

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. ROSE OF LIMA ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH COMPLEX

other names/site number \_\_\_\_\_

#### 2. Location

street & number 500 Parker Avenue [ ] not for publication

city or town Buffalo [ ] vicinity

state New York code NY county Erie code 029 zip code 14216

#### 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.)

Michael J. Lynch Deputy SHPO  
Signature of certifying official/Title

22 Feb 2016  
Date

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) \_\_\_\_\_

Michael J. Lynch Signature of the Keeper  
2-21-17 date of action

**St. Rose of Lima Roman Catholic Church Complex**

**Erie County, New York**

Name of Property

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**5. Classification**

**Ownership of Property**

(check as many boxes as apply)

- 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	
<u>4</u>	<u>0</u>	buildings
		sites
		structures
		objects
<b>4</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>

**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/Church-related residence

RELIGION/Religious facility

RELIGION/Church school

**Current Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

RELIGION/Church-related residence

RELIGION/Religious facility

RELIGION/Church school

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**

(Enter categories from instructions)

Late 19<sup>th</sup> & Early 20<sup>th</sup> Century Revivals/Collegiate Gothic

Modern Movement/ New Formalist

**Materials**

(Enter categories from instructions)

Foundation Concrete

walls Brick, Concrete

roof Asphalt

other  

**Narrative Description**

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

**St. Rose of Lima Roman Catholic Church Complex**

**Erie County, New York**

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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. **NPS #32,938, St. Rose of Lima R.C. School**
- 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)

Architecture  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Period of Significance:**

1926-1965  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Significant Dates:**

1926, 1956, 1965  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Significant Person:**

N/A  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Cultural Affiliation:**

N/A  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Architect/Builder:**

Bley & Lyman (1926); Leroy H. Welch (1965); Albert Rumschik (1956), George Kempf's Sons (1926), Picone Construction (1965)  
\_\_\_\_\_

**10. Geographical Data**

**Acreege of Property** .44 acres

**UTM References**

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1 17 676238 4757866  
Zone Easting Northing

3 17        
Zone Easting Northing

2 17      

4 17      

**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 Derek King and Matthew Shoen, Historians [Edited by Jennifer Walkowski, NYSHPO]

organization Preservation Studios, LLC date 7/15/2015

street & number 60 Hedley Place telephone 716-725-6410

city or town Buffalo state NY zip code 14208

**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. Rose of Lima R.C. Church Complex (1926-1965)**

The St. Rose of Lima Roman Catholic Church Complex is located at 500 Parker Ave, in the North Park neighborhood, five-and-one-half miles northeast of city hall in Buffalo, New York. The complex occupies the southern half of the block along Parkside Avenue between Parker Avenue and Winston Road, with the church and school fronting Parkside Avenue. The surrounding neighborhood is primarily composed of single-family residences from the early- and mid- twentieth century.

The complex consists of four buildings, including a symmetrical, mid-twentieth century church (designed in 1965 by Leroy H. Welch); a two-story brick convent (designed in 1956 by Albert Rumschik); a three-story brick and stone school, two-story rectory (connected to the church), and one story garage (all designed in 1926 by Bley & Lyman). The church and school are located, respectively, on the east and west corners of the block facing Parkside Avenue; both are oriented towards the south, though the church entrances are on the east and west elevations. A connection was made between the church and the 1926 rectory when the church was built in 1965, and for the purposes of the National Register program, these interconnected buildings are counted as one resource. The church is set back approximately fifty-feet from Parker Avenue, with a wide lawn that contains a small garden with a shrine. A concrete path wraps around the building and connects the church with the road. The rectory is immediately behind the church, oriented toward Parker Avenue, and the convent is located in the northwest corner of the complex, oriented to the south. The garage is located in the center of the complex, between the church, convent, and school.

**St. Rose of Lima Church (1965)<sup>1</sup>**

St. Rose of Lima Church combines both traditional Christian church elements, such as its T-plan and tower, stained glass windows, and its interior configuration of spaces, with a simplified, geometric vocabulary that speaks to the popularity of Modern architecture in church design of the 1960s. Designed in the Neo-Formalist style, the St. Rose of Lima Church has a T-plan, with a thirty-foot-tall, double-height central mass containing the building's south-facing facade, shorter, twenty-foot, east and west transept and a tall tower on the west side. Small apsidal chapels are located on the primary facade, as well as on the north and south faces of the wings. The most notable feature of the church is the concrete barrel vault roof and ceiling, a distinctly modern thin-shell concrete treatment.

**Exterior**

The church has a concrete foundation and is constructed of sand-colored yellow brick laid in common bond. There are entries on the east and west elevations of the narthex, and at the east and west ends of both transepts. A flush, soldier-bond beltcourse, which serves as a lintel where it meets any windows, wraps the building.

<sup>1</sup> While the church and rectory are interconnected and counted as one resource, they are described here as separate buildings for the sake of clarity. They are connected by a one-story brick clad corridor, with doors at both ends, no doubt added to facilitate movement between the two buildings during hard Buffalo winters.

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Nearly the entirety of the primary southern façade is occupied by a full-height window, and there are tall, stained-glass windows on the east and west elevations. The roof is composed of multiple thin-shell concrete barrel vaults running perpendicular to the structural exterior walls. All around the perimeter of the building, there are stained-glass windows in the arches formed by the roofline, creating a modern interpretation of a more traditional clerestory.

The primary (southern) façade features a full-height stained-glass window containing rectangular pink, purple, and white panes of various sizes. A single-story, flat-roofed, apsidal chapel is centered on the elevation. The chapel is solid brick with narrow vertical bands of cream-colored stone. Paired wooden door entries are located on the east and west ends of the southern elevation, underneath single-story porches with concrete butterfly roofs.

The secondary elevations of the center wing contain five and a half bays, with the main entry at the southern end in the half-bay and two stained-glass windows in each of the remaining bays. On the west side, the tower occupies the fifth bay. The stained-glass windows extend only halfway up the elevations and are deeply recessed within wide, curved, concrete surrounds. Below each window is a recessed brick panel. In each window, depictions of saints are sharply defined with thin metal wires.

The east and west transepts are identical. Each features a projecting apsidal chapel on the north and south elevations, identical to that on the primary facade. On the east and west elevations, a paired metal door entry is covered by a concrete porch with an asymmetrical butterfly roof. The barrel-vaulted roof over the wings is composed of a half-arch beginning at the wall of the central mass, two full arches, and a second half-arch terminating at the end wall of the wing. The first half-arch and two full arches each have stained-glass windows; the final half-arch is filled with brick.

The forty-five-foot tower at the southwest corner is the tallest element in the church complex. The tower has a rectangular form with an arched top. It is roughly ten feet by ten feet and constructed of brick with the same thin vertical concrete bands as on the chapels on the north and south elevations. Just below the roofline of the tower are openings on each elevation containing large concrete lattices with twenty-four openings. The roof is arched on the north and south sides and has a tall thin metal pole at the center topped with a decorative metal cross.

The northern elevation contains a one-story wing housing the sacristy with flat roof and full-height bands of glass block along the wall. At the eastern end of this elevation, a one-story hallway connects the church to the rectory and contains a metal door and several full-height inoperable windows with transoms.

The curved shape of the thin shell multiple barrel vaulted roof structure balances out the verticality of the church. The thin, concrete vertical ribbons that run the height of the tower and chapels, along with the

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building's tall, flat walls and sharply defined windows, create an angularity that contrasts with the curved roof. The eight barrel-vaults along the central mass (bookended by two half-vaults) thicken at the vertices, giving them a smoothed appearance. The spaces within the arches are filled with stained-glass windows in a modern interpretation of a clerestory and combine elements from the primary elevation and the windows below with large rectangular pink and purple panes around center panels depicting symbols found on metal reliefs on the inside of the church. The concrete butterfly roofs over the entries to the building complement the roof's curves and are supported by thin concrete columns.

**Interior**

The church is laid out with a traditional cruciform organization, with a choir loft above the narthex, and a central nave with east and west transepts intersecting at a main altar, with a sacristy behind the altar. The church has grey and red patterned tile flooring throughout with pale yellow brick walls. The nave and transepts are lined with ten-foot stained-glass windows with square and rectangular panes surrounding sharp, polygonal depictions of saints. The barrel-vault concrete roof is articulated on the interior as well, creating deep arches that are illuminated by the colorful half-round clerestory windows. The pink and purple panes of glass in the clerestory, the blues and purples of the windows along the nave, and the full-height window wall that forms the southern elevation bathe the interior with a soft, pinkish hue. Original golden conical light fixtures with cross cut-outs hang from metal rods throughout the sanctuary space. Additionally, nearly fifty different metal symbols adorn different parts of the interior (most notably on the railings around the main altar and choir loft, as well as the wooden screen that separates the former baptistery from the narthex).

*Narthex & Choir Loft*

The east and west entries at the southern end of the church lead into the narthex, which is open to the nave and only articulated by the overhanging choir loft. The narthex is illuminated by the full-height, stained-glass window that forms the southern elevation, which contains pink, purple, and clear panes. At the center of the narthex is the chapel, which originally housed the baptistery. It is accessed through a screen consisting of paired metal lattices containing wooden plaques adorned with stylized bronze symbolic metalwork. The choir loft is accessed by a staircase on the western side of the narthex through a swinging, decorative, wooden and metal door. The loft is also illuminated by the full-height window and has a large organ that dominates the eastern and western ends, with seating for the choir in between. Vents along the northern end of the choir loft have decorative metal grates.

*Nave & Clerestory*

The nave has a center aisle with two rows of wooden pews with aisles on either side. The nave is illuminated by stained-glass windows depicting saints using sharp, angular polygons with thick metal bands surrounded by blue, green and yellow squares and rectangles. Above, arched geometric stained-glass windows in the clerestory also give light to the space.

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*Main Altar*

The main altar is separated from the nave and transepts by a narrow wooden railing supported by metal panels depicting motifs also found on the entry to the southern altar. It consists of a slightly raised platform, with steps up to a dais directly beneath a depiction of the Crucifixion. The altar is illuminated by a curved lighting fixture with rotating spotlights, and is bordered by two concrete block screens (with cross pattern), each containing a sculpture of St. Rose of Lima. A sacristy is located behind the altar and connects to the rectory via a hallway.

*Artwork and Fixtures*

The St. Rose of Lima Church contains several interesting fixtures and pieces of art. Most notably, the church contains at least fifty unique bronze sculptures affixed throughout the building, each depicting a piece of Catholic iconography. The only images that repeat are the pairs of icons etched onto the metal ventilation grates affixed to the front of the choir loft. The light fixtures in the building are original 1960s golden-colored conical shaped pendant fixtures with a cross motif that hang from solid metal rods.

In all, the interior of the St. Rose of Lima Church retains nearly all of its original 1965 integrity, including the original golden light fixtures, the decorative patterned concrete block screens, and the over fifty individually crafted and stylized icons attached throughout the building. Additionally, the stained-glass windows are articulated with sharp rectangles and use polygonal shapes to depict the saints, giving it a distinctly modern feeling. Lastly, the construction of the church, in particular the full-height southern stained-glass window and barrel-vault ceiling with tall arched stained-glass windows, bathe the church with soft light, often with a pinkish hue. St. Rose of Lima Church combines both traditional Christian church elements, such as its T-plan and tower, stained-glass windows, and its interior configuration of spaces, with a simplified, geometric vocabulary that speaks to the popularity of New Formalism in church design of the 1960s.

**Rectory (1926)**

The two and one-half story, rectangular brick and cast-stone rectory occupies the northeast corner of the lot and is oriented toward Parker Avenue. The building was designed with a Collegiate Gothic style in 1926 by the firm of Bley & Lyman. The building has three bays with a center entry. It has a hipped asphalt shingle roof with a flat top, two large gable dormers on the north and south elevations, and one large gabled dormer in the center bay.

The interior of the building is oriented along a central hallway that runs east-west. The rectory retains original plaster walls, wood trim and door casings, and though there is carpeting along the stairs, several of the offices still have exposed hardwood floors. The entry vestibule leads to two interior doors, one of which is a simple wooden door with original wood casing that leads to an interior office, and the other wooden door leads to the central hallway and has a nine-light window with eight-light sidelights. Just past this door are entries to the two offices, and through a pointed wooden arch is the main hallway, stairwell, dining room and secondary entry.



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The offices are unadorned but have stained crown molding and wide, wooden window sills. The last office on the first floor (along the west elevation) has a gray-brick fireplace with a dark-stained mantel supported by rectangular columns. A large dining room occupies much of the southern half of the first floor, and though it has a cardboard drop ceiling, it retains the original crown molding. A one-story wing projects off the dining room, hidden from view on the exterior by the one-story hallway off the church, but has a large picture window with five-light sidelights, a built-in cabinet and bookcase, and a full-glass door with five-light sidelights.

