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United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name St. Matthias Episcopal Church Complex

other names/site number _____

name of related multiple property listing N/A

2. Location

street & number 374 Main Street; 24 Maple Road [] not for publication

city or town East Aurora [] vicinity

state New York code NY county Erie code 029 zip code 14052

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, 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 as set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property meets [] does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant [] nationally [] statewide locally. ([] see continuation sheet for additional comments.)

[Signature]
Signature of certifying official/Title

10/11/2019
Date

[Signature]
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property [] meets [] does not meet the National Register criteria. ([] see continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the 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) _____

[Signature]
Signature of the Keeper

date of action

12/3/19

St. Matthias Episcopal Church Complex

Name of Property

Erie County, New York

County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(check as many boxes as apply) (Count)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

Category of Property

(Check only one box)

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
3	0	buildings
_____	_____	sites
_____	_____	structures
_____	_____	objects
3	0	TOTAL

Name of related multiple property listing

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

N/A

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(enter categories from instructions)

RELIGION/Religious facility

DOMESTIC/Single dwelling

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

RELIGION/Religious facility

RELIGION/Single dwelling

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

LATE 19th & 20th CENTURY REVIVALS/Gothic Revival

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation stone

walls stone, concrete block, stucco

roof slate, asphalt

other

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets)

St. Matthias Episcopal Church Complex

Name of Property

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8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A** Property associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or that represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all boxes that apply.)

- A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B** removed from its original location
- C** a birthplace or grave
- D** a cemetery
- E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure
- F** a commemorative property
- G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

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 Building Survey # _____
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal Agency
- Local Government
- University
- Other repository: _____

Areas of Significance:

(Enter categories from instructions)

 SOCIAL HISTORY

 ARCHITECTURE

Period of Significance:

 1923-1963

Significant Dates:

 1923; 1928; 1963

Significant Person:

 N/A

Cultural Affiliation:

 N/A

Architect/Builder:

 Robert North (Church); Edward B. Reed (addition)

St. Matthias Episcopal Church Complex

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10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of Property 1.21 acres

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1	<u>18</u>	<u>694688</u>	<u>4737884</u>	3	<u>18</u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
2	<u>18</u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	4	<u>18</u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Annie Schentag; Kerry Traynor [Edited by Jennifer Walkowski and Bill Krattinger, NYSHPO]

organization kta preservation specialists date 6/29/2019

street & number 422 Parker Avenue telephone 716.864.0628

city or town Buffalo state NY zip code 14216

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location
 A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

Additional items

(Check with SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner (Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO)

name _____

street & number _____ telephone _____

city or town _____ state _____ zip code _____

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 *et seq.*)

Estimated Burden Statement: public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, D.C. 20503

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St. Matthias Episcopal Church Complex
Name of Property
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Narrative Description

The St. Matthias Episcopal Church Complex, located at 374 Main Street in East Aurora, Erie County, New York, consists of three religious buildings: a **church** (1928) with rear addition (1963), a **rectory** (c.1860) and its one-story frame garage (c.1963). The buildings occupy two parcels on the north side of Main Street at the northeast corner of Maple Road. The complex is located on the west side of the Village of East Aurora, and the surrounding area is primarily residential, populated mostly by two-story frame dwellings, with some commercial buildings located along Main Street to the east of the complex. Two other churches are located in the immediate vicinity. To the north of the church on Maple Road, the Aurora Expressway leads towards the city of Buffalo about 25 miles to the northwest.

The church is built in the English Gothic Revival style and sits on the northeast corner of Main Street and Maple Road, with the primary elevation facing south on Main Street. In 1963, a rear addition to the church was constructed in a contemporary style that complements the church at the north end of the original stone building to accommodate classrooms. The rectory is a two-story frame dwelling built facing east towards Maple Road in the Greek Revival style, adjacent to the rear, north side of the church.

The church is set back from Main Street approximately 8 feet, and the rectory is set back from Maple Road about 6 feet. The garage is obscured from the street by the other buildings. A paved concrete sidewalk is located on both Main Street and Maple Road, separated from the street by a small grass median. The grounds are lightly landscaped with maple trees, manicured groundcovers, and grass. The primary entrance at the south elevation is accessible by a raised pathway that is separated from the sidewalk by uncut stone steps with metal handrails on either side. This entire portion is raised from the rest of the lawn and distinguished by a stone curb. A few mature trees are located to the east and west of the property. At the rear of the complex is a paved parking lot, with a driveway and walkway between buildings and at the rear of the church.

The St. Matthias Episcopal Church congregation has owned and occupied this lot since 1869. The complex's historically significant construction and additions all occurred before the end of the period of significance in 1963. Overall the buildings are in excellent condition, maintaining more than sufficient architectural integrity on both their exteriors and interiors in order to convey historic meaning as a collection of religious buildings from the late-nineteenth to mid-twentieth century.

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St. Matthias Episcopal Church (1928; rear Barker addition 1963)
Architect: Robert North (church); E.B. Reed & Associates (addition)
One contributing building

Exterior

St. Matthias Episcopal Church is located on the northeast corner of Main Street and Maple Road and was built in 1928 in the English Gothic Revival style. Overall, the massing and form of the building presents a T-shape. The two-story church, constructed with Buffalo and Indiana limestone, features a front-facing gable with cross gabled wing and three-story tower nestled into the ell of the cross-gable to the northwest. This shape is formed by a long, two-story rectangular main section facing Main Street under a steep gable roof and a cross-gabled wing behind it stretching north along Maple Road. The main section features a one-story exterior side wing with a flat roof that runs parallel to its west side and a square engaged entrance tower at the intersection of the side wing and the cross-gabled wing. Behind the cross-gabled wing is another square section holds the church hall. A rectangular wing was constructed later as an educational wing, to the north and rear of the main building.

The primary elevation, facing south towards Main Street, is defined by paired wood entrance doors set within a dressed limestone arch. The main entrance portal is accessed via a walk off Main Street and rising four stone steps. The dressed stone architrave above the door continues and intersects with simple, single story gabled pier buttresses with dressed stone caps on either side of the entrance. Above the stone belt course is a paired lancet window surmounted by a simple quatrefoil cut. The window is set within a stone arch with drip eared moulding that springs from a dressed limestone band that extends across the elevation. Square piers turn the corner to the east and west. To the west, a single bay of the south elevation is set back along the west elevation and is defined by a single lancet window with leaded diamond-shaped panes that look into the side aisle.

The west elevation features a single story below the shallow eaves, with a square, three-story tower placed between the north and south bays in the ell of the cross gable. A single wood door set within a dressed limestone architrave, similar to the one on the south elevation, is located on the west elevation of the tower. Above the door are paired, rectangular window openings with stone mullions. The tower is terminated by slightly recessed dressed stone sitting on top of stone sills at each corner and finished with stone coping. The elevation continues on both sides of the tower, with four bays to the south and three bays to the north. In the four bays to the south of the tower, paired lancet windows with leaded diamond panes and stone mullions are in each bay and are headed by a continuous dressed limestone course. The rectangular window openings are relatively small and do not extend up and under the shallow eaves. Tall rectangular openings with metal louvers are located on the second floor of each elevation.

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The one-and-one-half story cross-gable wing, facing west, is detailed with wood half-timbering and stucco at the window bands and gable, and random-coursed limestone below. Two, six-light leaded casement windows are located at the raised basement. The windows, located high on the first floor, are eight-light leaded casement units, while those on the gable end are paired six-light units with wood mullions. Beyond the cross-gable the single-story west elevation continues for three bays, each defined by a single story stone pier. The walls in between each pier have a stucco finish and feature window triplets at the raised basement and first floor. At the basement the windows are six-light leaded casement units with wood mullion set within a simple wood frame. The first floor features half-timbering and extends beyond the plane of the wall slightly between each stone pier. Each window triplet features a four-over-six light window. A simple, single-story gabled pier buttress turns the corner at the north elevation.

The east elevation also features a single-story below the shallow eaves. The bay to the south, at the narthex features a single, rectangular window opening defined by dress limestone and a lancet window. At each of the four bays to the north is a paired lancet window, also with leaded diamond panes set within a rectangular, dressed limestone opening set just beneath the shallow eaves. To the north of the four bays the exterior is finished with stucco. The first six bays feature single ten-light leaded glass casement windows, while the bay to the south features paired ten-light leaded glass windows. Unlike the windows at the four bays to the south on this elevation, these windows do not extend up beneath the eaves. The final three bays on the elevation feature a single eight-light casement window and two paired eight-light casement windows which extend up beneath the eaves.

A single-story addition with raised basement was added to the gabled, north elevation in 1963. Triplet lancet stained-glass windows remain visible in the gable above the addition. The six-bay addition is constructed of concrete block with a stucco finish. Each bay on the east and west elevations features twenty-four-light, sliding glass windows on the first floor and eighteen-light sliding glass units at the basement. The entrance into the addition is located on the east elevation, which features paired aluminum entrance doors below a wooden truss supported by knee bracing. The north elevation features sliding glass units, centrally located, at the basement and first floors.

Interior

The interior of St. Matthias Episcopal Church is divided into a narthex, nave and chancel. One enters the church from the south into the narthex before passing through a wood screen, detailed with diamond-shaped leaded-glass windows, into the nave. A gallery/choir loft with organ now forms a second story over the narthex; this was added in 1971. The gallery is accessed by stairs to the west within the narthex. Organ pipes are visible, set

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within a c. 1977 wood frame against the gable wall.¹ The floors of the nave are stone, and the walls are plaster. The center procession towards the sanctuary is defined by wood pews on either side of the nave. To the west is a one-story-tall side aisle defined by an arcade supported by simple stone columns. To the north, within the side aisle, the stone tower enters the volume with a segmental opening connecting the two spaces. The windows to the east, within the side aisle, are small and rectangular and feature stone stools and aprons, while those on the west wall, facing the nave, extend up toward the intersection of wall and ceiling. Original four-light metal pendants hang from the open wood truss ceiling. The wood ceiling features five decorative arch-braced trusses. As noted on the 1928 construction documents a metal rod system located within the central vertical post connects to the rafters along the top of the curved wood braces to provide the structural support.

