

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

For NPS use only

received APR 28 1987

date entered MAY 29 1987

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

1. Name

historic St. Francis of Assisi Complex

and or common St. Francis of Assisi School and Rectory

2. Location

street & number 1960 Bardstown Road na not for publication

city, town Louisville na vicinity of

state Kentucky code 021 county Jefferson code 111

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
na district	na public	xx occupied	na agriculture	na museum
xx building(s)	X private	na unoccupied	na commercial	na park
na structure	na both	na work in progress	xx educational	na private residence
na site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	na entertainment	xx religious
na object	na in process	na yes: restricted	na government	na scientific
	na being considered	xx yes: unrestricted	na industrial	na transportation
		na no	na military	na other:

4. Owner of Property

name Archdiocese of Louisville

street & number 212 E. College Street

city, town Louisville na vicinity of state Kentucky

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Jefferson County Courthouse

street & number 6th and Jefferson Streets

city, town Louisville state Kentucky

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

Ky Historic Resources Inventory
title (JFEH 3032) has this property been determined eligible? ___ yes ___ X no

date November 1984 ___ federal ___ X state ___ county ___ local

depository for survey records Kentucky Heritage Council

city, town Frankfort state Kentucky

7. Description

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

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The St. Francis of Assisi Complex includes a school and rectory. Areas within the school building include a convent wing and a wing that was temporarily used as a church. The school building and its two wings form an incomplete quadrangle with a central courtyard (see site map). Standing apart and to the southeast is the rectory building. These Spanish Mission style buildings were constructed in 1926 and 1928 to serve ecclesiastical functions. Together these church-related buildings make positive architectural contributions to the streetscape of the Highlands neighborhood (Photos 1, 2, 3, and 4).

There are a number of architecturally and historically significant structures in close proximity to the St. Francis of Assisi Complex. The Highlands National Register District (National Register: February 1983) is the largest district in Louisville and also one of the most diverse. Architectural styles in this area reflect residential and commercial building trends from the 1870s to the 1940s. Virtually every style of architecture within that time frame is represented in the district. The St. Francis of Assisi Complex lies just south of the district proper. In addition, a number of individual buildings nearby have been recognized for their architectural excellence. The Howard-Gettys House, dating from circa 1830 (National Register: February, 1978), is located less than a mile away as is Rosehill, an Italianate style building that dates from circa 1852 (National Register: December, 1980).

Bardstown Road is the major transportation artery and commercial core of the Highlands neighborhood (see USGS Map; Louisville East Quadrangle). Branching from Bardstown Road are secondary streets that are largely residential in character (Photo #5). The St. Francis of Assisi Complex is located on a trapezoidal lot bound by Alfresco Place, Rutherford Avenue, and Bardstown Road (see site map). Characterized by a mixture of both residential and commercial uses this area contains a high concentration of quality architecture.

The classroom area of St. Francis of Assisi School is symmetrical (Photo 1). The low, broad massing of this L-shaped, two-story section rests upon a raised basement. Regularly spaced, arched windows flank the prominently emphasized corner entrance. Its Spanish tile roof is supported by deep, bracketed eaves. Spanish tile is used again to top the pyramidal roofs of the two towers at the entrance.

The primary entrance into the classroom area is divided into three parts consisting of a two-story central bay flanked by three story bell towers. Starting in the center, the entrance is marked by two arches, arranged side by side, that are separated by a single, stylized, Corinthian column. They sit within an arched surround. Protecting the entry is a cantilevered tile visor roof supported by deep brackets. The second floor wall surface is recessed and has a grouping of three arched windows with stone surrounds and voussoirs.

8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

Specific dates 1926-1928 **Builder/Architect** Erhart, Fred (Rectory); School attributed to Erhart.

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The significance of the St. Francis of Assisi Complex lies in its architecture (Photos 1 through 4). It is an outstanding example of the Spanish Mission style and one of very few of this type constructed in the Louisville area. The architect, Fred T. Erhart, who designed the rectory and in all probability designed the school building as well, was one of the most prolific architects of large scale ecclesiastic buildings in Louisville.