The main staircase leads up to the second floor but also down to the secondary entry on the north elevation. The steps have been carpeted, but the dark-stained baseboards and original balustrading remain. At the bottom of the staircase, the railing spirals outward into a volute newel post set into the curtail step. The second floor contains a central, double-loaded, east-west corridor with bedrooms on either side. The bedrooms retain exposed hardwood flooring, unpainted woodwork, and feature gray brick fireplaces with wide mantels supported by paneling flush with the wall. Each bedroom contains a bathroom. The staircase continues up to the attic, which appears to be a mid-century modification to the building due to the differentiated railing (square newel post and spindles), carpeting throughout, and large blue subway tiling in the bathroom with penny-tile floor.

**School (1926)**

St. Rose of Lima's School building was constructed in 1926 and also designed by Bley & Lyman in the Collegiate Gothic style. The three-story building is I-shaped in plan and oriented north-south, with double-loaded corridors of classrooms on the second and third floors and an auditorium-cafeteria in the first floor. It is three bays in width and 10 bays in length. The building is located at the southwestern corner of the parish. The primary elevation faces south toward Parkside Avenue, and the secondary elevation faces Winston Avenue.

**Exterior**

The St. Rose of Lima school is constructed of brown and tan brick laid in Flemish bond with a concrete foundation and a stone sill course at the second floor. Along the sides, pairs of bays are articulated with brick pilasters terminating in a stone cap. The top of the building is wrapped by a stone lintel course in the third story with a parapet above. Nearly all the windows in the school are original, with the exception of the glass block infill of the large arched window on the southern elevation and the third-floor sliding window replacements. The front elevation is three bays in width. The projecting central bay features the main entry at the ground floor with a two-story pointed arched window above. In the wide bays to either side, there is a single, centered window at the ground floor; the upper two levels are blank and feature diamond-patterned brickwork. The ground floor of the central bay projects further than the upper stories to contain an enclosed porch. In the center, a flight of stone steps leads up to a segmentally arched opening with a quoined stone surround. The corners of the porch also feature stone quoining. In the upper two stories, the central bay is framed by rectangular piers and the two-story window features a quoined stone surround. The central bay of the parapet contains a

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panelized stone frieze surmounted by a sculpted limestone cross; to either side are octagonal piers with cylindrical finials.

The east and west elevations contain ten nearly identical bays except for the first and last bays of the first floor. The center eight bays contain paired six-over-six wood windows on the first and second floor with the third floor separated from the second floor by wooden spandrel panels ornamented with simple Gothic pointed arches. The third floor contains non-original paired sliding windows with inoperable transoms consisting of solid panels. The first and last bays of the west elevation are identical. They contain Lancet-arched stone entries with paired metal doors and an arched transom, now filled with glass block. Above, there are single, six-over-six, wood windows with pressed stone surrounds on the second floor, and six-over-six wood windows with pressed stone sills on the third floor. The east elevation is identical to the west, with the exception of the first floor. Here there is a large glass-block window with a pressed stone surround in the first bay, paired three-over-six windows in the eighth and ninth-bays, and a basement entry in the tenth bay. Additionally, the tenth bay of the east elevation contains a three-story brick chimney that extends above the roofline, with no window on the second floor, and paired one-over-one windows on the third floor.

The rear (northern elevation) of the school contains four bays on the first floor, with paired six-over-six wood windows in the first bay, shorter paired three-over-three wood windows in the second bay, a metal door in the third bay, and a single six-over-six window in the fourth bay. All windows have pressed stone sills. The second floor contains a tall six-over-six window in the first bay, a small four-over-four window in the second bay, and large paired six-over-six wood windows in the third bay. The third floor contains a single bay of paired six-over-six wood windows with stone sills.

### Interior

The interior of the St. Rose of Lima school has three distinct spaces. On the first floor, there is a below-grade auditorium/gymnasium, which originally served as the parish chapel, with at-grade mezzanine levels at the northern and southern ends of the building. The at-grade levels contain offices and a former sacristy spaces in the north and a staircase with bathrooms and a balcony in the south. Above, there are two floors of classrooms along a central, double-loaded, north-south corridor. As such, the building has an interesting layout, with staircases at the north and south ends of the building serving the educational spaces on the second and third floors and also providing direct access to the auditorium/gymnasium, which originally functioned as a chapel prior to the construction of the church building in 1965. After the construction of the church in 1965, the parish raised funds to renovate the school around 1970.

The auditorium/gymnasium occupies the majority of the ground floor at the center. It features the original stage and proscenium and the volume of the space is intact. The northern end is divided into office space with a kitchen, bathroom, boiler room and storage area. A notable feature of this space is an original built-in in the

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hallway between the offices. Walls are covered in original plaster in good condition, but the boiler room has painted CMU perimeter walls without plaster. The southern end of the first floor contains a stair landing with a bathroom and storage closet with a small balcony overlooking the auditorium/gymnasium.

The original corridor configuration throughout the second and third floors remains intact. Corridors have not been modified from their original width, with plaster walls in good condition. Corridors feature asbestos tile over the concrete subfloor. The original ceiling height is maintained on the third floor, but the second floor corridor has a suspended acoustic tile ceiling. Non-original lockers are present inset within the corridor walls on both floors.

The original configuration and many original details remain largely intact on the second and third floors. A 1970s remodeling installed a number of contemporary finishes, especially on the second floor. Most classrooms retain their original configuration and size, but the two northernmost classrooms on either side of the second floor no longer have the demising walls between them, being opened up to accommodate larger classes. Classrooms on the second floor have suspended acoustic tile ceilings; those on the third floor retain their original height. Flooring is a mix of carpet and asbestos tile over concrete with some hardwood flooring. All plaster finishes are in good condition, but some require repair. Classroom doors on the second floor are contemporary wood doors likely dating to the early 1970s remodeling. The third floor has non-original wooden classroom doors with transoms above. Classrooms on the second floor only have the original window casings with modern baseboards and no picture rail or transoms. Door casings, transoms, baseboards, and picture rail on the third floor appear original and in good condition. All classrooms have chalkboards, but only those on the third floor appear original.

**Garage (1926)**

St. Rose of Lima parish contains a one-story, three-bay, brick garage designed by Bley & Lyman. The garage is located near the center of the complex and faces east. There is a parapet on the north and south elevations with a flat roof behind. On the east elevation are three vinyl replacement garage doors. The north, west, and south elevations have two bays each. In the second bay of the south elevation, there is a single wooden door entry; elsewhere, each bay contains a glass block window with a stone sill.

**Convent (1956)**

St. Rose of Lima church complex also contains a two-story rectangular convent built for the Grey Nuns in 1956 and designed by Albert A. Rumschik. The building is two stories in height and constructed of yellow brick with a concrete foundation and a low-pitched hipped roof and has a modern, streamlined appearance.

The building is five bays in width with variously sized sliding windows on the first and second floors. In the second bay is an entry with a flat roof supported by metal lattice railings. The façade also includes a projecting,

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one-story, flat-roofed chapel with a blank southern elevation featuring a decorative concrete cross panel at the center. On the east and west sides of the chapel are three-light sliding windows. The west elevation of the building contains three bays, with single one-over-one windows in the first and third bays and a paired sliding window in the center bay. The east elevation contains a two-story enclosed porch with white vinyl siding and tripartite sliding windows.

The main entrance of the convent is in the southwest corner, and leads to a double-loaded east-west corridor that runs the length of the building. The main staircase is just opposite the front entry with a reading room immediately to the west. The remaining public rooms are on either side of the hallway, including a long kitchen and dining room to the north, and an altar to the south, and ends with an enclosed porch to the east. The second floor also runs along the east-west corridor with bedrooms on either side.

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**Statement of Significance:**

The St. Rose of Lima Roman Catholic Church Complex is a locally significant Roman Catholic church complex in the City of Buffalo, New York. The buildings in the complex, located at 500 Parker Avenue, reflect the growth of North Buffalo's Roman Catholic community, which stalled at the start of the Depression and resumed after World War Two. St. Rose of Lima was formed in 1926 as one of four Catholic parishes established in North Buffalo after the turn of the century to meet the demand of residents moving to this streetcar suburb. As many of the new residents were young families, the parish initially built a combination church and school, not only to make it easier for Catholics to attend Mass, but to provide a parochial education to their children. Though development and population growth waned in the 1930s, the community grew rapidly after 1950, prompting St. Rose of Lima to construct a new church in the parish, in line with North Buffalo growth, as well as national church construction trends after mid-century.

The St. Rose of Lima Church Complex is locally significant under Criterion C in Architecture for the Collegiate Gothic and New Formalist style thin-shell concrete religious buildings that reflect the parish's two distinct building phases. The first phase corresponds to 1920s growth in the Interwar-era, and the second reflects post-World War II suburban development, with the gap between typical of many American parishes as a result of construction halting during the Great Depression and World War II. The complex consists of three buildings that express Collegiate Gothic styling, the school, rectory, and garage, all designed by Bley and Lyman in 1926, emphasizing the parish's first purpose in providing parochial education, as well as two modern buildings, the Albert Rumshick designed 1956 convent and Leroy H. Welch's 1965 New Formalist church, which epitomizes national trends in church design and construction. These firms had extensive experience designing churches and buildings affiliated with religious organizations. Many of Bley & Lyman's designs incorporated classical revival themes and Welch's designs populated Catholic parishes and institutions across the city and region.

The period of significance for the St. Rose of Lima Roman Catholic Church Complex begins with the construction of the earliest buildings on the site, the school, rectory, and garage in 1926. It concludes in 1965, with the construction of the church building. This period includes the 1956 construction of the convent, as well as all significant architectural development and changes. It also encompasses the era in which the St. Rose parish was at its most active and prominent in the local community.

**The Development of North Buffalo**

The St. Rose of Lima Roman Catholic Church is located on the edge of the North Park neighborhood in the North Buffalo area of the city of Buffalo, New York. The neighborhood is roughly bound by Delaware Avenue to the west, Amherst Avenue to the south, Kenmore to the north, and the New York Central Railroad Belt Line to the east. The North Park neighborhood is an extension of the Parkside and Central Park neighborhoods to the south, which developed as streetcar neighborhoods around the Frederick Law Olmsted-designed Delaware Park.

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While some pockets developed earlier along routes to the nearby villages, most of the area that composes North Buffalo remained forest or farmland well into the nineteenth century. By 1797 the only area to develop in this section of the city was along what is now Main Street, which connected Buffalo (called “New Amsterdam”) with the other early villages, today Williamsville and Clarence.<sup>2</sup> Officially named “Main Street” by 1832, the route was still a rough road through the country, despite a macadam covering. Though the city expanded its boundaries in 1854 to encompass this area and Olmsted planned out Delaware Park and the Parkside community beginning in the late 1860s, the area didn’t see real growth and development until the late 1870s, with the completion of the New York Central Belt Line.

The development of Buffalo’s park system by Frederick Law Olmsted had a profound impact on North Buffalo. Olmsted was invited to Buffalo in 1868, and over the course of the next three decades he designed a four-component system, including the large primary park around a dammed Scajaquada Creek, a waterfront park at the mouth of the Niagara River, and “The Parade,” the smallest of the three, but connected to both via long parkways.<sup>3</sup> “The Park,” renamed Delaware Park, was the centerpiece of the system, containing signature Olmsted elements, such as a large water feature (“Gala Water,” now Hoyt Lake), and traverse roads similar to those in New York City’s Central Park, which kept traffic along Delaware Avenue lower than the surrounding park. As part of The Park’s design, he incorporated roads for a neighborhood on the edge of the park that would feature curvilinear streets and large lots. Though it would not develop until nearly twenty years after it was planned, the Parkside neighborhood would blend a traditional street grid with curvilinear streets that paralleled the curved edge of Delaware Park.

The neighborhood also benefited from its proximity to the “Belt Line.” New York Central Railroad’s “Belt Line,” a track developed between 1871 and 1883 that encircled the city, led to a rapid expansion of industry throughout Buffalo, and created new industrial and manufacturing nodes. The rail line connected portions of the former Buffalo and Niagara Railroad, the New York Central and Hudson River Railroad, and the Lake Shore and Michigan Southern Railway to form a complete loop around the city.<sup>4</sup> The loop had nineteen stations spaced one mile apart and led to the expansion of industrial facilities throughout the northern and eastern quadrants of the city, as well as allowed workers to travel from any residential enclave along the line to factories on the other side of Buffalo.

The close proximity of these two features, Delaware Park and the Belt Line, led to other developments in addition to the Parkside neighborhood. Local businessman Lewis J. Bennett, owner of the Buffalo Cement

<sup>2</sup> Steve Cichon, *The Complete History of Parkside* (Buffalo: Staffannouncer.com, 2009), 7.