Two steps lead into the chancel before continuing up an additional step to the curved wood communion rail, which surrounds the altar. This space features original hardwood floors at the altar and stone around the perimeter. The chancel was altered by 1945 when the choir (which occupied long pews facing each other) was relocated, the pews were removed, and the communion rail was curved. In a later renovation (c1970s), the altar was moved closer to the congregation. A simple tripartite lancet wood panel is located behind the altar (this also appears to date to the 1940s renovation), echoing the tripartite, stained-glass lancet window in the gabled wall above. Some original altar furniture remains extant, including the raised hexagonal wood pulpit to the east, detailed at each corner with columns supporting pointed arches. To the west of the sanctuary is a small columbarium in the space where the organ was originally located, and to the east is the sacristy and vestry.

To the north of the columbarium is a narrow hall and stair leading up to the entrance into the parish hall, "All Saints Hall," to the north and a small chapel to the west. The hall and chapel are also accessed from within the tower via a broad set of wood stairs. The chapel is a simple rectangular room with paired leaded diamond-pane casement windows on the west wall and a simple stucco finish on the east wall. Wood timber beams running east-west span the room. The altar is located to the south enclosed by limestone walls to the east and west and set up against an elaborate wood screen decorated with Gothic ornament. Two decorative wood communion rails sit on top of the hardwood floor and there is a freestanding wood lectern.

All Saints Hall is a large open space with stucco walls, hardwood floors and triple windows with wood mullions, set within simple wood casing and featuring a continuous wood stool. The open wood ceiling is defined by cross bracing and scissor trusses. A small balcony is located above the entrance into the room. Centrally located along the east wall is a limestone fireplace with simple wood mantel and stone hearth. To the north of the fireplace paired wood doors lead to the corridor connecting to the 1960s classroom addition to the north, while the doors to the south lead to a second set of stairs leading to the balcony overlooking the parish hall and two small offices.

¹¹ Drawings dated October, 1977 show alterations to the chancel.

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Beneath the parish hall in the basement is a similar large room that functions as a meeting space and dining room, with kitchen located to the east, as it was historically, although it was enlarged in 1961. This room is accessed from the stair at the tower and the stair to the west off the sanctuary. This room features raised paired casement windows along the west wall, and a stone fireplace centrally located along the east wall. The ceiling is covered with dropped acoustical tile. The space beneath the church houses the boiler room and what was coal storage immediately to the south of the stairs. Beyond and to the south is not accessible, although historic drawings show structural piers.

In 1961 a rectangular classroom/office wing, the Barker addition, was added to the north. A single double-loaded corridor runs north-south at the basement and first floors and features acoustical tile ceilings, vinyl composition tile floors and painted concrete block walls. The main entrance into the addition occurs at the north corner of the east elevation through paired aluminum storefront doors that lead to vestibule landing with stairs descending into the basement and ascending to the first floor corridors. Windows on the east and west walls provide light into the classroom and office spaces.

St. Matthias Episcopal Church Rectory and Garage (c.1860; c.1963)

Architect: unknown

Two contributing primary buildings

A rectory is located to the north of the church, facing west, towards Maple Street. The two-story L-shaped frame residence appears to be a vernacular Greek Revival period house with an upright and wing configuration. There is a two-bay-wide front gabled upright section and a side gabled wing with two irregular bays. There is an entrance on the west facing Maple street along with one on the southeast. The southeastern porch is supported by small columns accessible by steps. The door has glass panels and is flanked by two sidelights. The windows on the west facade are two-over-three double-hung windows with black shutters on both stories. To the right there is a three-over-two window with two smaller versions on the second story. The south elevation has two windows on each story identical to the west elevation with a band distinguishing the two floors. There is also a brick chimney emerging from the right side of the roof. The west elevation has a large enclosed porch that has the other entrance to the left. To the right of this are two larger double-hung windows on the first story. The roof of this portion is another gabled peak. On the north elevation there is brick chimney attached to the house along with an additional porch with surrounding windows that look out onto the driveway to the main parking lot.

Garage

A small single-story garage associated with the rectory is located to the northwest of the church. It was likely built c.1963 when the building became the rectory. Its rectangular massing runs parallel to the church. The

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exterior is composed of concrete bricks and has a gabled roof. There is a small single car garage door facing Main Street and accessible by a sidewalk. There is an additional two-car garage facing the rear parking lot with white trim and a green metal side gabled roof. The elevation facing the church has a single painted wood door and a pair of three-over-two windows with white muntins. The side facing the parking lot has a two-car garage door. It is also connected to the rear entrance of the church with a sidewalk.

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St. Matthias Episcopal Church Complex
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Statement of Significance:

The St. Matthias Episcopal Church Complex, located in the Village of East Aurora, Erie County, New York is locally significant as a representative example of a twentieth-century English Gothic Revival Episcopal church complex, which reflects the history and growth of the parish in the community throughout the twentieth century. Consisting of three contributing buildings, including the church, a rectory, and a garage, the church complex has been a notable feature of East Aurora's Main Street since the parish's founding in the 1870s. Significant under Criterion C for Architecture, the complex reflects several stages of construction and growth for the church and its parish. The English Gothic Revival church anchors the complex; it was designed in 1928 by parishioner and architect Robert North to replace an older church that had been located on the same site since around 1871. In 1963 a modest addition was made to the north of the building, designed by architects E.B. Reed & Associates, to accommodate the growing educational and administrative needs of the church. The complex also includes a Greek Revival style residence that was affiliated with the church as a rectory since 1923 and a small non-historic garage (c.1963) at the rear of the property. The complex is also significant under Criterion A in Social History as it reflects the growth of the church congregation and its parish in East Aurora. By the time the current church was constructed in 1928, this community was growing and expanding significantly as a result of residential wealth occurring in East Aurora. The 1963 addition to the church further indicates the continued success of this ecclesiastical community into the mid-twentieth century, when the parish population reached another peak. The period of significance for the St. Matthias Episcopal Church Complex is 1923-1963. This period begins when the rectory was donated for use by the congregation in 1923, includes the construction of the present church in 1928, and ends with the construction of the addition in 1963.

Neighborhood Context

Although the present church was not built until 1928, the St. Matthias Parish was established in the late nineteenth century to address the growing population of East Aurora by that time. Located about 20 miles south of the City of Buffalo, East Aurora was first settled by Euro-Americans in 1804. The village's first white settler, Jabez Warren, purchased land from the Holland Land Company and built the first permanent dwelling here in 1804. Shortly thereafter, following tree markings Ellicott had made in 1803, Warren and other early settlers cut the Big Tree Road, present day Main Street, through the forest. It saw a steady increase in settlers in the early 1800s, with a boost in settlement after the British burned down Buffalo on December 30, 1813 during the war of 1812.

The Village of East Aurora was a small farming community until the introduction of the railroad in the second half of the nineteenth century. The village experienced a languid period of growth through the middle decades of the century. During this early settlement period, log cabin and simple houses gave way to more elegant dwellings in the Federal and Greek Revival styles. These buildings reflected the attachment to the New England

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tradition which was the origin of most of the early architecture in Western New York.

After the Civil War, when the community was linked to Buffalo by rail service, the scale and character of the village and the surrounding township began to change. The first train arrived in the village in 1867 and the quick and reliable form of transportation that came with the railroad provided an easy way for people, oil, and timber to be transported through East Aurora. Some of the most notable businesses that benefited from the railroad are Fisher-Price, which for many years received raw materials and shipped out finished toys by rail, and the area's farmers, who depended on the railroad to bring feed to local mills.

The railroad brought new wealth to the area in the form of large rural estates that became famous especially for the race horses that were bred there. "East Aurora was the town of Cicero J. Hamlin, of Ed Geers and Billy Andrews," declared an early twentieth century resident ". . . Those who know claim that 'Pa' Hamlin did more to evolve the American trotting horse than any other one man."² All year long, village locals were accustomed to seeing inveterate horsemen exercising "their beautiful horses hitched to spindly sulkies on their private tracks and on the high roads round about."³ The community of East Aurora is also known as the home place of the Jewett Farm track, a popular horse race track. East Aurora soon earned the moniker "the horsey Village."

The village benefited from this influx of wealth and social status. During the last decades of the nineteenth century, many well-to-do residents built houses, undoubtedly designed by architects, in fashionable styles. More modest middle-class families also took up residence here and erected substantial houses in the same styles, particularly Queen Anne, Italianate, Colonial Revival and Arts and Crafts. It was during this period, too, that Main Street became the locus of the village's commercial buildings. The village grew from a population of 1,109 in 1880 to a population of 6,198 in 2016 and is now home to hundreds of families who make a comfortable living off farms, business, and industry.⁴

The village assumed national attention between 1895 and 1915 when Elbert Hubbard, a former executive of the Larkin Soap Company in Buffalo, established the Roycroft Campus there. Modeled on William Morris's Arts and Crafts ideals and the Kelmscott Press, which Hubbard had visited, the Roycroft studios--the name signified "fit for a king"--turned out beautifully crafted books, many of which were written by Hubbard himself. The Roycrofters also made furniture and household goods that became famous around the country for their simplicity and honest construction. The Roycroft Inn, which went up in 1904, became a popular venue for visitors who wished to partake of the quaint, semi-religious Roycroft experience.

During the late nineteenth century, Main Street evolved into an avenue of churches, many of which are located

² Felix Shay, *Elbert Hubbard of East Aurora* (New York: W.H. Wise, 1926), 56.

³ Shay, 56.

⁴ "Census of Population and Housing". Census.gov. Archived from the original on May 12, 2015. Retrieved May 05, 2018.

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on the western end of this important village street near St. Mathias. These ecclesiastical buildings in several different styles of architecture lend charm and dignity to this area of the village. These buildings reflect the important role of religion in the lives of the residents. This growing community has become home to more than nineteen churches.

St. Matthias's Church reflects the village's growth over time and serves as an important landmark for the Episcopal Church in Western New York. The St. Matthias's parish was established in 1874, early in the village's history, and though it has gone through many changes it has been heavily involved in the growing and vibrant community. The church, like the village it resides in, grew in the early 1900s and provided a place for its members to gather and grow for over a hundred years. During the last decades of the century, many well-to-do residents built houses, designed by architects in different styles. More modest middle-class families also took up residence here and erected substantial houses in the same styles. It was during this period that Main Street transitioned from being the locus of the village's commercial buildings to an avenue of churches, interspersed among storefronts, residences, and even a few mill buildings.

This population influx required not only new residential accommodations, but also more religious congregations. St. Matthias remained an anchor in the community for several generations, rebuilding its church and expanding it to accommodate a growing congregation into the mid-twentieth century.