The St. Francis of Assisi parish was organized in 1885 to accommodate the large number of German Catholic farmers living in the Highlands. By the 1920s the congregation had grown and new church buildings were needed to accommodate the increase. The school with its convent and former church/now auditorium wing were built as a contiguous unit in 1926. The rectory was completed two years later, in 1928.

Fred T. Erhart (1870-1951) designed the rectory and, although no record of it exists, probably designed the school as well. He was a prolific Louisville architect best known for his church designs. Erhart's execution of the cloister at Gethsemani Abbey was in the Gothic Revival style, but he was more widely recognized for his designs of Spanish influence. St. Therese Roman Catholic Church and Rectory were constructed in the Spanish Baroque style (National Register: July, 1975) and St. Elizabeth's Roman Catholic Church was designed in the Classical Revival style with Spanish Baroque influences (National Register: May, 1982). In addition, the design of a two-story, cast iron facade applied to an earlier commercial storefront in the 300 block of West Market Street (demolished) is attributed to Erhart.

The Spanish Mission style of architecture, which reached its greatest popularity in California in the 1880s, eventually spread eastward. A few scattered examples were built in Louisville in the early part of the twentieth century. The earliest extant example of the Mission style is the Whiteside Bakery designed by Arthur Loomis and completed in 1908 (National Register: April, 1979). Firehouse #13, an excellent example of a Spanish Renaissance style building conceived for a utilitarian purpose (National Register: November, 1980), was dedicated in 1926. It is architecturally one of the finest firehouses built in Louisville in the 1920s. Also designed in the Spanish Renaissance style is Joseph and Joseph's Merchant's Manufacturing Building of 1923. (National Register: September, 1983). Loew's United Artists' Theater, like Erhart's St. Therese's Roman Catholic Church and Rectory, was designed in the Spanish Baroque style. John Ebersson was

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Above is a blind quatrefoil medallion of stone that adorns a parapet with stone coping. Two identical towers flank this central portion. Starting at the base and looking upwards, each tower has a window arrangement that consists of: two simple four-over-four light windows at the basement level, a single multi-light arched window set within a wide stone surround with voussoirs on the first floor, an arched, multi-light window with voussoirs and a small wrought iron balconet on the second floor, and finally, a bell tower with arched openings and stone voussoirs. The bowed pyramidal roof is covered with Spanish tile and topped by a simple stone cross.

Both the Alfresco Place and Bardstown Road facades of the school building have the same regularly spaced, arched windows (Photos 1 and 6). Starting at the center of each side, the windows are grouped in a series of three windows, flanked by two, and finally, a single window. Each window is separated by stylized Corinthian pilasters and capped by stone voussoirs. Medallions of stone, two square and two round, adorn each facade. The classroom area's box cornice is lined with brackets.

The interior floor plan of the school's classroom area (see site map) is dominated by long corridors that extend the length of the primary facades. The classrooms that branch from these hallways are located on the inside of the "L", with windows overlooking the courtyard (Photo 7). The interior of the classroom area has been finished with detailing typical of the 1920s. It is not architecturally significant.

The convent wing is located southwest of the classroom area's main entrance with its primary facade facing Alfresco Place. This portion of the school is brick, three-stories in height, and rests upon a raised basement. (Photos 4, 8, 9, and 10). The convent wing is rectangularly shaped (see site map) and has a block-like massing. Each story is distinguished by varied window treatments. The wing's shed roof is hidden by a parapet.

The convent wing is entered by ascending an L-shaped stair that terminates with a landing. This portion is shielded from the elements by an arched loggia surmounted by a modified hipped roof. The first floor entrance is balanced by a window to the right. The second floor has three rectangular six-over-one windows. Two arched windows on the third floor are embellished by voussoirs and decorative brick work. The Mission style parapet is topped by a stone coping and a stone crucifix. The interior is architecturally undistinguished.