<sup>3</sup> Christine Longiaru, Frank Kowsky and Martin Wachadlo, “Broadway Fillmore Neighborhood Intensive Level Historic Resources Survey,” City of Buffalo, last updated 2004, [https://www.city-buffalo.com/Home/City\\_Departments/Office\\_of\\_Strategic\\_Planning/RegulatoryBoards/Preservation\\_Board/HistoricResourcesIntensiveLevelSurvey](https://www.city-buffalo.com/Home/City_Departments/Office_of_Strategic_Planning/RegulatoryBoards/Preservation_Board/HistoricResourcesIntensiveLevelSurvey), Section 3-4.

<sup>4</sup> Aaron T. Heverin, “Past Tracks: A Queen City Built by Rail,” *Buffalo History Works*, [Buffalohistoryworks.com/ptracks/](http://Buffalohistoryworks.com/ptracks/).

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Company, began developing land on the east side of the Belt Line in 1889. Bennett recognized the potential of the nearby railroad and constructed a train station at Starin and Amherst along the Belt Line, advertising the neighborhood's easy access to the station and to streetcar lines in literature about the development.<sup>5</sup> Adding to the growth of the neighborhood, Bennett donated the land for the construction of Bennett High School but added covenants to deeds that created "minimum costs" for houses, ensuring a high quality housing stock.

Between 1895 and 1915, the Parkside and Central Park neighborhoods went from sparse development to nearly fully built-out, with just a few vacant parcels along Parkside Avenue facing Delaware Park. Most lots contained large single-family homes, reflecting the minimum costs established by Bennett, but also the desirability of the neighborhood. Both Parkside and Central Park were in the 12<sup>th</sup> Ward, which doubled in population from 1870 to 1890, going from 5,290 to 10,851 residents.<sup>6</sup> In 1909, the 12<sup>th</sup> Ward became the 17<sup>th</sup> Ward and included everything within city limits east of Delaware Avenue and north of Delevan Avenue and had a total population of 13,636.

The North Park neighborhood developed as an extension of the growth in Parkside and Central Park. Today, North Park consists of several speculative residential developments that occurred at the turn of the twentieth century, including: "Villa Park," laid out between 1890 and 1894 between Delaware Avenue and what today is Sterling Ave; "Colvin Park," laid out between 1900 and 1905 between Sterling and Starin Avenues; and "Starin Central," between Starin and the New York Central Railroad, laid out between 1915 and 1920. In 1895, the "Villa Park" Belt Line station along Colvin Boulevard was renamed "North Park Station," and a second "North Park Station" along the Lake Erie and Western Railroad (a rail line that ran parallel to the New York Central Belt Line, a half-mile north) was added as well.<sup>7</sup>

Between 1910 and 1920, North Park began to fill with new construction. The 17<sup>th</sup> Ward became the 20<sup>th</sup> Ward as the city's overall population grew, and in 1920 the ward had a population of 38,440, nearly triple the size of a decade earlier, with over 4,000 school-age children.<sup>8</sup> The blocks around St. Rose of Lima reflect this change as well: in 1916, Parkside Avenue did not even extend to its current location, and Winston and Parker Avenues ended a block to the south of where they reach today, with only nineteen buildings on Winston and none on Parker.<sup>9</sup> By 1935, the St. Rose of Lima parish had been established and the street grid surrounding it was laid out to its current configuration, with 78 buildings on Winston Avenue and 68 on Parker Avenue. Hertel Avenue,

<sup>5</sup> James R. Amone, *Central Park, Buffalo, NY: A Neighborhood of History and Tradition* (Buffalo: Buffalo & Erie County Historical Society, 2010), 83-4.

<sup>6</sup> U.S. Department of the Interior, *Report on the Population of the United States: Ninth Census, 1870* (Washington, DC: GPO, 1870), 268; U.S. Department of the Interior, *Report on the Population of the United States: Eleventh Census, 1890* (Washington, DC: GPO, 1890), 246.

<sup>7</sup> Rand McNally Co., *Buffalo New York Map 1895* (Buffalo: Rand McNally Co., 1895), sheets 1 and 2.

<sup>8</sup> U.S. Department of the Interior, *Report on the Population of the United States: Fourteenth Census, 1920* (Washington, DC: GPO, 1920), 263.

<sup>9</sup> Sanborn Map Company, *Buffalo, Erie County*, 1916, Sheet 511.

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which was emerging as a major commercial thoroughfare by 1915 due to the streetcar line that ran its length, had eleven buildings on the block between Winston and Parker, which doubled to 22 in 1935.<sup>10</sup>

Early development in the neighborhood around St. Rose of Lima included single-family houses and doubles, with most containing garages (including two-bay garages for doubles). Though many houses had garages, the neighborhood was well serviced by busses and streetcars along Delaware, Hertel, Colvin, Main Street, and Parkside Avenue. The middle-class nature of the neighborhood is epitomized by the housing stock, which is more utilitarian than the homes in the Parkside and Central Park neighborhoods to the south, although there are still large grand homes along Starin and Parkside Avenues.

While North Park experienced a great deal of construction in the 1910s and early 1920s, the onset of the Great Depression in 1929 led to a halt in growth in the neighborhood. Unlike Hamlin Park, near Forest Lawn Cemetery, and other "streetcar suburbs" in South Buffalo or near the University of Buffalo along Main Street, there were a great many vacant lots in North Park in 1935; indeed, of the 24 lots on Parker Avenue adjacent to St. Rose of Lima, only two had houses built on them. After World War II, North Park saw a resurgence of development, and the streets around St. Rose reflect this: in 1950, Winston and Parker were fully built up except for six lots, and Taunton Avenue (just one block north of St. Rose) went from having one house along a seven-block stretch in 1935 to having 39 residences in 1950.<sup>11</sup> In addition, the 20<sup>th</sup> Ward was carved up into six new wards, and the 18<sup>th</sup> Ward, containing the St. Rose of Lima Parish, increased from 17,553 residents in 1940 to 18,127 in 1950.<sup>12</sup>

**Catholicism in North Buffalo**

The St. Rose of Lima Church emerged out of the development of North Buffalo during the early 1920s, and grew with the neighborhood after World War II. The spread of Catholic families throughout Buffalo followed the growth of the city, with the development of new neighborhoods often shortly followed by the creation of a new Catholic parish. North Buffalo was no different; between 1913 and 1926 four parishes were created, including St. Rose of Lima. The combination church and school building represents the composition of the original parish, as it not only provided closer masses for residents in the neighborhood, but parochial education for a community composed largely of families. The construction of the new church in 1965 represents not only the growth of North Buffalo after World War II but national trends in post-war church construction and design as well.

<sup>10</sup> Sanborn Map Company, *Buffalo, Erie County, New York*, 1935, Sheets 970, 971, 977.

<sup>11</sup> Sanborn Map Company, *Buffalo, Erie County, New York*, 1925-1951, Sheet 1977.

<sup>12</sup> U.S. Department of the Interior, *Report on the Population of the United States: Sixteenth Census, 1940* (Washington, DC: GPO, 1940), 288; U.S. Department of the Interior, *Report on the Population of the United States: 1950* (Washington, DC: GPO, 1950), 301.



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Although small at the start of the nineteenth century, Buffalo's Catholic population expanded into one of the largest religious groups in the city by the turn of the twentieth century. In 1821, only five Catholic families lived in Buffalo, but within a decade, the increase of French and German Catholic immigrants precipitated the city's first Catholic church, Lamb of God (later renamed St. Louis), in 1829.<sup>13</sup> Bishop John Timon became the first bishop of the region when the Diocese of Buffalo was created in 1847. The Catholic population of Buffalo grew rapidly in the 1840s, as Irish and German immigrants arrived in greater numbers. Through the end of the nineteenth century, these early Catholics were joined by new Polish, Italian, Ukrainian, Lebanese, Hungarian, and Slovak populations. Rather than join the same parishes, each group "required new parishes in their ethnic enclaves to minister to their distinctive linguistic and cultural needs."<sup>14</sup>

Due to the cost of erecting masonry buildings, many parishes began in temporary wood structures with ambitions to grow into more impressive churches over time. As the growing Catholic population of Buffalo came from a number of European countries, it is perhaps not surprising to find that these early Catholic parishes aspired to construct elegant stone churches in the European tradition.<sup>15</sup>

Though the Catholic populations in South Buffalo and in the neighborhood known as "Polonia," around Broadway and Fillmore Avenue, grew rapidly, parishes also emerged across the city to serve the growing Catholic community in newly developed areas, including North Buffalo. The first Catholic parish in North Buffalo was established along Main Street at the current location of St. Joseph's University Church in 1850, when Bishop Timon settled a dispute between "North Bush" (now the Village of Kenmore) and "Elysville" (later "Buffalo Plains," and today known as the University Heights neighborhood) by locating the new St. Joseph's Parish along Main Street in the heart of the latter settlement.<sup>16</sup> The remote location led to a tumultuous relationship with priests, many serving for only a year, and the parish went through 26 pastors in 35 years.<sup>17</sup>

During the 1880s, many streets were laid out in North Buffalo, and in 1890, Main Street was paved.<sup>18</sup> As a result of the growth in the Buffalo Plains neighborhood, a new church was constructed at St. Joseph's in 1894, with the continued growth resulting in its replacement with the larger, more grandiose current structure in 1923. Similarly, the Parkside and Central Park developments lead to the establishment of St. Mark's Parish along Woodward Ave near Olmsted's Delaware Park. Despite serving only 32 families in 1908, the parish grew

<sup>13</sup> Martin F. Ederer, *Buffalo's Catholic Churches: Ethnic Communities and the Architectural Legacy* (Buffalo: digital@batesjackson LLC, 2003), 2.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, 3.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, 69.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, 70.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*

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quickly and commissioned Albert Asa Post (architect of St. Teresa's Church in South Buffalo, and Annunciation Church on Lafayette on the West Side), to design a new church for the parish in 1914.<sup>19</sup>

The growth of North Park prompted the diocese to create several new parishes at the start of the twentieth century. The Holy Angels Parish was formed in 1913 from parts of St. John the Baptist (in Black Rock), St. Joseph's on Main and St. Mark's on Woodward and moved from its original location near Elmwood to its present campus location in 1921.<sup>20</sup> St. Margaret's Parish was formed in 1916 along Hertel Avenue near North Park Avenue, and the original combination church/school was finished in 1919, with the parish's standalone church constructed in 1956.<sup>21</sup> Lastly, St. Rose of Lima was established in 1926 after residents successfully petitioned the diocese in 1925 to create a new parish in the growing northeastern corner of the North Park area near the intersection of Parker and Parkside Avenues.

**St. Rose of Lima Parish**

With the growth of the North Park neighborhood, the Catholic Diocese of Buffalo decided to open another parish in North Buffalo between Hertel Avenue and the Belt Line. At the same time, the Carmelite Sisters were in the process of construction of a new monastery in the area as well. The Carmelite Sisters were driven out of Mexico in 1914 and settled on Cottage Street in Buffalo in 1919 with the Reverend George Crimmen as their chaplain. They approved a design for their new monastery in 1924 and moved to this relatively undeveloped portion of the city in 1925, into a large two-story building with a quad-plan (including a large chapel on the corner of Carmel and Tacoma), with the new cut-in road named Carmel Road after their order.<sup>22</sup> Residents of the area attended weekday morning mass and evening rosary and benedictions at the monastery, but it did not provide Sunday mass, forcing them to travel to nearby parishes. As the area's population increased, the complaints by residents increased, as the distance to St. Margaret's on Hertel Avenue or St. Marks near Parkside Ave caused many parishioners to miss the start of Sunday mass, even by streetcar. In 1925, Bishop William Turner was asked to form a new parish in the North Park/Parkside area.

Since many neighborhood residents attended mass at the Carmelite Monastery, Bishop Turner tasked the chaplain of the monastery, the Reverend George Crimmen, with organizing the new parish due to his familiarity with the new parishioners. Crimmen secured the current parcel for \$39,400 and hired Bley and Lyman to create plans for a rectory and combination church, school, and auditorium; George Kempf's Sons were hired to construct the buildings. With 161 students in attendance, only five Catholic children of school age in the

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., 71.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid., 72.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., 73.

<sup>22</sup> *St. Rose of Lima: 1925-1975, Buffalo, New York* (St. Rose of Lima Parish, Commemorative Magazine) (Buffalo, 1975), 17.