Social History of the St. Matthias Parish

The St. Matthias parish was first established in East Aurora in 1869, responding to a steadily growing population of Episcopal parishioners in the area since the mid nineteenth century. As the only Episcopal Church to be located in the area, St. Matthias saw growth in its membership and played a prominent role as a hub for religious, social and recreational groups in the parish. Overall, the Episcopal Church saw a steady increase in membership in the United States throughout the 1800s and on September 21, 1836 the Episcopal Church reached New York State. Between 1850 and 1870 the number of Episcopal Churches in the United States grew from 1,459 to 2,601 with eleven of those 2,601 located in Erie County.⁵

The parish of Saint Matthias began in the year 1869, when Arthur Cleveland Coxe, the second bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of Western New York, received a letter on February 27th from a small group of Episcopalians in the Town of Aurora. The small group were seeking the bishop's canonical consent to organize their congregation as a parish. On February 17, 1869, Bishop Coxe granted his canonical consent to the organization.⁶ With the approval from Bishop Coxe, the parish, which at the time consisted of twenty-six

⁵ Paul Spengler, "*The History of Saint Matthias from 1869 to 1936*," *Saint Matthias' Episcopal Church*. <https://saintmatthiaschurch.org/history/>. Accessed April 04, 2018.

⁶ Saint Matthias's Parish Church, "Records of Vestry from the Organization," (April 6th, 1926), 27.

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communicants, was established on February 24, 1869. At a meeting they held on this day in the Universalist church, "It was agreed then that the parish would take its name from the saint whose feast day it was."⁷ That day was the day of St. Matthias, lending the church its name. Church officials were also selected that day. The first wardens were John Townsend and Clark Bowen; the first vestrymen were Byron Person (an early supervisor of Aurora), William D. Jones, Henry B. Miller, Nathaniel A. Larner and William D. Wallis (postmaster).⁸

Once established in 1869, the new parish soon sought land to build its own church. For the first few years, they rented space for worship at the Universalist church across Maple Road, and vestry meetings were held in the houses of vestrymen. In November 1869, a building committee was created to "study the feasibility of erecting a stone or wood church with room for 150 worshippers."⁹ On November 23, 1869, a lot was purchased for \$375 at what was then Plank Road (Main St. today) at the northeast corner of Maple. After receiving \$899 worth of donations from various pledges for the building fund, the vestry began purchasing pieces of cut stone in preparation for construction.¹⁰ Due to financial difficulties, however, some of this stone was sold within the next three years in order to pay parish debts.

Church officials struggled to maintain financial stability over the next two decades, which resulted in difficulty attracting and maintaining a rector who would be willing to accept a low salary of about \$300 a year. There is a gap in the minutes for the vestry from 1870-1876, but it is clear that the church was without a rector after the Rev. Bonnar left in 1871 until Father Duboc accepted the position in 1877. The first church constructed for St. Matthias was erected c.1871 and was designed to provide space for over 100 worshippers. This was described as a "small framed church edifice" built on the lot at the northeast corner of Main and Maple, c. 1871, on the present site.¹¹ Records indicate that it was valued at about \$700. In 1878 Father Duboc was able to expand this church to include a chancel and a vestry room. This church appears on the 1886 Sanborn map and in Figure 1. The c.1871 frame church underwent several improvements in 1897. This included a small addition containing rooms for the sacristy, organ and choir, as well as interior improvements. By 1897, there was also a parish house to the north of the church on Maple Road, which served to accommodate educational sessions, church events and community organizations. This parish house was demolished in 1963 to accommodate the construction of the new, present church, and the mid-nineteenth century dwelling to the north at 24 Maple Road became the rectory at that time.

⁷ Spengler, *The History of Saint Matthias from 1869 to 1936*.

⁸ Spengler, *The History of Saint Matthias from 1869 to 1936*.

⁹ Spengler, *The History of Saint Matthias from 1869 to 1936*.

¹⁰ Saint Matthias's Parish Church, "Records of Vestry from the Organization," (April 6th, 1926), 27.

¹¹ Henry Perry Smith, *History of the City of Buffalo and Erie County: With Illustrations and Biographical Sketches of Some of its Prominent Men and Pioneers, Volume 1* (Buffalo, NY: D. Mason & Company, 1884), 555.

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In the late nineteenth century, the parish experienced many financial difficulties and changes in church officials. As church historian Paul Spengler stated, "it is evident that the low figure set by the vestry for the rector's salary made it difficult to maintain a Rector."¹² Father Duboc left St. Matthias in 1879 and the church was again without a rector until Henry S. Huntington accepted the position in April 1881. Huntington negotiated a salary raise for the position of \$600 per year with four weeks' vacation, but the church continued to falter with finances in other areas. In 1883, the Good Friday collection was \$3.22 and on Easter it was merely \$14. Father Huntington resigned in 1883 and his successor was Father Henry Brown, who lasted 11 years, the longest period of service by a rector at the church up to that time. Aside from increasing the vestry from six to eight and founding some committees, Father Brown also suggested that a new church building would soon be required to replace the older edifice and provide for a growing population. Without proper funds and support, however, Brown resigned by 1894.¹³

Several more rectors were affiliated with the church over the next few decades. These included the Reverends Warren Watson Walsh (1894-1902), J. W. Dennis Cooper (1903-1907), Allen Prescott (1908-1909), Frederick A. Heisley (1910-1911), Lewis Carter Harrison (1912-1916), and Henry de Wolf de Mauriac (1917-1936). During the early twentieth century, these rectors provided guidance and support for many social and economic initiatives for the church, establishing numerous civic committees to address issues of the day such as the Social Services Committee, Temperance Committee, Democratic Committee and Missionary Committee. These committees were responsible for organizing charity events and fundraisers, as well as attracting and hosting lectures, luncheons and food pantry events to benefit a variety of causes. The church also supported a variety of organizations for women and families. These groups included the East Aurora Women's Club, the East Aurora Home Bureau and numerous after-school clubs from East Aurora High School, which would hold meetings, lectures, luncheons and fundraising events at the parish house. This type of regular engagement with the broader community of East Aurora demonstrates the social impact of the church as well.

The Finance Committee slowly gained traction in generating sufficient funds to pay a reasonable rector salary, reduce debt and maintain upkeep of the church. It was noted several times in the vestry minutes that the church was unable to pay several expenses. These expenses ranged from four and a half months of the reverend's salary and church school expenses in January 1896 to the janitor's salary, the coal bill, and the paving tax in June 1905.¹⁴ These financial burdens made the hope of erecting a new church bleak. However, many of these fathers also made significant contributions to the church buildings, with improvements such as chimney repairs by the Rev. Heisley c. 1911 and the purchase of a new organ by the Rev. Harrison c. 1912. The first rectory (also known as the parish house) was located at 16 Maple Street, constructed c.1897 and remained there until it was demolished to make way for the rear addition in 1963.

¹² Spengler, *The History of Saint Matthias from 1869 to 1936*.

¹³ Saint Matthias's Parish Church, "Records of Vestry from the Organization," (1904), 102.

¹⁴ Saint Matthias's Parish Church, "Records of Vestry from the Organization," (1904), 102.

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By the early 1920s, the original frame church building was outdated and no longer sufficient for the size of the congregation. The rector and vestry began discussing the construction of a new church in 1921, and various donations eventually enabled its construction beginning in late 1927. Completed in 1928, the new church continued to provide a place for the parish to gather for worship, while also providing Sunday school opportunities and giving back to the community through several outreach programs. Today these programs include raising money for groceries for the local food pantry, collecting donations for the Heifer Project, and raising funds for Family Promise.

Architectural History of St. Matthias Episcopal Church Complex

As the parish grew, the vestry and rector recognized the need for a larger church than the 1870s frame church, but financial difficulties delayed the process for several years. Discussions surrounding the construction of a new church began in the early 1900s, but they did not become feasible until a series of financial efforts began in 1921. At that time, St. Matthias held a successful parish bazaar to begin financing construction, which brought in \$1,177.04. In 1923, the funding for the new church was heavily assisted by Mr. and Mrs. Robert B. Ward, who donated their house at 24 Maple Road to St. Matthias.¹⁵ A letter written in 1923 indicated the decision by a committee appointed by the vestry to rent out Mr. and Mrs. Ward's property and use the funds to alleviate some of the financial burdens of the church. The record indicates that they were "instructed to rent the property recently offered to the parish by Mr. and Mrs. Robert Ward, to take under consideration the possible sale of the property, estimate its value and to make recommendations as to the disposition of the proceeds in the event of this sale."¹⁶ There was also consideration made to turn the Ward house into the rectory and occupy the current rectory as a parish house until the new church was built. In addition to the Wards, other groups and committees also aided in the raising of funds for the church's improvement throughout the years. For example, the Sewing Society raised \$306.19 dollars during the course of a year, paying some of it to the mortgage of the rectory while the church also received \$45 from the Ladies of the Parish to apply to the debt.¹⁷

By 1925, the church had raised enough money to hire an architect to design the new church. In a meeting in December 1925, architect Robert North was hired by the vestry to develop preliminary plans for a new church. On February 15, 1926, a meeting including the Rev. Henry de Wolf de Mauriac and several other vestrymen was held in order to review the logistics of building a new church and it was determined that the final decision on whether the new church would be built would take place during a special meeting in April.¹⁸

¹⁵ Saint Matthias's Parish Church, "Records of Vestry from the Organization," 1923.

¹⁶ Saint Matthias's Parish Church, "Letter to the Vestry of St. Matthias' Church," (May 15, 1923).

¹⁷ Saint Matthias's Parish Church, "Annual Meeting Record – 1904," 122.

¹⁸ Saint Matthias's Parish Church, "Records of Vestry from the Organization," (February 15, 1926), 20.

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On April 6, 1926 a special meeting was held for the sole purpose of discussing the new church that would be built. Lewis H. Allen stood in front of the meeting attendees and announced, "On festival occasions, our (current) church building will but barely accommodate our present membership" and talked about the increasing need for a proper parish house.¹⁹ At the time of this meeting, East Aurora's population was rapidly increasing, jumping from 2,448 in 1905 to 4,641 in 1925. Of those 4,641 residents, 215 were communicants of the church. The numbers were provided in the meeting to suggest that the membership would double within the next ten years as the village provided the perfect escape from the City of Buffalo for families.²⁰

As he was a parishioner at St. Matthias's Church, architect Robert North was present at several vestry meetings between 1925 and the completion of the new church. He was first approached by Bishop Charles Henry Brent, a man who himself possessed considerable knowledge of Gothic architecture and enjoyed a worldwide reputation for his efforts on behalf of religious ecumenism to design both the church and the parish house.²¹ On February 15th, 1926, North, together with wardens, vestrymen, and the Reverend Henry de Wolf de Mauriac were present at the vestry meeting. The recorded minutes stated that "Mr. Robert North, architect who has given a considerable amount of his time preparing plans and specifications for new church buildings was present at this meeting and gave the vestry an excellent explanation of the plans made so far for the church, parish house, and rectory."²² North's design, estimated to cost \$70,000, was submitted and approved in the same year. Although the estimated price tag for the new church was daunting at first, the meeting attendees were faithful that they could raise the money needed.²³ After some closing statements from Robert North and some careful consideration, the construction of this new church was approved by the vestry.