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The wing of the school that formerly served as a church and is now used as an auditorium is located southeast of the school's primary entrance. This portion is symmetrical, two-story, brick, and has a blocky massing (Photo 2). A single-story arcade marks the entrance to this wing. Both arched and square-head windows are found on its primary facade. A gabled roof, obscured by a parapet, completes the design.

The entrance to the former church/now auditorium wing is marked by three segmental arches that are unified by a curvilinear parapet. Spanish tile covers the roof above. Five arched windows with stone window heads, flanked by rectangular windows, are located on the second floor level. A large, round, multi-light window with medallions on either side is located just below the parapet. A stone cross caps the building.

The interior of the former church wing is reflective of its first use (compare photo 15 with the photocopy captioned "interior of the auditorium when used as a temporary church"). The space was designed so that it could be temporarily used for worship. After the permanent church was constructed in 1952, as planned, the former church was converted to an auditorium and gymnasium. Some remnants of its first use remain. For instance, the elliptical arch with a raised foliate design once used as an altar is now a stage. Similarly, the original art glass windows were retained and still line the building's side walls. The interior is a clear span space that is not supported by columns.

When viewed from the interior courtyard, the St. Francis of Assisi School forms a cohesive architectural unit (Photos 7, 10, and 14). Identical brick is used throughout and, although the light configurations of the windows as seen from the courtyard vary, a consistent window spacing and floor height is evident. A continuous stone water table runs through the length of this building and the roof is covered with Spanish tile.

The overall appearance of the St. Francis of Assisi Rectory is residential (Photos 3, 11, 17, and 18). The form of this two-story brick structure is a basic cube (see site map). Both arched and square headed windows are found on the building. Its hipped roof is dominated by a wall dormer and is covered in Spanish tile.

One enters the rectory by passing through a recessed entry framed by an archway adorned with a keystone in its center. This arch motif is

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repeated to the southeast with a pair of arches forming a small loggia. To the northwest is a multi-light window with an identical surround. On the second floor, above the entrance, is a rectangular window with a protruding sill and stone impost blocks. The flanking windows are identical. Capping the rectory is a gabled wall dormer with three arched windows and a Mission style parapet. Deep, bracketed eaves support the building's hipped roof of Spanish tile. A bay window protrudes from the secondary, southeast facade of the rectory. Arched, multi-light windows are located on the ground level and square-headed one-over-one windows are above.

The interior features of the rectory include traditional 1920s door and window trims combined with Spanish style plaster moldings (Photos 19 through 23). Cast plaster is used throughout the interior of the rectory. The plaster ceiling medallion in the dining room and the geometric and foliate motifs adorning the living room's fireplace mantel, ceiling beams, and window surrounds are the most outstanding.

The nominated area includes two contributing buildings and two non-contributing buildings.

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the architect of this atmospheric theater built in 1928 (National Register: March, 1978).

Few changes have been made to the St. Francis of Assisi buildings since their completion in the late 1930s. The former church wing was converted to an auditorium and gymnasium after 1952. During the conversion, care was taken to preserve both the elliptical arch that once framed the altar area and the art glass windows that line the walls (compare photo 15 with photocopy captioned "interior of the auditorium used as a temporary church"). A ramp to make the building accessible to the handicapped was added in recent years to the exterior wall on the northwest side of the wing (Photos 13 and 14). None of these changes to the former church/now auditorium wing have been significant enough to destroy its architectural integrity. The only alteration to the St. Francis of Assisi rectory wing occurred in the rear where an arched, covered walkway was constructed (Photo 18). It leads to a brick garage. This addition, however, does not significantly diminish the importance of the rectory area's architecture.

There are two non-contributing buildings occupying the site historically associated with the St. Francis of Assisi Complex. The first is a church building located closest to the Bardstown Road and Rutherford Avenue intersection, that was completed in 1952. The second is a single-story brick garage that dates from circa 1974 (See site map and map showing contributing and non-contributing buildings).