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neighborhood were not registered at St. Rose of Lima at the opening of the new parish school. The first classes, taught by the Grey Nuns of the Sacred Heart, were in session by September of 1926.<sup>23</sup>

The Grey Nuns of the Sacred Heart were a relatively new order in America when they began instruction at St. Rose of Lima. Though established in Montreal in 1737 by Marguerite D'Youville, the Grey Nuns did not have a motherhouse in the United States until the establishment of one in Philadelphia in 1921. Despite that, the Grey Nuns already had a presence in Buffalo, as they had established D'Youville College in 1908; they also had a convent and formed the Holy Angels school for girls at the corner of Prospect and Porter Avenues in 1899.<sup>24</sup> At St. Rose, the school began with eight classrooms and expanded to its present capacity, having two classrooms for kindergarten through eighth grade, serving 345 students, in 1975. The curriculum for the school emphasized physical, mental, and social development on top of spiritual pursuits for the students. Although the diocese oversaw the pupils' education, the Grey Nuns were given a level of autonomy with their teaching.<sup>25</sup>

Though rapid growth precipitated the establishment of the three North Park parishes, expansion of the neighborhood plateaued in the 1930s. During this time, St. Rose shared its clergy with the Carmelite Convent and Holy Angels Academy, and St. Margaret's did not construct its church until 1956. Similarly, although St. Rose burned its mortgage in 1946, it did not engage in another construction project until 1956, when the parish began construction on the convent at the rear of the complex. This period seems to be when the parish experienced its largest growth, as the mortgage for the convent was paid off in just one year.<sup>26</sup>

The leadership of the first pastor, Father Crimmen, was instrumental in the parish paying off its original mortgage. As population dwindled and the neighborhood suffered the economic restrictions of the Great Depression and during World War II, Crimmen helped establish several clubs and fundraising efforts to help raise money to pay down the mortgage. Some of the clubs, like the 50-50 Club, were short-lived groups designed to pay down the debt, but they created a celebratory culture in the parish, which often held annual picnics on the lawns where the current church stands.<sup>27</sup> Other organizations established during his leadership still existed into the 1970s. These included the St. Vincent de Paul Society (formed 1941) and Ladies of Charity (formed in the late 1930s); others, such as the Altar and Rosary Society, formed in 1927, still exist. Many of these clubs organized shows and fundraisers similar to the ones Father Crimmen used to successfully pay off the mortgage. Sadly, he passed away months before that goal was accomplished in 1946.<sup>28</sup>

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., 6.

<sup>24</sup> *Ins and Outs of Buffalo: The Queen City of the Lakes*, (Buffalo: A.B. Floyd, 1899), 140.

<sup>25</sup> *St. Rose of Lima: 1925-1975*, 17.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid., 7-8.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid., 9.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid., 8, 18-21.

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In 1963, the incoming pastor, Msgr. Bernard McCarthy, led the discussion about constructing a new, separate, place of worship for the parish. After securing architect Leroy H. Welch to design the buildings, Picone Construction began construction that year, finishing in 1965. Msgr. McCarthy also led the church in a full remodeling of the school, replacing the windows, updating classrooms, and installing lockers to create the building as it exists today. During this time, McCarthy took a page from the parish's first pastor, re-establishing Memorial Day mass, encouraging more family picnics, and holding turkey raffles in order to pay down the debt from the construction of the new church.<sup>29</sup>

Influences of Vatican II on Ecclesiastic Architecture

The St. Rose of Lima Church Complex demonstrates the effects of the Second Vatican Council (also referred to as Vatican II) of 1962-1965 on ecclesiastic design with examples of architecture that was common both before and after Vatican II. The complex's school and rectory, executed in the Collegiate Gothic style, represent the more traditional Catholic building mode, popular before Vatican II. The church, a New Formalist design with a multiple barrel vaulted thin-shell concrete construction, is highly indicative of changes commonly seen in churches that were built following Vatican II, although it does appear to reflect some carryover of the pre-Vatican II conventions. These designs make the St. Rose of Lima Church Complex an excellent example of the development of Catholic Church architecture in the early-to-mid twentieth century. Together, these two buildings provide a strong physical depiction of the changes implemented by the Second Vatican Council and the impact these changes had on church design.

Prior to Vatican II, Catholic Churches around the world were designed in diverse architectural styles reflective of the regional context of their construction. However, a number of guiding principles informed church design. Catholic Churches needed to possess three major traits: verticality, permanence, and iconography.<sup>30</sup> By building vertically, the church became a cavernous space, dwarfing the individual, a reminder of God's ultimate power. Like God, the church needed to be permanent to serve generation after generation, transcending time and culture.<sup>31</sup> Finally, the use of iconography was crucial to creating points of contemplation throughout the church, reminders of the life of Jesus and the church's history.<sup>32</sup> The floor plan of the traditional cruciform church was also steeped in meaning and churches were laid out symbolically to instill wonder and reinforce the worshiper's faith. Historian Steven Schloeder writes of the traditional floor plan that:

Christ's head is at the apse, which is the seat of governance represented by the bishop's cathedra; the choir is his throat, from which the chants of the

<sup>29</sup> Ibid., 15.

<sup>30</sup> Jenna Victoria Farah, "The Implications of the Second Vatican Council on Historic American Catholic Architecture" (Masters Diss., University of Pennsylvania, 2009), 15.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid.

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monks issue forth the praise of God; the transepts are his extended arms; his torso and legs form the nave, since the gathered faithful are his body; the narthex represents his feet, where the faithful enter the church; and at the crossing is the altar, which is the heart of the church. The power and clarity of this image of the crucified Lord is precisely why it was the predominant model for church design until the second half of the twentieth century.<sup>33</sup>

A Catholic church's cruciform design, building scale, and iconography, laden with meaning and spiritual significance, doubtlessly left a major impact on worshipers. The architecture and art of the traditional Catholic Church reminded parishioners of God's power and authority, and the centrality of God to life as expressed by the church's permanent presence in the community.

At the start of the twentieth century, the architectural styles utilized in ecclesiastic design still reflected the grandeur of Renaissance-and Victorian-era styles, often eclectic interpretations of past styles and forms. In the 1920s, when St. Rose of Lima Parish was founded, Collegiate Gothic was one of the most popular building styles for churches and academic institutions as it reflected architecture of the more pious Middle Ages, offering twentieth century parishioners yet another point of reflection as they gathered together for mass.

The Collegiate Gothic architecture of the St. Rose of Lima rectory and school is representative of the traditional architectural styles employed by church architects before Vatican II. Collegiate Gothic architecture developed at the turn of the twentieth century and quickly became a defining style for educational facilities across the United States, explaining its use in the parochial school and convent. Also called "Academic Gothic Revival," Collegiate Gothic took inspiration from English and French medieval university Gothic designs. The new Collegiate Gothic designs were, however, "neater, and more consistent, and better scaled than the originals, making sophisticated allusion to 'ancient, stable institutions.'"<sup>34</sup> American universities like Yale and Princeton used the style to try and "rival" England's medieval Oxford College, laying out quads, commons, spired towers, and chapels with mighty Gothic vaults. Ralph Adams Cram popularized the style in the United States with his designs for buildings at Princeton University, upon which Woodrow Wilson remarked, "Gothic architecture has pointed everyman's imagination to the earliest traditions of learning in the English-speaking race."<sup>35</sup> Cram, who began practicing in Boston in 1881, promoted Gothic designs for their academic nature, which he thought gave order to an American architectural field that was unorganized and uninspired.<sup>36</sup>

<sup>33</sup> Steven J. Schloeder, *Architecture in Communion: Implementing the Second Vatican Council Through Liturgy and Architecture* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1998), 30.

<sup>34</sup> Alan Gowans, *Styles and Types of North American Architecture: Social Types and Cultural Expression* (New York: HarperCollins, 1992), 255.

<sup>35</sup> Claire Ross, "The Saturn Club," National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form, 2005, Section 8, Page 3.

<sup>36</sup> Gowans, *Styles and Types of North American Architecture*, 221-223.

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Popularized at a national level by Cram, Collegiate Gothic remained in vogue across university campuses and church complexes until the Great Depression. The economic downturn of the 1930s largely halted new church construction and it was not until the end of World War II that churches again attempted to expand. However, when these churches attempted to build new buildings, they found traditional architectural styles like Collegiate Gothic required building materials that were too expensive for the congregation to use. The prohibitive cost of materials that defined the Neoclassical and Gothic Revival churches before 1945 led many churches to seek modern designs that incorporated less ornamentation and utilized cheaper materials like concrete.<sup>37</sup>

*The Post-War Building Boom*

The St. Rose of Lima Parish experienced a forty-year gap between the parish's founding and the construction of a standalone church due to the onset of the Great Depression and later World War II, when building materials and labor focused on war-time production. Many parishes and congregations across the country put off large-scale renovations and constructions for their churches during the Depression, but after World War II, there was a boom in construction for religious buildings.<sup>38</sup> Driven by repairs, as well as the growth of post-war baby boom families settling down and looking for religious centers, church construction totaled \$126 million in 1947, increasing to \$474 million in 1953, before ballooning to \$1 billion in 1960.<sup>39</sup>

By the mid-1960s, the boom in church construction began to slow, partly due to a satiated demand, but also because congregations began to move away from increasingly complex designs. An article in *The Christian Century* was titled, "Let's Stop Building Cathedrals," and *Christianity Today* noted that congregations were in danger of losing sight of the Gospel in favor of the "idolatry of wanting more and more buildings."<sup>40</sup> In the midst of the church building boom and accompanying tension related to the scale of new church building projects, the Second Vatican Council was convened. This council of the Catholic Church's highest leaders came together to address the future of the church and how Catholicism could adapt to meet the needs of the modern world and the modern congregation.

*Vatican II*

Vatican II was a major meeting of leaders of the Catholic Church that occurred between 1962-1965. During this three-year conference, church leaders discussed the relationship between the church and the modern world. The leaders who took part in Vatican II sought to bring people into closer connection with their faith. In addition to

<sup>37</sup> John Southard and Don Meserve, *Historic Context: Scottsdale Places of Worship: 1945-1973* (Scottsdale: 2010), 6.

<sup>38</sup> Lisa Mausolf, *Mid-20<sup>th</sup> Century Architecture in NH: 1945-1975* (Concord: NH Employment Security, 2012), 14.

<sup>39</sup> Jay M. Price, "When Traditional Could be Modern: Religious Buildings in Kansas after World War II," *Kansas Preservation* 26, no. 2 (2004): 5.

<sup>40</sup> Price, "When Traditional Could be Modern," 13.

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promoting a more active faith, another goal of Vatican II was to redesign Catholic churches to be more inviting, human oriented spaces. In pursuit of this, the council promoted a number of alterations, particularly to the interior of churches, in the hope of encouraging a more active relationship between the church and worshippers. These reforms altered church services and the architecture of many church buildings built after the conclusion of Vatican II in 1965.

Prior to Vatican II, parishioners sat in fixed pews facing the altar and tabernacle. The altar was only accessible from three sides and the priest conducted mass facing away from the laity. Further, mass was performed in Latin, rendering the parishioners silent observers rather than active participants in their faith.<sup>41</sup> Nevertheless, many parishioners loved the Latin mass and felt deeply connected to the traditional liturgy, reciting the prayers along with the priest. After Vatican II, mass was conducted in the vernacular rather than in Latin and the priest conducted mass facing the parishioners.<sup>42</sup> This impactful change diverted significance away from the altar and placed it on the worshippers, giving them a greater role during mass.

A greater emphasis on the interaction between the priest and laity lead to changes in seating arrangements in the church. Some churches abandoned pews in favor of chairs or benches, and many new churches were built with a rounded form to allow the priest to stand at the center of the church and speak to the laity as if they were theatergoers arrayed around him. Jenna Victoria Farrah argues that after Vatican II “the church building’s primary function is no longer to serve as the House of God, rather it proclaims its members are the People of God who use the building to accommodate their needs, in addition serving as a place for worship.”<sup>43</sup>

The experience of the individual churchgoer and comfort were emphasized in these new designs and many traditional church fixtures such as communion rails, altars, pews, confessionals, and tabernacles became targets for renovation or removal. The confessional chamber was one of the church features most impacted by Vatican II. Formerly, confession had occurred within a two-roomed chamber with a screen that allowed the priest and confessor to speak with anonymity.<sup>44</sup> After Vatican II, the confessor was allowed a choice between the traditional confessional chamber, or a face-to-face encounter with his/her priest. Farrah argues that “this may seem like a minor change, yet in reality it represents a fundamental change in attitude which allows the individual a choice in how to experience a sacrament instead of an imposed format.”<sup>45</sup> Doctrines emerging from Vatican II emphasized individuality during worship, and the church as a human space. These ideas promoted by the church after Vatican II resulted in major changes to churches and church architecture during the 1960s and

<sup>41</sup> Jenna Victoria Farrah, “The Implications of the Second Vatican Council on Historic American Catholic Architecture” (Masters Diss., University of Pennsylvania, 2009), 19-20.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid., 31.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid., 23.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid., 21.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid.

