

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

For NPS use only

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

received **AUG 27 1986**

date entered **SEP 25 1986**

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

1. Name

historic SS Peter and Paul Catholic Church Complex

and/or common N/A

2. Location

street & number First Avenue N/A not for publication

city, town Strasburg N/A vicinity of

state North Dakota code 38 county Emmons code 029

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 | Public Acquisition | Accessible | <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 |
| | <u>N/A</u> | <input type="checkbox"/> no | <input type="checkbox"/> military | <input type="checkbox"/> other: |

4. Owner of Property

name St. Peter and Paul Church c/o Fr. Kautzman

street & number N/A

city, town Strasburg N/A vicinity of state North Dakota

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Register of Deeds Office

street & number Emmons County Courthouse

city, town Linton state North Dakota

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title N/A has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date N/A N/A federal state county local

depository for survey records N/A

city, town N/A state N/A

7. Description

| | | | |
|---|---------------------------------------|---|---|
| Condition | | Check one | Check one |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> excellent | <input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated | <input type="checkbox"/> unaltered | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site |
| <input type="checkbox"/> good | <input type="checkbox"/> ruins | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered | <input type="checkbox"/> moved date _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> fair | <input type="checkbox"/> unexposed | | |

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

SS. Peter and Paul Catholic Church is located in Strasburg, a community of approximately 600 people located in south central North Dakota. The nominated area includes two contributing buildings, the church and rectory, and a noncontributing building, a modern garage. The church and rectory are located in a residential area, two blocks from main street. The church is the oldest and largest public building in the community. All three buildings face south on First Avenue.

Formerly, a wood frame church and parish rectory occupied the site. These buildings were moved to Strasburg from the a rural location in 1906 and removed from the site when the present church and rectory were built in 1910 (Centennial 1976 p. 25). The original church was used as a convent from 1911 (Centennial 1976 p. 26) to 1970 and was then demolished. The rectory was used as a residence for a few years. No evidence of these buildings, as foundations or depressions, is evident.

The church is a brick building with a rock foundation, crossing gable roof and a steeple. It measures 128 feet north-south by 50 feet east-west. The transept extends 70 feet east-west and the tower rises 85 feet high. Construction of the church began in 1909, and, was completed in 1910 (Moments to Remember p. 25). The total cost of the building was \$45,000, and it was designed to seat approximately 900 (Centennial 1976:25).

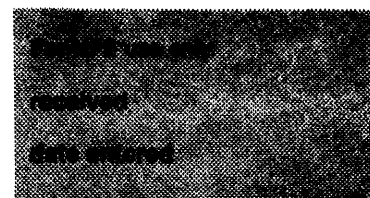
The exterior design of the church is marked by symmetry on the front (south) facade (see photo 1) and more complex massing on the sides and rear. A multitude of wall planes and curvilinear surfaces advance and retreat on secondary elevations (see photo 2). Facing brick and stone foundation convey the pattern throughout. Other exterior details include brick corbelling (see photo 3), arched stained glass windows in heavy wooden frames, and historic street lights at the building's entrance.

The interior is encountered initially in the leather covered nave door with trefoil windows and brass-headed nails under a stained glass arch. Inside the nave and chancel are domed ceilings, three altars, stained glass, and 21 statues. Stencil work at about 4 feet high forms a continuous decorative band around the interior. Carved wood serves as the material for the altar, pulpit, and confessionals. Four large canvas paintings on the ceiling depicting biblical scenes.

Changes to the church have been related to maintenance. In 1947 a poured concrete floor replaced the wooden floor in the basement. The basement's kitchen was partitioned, plastered and repainted. Fluorescent lighting was also added in 1947 (Centennial 1976 p. 28). The altars and statues were all repainted by an artist, Fr. Kreutz. In 1948 leaks in the roof mandated repairs. In 1953 the church interior was completely repainted. Originally a dark color, it was repainted lighter colors: shades of blue, pink and white. During the 1953 repainting the four ceiling canvas paintings were added. The windows were also repaired and the sanctuary tiled (Centennial 1976 p. 28). The church basement was tiled and carpet put on the steps. In 1985 the communion railing was moved back to replace the first row of the pews.

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The rectory (see photo 4) was completed in 1914. It is a two story wood frame building with a full basement. It contains fourteen rooms and had running water and a steam heating plant when built (Centennial 1976 p. 27). It has wooden siding, shingled roof and an open porch across the front. The exterior neoclassical styling is typical of dwellings built in North Dakota during the first two decades of this century. Its white coloration, symmetrical composition, simple classical columns on the porch, and decorative window surrounds (see photo 5) were current expressions of the style.

The main floor contains an office, large living room, dining room and kitchen. Decorated interior woodwork is limited to simple baseboards, corner moldings, and a newel post on the stairway. The rectory has had no major changes since its construction. It was used as a convent from 1972 until 1985. During this time the upper floor was partitioned to create additional sleeping space for the tenants. The building's floor plan was restored to the original in 1985. The building continues today as a rectory.

The concrete block garage (see photo 6) is of modern construction. It appears in an aerial photograph from 1973, but probably does not predate that year by very much. It is covered by a double-hipped roof with asphalt shingles.