Construction on the new church began with the cornerstone ceremonies on September 10, 1927. Designed with a similar cross-axial massing as the previous church, the new church was positioned on nearly the same location. The older 1870s frame church was moved across Maple Road to the northwest corner of Main Street and Maple Road to make way for the new church. The sale of the older church to the Universalist parish helped fund the construction of the new church.²⁴ This church, now owned and occupied by the Universalists, is still extant but has not been affiliated with St. Matthias since 1927.

Built of Onondaga and Indiana Limestone, the new church was built in a subdued English Gothic Revival style that harmonized with the nearby Roycroft Arts and Crafts community and is pervasive throughout East Aurora as well. In North's original drawings, he relied heavily on the use of stone to cover the building while using cut

¹⁹ Saint Matthias's Parish Church, "Records of Vestry from the Organization," (April 6, 1926), 26.

²⁰ Saint Matthias's Parish Church, "Records of Vestry from the Organization," (April 6, 1926), 28.

²¹ Wachadlo, Martin and Kowsky, Francis R., "Reconnaissance Level Survey of Historic Architectural Resources in the Village of East Aurora, New York," East Aurora Preservation Commission, 2013.

²² Saint Matthias's Parish Church, "Records of Vestry from the Organization," (February 15, 1926), 20.

²³ Saint Matthias's Parish Church, "Records of Vestry from the Organization," (April 6, 1926), 29.

²⁴ Saint Matthias's Parish Church, "Records of Vestry from the Organization," (April 6, 1926), 27.

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stone for decorative aspects. The walls of the church, “are plastered a rough sand finish, while the paving is of medina sandstone laid in concrete.”²⁵ North also proposed a steep pitched slate roof and metal casings around the windows. In keeping with the Gothic Revival style, North used many vertical elements such as the tall bell tower, steeply pitched roof, and long narrow windows.

The church was completed according to North’s design and formally opened on May 20, 1928. Special touches were given to the interior treatment of the church, where “Just inside the main entrance, embedded in the concrete, are five smooth stones from Japan, China, India, Egypt and Hawaii, given by the mother of the pastor, and gathered on a trip around the world.”²⁶ In the floor directly in front of the altar, “is cemented a stone brought from in front of the Church of the Ascension in Jerusalem.”²⁷ Stained-glass windows with the Nativity as the main subject designed by parishioner and noted animator Rixford Jennings and constructed by the Bell Stained Glass Company of Buffalo were set within the walls to light the main nave. At the northwest corner of the building, to the rear of the bell tower, a parish hall wing provided space for educational programming and community outreach.

The church continued to grow, and educational outreach increasingly became a significant portion of the parish programming. During the postwar population boom, the population of East Aurora grew from 4,815 in 1930 to 6,791 by 1960 and along with it, the size of the parish. In response to this growth, St. Matthias Episcopal Church began fundraising efforts to build a rear addition to accommodate new classrooms for its Sunday school and outreach. In 1961, the firm selected to build the addition, E.B. Reed and Associates, submitted the first drawings in June. The new education wing extended north from the rear of the original church. It featured six classrooms on both sides of a double-loaded north-south corridor. The original 1961 plans also featured a second addition to the northeast, behind the rectory, but this portion was never built. The classrooms were designed to meet the needs of Sunday School students, providing windows in each room located along a central corridor, with rectangular shaped rooms for a basic instructional layout. Construction on the addition was completed in 1963. This construction was located on the site of the earlier 1897 rectory formerly at 16 Maple Street, which was demolished in 1962 to make way for the addition. At this time, the former Ward residence at 24 Maple Street (extant, contributing) became the rectory for the church.

E.B. Reed and Associates’ design defines the wing as a later addition to the church. Whereas the church had a limestone exterior with Gothic Revival style detailing, the addition had unadorned concrete walls, a flat roof and regular fenestration that complements the church. The fenestration retains a consistent rhythm along the west and east elevations, with a raised basement window and a first story window with concrete sill in each bay. An entrance is located under a frame gable with wood braces at its northeast corner, on the east elevation. On

²⁵ “Plan Ceremony for New Church at East Aurora,” *Buffalo Courier-Express* (April 22, 1928), 11.

²⁶ “Plan Ceremony for New Church at East Aurora,” 11.

²⁷ “Plan Ceremony for New Church at East Aurora,” 11.

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the interior there are no revival references or detailing. The design was functional and met the growing educational and outreach ministries of the church.

By the time the new wing was added to the church in 1963, St. Matthias had become the campus that it is today, with two primary buildings and a secondary shed in the rear of the rectory. Given the population boom following World War II, by the early 1960s there was a rise in the number of young children in the parish. This young population required additional space for increased Sunday school programming, and the need to accommodate more students at the church is reflected in the 1963 rear wing to the church. Although some minor redecoration and repairs occurred after this time, all of the major changes to this building had been completed by 1963.

Rectory

The oldest remaining building affiliated with the church complex is the rectory at the northwest end of the property, but it was not constructed specifically for religious use and did not become affiliated with the church until it was donated to the church in 1923. The residence at 24 Maple was built prior to 1880, but no maps, permits or newspaper articles can otherwise confirm the exact date of its construction. Constructed as a frame single family dwelling, the house was designed to blend in with the residences nearby on Maple Road.²⁸ The frame residence with low pitched gable roof features Greek Revival style details such as a central entry with gabled portico with round column supports. It appears on the 1880 Beers map as a frame dwelling with square massing belonging to "Mrs. Hines." In 1896, Buffalo realtor Fletcher J. Barron received a permit to alter the dwelling on Maple Road.²⁹ Given that the dwelling at 127/24 Maple Road appears on the 1909 map under F.J. Barron's name, it is reasonable to estimate that this property, now serving as the rectory for St. Matthias, belonged to F.J. Barron c. 1896.

This house again changed hands in the mid-1910s, when Barron sold the house to Robert V. Ward. In 1923, Robert Ward and his wife donated the house to the St. Matthias Episcopal Church, which eventually enabled the construction of the new church in 1928. The house served as an income-producing rental unit for the church until it officially became the rectory for the church in 1963 when the rear addition required the demolition of the earlier rectory at 16 Maple Street.³⁰ According to maps, the house at 127/24 Maple Road also had a two-story barn into the 1950s, but it was later replaced in c.1963 with the single story garage that is on the property today. Today the dwelling has historic siding. Its later affiliation with the church, however, significantly contributes to the social history of the parish and the complex.

²⁸ There was another frame dwelling to the south at 16 Maple Road that served as the parish house and rectory until it was demolished to make way for the addition in 1963.

²⁹ *Buffalo Courier* (December 1, 1896), 9.

³⁰ Saint Matthias's Parish Church, "Letter to the Vestry of St. Matthias' Church," (May 15, 1923).

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The Gothic Revival & the Episcopal Church

The Gothic Revival emerged in eighteenth-century England within the context of the cultural sentiments of the Picturesque movement, which led to a renewed interest in medieval buildings and styles.³¹ The combination of those factors, fueled by the zeitgeist of “romantic feeling” and subjective experience, formed the broad underpinnings of the style.³² Gothic Revival architecture sought to create emotionally compelling, dramatic structures inspired by historical forms, and in America its influence extended from the mid-nineteenth century into the early twentieth century. The adoption of the Gothic Revival mode for church design—and in particular the use of English-inspired medieval models—was directly resultant from the Ecclesiological movement within the Episcopal Church, first in England and then in America.

The Ecclesiological phase of the Gothic Revival in American architecture was promoted by the New York Ecclesiological Society, which was responsible for the dissemination of architectural doctrine within the Episcopal Church in New York during the third quarter of the nineteenth century. That reform movement, closely guided by developments in England, sought a return to authentic medieval Gothic forms for new church architecture, as those were thought to offer an appropriate setting for worship, imbued as they were by centuries-old tradition. In the words of architectural historian William H. Pierson Jr., churches built under the influence of the Ecclesiological movement were “functionally designed around liturgical principles.”³³ They were distinguishable from the earliest generation of American Gothic Revival churches by their more authentic design characteristics, as opposed to the application of Gothic details on to otherwise traditional meetinghouse forms. The English-born architect Richard Upjohn (1802-1878) proved one of the early stalwarts of the Ecclesiological movement in America, even though his first landmark Gothic essay, Trinity Church in Manhattan (1839-46), failed in many regards to satisfy the strict architectural requirements set forth by the Ecclesiologists. English Gothic churches from the Early and Decorated period were deemed as suitable models by the tradition-driven Ecclesiological movement; Trinity Church was criticized by the Ecclesiologists as its design was largely derived from the later Perpendicular period and given Upjohn’s failure to use exposed wood trusses—it instead had faux plaster vaulting—and since the chancel was not properly articulated in the exterior design. Both exposed wood-truss ceilings and a chancel that was clearly differentiated, both outside and in, emerged as design hallmarks of Gothic churches built under the sway of the Ecclesiologists.

Specific English design prototypes were endorsed by the doctrinaire Ecclesiologists as appropriate for smaller parishes, among them the medieval parish church represented by noteworthy examples such as St. Michael’s,

31 Marvin Trachtenberg and Isabelle Hyman, *From Prehistory to Post-modernism: the Western Tradition* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 2002), 387.

32 Trachtenberg and Hyman, 437.

33 William H. Pierson, *American Buildings and Their Architects: Technology and the Picturesque. Vol. 2. The Corporate and Early Gothic Styles* (Garden City, New York: Doubleday, 1978), 173.