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beyond. St. Rose of Lima Church is a prime example of the changes to architecture and church design that occurred as a result of Vatican II.

*The Influence of Vatican II on The St. Rose of Lima Church*

Designed and constructed during Vatican II, but prior to the formal conclusion of the conference, St. Rose of Lima Church balances pre- and post-Vatican II design trends. The most distinct demonstrations of this balance is the dramatic New Formalist design that features a rolling thin-shell concrete barrel-vaulted roof supported by flat brick walls oriented in a classic cruciform plan.

There are several other details that demonstrate St. Rose of Lima's construction in the midst of a paradigm shift of Catholic church design. The church's ceiling was clearly influenced by ideas circulating during Vatican II. Rather than feature a vaulted dome or cavernous interior, the ceiling is lowered, creating a cozy, parishioner-oriented environment. Additionally, the church's altar is simpler than the altars of older churches and acts as a backdrop to the sermon, rather than the focal point of mass. In many older churches the altar was set against an elaborately carved backdrop called a reredos, a highly decorated piece of woodwork or stonemasonry.<sup>46</sup> A feature largely abandoned by church designers after Vatican II, the reredos is absent in the St. Rose of Lima Church. Notably, the communion rail at the front of the church, once a clear divide between the priest and laity, serves a more decorative role in the St. Rose of Lima Church. Changes to the altar space and church nave were implemented after Vatican II to bring church communities closer to God on an individual level. Importantly, the church confessionals offer worshipers the option of choosing left or right, face-to-face or confidential confessions, another marker of the changes the Catholic Church implemented after Vatican II.

Another example of the effect of Vatican II on church design principles are the icons scattered throughout the church. These icons, rendered in brass, represent some of the most common symbols of Christianity and are very minimalist. Compared to other Catholic Churches in Buffalo, the icons in the St. Rose of Lima church are restrained and simplified, following Father John Hillier's belief that after Vatican II, Catholic Church icons and art strove for noble beauty rather than extravagance, emphasizing simplicity over ornamentation.<sup>47</sup> The forty odd brass icons placed in St. Rose of Lima Church are abstract representations of Christian symbols and provided parishioners places of contemplation and reflection. The use of modernist architecture, minimalism in the icon depiction, and a more open altar space helps to mark St. Rose of Lima and many churches like it as buildings directly influenced by Vatican II.

<sup>46</sup> Farrah, "The Implications of the Second Vatican Council," 20.

<sup>47</sup> Rev. John G. Hillier, PhD., "Vatican II Never Sought Removal Of Statues, Images From Churches," *The Catholic Spirit*, <http://www.catholicspirit.com/vatican-ii-never-sought-removal-of-statues-images-from-churches/>.



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*New Formalism*

The contrast between the architectural styles of the school and the church, designed by Leroy H. Welch in 1965, could hardly be greater. Although the school and rectory embody the academic Collegiate Gothic style, the church is a distinct New Formalist design, with a multiple barrel-vault concrete roof, minimalist construction, and a tall brick and concrete tower. It is a highly intact example of a New Formalist church constructed with a thin-shell concrete roof structure.

Prior to World War II, many church designs were grounded in various Classical Revival styles, including the “Collegiate Gothic” and Late Gothic Revival designs of the rectory and school at St. Rose of Lima. Though architects like Frank Lloyd Wright (one of the leaders in the proto-Modern Prairie style) and Walter Gropius (founder of the Bauhaus School in Germany) were already influential in the architectural community, the establishment of the International Congress for Modern Architecture in 1928 in Switzerland signified the advent of the modern architectural movement around the world. After the Great Depression, however, the works of Frank Lloyd Wright, Eero Saarinen, Ludwig Mies van der Rohe, and Le Corbusier helped popularize modern designs in the United States.<sup>48</sup> Most works from this era emphasized the idea “form follows function,” a simplification of a quote by Louis Sullivan, combined with the Austrian architect Albert Loos’s essay titled, “Ornament and Crime,” which led to a rejection of ornamentation for more utilitarian designs influenced by industrial buildings like grain silos and water towers.<sup>49</sup>

The St. Rose of Lima Church is grounded in New Formalist design, a common style for public architecture during the mid-twentieth century. New Formalism emphasizes classical elements that are articulated in distinctly modern ways, often using advances in technology and manufacturing to achieve this. For instance, government buildings designed with New Formalist elements might have the massing of older Neoclassical institutional buildings, but the columns were constructed with concrete and would be thin, smooth, and merge uninterrupted into the arches that form the portico or roof. New Formalism emphasized this balance between historic precedents and massing with modern construction methods and styles, often featuring columns, smooth surfaces, lines and geometric shapes; often, roofs dominate the design.<sup>50</sup>

St. Rose of Lima church is an excellent local example of New Formalist design, blending modern and traditional building materials and design. At this time, it appears to be one of only a small number of Modern

<sup>48</sup> John Southard and Don Meserve, *Historic Context: Scottsdale Places of Worship: 1945-1973*, 5.

<sup>49</sup> Sarah Allaback, Ph.D., *Essays on Modern Architecture: For the National Historic Landmark Program* (Amherst Massachusetts: 2003), 74.

<sup>50</sup> Jennifer Minner, “Mid-Twentieth Century Olympia: A Context Statement on Local History and Modern Architecture, 1945-1975,” (Olympia: City of Olympia Heritage Commission, 2008), 72-73.

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designed places of worship identified in the City of Buffalo.<sup>51</sup> Here, traditional elements familiar to Roman Catholics (and many Christians in general) such as cruciform plan, apses, clerestory windows, and towers signify the building as a place of worship, but they are rendered in the clean, simplified, bold modern design of the mid-twentieth century. The modernity of the thin-shell multiple barrel-vaulted concrete roof and tower is balanced by a traditional cruciform plan, representative of its mid-1960s construction amidst the growing dissatisfaction with “modern” churches. The tower is an obvious nod to traditional Christian churches dating back centuries; however, at St. Rose of Lima, the tower is fashioned with a simple, bold, geometric design that emphasizes verticality and is terminated by a simple curved “spire.” The walls are brick, with large stained-glass windows like other churches, although the flat, smooth wall surfaces are devoid of the buttresses that adorn even other contemporary churches such as St. Margaret’s on Hertel Avenue (1956). St. Rose of Lima church, while distinctly Modern, balanced the thin-shell concrete roof and modern artwork throughout the building with traditional materials, spaces, and orientation, retaining large stained-glass openings, light brick, and a cruciform plan.

*Thin-Shell Concrete Construction*

The multiple barrel vault concrete roof of the church is representative of the growth in popularity of “thin shell” concrete construction in architectural design. A building’s form is generally considered “thin shell” if it is a “curved slab whose thickness is small compared with its other dimensions and compared with its principal radii of curvature.”<sup>52</sup> Domes, vaults, and arches are natural forms for thin shell designs since they rely entirely on compression strength.

Early experimentation with thin shell and barrel-vaulted shells began in Europe immediately after World War I. The barrel-vaulted thin shell roof has its origins in 1923 with the experiments of Franz Dischinger, a German engineer who worked with other leading engineers in Germany to develop and hone reinforced concrete thin-shell domes. After attempts to design a dome on a nearly square plan, Dischinger turned his thinking to designing a more simple geometric form, shells of a single curvature or a barrel shell. Based on his initial calculations, the Zeiss Company hired German engineers Dyckerhoff and Widmann to design a barrel vaulted shell for its factory buildings in Jena, Germany in 1924, developing the “Zeiss Dywidag System.” By 1926, Dyckerhoff and Widmann built the first commercially viable barrel shell, called the Dywidag-Halle, for the Gesolei Fair in Dusseldorf. However, despite early experiments and prototypes developed in the 1920s in Germany and in France, the barrel shell failed to catch on, especially in America.<sup>53</sup>

<sup>51</sup> The Temple Beth Zion synagogue, located at 805 Delaware Avenue, is also an unusual example of a New Formalist place of worship in the City of Buffalo, however that building with its three-dimensional sculptural design is dramatically different than St. Rose.

<sup>52</sup> Kathleen LaFrank, “Onondaga County War Memorial,” National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form, Syracuse, 1988, Section 8, Page 6.

<sup>53</sup> David P. Billington, *Thin Shell Concrete Structures*, 2nd ed. (New York: McGraw Hill Book Company, 1982), 10-14.

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It was not until 1930s that a young Austrian engineer named Anton Tedesko brought the German technology to the United States. Tedesko, a 1926 graduate of the Institute of Technology of Vienna, spent several years in the United States before working with Dyckerhoff and Widmann in 1930 during this era of early experimentation and development. Because of his connections with the US, Tedesko was sent by the firm to America in early 1932 to expand its business. There, he connected with a former Vienna colleague, John E. Kalinka, who was working for the Roberts and Schaefer Company in Chicago. The Roberts and Schaefer Company was itself experienced with concrete structures, primarily used for coal handling and in bridge construction. Through this collaboration, the first American brochure advertising thin shells appeared in January 1932, announcing the Roberts and Schaefer Company as the agent for the patented "Z-D system" and showing many German examples. Between 1932 and 1934, Tedesko (still an employee of Dyckerhoff and Widmann) worked closely in Chicago with the Roberts and Schaefer Company to promote the Z-D system. The first example of this system was the Hayden Planetarium, built in New York City in 1934, where the thin shell concrete proved to be more cost efficient for the construction of the large dome than the Guastavino tile alternative. However, Tedesko insisted that the dome be built using more traditional false-work than the Z-D system. The second example built in the U.S. was a barrel shell for the Brook Hill Farm dairy building at the Century of Progress World's Fair in 1933 in Chicago and featured five multiple barrel vaults spanning a 36-foot by 70-foot space.<sup>54</sup>

Thin shell concrete architecture was still a relatively unknown building method in the early 1930s, with almost no writings about it in American technical or architectural journals. The first article to have any impact on the American engineering world was one attributed to Tedesko in 1931 but published anonymously in 1932. This article probably spurred the Brook Hill Farm project and appears to have been the earliest introduction to thin shell concrete architecture for American engineers and designers.<sup>55</sup>

Despite the growing awareness of the new engineering method, thin shell concrete architecture struggled to gain wide use during the 1930s because of the general slowdown of construction during the Great Depression. Despite this, the 1936 construction of the Hershey Company's new ice hockey arena was the first major thin shell in the country. With a 232-foot span, 340-foot long roof, the Tedesko-designed Hershey ice hockey rink was the largest thin shell concrete structure built on the continent. The shell was erected as five separate units, with expansion joints between each segment. When it opened on December 19, 1936, it proved to be a tremendous success for spectators and the public, and it encouraged the dissemination of the construction method to engineers. The thin shell design of the Hershey ice hockey arena, with its vast size, extreme thinness, and relatively quick construction served as the model for many other arenas and hangar buildings designed by Roberts and Schaefer into the mid-twentieth century. As historian and engineer Daniel P. Billington notes,

<sup>54</sup> Billington, 15-16.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid, 16.

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“Hershey was the major turning point of thin shells in North America,” and because of its appeal and success, a large number of thin shell vaults were constructed up through World War II.<sup>56</sup>

Following the breakthrough of the thin shell concrete structural system at the Hershey arena, this method proved to be popular for war-time construction projects during World War II. During this era, the focus from recreational and entertainment use for thin shell shifted, and the structural system lent itself to use for military warehouses, hangars, and production facilities. Kalinka stressed the military applications of the Z-D system in an article that emphasized the resiliency of the thin shell concrete construction, showing a dramatic photo of a bombed thin shell roof church in Finland where the shell remained standing despite a gaping hole where a bomb had crashed through the building. In late 1940, the U.S. Army Quartermaster Corps took bids for a new proposed warehouse in Columbus, Ohio, receiving proposals of three structural systems: a steel and wood design, a steel design, and a thin shell concrete design. The concrete shell proposal was the least expensive and was subsequently built by Roberts and Schaefer in 1941. The design included three buildings, each 182-foot-wide by 1562-foot-long, covered by four barrel vaults, each about 45-foot-wide. Tedesko designed a series of transverse diaphragms to support the vaults, exposed on the roof as heavy frames. These frames were a visually dominant feature of the design and complicated the construction of roofing and flashing.<sup>57</sup>

Tedesko’s work at the Columbus warehouse proved to be important for the design of the multiple barrel-vaulted roof of St. Rose of Lima. Dissatisfied with the roof solution and the heavy frames, in 1950 he set about directing new tests on the property of the Roberts and Schaefer Company. Here, Tedesko experimented with large-scale concrete models of barrel-vaulted shells where the shell itself was thickened into rib bands over the columns to simplify the line of the vault, making construction easier, as well as making the final product more visually appealing. Through these experiments, Tedesko and his colleagues concluded that ribless barrel vaulted structures could safely and efficiently be constructed. This led to the construction of the first cast-in-place ribless shell roof project at the U.S. Air Force Olmsted base near Middletown, Pennsylvania, in the mid-1950s.<sup>58</sup>

After the war’s end, ribless thin shell concrete structural systems became more widely used in the United States. While Roberts and Schaefer had dominated the construction market for thin shell designs since the 1930s, new developments and newly formed companies began to emerge that specialized in this type of construction, providing the first real competition in the American market. The Ammann and Whitney company was founded in New York City as a rival to Roberts and Schaefer, with its first thin shell structures appearing in 1948. Also after the war, the American Society of Civil Engineers formed a subcommittee to specifically study thin shell concrete. Chaired by Charles S. Whitney of Ammann and Whitney, the committee produced a lengthy manual

<sup>56</sup> Ibid, 17-18.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid, 18.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid, 19.