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 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 1910, 1914 **Builder/Architect** Unknown

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

Ss. Peter and Paul Church in Strasburg is architecturally significant for the quality of its interior decorations and exterior design. The church is also a significant cultural expression associated with a recognizable ethnic group, the Germans from Russia. The first settlers of this community were almost exclusively German Russians and a large portion of the community is still of German Russian descent (Sherman 1983:49).

The church which formerly served the parish was constructed in 1893 for 1800 dollars. It was seated 2 1/2 miles from the present townsite, before the railroad had permanently fixed Strasburg's location. In 1902 the railroad laid the tracks through present day Strasburg, and an argument arose over whether or not to move the church to the new community. For four years the debate continued until, in 1906, the bishop was called upon to mediate. He instructed that the church be moved into town. That decision caused hard feelings among many rural parishioners, resulting in a spirit of divisiveness in the once cohesive parish. Presumably the process of planning and building the new church three years later functioned as an important event in reestablishing unity among the people. Upon completion, Ss. Peter and Paul church was praised in many quarters; not the least of which included the bishop. His letter of congratulation naming Ss. Peter and Paul as one of the most beautiful churches in the state confirmed the sentiment of the congregation who had helped erect it (Centennial 1976:25).

Architecturally the church is among the most elaborate in the county and even among all rural North Dakota worship houses. Its large size and brick construction is matched by few, most notably National Register listed churches in Hague, (St. Mary's) and New Hradec (Ss. Peter and Paul). All three of these churches are outstanding in their design and represent a tremendous effort by immigrant people with few economic resources. The construction of the church in Strasburg was an accomplishment of no small proportions.

Most of the labor for the church was donated. The rocks for the foundation were hauled in from the surrounding land and cut on site. Abbot Vincent Wehrle, who later became Bishop of the diocese, and the attending pastor, Fr. Justus, loaded and hauled the first load of rocks for the foundation (Jubilee 1948 p. 38). The Bishop's letter of approval confirmed the sense of unity and success the church gave to the people.

Most early Strasburg social activities centered around the church because of the homogenous ethnic and religious composition of the community. The church became a particularly strong center of their lives (Sherman:50).

9. Major Bibliographical References

See continuation sheet.

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property 1.03 acres
Quadrangle name Strasburg, N. Dak. 1971

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UTM References

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| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Zone | | Easting | | | | Northing | | | | | | | | |

Verbal boundary description and justification

See continuation sheet.

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

state N/A code N/A county N/A code N/A

state N/A code N/A county N/A code N/A

11. Form Prepared By

name/title L. Martin Perry, Architectural Historian
Diane Marquart

organization State Historical Society of North Dakota date March 24, 1986
Private

street & number North Dakota Heritage Center telephone (701) 224-2672
808 North First Street (701) 223-0652

city or town Bismarck state North Dakota
Bismarck

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.

James E. Sperry
State Historic Preservation Officer signature *James E. Sperry*

title State Historic Preservation Officer (North Dakota) date 8/20/86

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

James E. Sperry date 9/25/86
Keeper of the National Register

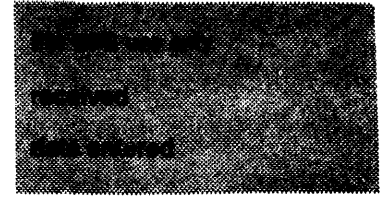
Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

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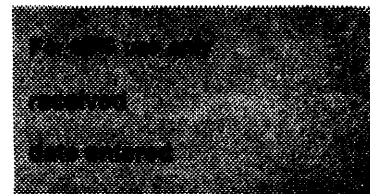
2

For example, one social activity was the annual church fair. It was started in 1927 to raise money to pay off the parish debts. In 1946 this activity broke its previous attendance record with over 1200 people participating (Moments to Remember p. 26). In 1923 the parish initiated a Catholic High School. This was the first and only high school in Strasburg. The teachers were Ursuline Sisters, an order dedicated to education, who came from Germany. They conducted classes in German as well as in English for the many students who had not learned the new language (Jubilee, 1948).

Obviously, the parish social, educational, and religious activities fostered a cultural unity among early residents and allowed a smooth assimilation of the German-Russian immigrants into their adopted culture. The church and attendant rectory remain today a community focal point and are representatives of the historic efforts of the parish to foster cultural integrity.

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9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Area Fact Survey of Strasburg, North Dakota. Strasburg, North Dakota: Strasburg Civic Club, 1966.

Letter from Bishop Werle, Bismarck, to Ss. Peter and Paul parish, March 31, 1948.

Miller, Michael M.

1976 Moments to Remember. Strasburg: Alumni Association.

Sherman, William

1983 Prairie Mosaic, An Ethnic Atlas of Rural North Dakota. Fargo: Institute for Regional Studies.

Strasburg Diamond Jubilee. Strasburg: Bicentennial Committee, 1976.

Strasburg, Emmons County, North Dakota, Richardton: Der Volksfreund, 1914.

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

Verbal boundary description and justification.

The nominated property lies on the South half of an unnumbered block in Strasburg, North Dakota. The half block is bounded on the North by an alley, on the West by Fifth Street and Block 20 of Milwaukee Land Company's 3rd Addition, on the South by First Avenue and Block 11 of Milwaukee Land Company's First Addition, and on the East by Fourth Street and Block 12 of Milwaukee Land Company's First Addition.