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Longstanton (ca. 1230), which served as the indirect prototype for examples in New York such as the frame bell cote board-and-batten churches built to the plans of the Upjohn office and their masonry counterparts. More ambitiously scaled churches drew from larger medieval prototypes, the prescribed models being drawn from the Decorated, or Middle period, of English Gothic architecture. Those typically featured prominent offset bell towers such as that used by Upjohn for St. Paul's in Brookline, Massachusetts (1848-52). While at first a movement confined to the Episcopal Church, the designs driven by the Ecclesiological movement came to have sweeping implications for the introduction of the Gothic mode to other denominations in the United States. In Newburgh, New York, architect F.C. Withers' Calvary Church (1858) introduced many features of the English-inspired Ecclesiological church to a Presbyterian congregation. Withers' Calvary design was so authentically English Gothic that even the Ecclesiologists in England were compelled to take note of it; "the building was intended for the Presbyterian community ... it is hoped that ere long it may pass into other hands."³⁴

The Gothic Revival continued to influence religious design into the later nineteenth century, as expressed in the work of, among others, Ralph Adams Cram (1863-1942), and it found continued footing in the early twentieth century. Cram's All Saint's Church in Boston, Massachusetts (1891), while inspired by English sources, was not bound to the archaeological preciseness and dogmatism of the Ecclesiological movement. As noted in one source, "His philosophy, embodied in his books as well as his buildings, had little to do with the romanticism or the rationalism of the earlier Gothic Revival..."³⁵ Cram's sometime partner, Bertram Goodhue (1869-1924), was an important purveyor of the Gothic mode in the early twentieth century; his St. Thomas's Church in Manhattan (1906-13), is characteristic of the Late Gothic Revival, as expressed in its freedom from specific sources and its combination of English and French design features.³⁶

Built in 1928, St. Matthias Episcopal Church represents a later example of Gothic Revival church design in East Aurora. The forms, finishes, and detailing are more simplified and streamlined, reflecting general early twentieth century design preferences. The parish hired architect Robert North, a local architect known for his ecclesiastical design and proficiency in Gothic Revival in his construction of several churches throughout the Western New York area. The Gothic Revival was an appropriate style for the church, as it was at the heart of the Episcopal parish in East Aurora at the time. The fire-resistant limestone masonry conveyed an air of permanency and the style lent an air of authority and tradition to the church.

St. Matthias Episcopal Church features many identifiable characteristics of the English Gothic Revival style. Lancet windows and pointed-arched window openings punctuate the limestone walls, accentuating the verticality of the church's massing. Pier buttresses and quatrefoil window designs also reflect common Gothic

³⁴History of Calvary Presbyterian Church, <https://www.calvarypresbychurch.org/the-building/>, accessed 22 August 2019.

³⁵Marcus Whiffen and Frederick Koeper, *American Architecture, 1690-1976* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1981), 286.

³⁶Whiffen and Koeper, *American Architecture*, 289.

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Revival style details. The tower at the northwest corner creates an asymmetrical primary elevation that lends the church a picturesque quality in keeping with the style.

1963 Addition

The 1963 addition is a subdued example of a modern aesthetic that contains classroom spaces divided by a central north-south corridor. The building was constructed amidst a national building boom in religious building construction but also in the context of a smaller expansion period among religious campuses in Western New York. Many parishes and congregations across the country put off large-scale renovations and constructions for their churches during the Depression and World War II, resulting in a construction boom for religious buildings after the war.⁴⁷ Driven by repairs, as well as the growth of post-war “baby boom” families settling down and looking for religious centers, religious building construction totaled \$126 million in 1947, increasing to \$474 million in 1953, before ballooning to \$1 billion in 1960.⁴⁸ Given the postwar era in which these repairs and additions were constructed, many of these religious building expansions resulted in the use of various modern styles, as in the 1963 wing at the St. Matthias Episcopal Church Complex.⁴⁹

Both the aesthetic approach and overall plan of the 1963 addition reflect the application of the modern design principles, evident in the addition’s rejection of superfluous ornamentation and simple rectangular massing. The clean, smooth surface of the addition is meant to complement the design, color, and materials of the existing church, while the lack of ornamentation, box-like massing, and simple fenestration differentiates the wing as clearly a mid-twentieth century design. At the church complex, the simplification of form (a rectangular box with clean lines) and the use of modern prefabricated materials are typical of the modern style. Both in plan and in aesthetics, the architecture of the 1963 addition demonstrates the adoption of the modern style that updated, yet complemented, the older church complex.

Notable Figures

Robert North, architect

Born in 1883 in Batavia, NY, Robert North graduated from Cornell University with a Bachelor of Architecture degree in 1905. He was soon after involved with the Roycroft Artisans in East Aurora, an organization closely tied to the Roycroft Campus that sought to preserve the ideals of the Arts and Crafts Movement. In 1907 North went on a tour of European churches, castles and other grand buildings. This may have been what inspired his painting and architectural practices. North worked for the firm Green and Wicks in Buffalo before he became a partner at his own firm, North, Shelgren and Swift, in 1919. During his time at this firm North was responsible for the design of over 50 churches. These included St. James Episcopal Church in Batavia in 1908, the Calvary Episcopal Church in Williamsville in 1952, and the Church of the Advent in Kenmore in 1951. He frequently designed in the Gothic Revival style, and these churches share many ornamental elements with St. Matthias Episcopal Church. In addition to churches his repertoire of buildings also includes numerous Buffalo Public

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Schools, the Hall Baking Company Building, the Crosby Building, and the Westbrook Apartments as well as many residences. He became one of the most notable names in the design of ecclesiastical architecture in the Western New York. He died in 1968. A section of the current church is named after Robert North to honor his incredible contribution to the building.

Edward B. Reed, architect

Edward Barcalo Reed attended Nichols School in Buffalo and graduated from Princeton University with a master's degree in architecture. He won the American Institute of Architect's medal for general excellence upon graduation. During World War II, Reed was in the navy. From 1950-1951 he served with several archaeological expeditions in Turkey and Greece, finding relics from 1200-60 B.C.E. He lived in East Aurora, with his wife Dorthea Stevens Reed and three children, in a house Reed himself designed at 411 Girdle Road.³⁷

Reed joined Harold E. Plumer's firm in 1958, and soon took over the firm when Plumer partially retired in 1961, along with Arthur J. Smith as partner, who previously worked with Plumer for 21 years. In its first year, the new firm of E.B. Reed and Associates was engaged in design work for "two branch banks of the Liberty Bank and Trust Company and architectural work on several new churches in Erie County."³⁸ St. Matthias was one of these churches, where E.B. Reed and Associates designed the rear addition beginning in 1961, completed in 1963.

After the Period of Significance

After the completion of the new wing in 1963, the church complex has had very few physical changes and alterations. No major renovations were conducted on the church in the decades following the completion of the new wing in 1963. A wood deck was added to the secondary entrance of the rectory in 2006. The space is still owned and occupied by St. Matthias Episcopal Church.

After World War II, the village saw an increase in the building of houses as East Aurora became a suburb of Buffalo. Rail service had disappeared, and, in its place, commuters used their automobiles to go back and forth to work in Buffalo. Fortunately for the quality of life, suburbanization did not overwhelm the charming character of the village, which is preserved to this day. Together with many new ranch houses erected within its boundaries, East Aurora managed to hold on to its historic identity and its sense of a village community. Defining moments in this regard occurred in 1995 and 1999 when the community successfully resisted the attempts of Wal-Mart to establish a department store within the village borders.

Today, the Reverend Ann M. Tillman is the rector for the church, which is a congregation of the Episcopal

³⁷ Sue Fruchtbaum, "Reeds' Modern House Blends with Setting," *Buffalo Evening News* (November 14, 1959), 12.

³⁸ "Architectural Firm Debuts Here," *Buffalo Courier-Express* (April 30, 1961), 62.

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Diocese of Western New York. The Rev. Tillman continues to lead the parish in the Anglican tradition, and the church still holds numerous community events, fundraisers and religious celebrations. The parish turned 150 years old on February 24, 2019 and hopes to celebrate its 150th anniversary during a jubilee celebration that also acknowledges its National Register status later in the year.

Summary

The St. Matthias Episcopal Church Complex in East Aurora, New York is significant under Criterion C in the area of Architecture as an excellent example of an English Gothic Revival Style church with Arts and Crafts elements. The complex is also significant under Criterion A in the area of Social History for its affiliation with the parish as it grew in East Aurora beginning in the late nineteenth century. Constructed in 1928 to replace a previous church on the same site, the church is an anchor to the Episcopal community of East Aurora. The 1928 design for the church and 1961 design for the addition realized the congregation's vision for the church complex. The complex retains significant architectural integrity, with a period of significance beginning with the donation of the mid-nineteenth-century rectory dwelling in 1923, including the church construction in 1928 and ending when the rear addition was completed in 1963.

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St. Matthias Episcopal Church Complex
Name of Property
Erie County, New York
County and State

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National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

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St. Matthias Episcopal Church Complex
Name of Property
Erie County, New York
County and State

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National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
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Section 10 Page 1

St. Matthias Episcopal Church Complex
Name of Property
Erie County, New York
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Verbal Boundary Description

The boundary is indicated with a heavy line on the attached maps with scale.

Boundary Justification

The boundary has been drawn to correspond to the parcels containing the contributing buildings at 374 Main Street and 24 Maple Road. These parcels were historically owned and occupied by St. Matthias Episcopal Church during and after the period of significance. Today they are still owned and occupied by St. Matthias Episcopal Church.