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that played a significant role in disseminating thin shell structures to a wider audience. The document provided a simplified presentation of the concept, with easy to understand tables providing the engineering calculations, full theoretical derivations, and a comprehensive discussion on the behavior of the barrel-vaulted shell. This manual is credited by engineering historians for opening up thin shell construction to a wider network of engineers, not just those with long experience. Building on the successful track record of thin shell works by Roberts and Schaefer, this manual provided designers a relatively easy method for calculating stresses.<sup>59</sup>

In the mid-twentieth century, the Ammann and Whitney company emerged as a leader in popularizing reinforced concrete thin shell technology. In 1948, they built two hangars for American Airlines in Chicago, and a TWA hangar, also in Chicago, was designed by the firm in 1951. Beyond its work with airplane hangars, the firm was the consulting engineer for the MIT Auditorium in Cambridge, Massachusetts, designed by Eero Saarinen in 1950, as well as for the structural design of the Assembly Hall at the University of Illinois at Urbana in 1962. This latter project was for a folded-plate concrete dome designed by architects Harrison and Abramovitz. Working again with Harrison and Abramovitz, Ammann and Whitney designed the inverted concrete shell for the Albany Mall Meeting Center in Albany, New York (also known as “The Egg”), which was built between 1966 and 1978.<sup>60</sup>

These developments after the end of World War II led to the widespread popularity of thin shell construction across the U.S in the 1950s and 1960s. At that point, the thin shell structures could be built relatively easily and were cost effective. Aesthetically, the simple, geometric forms rendered in smooth concrete lent themselves well to the emerging Modern architectural trends of the mid-twentieth century, which often expressed structural and construction systems as design elements. Architects and designers, including Eero Saarinen and Harrison and Abramovitz, transformed the thin shell technology from its early and more utilitarian purposes into a prominent design feature in many public spaces. As computer technology has improved, allowing engineers to better and more easily calculate stresses, thin shell structures have increasingly become more complex in their shapes and forms. Perhaps the best known thin shell building in the world is the Sydney Opera House in Australia, designed by Jørn Utzon with Ove Arup and Partners as structural engineers and built between 1959 and 1973.

The multiple barrel vault concrete roof at St. Rose of Lima demonstrates thin shell concrete’s potential to blend a key structural component to create a pleasing aesthetic in something structural, as well as following New Formalist principles using arches, smooth surfaces, and a prominent roof design. The thin shell vaulting spans the entire width of the building and allows for a clear open interior, with no structural columns interrupting sightlines in the interior. Further, this design allows a great deal of light into St. Rose of Lima church through

<sup>59</sup> Ibid, 20-21.

<sup>60</sup> Michele G. Melaragno, *An Introduction to Shell Structures: The Art and Science of Vaulting* (New York, NY: Van Nostrand Reinhold, 1991), 193.

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the clerestory formed by the ends of the barrel vaults. Lastly, the tower is capped with a thin concrete cap, giving it an oval shape. The shape of this tower is very similar to the towers of Le Corbusier's Notre Dame du Haut, one of the most significant Modernist churches ever built and a major inspiration for other Modernist church architects.

**Architects and Craftsmen associated with the St. Rose of Lima Parish Buildings.**

*Bley and Lyman—School, Rectory, and Garage*

The diocese hired the locally prominent firm of Bley and Lyman to design the first buildings of the complex. Composed of Lawrence Bley and Duane Lyman, the firm designed many buildings and complexes around Buffalo.

Lawrence Bley was born in 1884 in Hamburg, NY, a community to the south of Buffalo. After graduating from Hamburg High School, he began working in the offices of Lansing & Beierl as a draftsman between 1903 and 1904. Although Bley had received no formal architectural training prior to joining the firm, Lansing made him a partner with the firm after Max Beierl's death in 1910.<sup>61</sup>

Duane Lyman was born in Lockport, New York, in 1886 and as a child he moved to Buffalo, where he attended Lafayette High School.<sup>62</sup> In 1908, he received a degree in Architecture and Mechanical Engineering from the Sheffield Scientific School of Yale University. After graduating, he traveled to Europe and studied the architecture of England, France, Italy, and Switzerland, which he expressed in historical references throughout his career.<sup>63</sup> While he was known for proficiency in historical styles such as Neoclassical and Tudor Revival, his portfolio also includes Art Deco, Art Moderne, Prairie, International, and Post Modern styles.<sup>64</sup>

Lyman became a partner with the Lansing and Bley architectural firm in 1913, forming Lansing, Bley and Lyman.<sup>65</sup> The firm's work in Buffalo included the Buffalo Tennis and Squash Club [NR 2008], the Notre Dame de Lourdes School, and the Delaware Court Building. In 1919, Lansing retired, and the partnership continued as Bley and Lyman. The firm designed the Tudor style Saturn Club [NR 2005], 800 West Ferry, and the Buffalo Federal Court House.

<sup>61</sup> Jennifer Walkowski and Daniel McEneny, "Lafayette Avenue Presbyterian Church," National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form, Buffalo, 2008, Section 8, Page 11.

<sup>62</sup> Nancy L. Todd, "Connecticut Street Armory," National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form, Buffalo, 1993, Section 8, Page 2.

<sup>63</sup> Claire L. Ross, "Edwin M. and Emily S. Johnston House," National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form, 1997, Section 8, Page 5; Claire Ross, "The Saturn Club," Section 8, Page 2.

<sup>64</sup> Frank Kowsky and Martin Wachadlo, "Twentieth Century Club," National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form, Buffalo, 2010, Section 8, Page 9.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid., Section 8, Page 6.

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In 1939, after Bley's death, Lyman established Duane Lyman and Associates and continued to work extensively in Western New York. His company designed such structures as the Art Deco style Christ the King Chapel at Canisius College, the Georgian Revival Williamsville High School, and consulted with Minoru Yamasaki on the 1966 construction of the tall Modernist skyscraper at One M&T Plaza. Though Lyman primarily focused within the Buffalo Region, he worked elsewhere in New York designing the Prairie style house at 8 Berkley Drive in Lockport, New York, the Curtis Aeroplane Company Office and Laboratory in Garden City, Long Island, and the Yale University Armory in New Haven, Connecticut.<sup>66</sup>

*George Kempf's Sons*

George Kempf was a local mason operating in the Buffalo area during the end of the nineteenth century. By 1903, he was operating his contracting company out of his family home at the corner of Locust and Virginia Streets in the Fruit Belt neighborhood with his sons Nicholas and Frank. In 1910, the two sons took over the company renaming it "George Kempf's Sons," with Nicholas serving as president and Frank as secretary, and moving the business to his home at 389 Humboldt Parkway by 1925.<sup>67</sup> In addition to constructing the St. Rose of Lima school and rectory in 1926, the firm won the contract to build a boiler house for the Phoenix Brewery and Bottling Works on Washington Street in 1911 (no longer extant), as well as a two-story brick slaughterhouse on Newell Street (just south of train junction near the site of the Central Terminal) in 1922.<sup>68</sup> In 1930, Nicholas was operating the company with his own son Raymond, and the company was renamed "Kempf Sons Inc.," before renaming it Kempf & Sons in 1940.

*Albert A Rumschik*

In 1956, St. Rose of Lima parish hired Albert A. Rumschik to design its new convent. Rumschik was born in Buffalo on July 29, 1895, and began working as a draftsman in the office of Colson & Hudson from 1911-1914, and then the landscape architecture firm of Townsend-Fleming until 1916, before joining Bley and Lyman in 1918. He attended the Beaux Arts Institute of Design in New York City from 1924 to 1926, before finishing with a degree in the History of Architecture from the University of Buffalo in 1926. He continued as a designer and associate at Bley and Lyman until 1932. He was the architect of record along with Clayton Frye and Melvin King on the "Spirit of Light" statue that adorns the Art Deco masterpiece Niagara-Hudson Building in Syracuse, NY.<sup>69</sup> After the completion of the Niagara Hudson, Rumschik established his own firm out of 410 Parker Avenue, in Buffalo NY, before moving to 249 Linwood Avenue by 1956.<sup>70</sup> In 1951 he designed the Colonial Revival St. John the Baptist Church and School in Tonawanda, and from 1955-1958 worked on the

<sup>66</sup> Ibid., Section 8, Page 9.<sup>67</sup> *The Buffalo Directory: 1903* (Buffalo: The Courier Company, 1903), 1852; *The Buffalo Directory: 1910* (Buffalo: Courier Company, 1910), 695; *The Buffalo Directory: 1925* (Buffalo: J.T. Clement, 1925), 706.<sup>68</sup> "New Construction and Extensions," *Industrial World* 45, no. 1, January 9, 1911: 58. Accessed 6/10/15 via books.google.com.<sup>69</sup> Thomas C. Jeter, ed., *Twentieth-Century Building Materials: History and Conservation* (Los Angeles: Getty Publications, 2014), Plate 5.<sup>70</sup> George S. Koyl, Ed., *American Architects Directory* (New York: R.R. Bowker LLC & American Institute of Architects, 1955), 477.

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zoning board for the City of Buffalo.<sup>71</sup> Other extant designs include an addition to the former St. Vincent de Paul building at 38 East Huron Street (1948), as well the Bowl-o-Drome (1945) at the corner of Kensington and Fillmore Avenues.

*Leroy H. Welch—Church*

In 1964, the parish engaged Leroy H. Welch to complete designs for its new church. Welch was born in Eden in 1917 and attended Hutchinson Central Technical School in Buffalo before getting his architecture degree from the Pratt Institute in 1941. Welch served in World War II as an officer for the Navy's 46<sup>th</sup> Battalion of Civil Engineers, and as a part of these "Seabees" helped construct forward bases in the Solomon Islands in 1943.<sup>72</sup> After the war, he was a partner in the firm of Pauly, Houck and Welch at 230-250 Delaware Avenue. By 1964, he was working on his own from his home in Williamsville, with another office in Tonawanda.

Over the course of his career, he designed many buildings for religious organizations. While at Pauly, Houck, and Welch, he helped design two of Canisius College's dormitory buildings in 1957 and, as a result, the college selected him to design the Koessler Gymnasium, another dormitory and dining hall in 1967, and the Churchill Tower in 1971. The Churchill Tower was the most recognizable of his designs and was lauded in the *Buffalo Evening News*, as columnist Paul Price wrote, "this bold architectural structure, the tower has become a prime instrument in bridging the communication gap between students and faculty," noting the round layouts of each floor, and the fact that all offices were oriented around the outer walls to provide optimal light and views.<sup>73</sup>

Welch also designed several other Catholic church buildings, St. Gregory the Great in Williamsville, NY, and St. Joseph's in Batavia. Though St. Gregory the Great was constructed just two years later, the design could not be more different than Welch's North Buffalo church. While St. Rose retains the cruciform layout and mimics traditional religious architecture with the inclusion of a tower (falling somewhere between a bell tower and a more independent campanile found in other Buffalo church designs, such as the 1949 St. Thomas Aquinas Church in South Buffalo), St. Gregory has a tall center polygonal "hourglass" portion containing the nave and chancel, with lower trapezoidal wings that contain the transepts.

St. Gregory does share St. Rose's façade treatment, however, containing a large decorative window on the south elevation (though the main entrances face large parking lots rather than manicured lawns). St. Joseph's School also breaks with tradition, with the chapel of the complex being a large rectangular brick box with a flat roof, with first-floor covered entries with mansard roofs. The most distinctive features of the building are the full height decorative metal ribbon windows that look almost like inverted pilasters, capped with flat stone panels,

<sup>71</sup> Ibid.

<sup>72</sup> 46th Naval Construction Battalion, *The Anxiety of the 46<sup>th</sup> U.S. Naval Construction Battalion: 18 November 1942-1 May 1945* (Digitized by U.S. Navy Seabee Museum).

<sup>73</sup> Paul Price, *Buffalo Evening News*, "Churchill Tower is Dedicated," October 13, 1971, 6.