The St. Francis of Assisi Complex is a noteworthy example of Spanish Mission style architecture. This intact, architecturally cohesive complex, constructed to serve the various religious functions of the Catholic church, is one of the finest examples of the work of Fred T. Erhart and is highly significant.

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MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

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Louisville: Caron Directory Company, 1900-1935.

_____. Louisville Survey East Report. Louisville: City of
Louisville Community Development Cabinet, 1979.

The Parish of St. Francis of Assisi. 1886-1936 Golden Jubilee.
Louisville: Gibbs-Inman Company Printers Incorporated, 1936.

_____. St. Francis of Assisi Parish: Diamond Jubilee, 1886-1961.
Louisville, 1961.

The St. Francis of Assisi Parish. Souvenir: Solemn Dedication,
February 22, 1952. Louisville: Publishers Printing Company, 1952.

Item 10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

Verbal Boundary Description and Justification:

The boundaries chosen for this nomination are based on the lots historically associated with St. Francis of Assisi. The present St. Francis of Assisi Church building, built in 1952, and a small, two car garage built in the early 1980s, are included in this nomination but are not considered contributing because of their age. The legal description of the property being nominated is City of Louisville Block 76L Lot 152 and Lot 153.

909

907

908

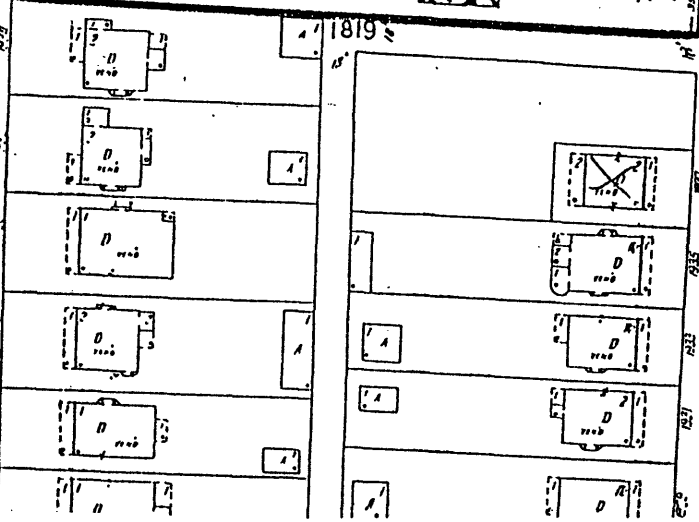
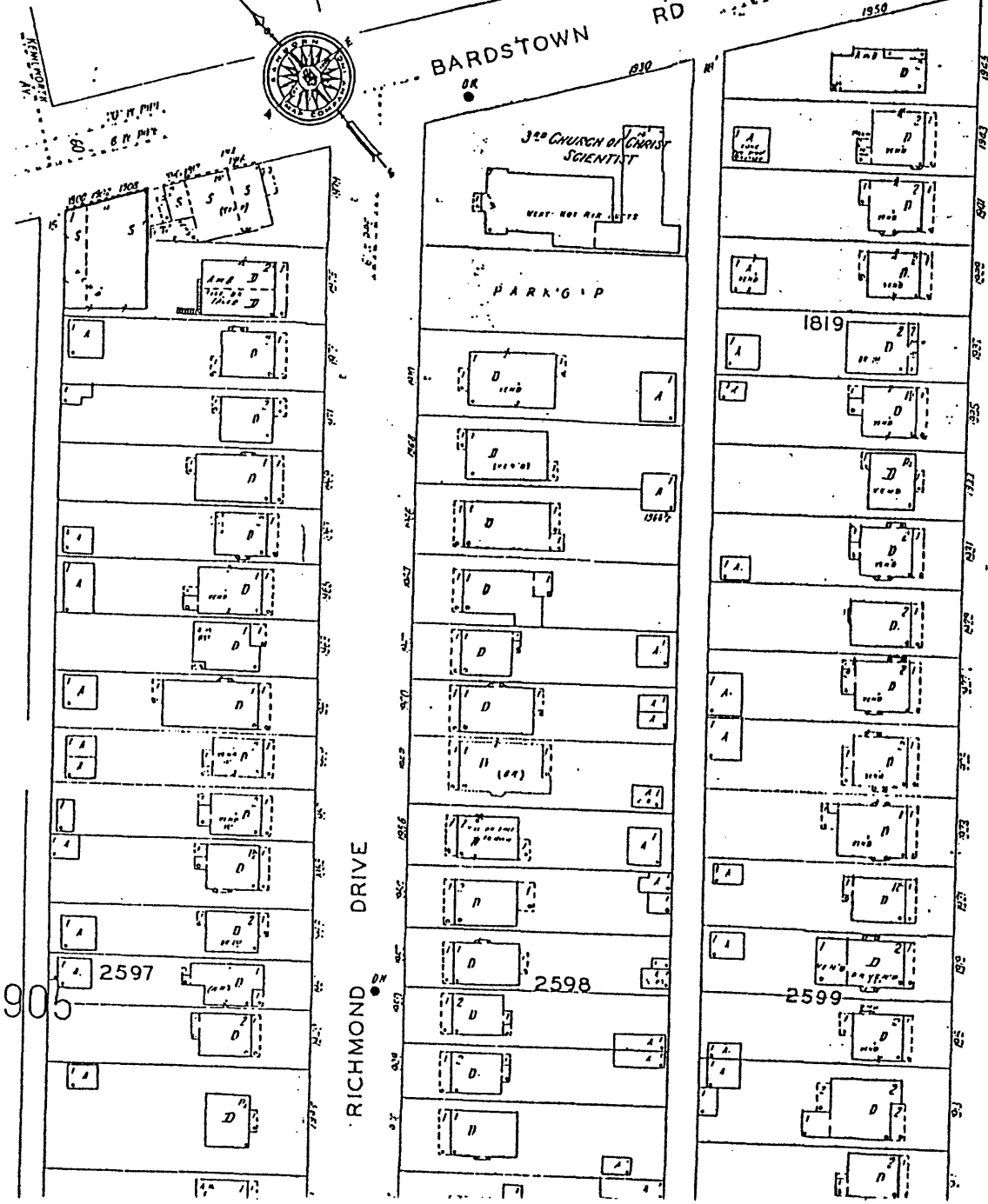
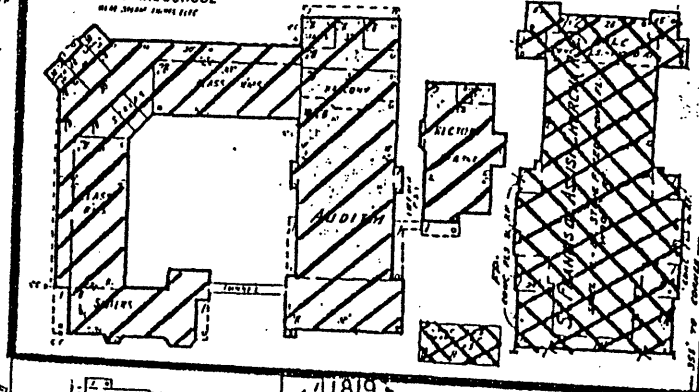
BARDSTOWN RD