St. Matthias Episcopal Church
374 Main Street: SBL 164.20-3-28
24 Maple Road: SBL 164.20-3-29.1

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Section 10 Page 2

St. Matthias Episcopal Church Complex
Name of Property
Erie County, New York
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St. Matthias Episcopal Church Complex
East Aurora, Erie Co., NY

374 Main Street
East Aurora, NY 14052



Coordinate System: NAD 1983 UTM Zone 17N
Projection: Transverse Mercator
Datum: North American 1983
Units: Meter

0 5501,100 2,200 Feet



St. Matthias
Episcopal
Church
Complex



Parks, Recreation
and Historic Preservation
Division for Historic Preservation

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

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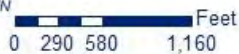
St. Matthias Episcopal Church Complex
Name of Property
Erie County, New York
County and State

St. Matthias Episcopal Church Complex
East Aurora, Erie Co., NY

374 Main Street
East Aurora, NY 14052



Coordinate System: NAD 1983 UTM Zone 17N
Projection: Transverse Mercator
Datum: North American 1983
Units: Meter



St. Matthias
Episcopal
Church
Complex



Parks, Recreation
and Historic Preservation
Division for Historic Preservation

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

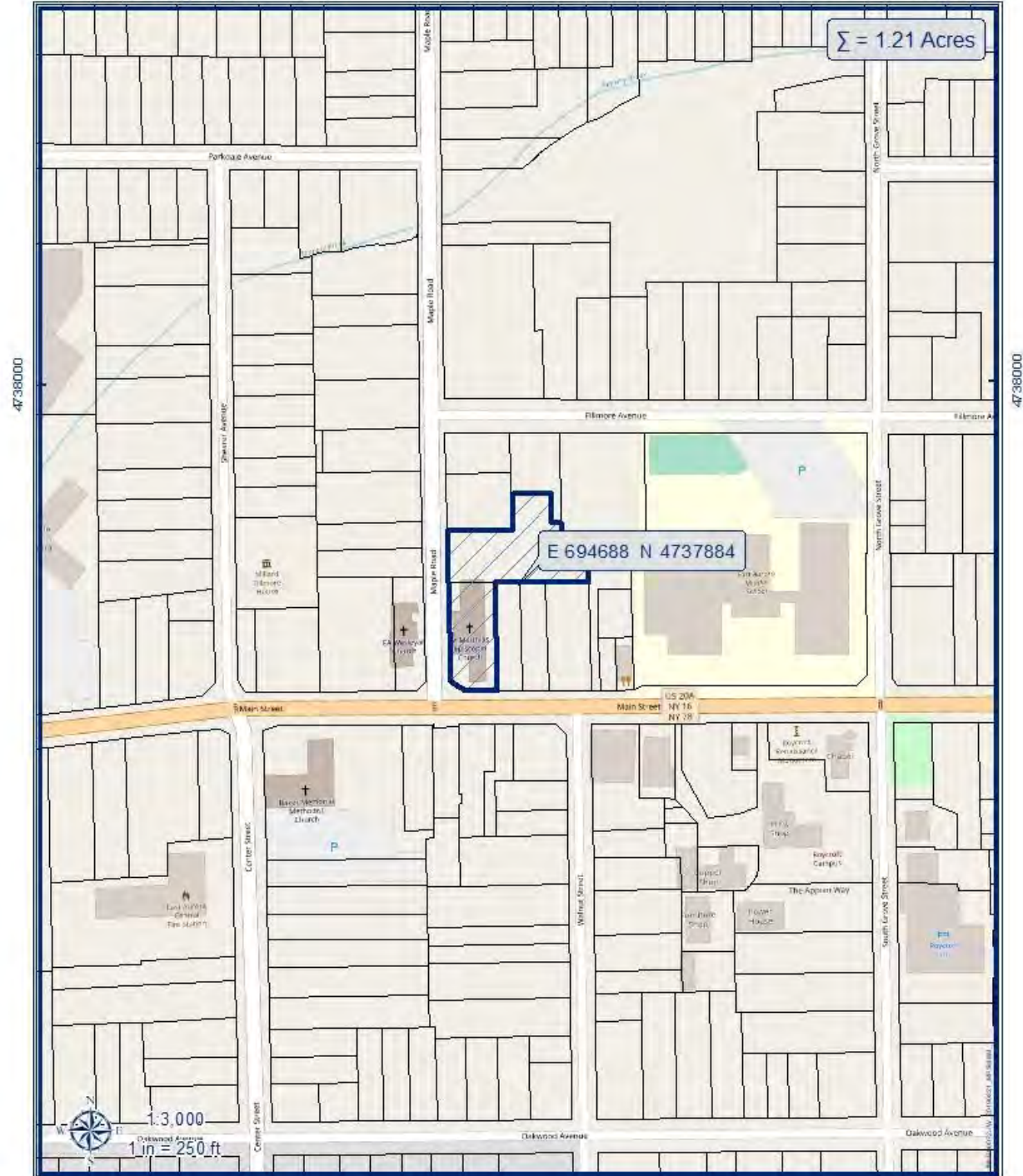
National Register of Historic Places
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St. Matthias Episcopal Church Complex
Name of Property
Erie County, New York
County and State

St. Matthias Episcopal Church Complex
East Aurora, Erie Co., NY

374 Main Street
East Aurora, NY 14052



Coordinate System: NAD 1983 UTM Zone 17N
Projection: Transverse Mercator
Datum: North American 1983
Units: Meter



St. Matthias
Episcopal
Church
Complex



NEW YORK
STATE OF
OPPORTUNITY
**Parks, Recreation
and Historic Preservation**
Division for Historic Preservation

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

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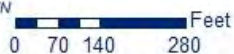
St. Matthias Episcopal Church Complex
Name of Property
Erie County, New York
County and State

St. Matthias Episcopal Church Complex
East Aurora, Erie Co., NY

374 Main Street
East Aurora, NY 14052



Coordinate System: NAD 1983 UTM Zone 17N
Projection: Transverse Mercator
Datum: North American 1983
Units: Meter



St. Matthias
Episcopal
Church
Complex



NEW YORK
STATE OF
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Parks, Recreation
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Division for Historic Preservation

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St. Matthias Episcopal Church Complex
Name of Property
Erie County, New York
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Section 11 Page 1

Additional Information

Photo Log:

Name of Property: St. Matthias Episcopal Church Complex
City or Vicinity: East Aurora
County: Erie
State: New York
Name of Photographer: kta preservation specialists
Date of Photographs: September 2019
Location of Original Digital Files: kta preservation specialists: Buffalo, NY 14216

NY_Erie County_St. Matthias Episcopal Church Complex_0001
Looking north across Main Street showing the south elevation of the 1928 church building.

NY_Erie County_St. Matthias Episcopal Church Complex_0002
Looking northwest showing the south and partial east elevations of the 1928 church building.

NY_Erie County_St. Matthias Episcopal Church Complex_0003
Looking northeast across Maple Road showing the partial west elevation of the 1928 church building.

NY_Erie County_St. Matthias Episcopal Church Complex_0004
Looking east across Maple Road showing the partial west elevation of the 1928 church building.

NY_Erie County_St. Matthias Episcopal Church Complex_0005
Looking northwest showing the intersecting gables and tower along the west elevation of the 1928 church building.

NY_Erie County_St. Matthias Episcopal Church Complex_0006
Looking southeast across Maple Road showing the west elevation of the 1963 classroom addition. Note the rectory (ca. 1860) is visible to the south.

NY_Erie County_St. Matthias Episcopal Church Complex_0007
Looking northeast across Maple Road showing the west elevation of the rectory (ca. 1860).

NY_Erie County_St. Matthias Episcopal Church Complex_0008
Looking southeast showing the west and south elevations of the 1963 classroom addition.

NY_Erie County_St. Matthias Episcopal Church Complex_0009
Looking southwest showing the rectory, classroom addition and church.

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St. Matthias Episcopal Church Complex
Name of Property
Erie County, New York
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Section 11 Page 2

NY_Erie County_St. Matthias Episcopal Church Complex_0010

Looking southwest showing the south, and east elevations of the 1963 classroom addition. Note gable end of church is visible to the south.

Name of Property: St. Matthias Episcopal Church Complex
City or Vicinity: East Aurora
County: Erie
State: New York
Name of Photographer: kta preservation specialists
Date of Photographs: June, 2019
Location of Original Digital Files: kta preservation specialists: Buffalo, NY 14216

NY_Erie County_St. Matthias Episcopal Church Complex_0011

View showing ca. 1963 rectory garage.

Name of Property: St. Matthias Episcopal Church Complex
City or Vicinity: East Aurora
County: Erie
State: New York
Name of Photographer: kta preservation specialists
Date of Photographs: September, 2019
Location of Original Digital Files: kta preservation specialists: Buffalo, NY 14216

NY_Erie County_St. Matthias Episcopal Church Complex_0012

Looking south from the alter and chancel towards the gallery/choir loft.

NY_Erie County_St. Matthias Episcopal Church Complex_0013

Looking north from the gallery/choir loft towards the chancel and alter.

Name of Property: St. Matthias Episcopal Church Complex
City or Vicinity: East Aurora
County: Erie
State: New York
Name of Photographer: kta preservation specialists
Date of Photographs: September, 2019
Location of Original Digital Files: kta preservation specialists: Buffalo, NY 14216

NY_Erie County_St. Matthias Episcopal Church Complex_0014

Looking south into chapel.

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St. Matthias Episcopal Church Complex
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NY_Erie County_St. Matthias Episcopal Church Complex_0015
View looking north into All Saints Hall.

NY_Erie County_St. Matthias Episcopal Church Complex_0016
Looking northwest towards entrance at tower.

NY_Erie County_St. Matthias Episcopal Church Complex_0017
View looking west showing stair connecting the first floor to basement level.

NY_Erie County_St. Matthias Episcopal Church Complex_0018
View looking into basement meeting hall and dining room.

NY_Erie County_St. Matthias Episcopal Church Complex_0019
View looking south along corridor in 1963 classroom addition.

Name of Property:	St. Matthias Episcopal Church Complex
City or Vicinity:	East Aurora
County:	Erie
State:	New York
Name of Photographer:	John Whitney
Date of Photographs:	July, 2019
Location of Original Digital Files:	John Whitney: East Aurora, NY

NY_Erie County_St. Matthias Episcopal Church Complex_0020
View into living room of ca. 1860 rectory showing original wood floors and fireplace.

NY_Erie County_St. Matthias Episcopal Church Complex_0021
View into dining room of ca. 1860 rectory.

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St. Matthias Episcopal Church Complex
Name of Property
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Historic Images

Figure 1. St. Matthias Episcopal Church, c. 1897.

Note this was built on the site in 1871, but was later sold, moved to the northwest corner of Main and Maple Road to the Universalist Church where it remains today. It was replaced on the St. Matthias site by the current church in 1928.