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that serve as simplistic shields atop the arrangement. The windows emphasize the flat vertical walls in a similar fashion to the concrete ribbons of St. Rose of Lima, but St. Joseph's shares more in common with the Koessler Gymnasium (in particular the boxy shape, flat roof, and ribbon windows) than with Welch's North Buffalo church design.

*Picone Construction*

Started in 1931 by Charles Picone, Picone Construction operated out of a small storefront at 414 West Ferry Street for much of the mid-twentieth century. In addition to constructing the St. Rose of Lima church, the firm constructed the three-story brick International style addition for Public School 8 at the corner of Masten and Utica Streets in 1957, and was contracted by the State to build a two-story infirmary at the campus for Buffalo State College in 1972.<sup>74</sup> The firm continues to operate today and actually performed restoration work on the Welch-designed St. Gregory the Great Church in Williamsville, NY.

**Summary**

St. Rose of Lima Roman Catholic Church Complex in Buffalo has served the local community for nearly 90 years. It is locally significant for the highly intact examples of Collegiate Gothic and New Formalist style buildings that are distinctly different from similar parish campuses around the city. The construction of the buildings reflect the growth of the neighborhood at two district periods (1920s and 1960s) and reflect the priorities of the parish in both periods, emphasizing education before the construction of a premier place of worship. The complex retains strong integrity pertaining to Criterion C from its inception in 1926 through the construction of the 1965 church.

<sup>74</sup> "School Board Appoints Two; Awards Contract," *Buffalo Courier-Express*, August 25, 1960, 26; "Local Firm Given Pact," *Buffalo Courier-Express*, December 3, 1970, 48.

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Continuation Sheet

St. Rose of Lima Roman Catholic Church Complex

Name of Property

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St. Rose of Lima Roman Catholic Church Complex

Name of Property

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National Park Service

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Continuation Sheet

St. Rose of Lima Roman Catholic Church Complex

Name of Property

Erie County, New York

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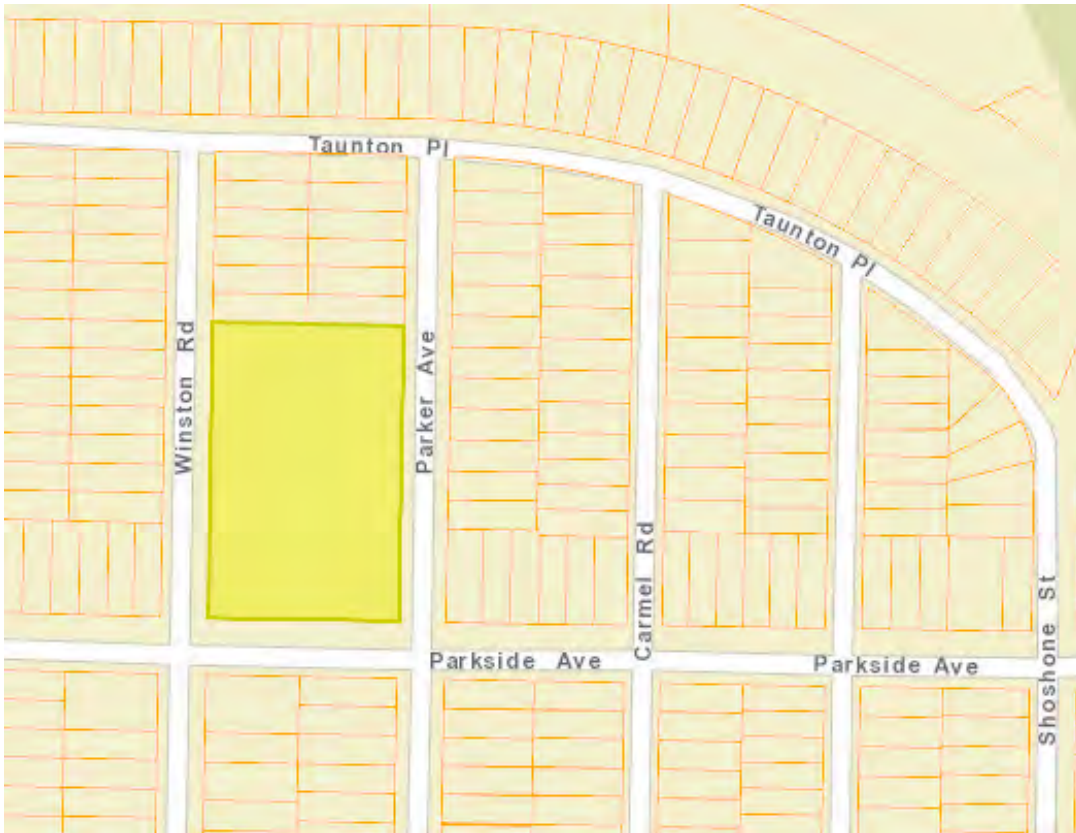
Section 10 Page 1

Verbal Boundary Description

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

Boundary Justification

The boundary encompasses all land historically and currently associated with St. Rose of Lima Roman Catholic Church Complex.





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National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

St. Rose of Lima Roman Catholic Church Complex

Name of Property

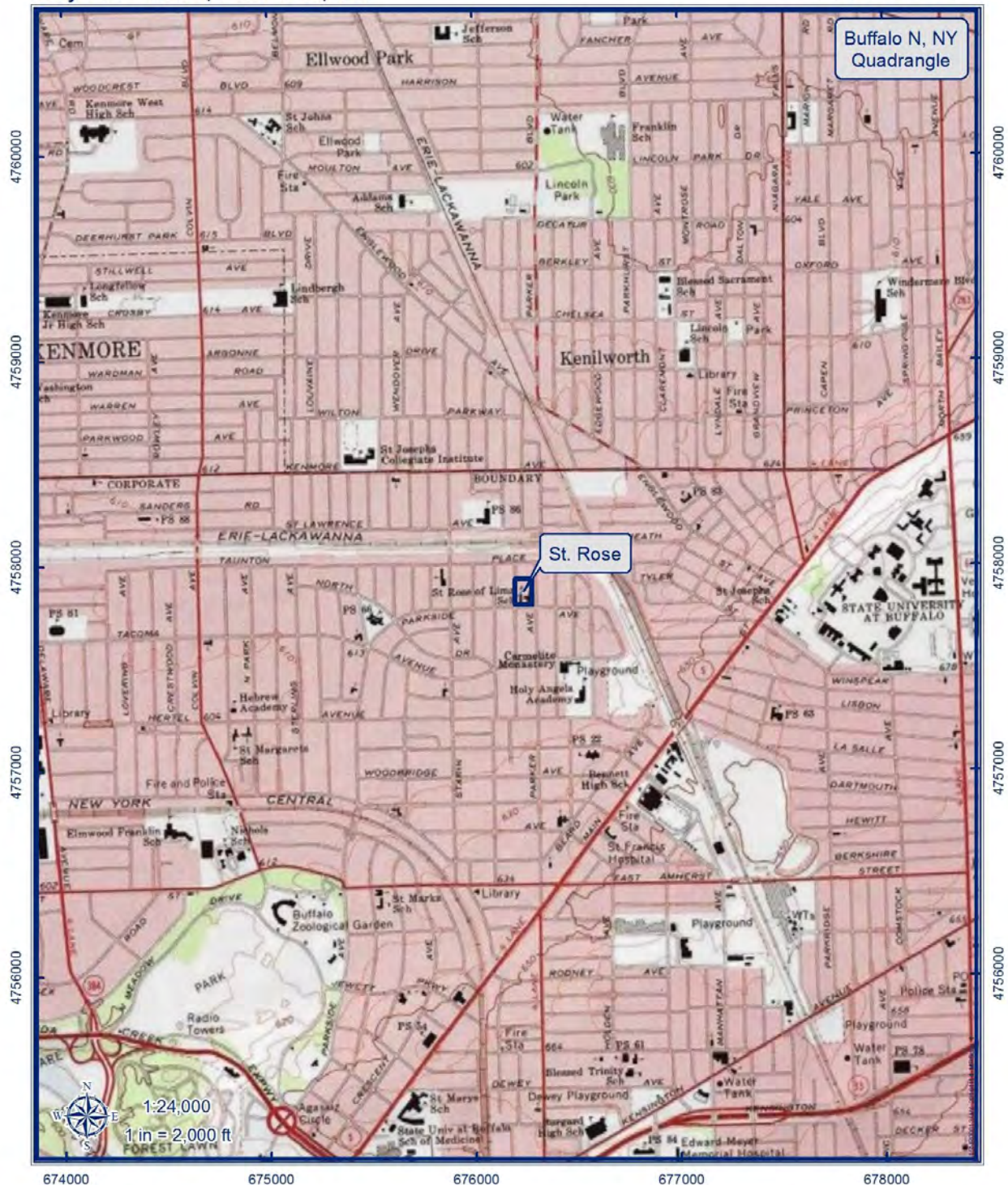
Erie County, New York

County and State

Section 10 Page 2

St. Rose of Lima Roman Catholic Church Complex  
City of Buffalo, Erie Co., NY

500 Parker Avenue  
Buffalo, NY 14216



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

0 5501,100 2,200 Feet



St. Rose



NEW YORK STATE OF OPPORTUNITY  
Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation



United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

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Continuation Sheet

St. Rose of Lima Roman Catholic Church Complex

Name of Property

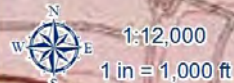
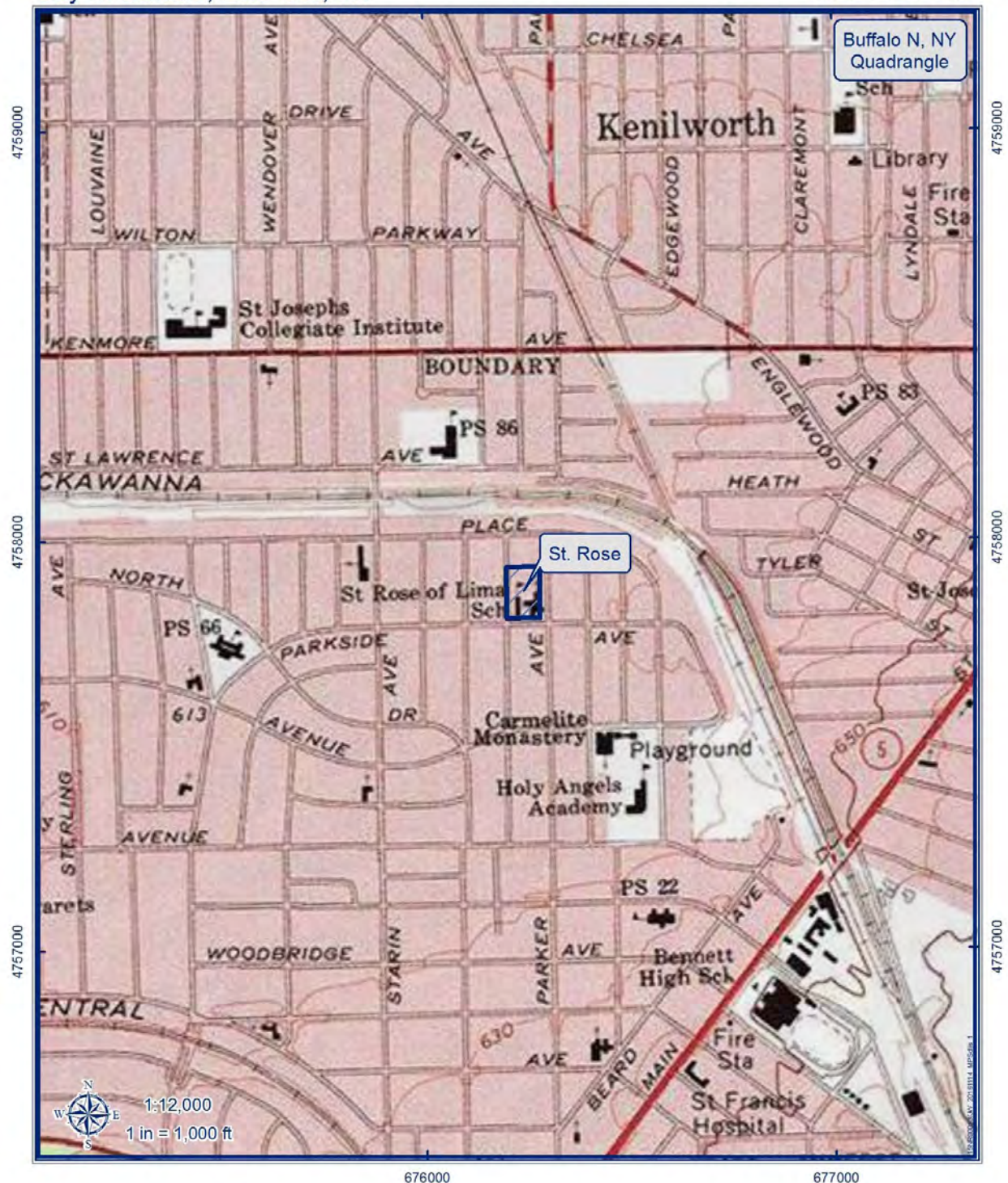
Erie County, New York

