

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

PH0692905

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RECEIVED DEC 5 1978  
DATE ENTERED JAN 25 1979

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS  
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

**1 NAME**

HISTORIC St. Stephen's Episcopal Church (SD01-39)

AND/OR COMMON  
Same

**2 LOCATION**

STREET & NUMBER  
15th and Adams Streets

NOT FOR PUBLICATION  
CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT  
1

CITY, TOWN  
Ashland

VICINITY OF

STATE  
Nebraska

CODE  
31

COUNTY  
Saunders

CODE  
155

**3 CLASSIFICATION**

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE	
<input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL	<input type="checkbox"/> PARK
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL	<input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	<b>PUBLIC ACQUISITION</b>	<b>ACCESSIBLE</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER:

**4 OWNER OF PROPERTY**

NAME  
Episcopal Diocese of Nebraska ✓

STREET & NUMBER  
200 North 62nd Street

CITY, TOWN  
Omaha

VICINITY OF

STATE  
Nebraska

**5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE,  
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC. County Clerk's Office, Saunders County Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN  
Ashland

STATE  
Nebraska

**6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE  
Historic Preservation in Nebraska

DATE  
1971

FEDERAL  STATE  COUNTY  LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR  
SURVEY RECORDS  
Nebraska State Historical Society

CITY, TOWN  
Lincoln

STATE  
Nebraska

# 7 DESCRIPTION

## CONDITION

EXCELLENT  
 GOOD  
 FAIR

DETERIORATED  
 RUINS  
 UNEXPOSED

## CHECK ONE

UNALTERED  
 ALTERED

## CHECK ONE

ORIGINAL SITE  
 MOVED      DATE \_\_\_\_\_

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### DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

St. Stephen's Episcopal Church is an 1872 frame board-and-batten construction on the northwest corner of 15th and Adams Streets in Ashland, Nebraska (1970 population, 2,176). The immediate neighborhood is residential, and the church is a key corner edifice.

The nave is covered by a steeply pitched gable roof whose ridge is straddled by a belfry at the eastern end. The principal entrance is a gabled enclosure near the southwest corner (see photo 4), and the south (main) wall is treated with two frame buttresses (see photos 2,3,and 4). On the nave's east end is a five-sided apse enlivened by three gablets (photos 1,2,and 3). North of the apse is a second gabled entrance enclosure -- this one serving a parish hall whose roof is lower than the nave's (see photo 1). Wooden shakes is the material covering all roofs, including the pyramidal steeple over the belfry. Excepting the removal of iron cresting atop the apse and its gablets (see photo 2), St. Stephen's exterior is in its original state.

The interior is well preserved and contains the correct fittings for a church of the Anglican Communion. The ceiling is supported by two tiers of cross beams and achieves an impressive height. Two narrow lancet windows (see photo 8) pierce the nave's rear wall and shorter lancets light the nave and choir. The pointed arch motif is carried on in the chancel by the shape of the apse and by two wooden frames that flank it.

The pews appear to be original, and the choir screens and a canopied ecclesiastical chair (photo 7) are fine elements. In the 1940s a high wooden dado was installed in the apse, and this is the only alteration that has occurred to the interior of St. Stephen's.

The nominated property is a rectangular lot measuring 140 feet deep and 88 feet wide. Included with the church on this lot are several trees approaching full maturity which enhance the setting.

# 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/HUMANITARIAN
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES 1872 BUILDER/ARCHITECT Unknown

### STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

St. Stephen's Episcopal Church is significant as being the finest representative of Gothic Revival architecture in the community of Ashland, Nebraska. Board and batten construction renders the church further individuality, and the building has suffered only minor alterations since its construction in 1872. Also, St. Stephen's is the oldest church building in Ashland, and is recognized as a local landmark by the community.

In June, 1871, a request to establish an Episcopal parish in Ashland was submitted to the Rt. Rev. R.H. Clarkson, first Bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of Nebraska. The request being approved, the Episcopalians of Ashland voted in June of that same year to build a church dedicated to St. Stephen (The First 100 Years, p. 28).

After 106 years, St. Stephen's retains a significant degree of its original appearance, and it is easily identifiable as being a church of the Anglican Communion through its stylistic features and the interior arrangement and fittings.

As might have been expected from its ritualistic character and its roots in a medieval past, the Episcopal church led the fight for the use of Gothic architecture. As early as 1807 the Episcopalian Churchman's Magazine of New Haven described Gothic solemnity as more fitting for religious exercises than 'the more light and finical [style] of Greece' (Early, p. 118).

Ashland, established ca. 1870, is mid-way between Omaha and Lincoln. The location is on the historic Ox Bow Trail, at a point where a rock-bottomed ford offered a safe crossing of the Salt River. In the 1870s the population numbered only a few hundred, and St. Stephen's Church was on the original town's very edge at the time of its construction.

In its location in a small town on the Great Plains, St. Stephen's Church well represents the manifestation of the Gothic tradition in the Episcopal Church -- a tradition that began in America as early as the 1600s when the first Anglican houses of worship were established on the eastern coast.

# 9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Early, James. Romanticism and American Architecture. New York: A.S. Barnes and Co., Inc., 1965.

The First 100 Years: Ashland, Nebraska. Ashland: Chamber of Commerce, 1957.

## 10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY less than 1/2 acre

QUADRANGLE NAME Ashland East, Nebr.

QUADRANGLE SCALE 1:24000

UTM REFERENCES

A 14 721000 4546340

B         

ZONE EASTING

NORTHING

ZONE EASTING

NORTHING

C         

D         

E         

F         

G         

H         

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

A rectangular lot on the northwest corner of 15th and Adams Sts. in Ashland, measuring 140 feet deep and 88 feet wide.

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
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## 11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Daniel Kidd, Architectural Historian

November, 1978

ORGANIZATION

Nebraska State Historical Society

DATE

STREET & NUMBER

1500 R Street

TELEPHONE

402-432-2793

CITY OR TOWN

Lincoln

STATE

Nebraska

## 12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL   

STATE X

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

*Marvin O. Knott*

TITLE Director, Nebraska State Historical Society

DATE

11/22/78

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

1-25-79

ATTEST: *William H. Graham*

DATE

1-22-79

CHIEF OF REGISTRATION