3RD CHURCH OF CHRIST
SCIENTIST




PARKING

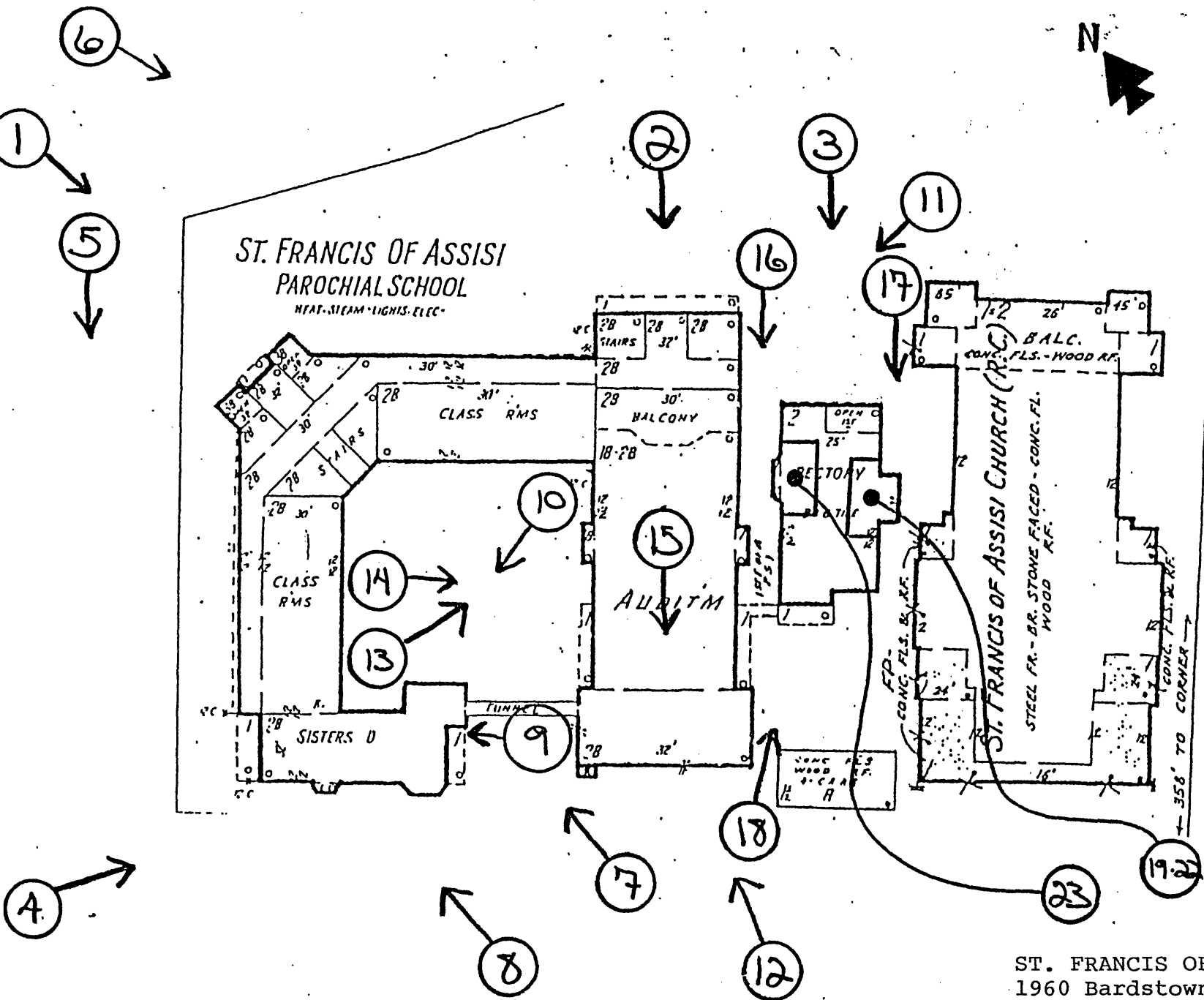
ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI
PAROCHIAL SCHOOL



ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI COMPLEX
1960 Bardstown Road
Louisville, KY 40205