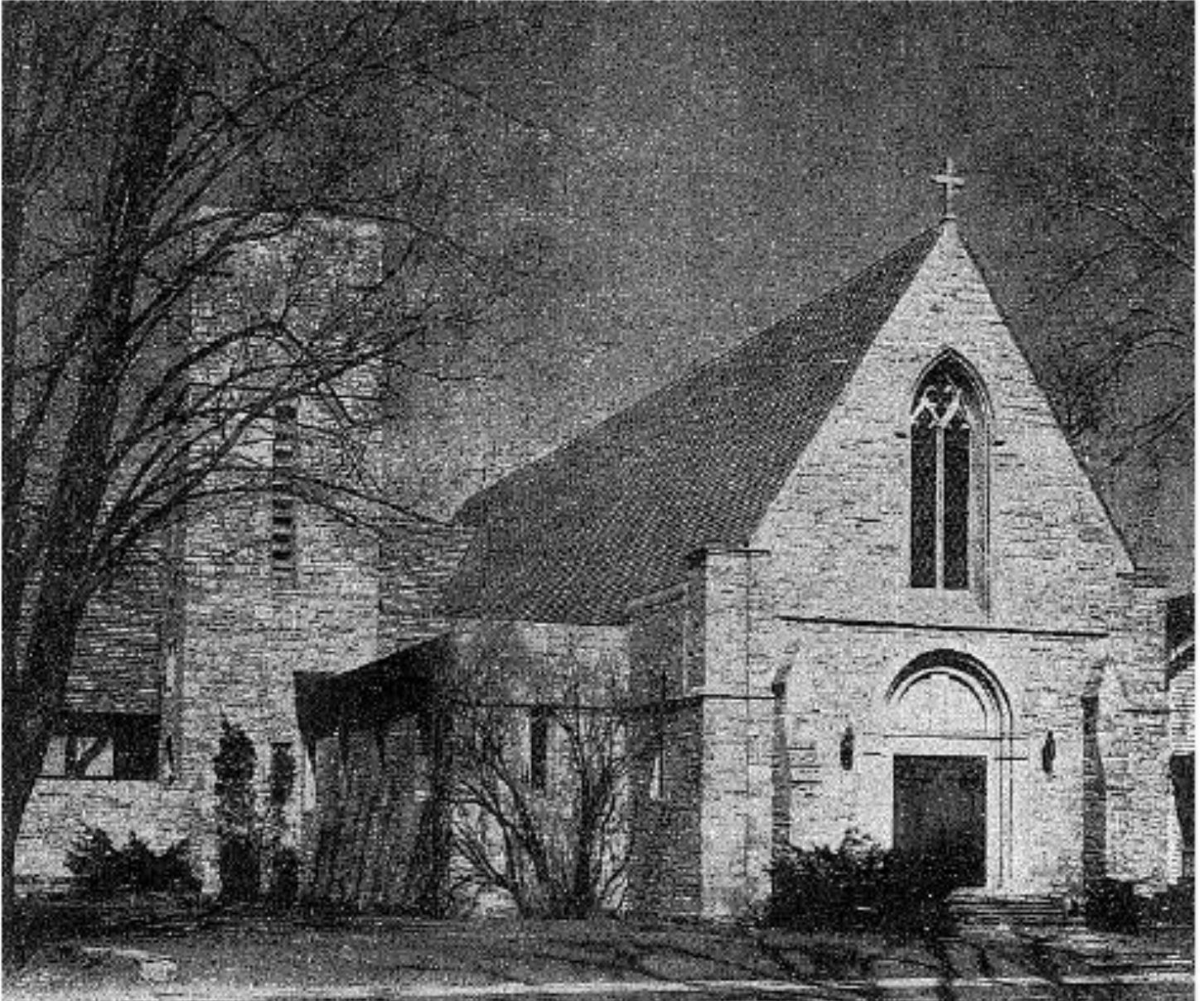
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St. Matthias Episcopal Church Complex
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Figure 2. St. Matthias Episcopal Church, 1959.
This depicts the 1928 church by architect Robert North, which is extant today.



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St. Matthias Episcopal Church Complex
Name of Property
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Figure 3. St Matthias' nave looking towards the Main Street entrance from the altar. 1945.



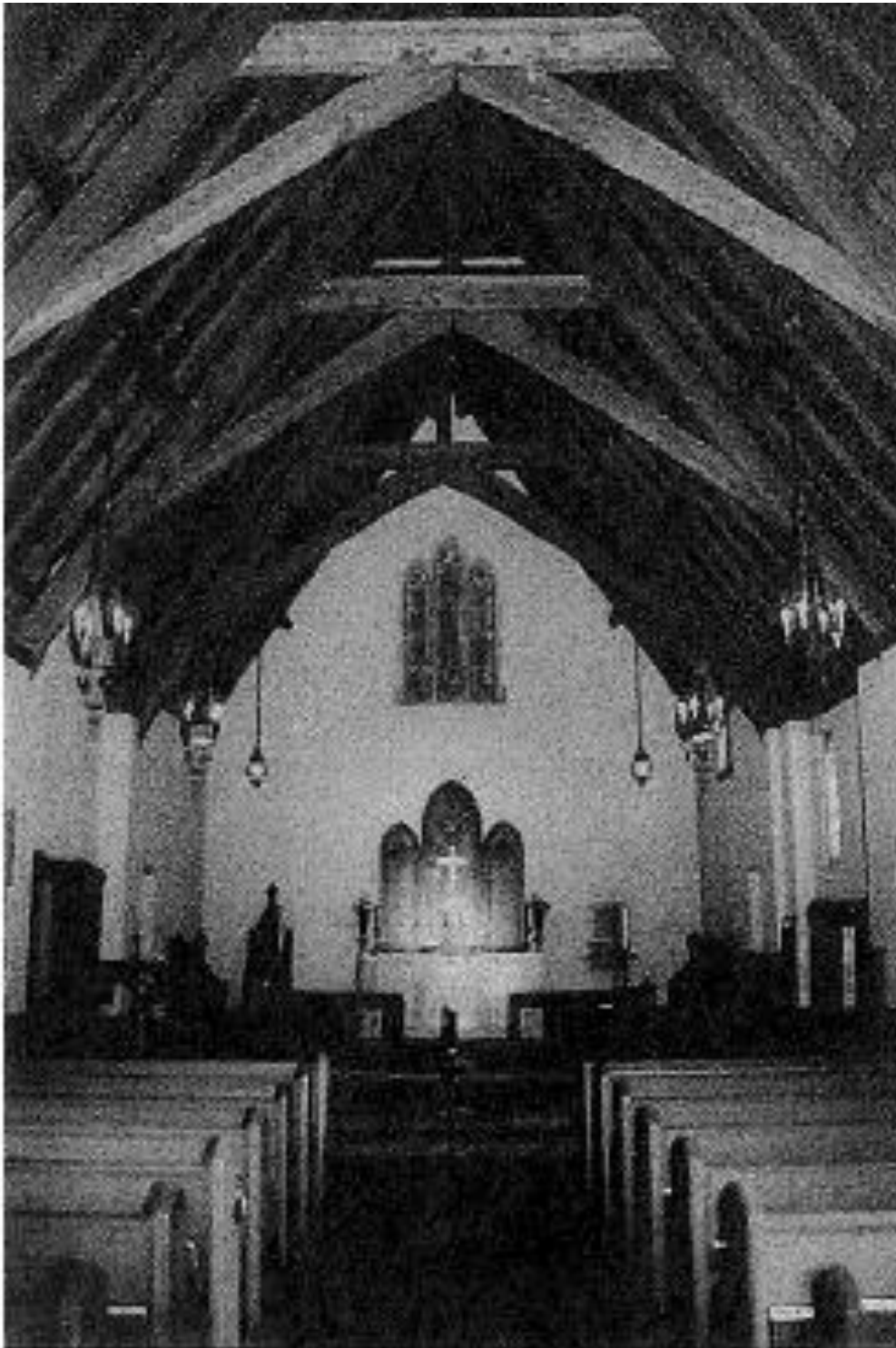
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St. Matthias Episcopal Church Complex
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Figure 4. Interior of nave looking towards altar. 1945.



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St. Matthias Episcopal Church Complex
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Figure 5. Postcard, c.1950



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St. Matthias Episcopal Church Complex
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Fig 6. Interior, c.1940.



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St. Matthias Episcopal Church Complex
Name of Property
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Historic Maps

Hopkins Atlas, 1880.

Note that the property is already owned and occupied by St. Matthias, listed as 'Episcopal Church' on this map. Also note that neither rectory had been constructed by this time. 117/16 Maple Street was occupied by a different dwelling for Mrs. Hines, and the present day 127/24 Maple Street residence differs from the R. Still residence on this map.



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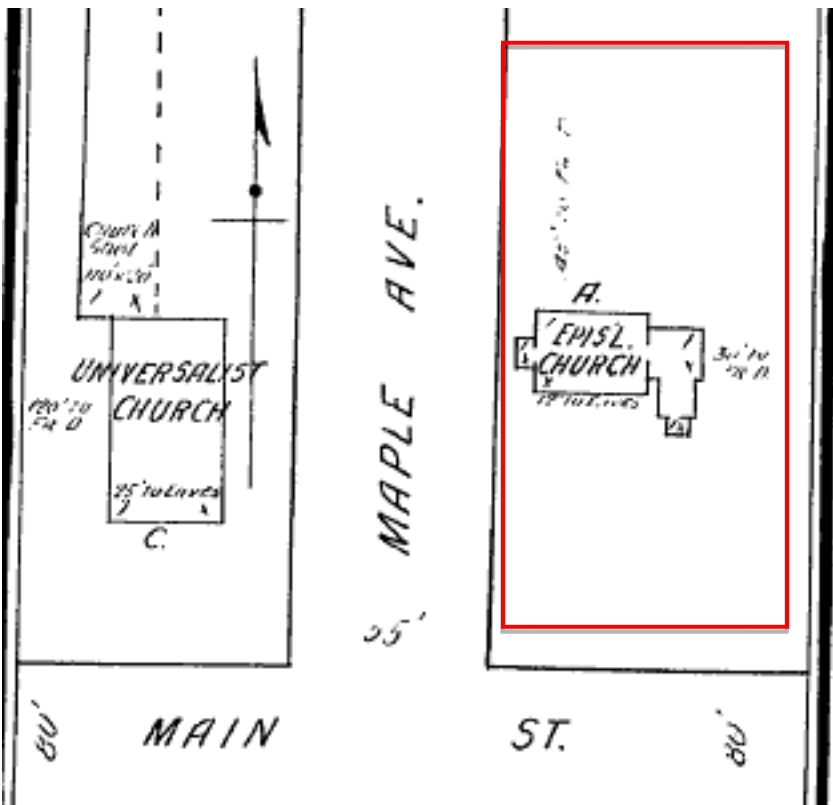
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St. Matthias Episcopal Church Complex
Name of Property
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Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, 1892. Sheet 4.

Note that at this time the former church had been built. This church was later replaced by the current one in 1928.