County and State

Section 10 Page 3

St. Rose of Lima Roman Catholic Church Complex  
City of Buffalo, Erie Co., NY

500 Parker Avenue  
Buffalo, NY 14216



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



Parks, Recreation  
and Historic Preservation



United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

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Continuation Sheet

Section 10 Page 4

**St. Rose of Lima Roman Catholic Church Complex**

Name of Property

**Erie County, New York**

County and State

St. Rose of Lima Roman Catholic Church Complex  
City of Buffalo, Erie Co., NY

500 Parker Avenue  
Buffalo, NY 14216



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



St. Rose



Parks, Recreation  
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United States Department of the Interior  
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**St. Rose of Lima Roman Catholic Church Complex**

Name of Property

Erie County, New York

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Section 10 Page 5

St. Rose of Lima Roman Catholic Church Complex  
City of Buffalo, Erie Co., NY

500 Parker Avenue  
Buffalo, NY 14216



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



St. Rose



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and Historic Preservation



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St. Rose of Lima Roman Catholic Church Complex

Name of Property

Erie County, New York

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Photo Log:

Name of Property: St. Rose of Lima RC Church Complex  
City or Vicinity: Buffalo  
County: Erie  
State: NY  
Name of Photographer: Derek King  
Date of Photographs: August-December 2016  
Number of Photographs: 11

NY\_Erie County\_ St. Rose of Lima RC Church Complex\_0001  
West elevation of church, camera facing NE

NY\_Erie County\_ St. Rose of Lima RC Church Complex\_0002  
Southwest corner of complex, showing school and church, camera facing NE

NY\_Erie County\_ St. Rose of Lima RC Church Complex\_0003  
Southeast corner of complex, showing church and school, camera facing NW

NY\_Erie County\_ St. Rose of Lima RC Church Complex\_0004  
Northeast corner of complex showing rectory, camera facing SW

NY\_Erie County\_ St. Rose of Lima RC Church Complex\_0005  
Northwest corner of complex, showing convent, camera facing NW.

NY\_Erie County\_ St. Rose of Lima RC Church Complex\_0006  
Interior of church, camera facing N

NY\_Erie County\_ St. Rose of Lima RC Church Complex\_0007  
Interior of church showing narthex, choir loft, organ, and furnishings, camera facing S

NY\_Erie County\_ St. Rose of Lima RC Church Complex\_0008  
Interior of rectory showing entry, camera facing E

NY\_Erie County\_ St. Rose of Lima RC Church Complex\_0009  
Interior of rectory main staircase and side entry, camera facing E

NY\_Erie County\_ St. Rose of Lima RC Church Complex\_0010  
Interior of school, ground floor auditorium, camera facing N

NY\_Erie County\_ St. Rose of Lima RC Church Complex\_0011  
Interior of school showing standard classroom, camera facing NE

United States Department of the Interior  
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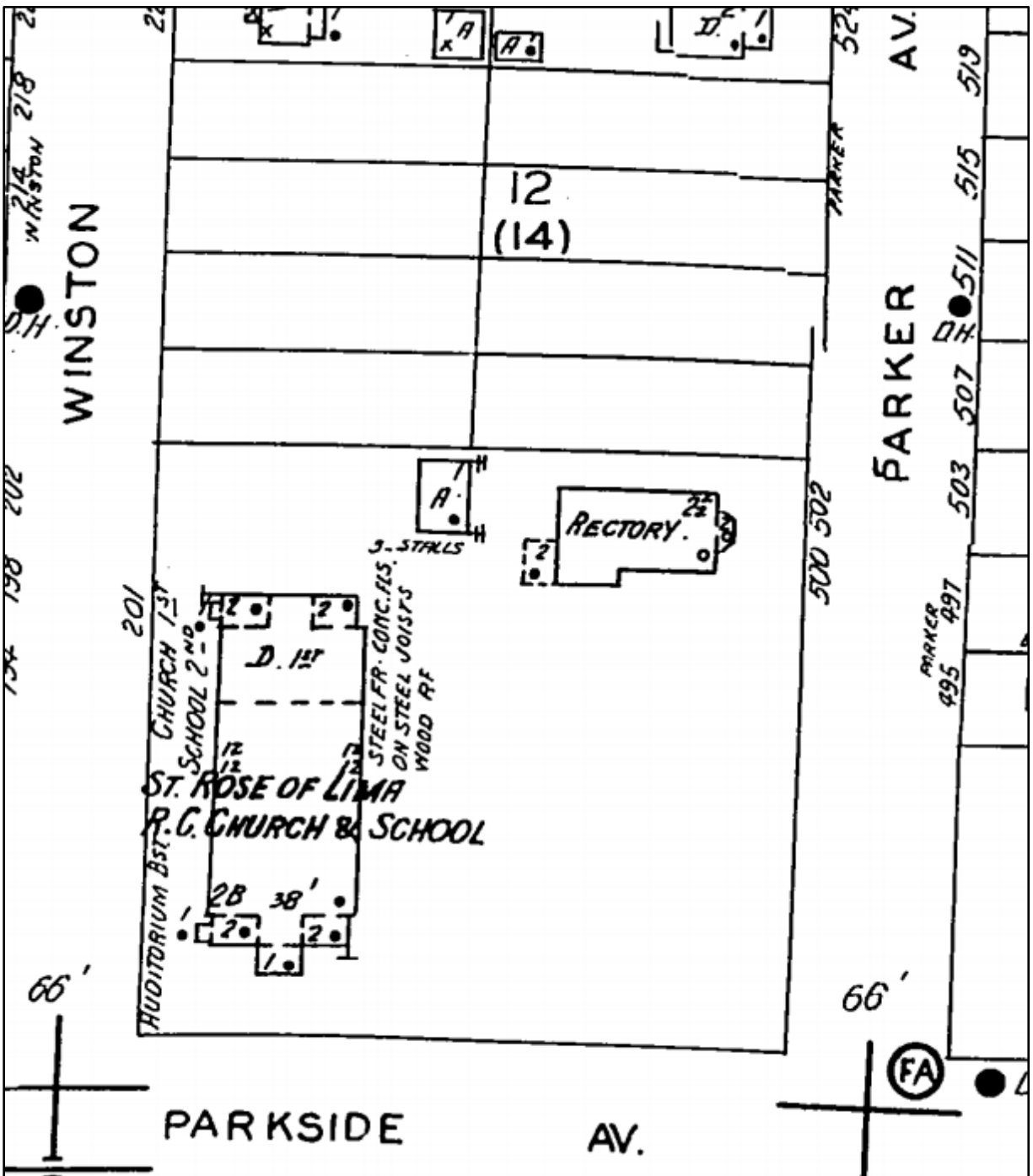
St. Rose of Lima Roman Catholic Church Complex

Name of Property

Erie County, New York

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Detail, Sanborn Map vol 9, sheet 977 (1935-updated to 1950)

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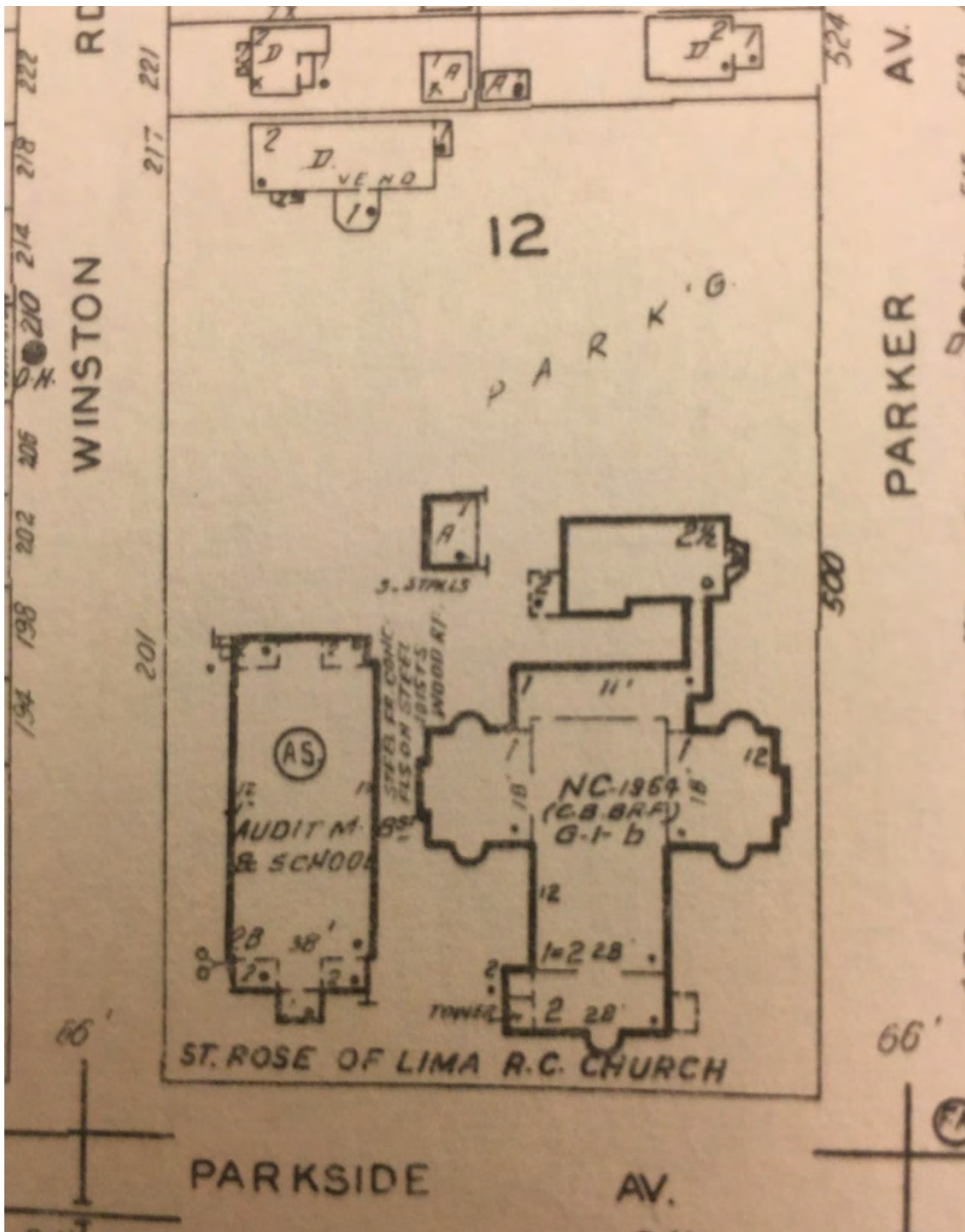
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St. Rose of Lima Roman Catholic Church Complex

Name of Property

Erie County, New York

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Detail, Sanborn Map (1963 – Updated to 1975)









*St. Rose of Lima*  
Parish founded 1823  
School founded 1824  
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Confessions



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:  Date of Pending List:  Date of 16th Day:  Date of 45th Day:  Date of Weekly List:

Reference number:

Nominator:

Reason For Review:

- |                                       |  |   |
|---------------------------------------|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Appeal       | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PDIL | <input type="checkbox"/> Text/Data Issue    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> SHPO Request | <input type="checkbox"/> Landscape       | <input type="checkbox"/> Photo              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Waiver       | <input type="checkbox"/> National        | <input type="checkbox"/> Map/Boundary       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Resubmission | <input type="checkbox"/> Mobile Resource | <input type="checkbox"/> Period             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other        | <input type="checkbox"/> TCP             | <input type="checkbox"/> Less than 50 years |
|                                       | <input type="checkbox"/> CLG             |   |

Accept  Return  Reject  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.



**Parks, Recreation  
and Historic Preservation**

ANDREW M. CUOMO  
Governor

ROSE HARVEY  
Commissioner



23 December 2016

Alexis Abernathy  
National Park Service  
National Register of Historic Places  
1201 Eye St. NW, 8<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Washington, D.C. 20005

Re: National Register Nomination

Dear Ms. Abernathy:

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

Offerman Building, Kings County  
St. Rose of Lima Roman Catholic Church Complex, Erie County  
St. Thomas Aquinas Roman Catholic Church Complex, Erie County  
Mentholatum Company Building, Erie County  
Silver Lake Cemetery, Richmond 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