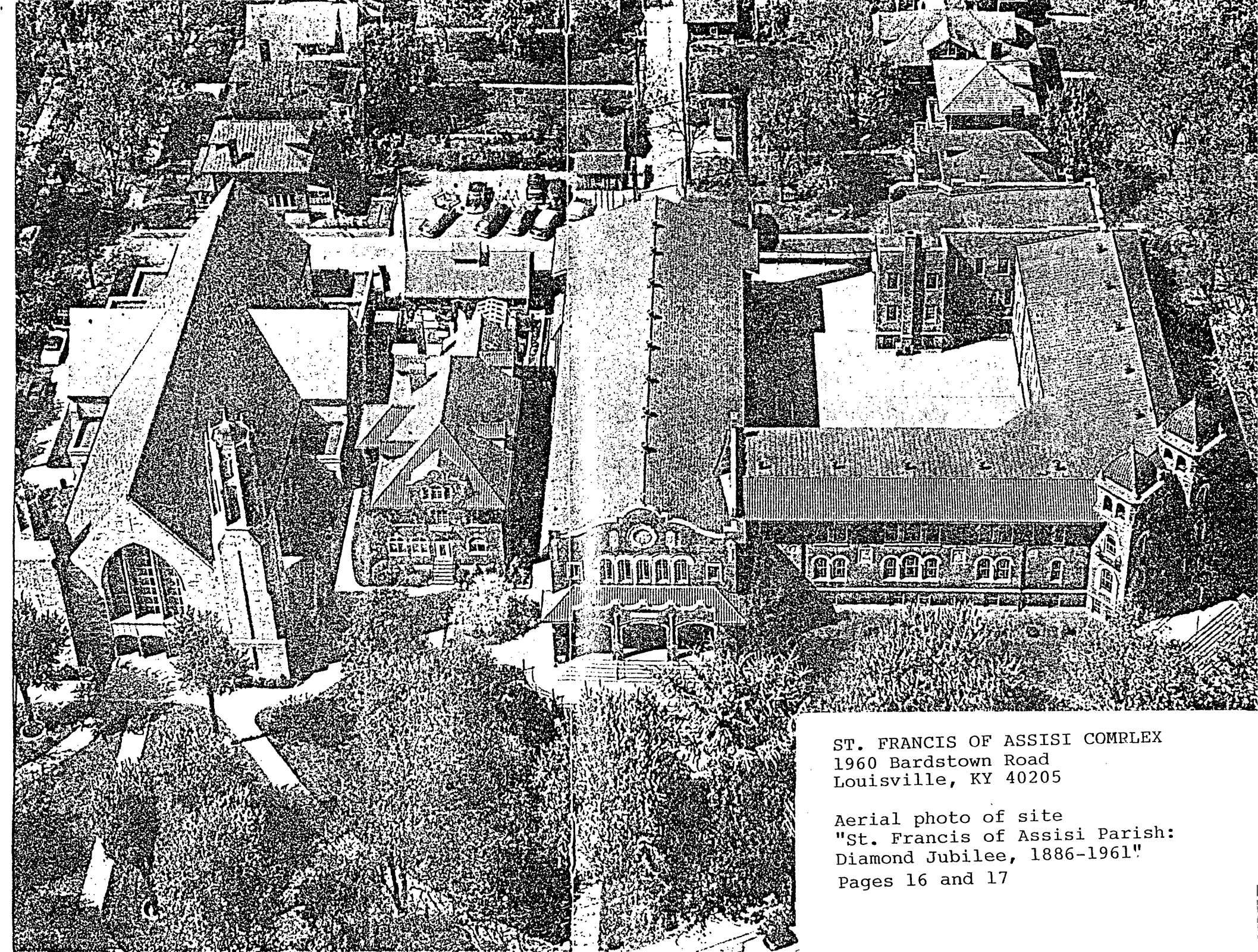
Site Map

-  = Boundary of Property being nominated
-  = Buildings being nominated
-  = Non-contributing buildings



ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI COMPLEX
 1960 Bardstown Road
 Louisville, KY 40205

Photographic Key



ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI COMPLEX
1960 Bardstown Road
Louisville, KY 40205

Aerial photo of site
"St. Francis of Assisi Parish:
Diamond Jubilee, 1886-1961"
Pages 16 and 17