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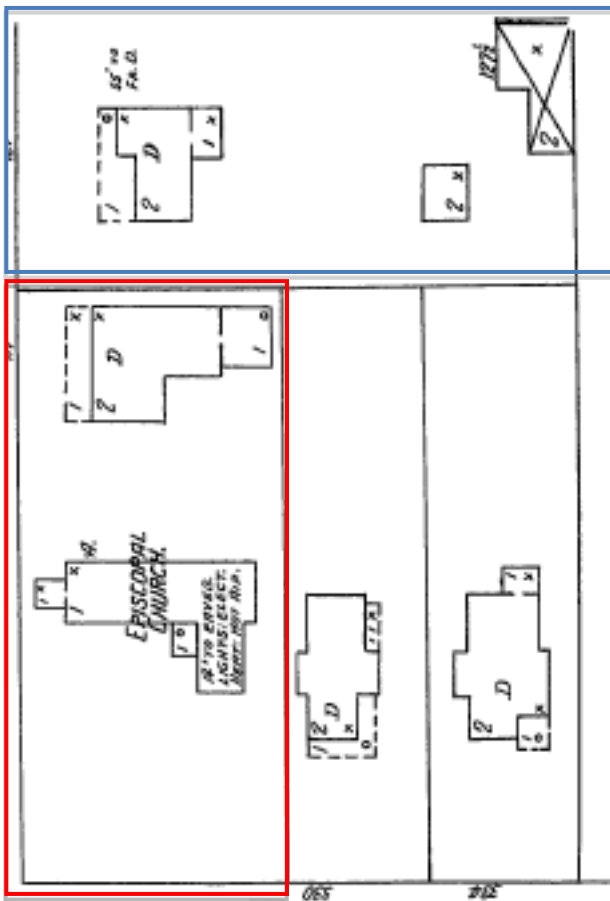
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St. Matthias Episcopal Church Complex
Name of Property
Erie County, New York
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Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, 1904. Sheet 6.

Note that the present-day rectory (constructed c. 1897, identified in blue) at 127 Maple (now 24 Maple) has been built to the north of the former church by this time. The residence at 24 Maple originally included a 2-story barn and shed, but these have since been demolished.



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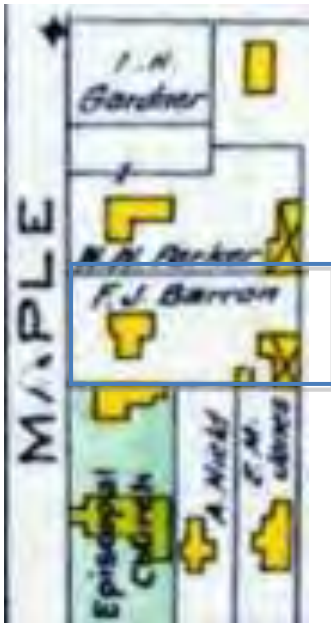
National Register of Historic Places
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St. Matthias Episcopal Church Complex
Name of Property
Erie County, New York
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Century Map Co. 1909.

Note that church has 1897 rectory on its property, but the current contributing dwelling, located today at 24 Maple, is still independent property, belonging to F.J. Barron.



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National Park Service

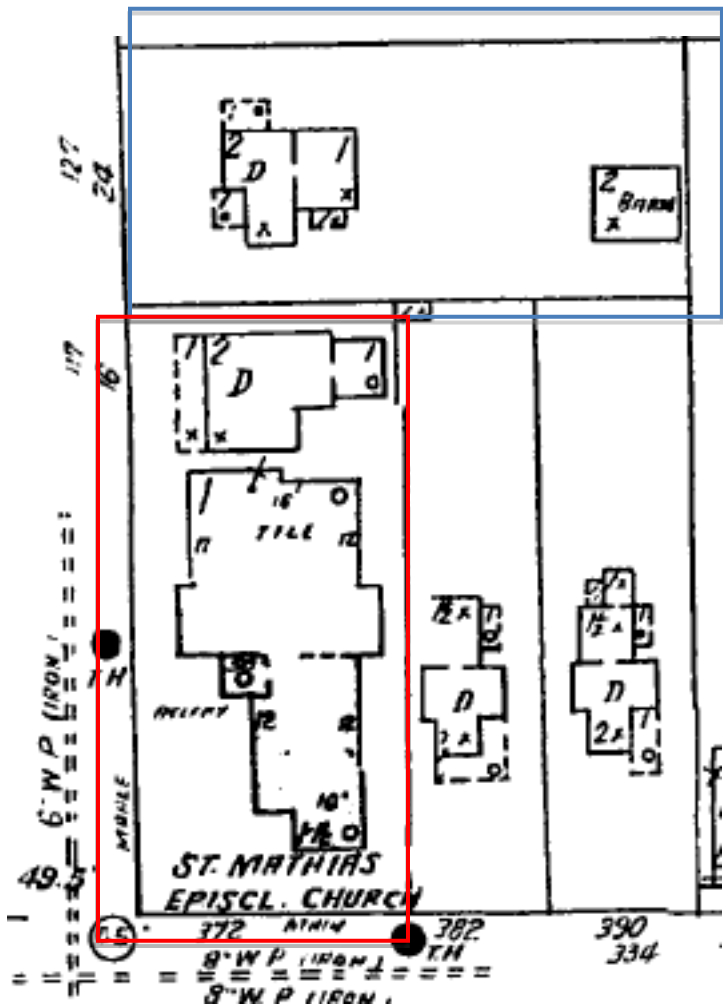
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St. Matthias Episcopal Church Complex
Name of Property
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Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, 1927-1951. Sheet 10.

Note that the present church, constructed in 1928, appears on this map, with the rectory at 24 Maple to the north. The rear addition has not yet been built. The dwelling at 16 Maple was demolished to make way for the rear addition in 1963. The barn has also been demolished and was replaced with the present single-story garage when it became the house became the church rectory in 1963.









YARD
← SALE →

Hand icon indicating a red traffic light signal.











RESERVED
PARKING



















EXIT



PLAQUE

PLAQUE

PLAQUE

PLAQUE



EXIT

RESTROOM



CHOKING
How to prevent choking
How to recognize choking
How to perform the Heimlich maneuver
How to perform CPR

St. Matthias
Episcopal Church
East Aurora, NY



IN THANKSGIVING FOR
THE MINISTRY OF
H. RUSSELL BARKER
RECTOR OF SAINT-MATTHIAS CHURCH
NOVEMBER 1958. DECEMBER 1982







UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

Requested Action:

Property Name:

Multiple Name:

State & County:

Date Received: 10/23/2019 Date of Pending List: 11/1/2019 Date of 16th Day: 11/18/2019 Date of 45th Day: 12/9/2019 Date of Weekly List: 12/6/2019

Reference number:

Nominator:

Reason For Review:

Accept Return Reject 12/3/2019 Date

Abstract/Summary
Comments:

Recommendation/
Criteria

Reviewer Alexis Abernathy Discipline Historian

Telephone (202)354-2236 Date _____

DOCUMENTATION: see attached comments : No see attached SLR : No

If a nomination is returned to the nomination authority, the nomination is no longer under consideration by the National Park Service.



Village of East Aurora

Village Hall ★ 571 Main Street
East Aurora, New York 14052
716-652-6000

www.East-Aurora.ny.us



August 5, 2019

Mr. R. Daniel Mackay
Deputy Commissioner for Historic Preservation
and Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer
New York State Office of Parks,
Recreation and Historic Preservation
Division for Historic Preservation
Pebbles Island, P.O. Box 189
Waterford, New York 12188-0189

RECEIVED

AUG - 7 2019

DIVISION FOR
HISTORIC PRESERVATION

Dear Mr. Mackay:

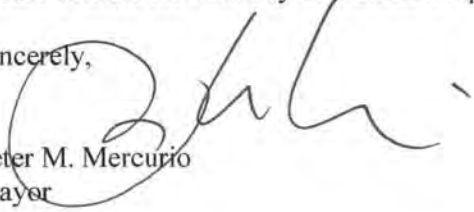
This is in response to your letter, dated July 5, 2019, concerning the St. Matthias Episcopal Church, seeking to be included on the State and National Registers of Historic Places. This property is within the Village of East Aurora, located at 374 Main Street and 24 Maple Road.

I have enclosed excerpts from minutes, dated July 10, 2019, from the Village Historic Preservation Commission, where this matter was discussed. That Commission unanimously approved a resolution supporting the request of the Church.

As Village Mayor, I also agree and concur that the State should approve this request.

Please contact me with any comments or questions.

Sincerely,


Peter M. Mercurio
Mayor

P.S. The third paragraph of your letter references the City of Buffalo as a Certified Local Government for the purposes of participating in federal and state historic preservation programs. This reference may have been made in error, and perhaps instead should have referenced the Village of East Aurora, which is also a Certified Local Government.



Meeting Minutes

Meeting Date: Wednesday, July 10, 2019

Time: 6:00 p.m.

Place: Village Hall, 571 Main St., East Aurora, NY, Basement Conference Room

Ms. Mary Ann Colopy called the meeting to order at 6:17 PM, and she noted that there was a quorum present.

- Present: Mary Ann Colopy, Saxon Deck, Michael Lennon, Michael Ried, Maggie Lindstrom, Patrick Capruso, Chuck Case, Daniel I. Sheff
- Excused: Linda Ulrich-Hagner, Michelle Schoeneman (Village Board liaison).
- Absent:

New Business:

- National Registry nomination for St Matthias Church- started as a UB graduate school project.

Saxon & Chuck- building has retained its character.

Mary Ann- Why did they not ask for local landmarking? National designation was more prestigious.

Public Comment- regarding the criteria that St. Matthias is being nominated under, which is the architecture category. How best to accomplish this?

HPC's Comment- please refer to Motion below.

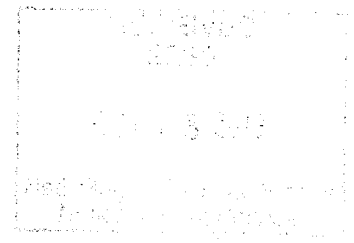
Motion by Saxon Deck that the HPC support St. Matthias' National Registry application and the criteria delineated. Seconded by Chuck Case. Motion passed unanimously (8-0).



**Parks, Recreation
and Historic Preservation**

ANDREW M. CUOMO
Governor

ERIK KULLESEID
Commissioner



18 October 2019

Alexis Abernathy
National Park Service
National Register of Historic Places

Mail Stop 7228

1849 C Street NW
Washington DC 20240

Re: National Register Nominations

Dear Ms. Abernathy:

I am pleased to submit the following five nominations, both on disc, to be considered for listing by the Keeper of the National Register:

- Rutherford House, Edmeston, Otsego County
- First Presbyterian Church of Deposit, Deposit, Broome and Delaware Counties
- St. Matthias Episcopal Church Complex, East Aurora, Erie County
- Sacred Heart Roman Catholic Church Complex, Niagara Falls, Niagara County
- Schaeffer & Brothers Malt House, Buffalo, Erie County

Please feel free to call me at 518.268.2165 if you have any questions.

Sincerely:

Kathleen LaFrank
National Register Coordinator
New York State Historic Preservation Office