservation Office
Fort Snelling History Center
St. Paul, Minnesota 55111
612-726-1171
March, 1991