

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

For NPS use only
received AUG 28 1984
date entered SEP 27 1984

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

1. Name

historic St. Thomas Episcopal Church

and/or common

2. Location

street & number 1200 Douglas St. not for publication

city, town Sioux City vicinity of

state Iowa code 19 county Woodbury code 193

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
	N/A	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military
			<input type="checkbox"/> museum
			<input type="checkbox"/> park
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private residence
			<input type="checkbox"/> religious
			<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
			<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
			<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name St. Thomas Corporation

street & number 1200 Douglas St.

city, town Sioux City vicinity of state Iowa 51105

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. County Clerk's Office

street & number Woodbury County Courthouse

city, town Sioux City, state Iowa 51105

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

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

date federal state county local

depository for survey records

city, town state

7. Description

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

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

St. Thomas Episcopal Church (1891-92) is an outstanding example of the Richardsonian Romanesque style of architecture. Restored following a disastrous 1922 fire, the building compares favorably with other examples of the Sioux quartzite ("Sioux falls Granite") building tradition of this same era.

As a fine example of the Richardsonian romanesque this essentially rectangular plan (55' by 72' core, 67' by 120' overall) is visually altered into a picturesque silhouette by the architect's design. The plan and the use of rugged masonry in an uninhibited fashion, reflects perhaps the influence of the later phase of Henry H. Richardson's design evolution, one towards a more simplified cubic form. The exterior stonework is unusual in that it combines the effects of a flat wall plane with a regular distribution of protruding ashlar rock faced blocks, which creates a strong shadow and light contrast particularly on the southern and western facades. This coursing technique was termed "broken ashlar" in 1891. The foundation is formed by "range work" or unbroken courses of ashlar stone. Fenestration is deeply set, and while there are numerous narrow vertical openings their placement in ribbon-like groupings minimizes their visual relationship with the unbroken wall surfaces. Broad slate roof planes add to the monumental feel of imparted by the plan. The straightforward treatment of the rose colored Sioux quartzite produces visual contrasts on the exterior. Ribbon courses of the same stone, which occur at the water table, sill and coping levels, appear lighter because of their finished surfaces. Heavy stone arches form the entrance and flanking windows of the narthex, the tower entrance, and the triple window sets in each transept on the main floor. Smaller scale arches or heavy stone lintels form the remaining window caps.

A cruciform roof plan and shallow gabled side pavilions create a sense of transepts. A tri-gabled narthex and a square (18' by 18') four story (78') Norman tower are placed in front of the west gabled end. The tower is reduced in thickness at the first and fourth floor levels. A crenellated parapet is anchored on each corner by circular pyramidal forms. In the rear (east end) of the plan, two story Weare Chapel projects an additional gable end to the north, that gable includes a square cut in wall chimney at the roofridge point. A broad curved chancel with conical roof separates the chapel from a narrow rounded sacristy (also with conical roof) which projects to the south opposite the chapel. A vertical visual thrust is imparted by flared buttresses (with tri-part cone shaped caps matching those on the tower parapet) on each corner. A hexagonal stone in-wall chimney projects from the north wall at a point west of center and is stepped back at the water table and at successive floor levels. Stone coping caps the parapet walls of each gable and each gable peak was originally trimmed with a stone finial. The uppermost triangular portion of each gable face is faced with square cut stone which is vertically and horizontally aligned. This same pattern is used in centered rectangles above each of the tower arches. The sacristy and chancel walls are topped with bands of stone lentils. From ground level to roof top, the wall massing is demarcated by the stepping back of the wall width at water table, and first and second floor sill levels, each of which is marked by the smooth surfacing treatment of the stone.

The building interior is dominated by the massive steeply pitched hammer beam birch ceiling. The dark birchwood and wainscoting (up to the sill level) contrasts sharply with the plaster wall finish. A curtain wall, consisting of a massive

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gothic arch, which on each side springs from a twelve column cluster beneath single flared elaborated ornamented capitals, separates chancel and chapel from the nave. A basement housed sunday school, classrooms, library, toilet, and furnace rooms.

The church occupies a prominent visual site overlooking much of the city of Sioux City. A contemporary account noted;

"...A more commanding site than that occupied by the new church could hardly have been chosen. At the corner of Twelfth and Douglass streets, near the crown of the bluff and amidst the finest residences of the beautiful city, St. Thomas Church overlooks the greater part of Sioux City, and is seen to advantage from every direction. From its noble tower the eye ranges over the broad plains of Nebraska and Dakota, as well as the marvelous evidences of prosperity and development at its base" (The Churchman, 15 October 1892, p. 30)

The church commissioned multiple plans in their search for an acceptable one. Henry M. Congdon (1834-1922) of New York, a noted ecclesiastical architect, was their first choice. A county history noted in 1891 that the congregation had acquired a new site on which they planned to build "...a magnificent edifice to cost \$50,000, the plans for which are now being made in New York" (History of Woodbury and Plymouth Counties, A. Warner & Company, Chicago, 1890-91, p. 196). Apparently even competition with the planned Columbian Exposition delayed progress. A second architect, Francis M. Whitehouse (1848-1938) of Chicago was approached but was too busy with design work for the Exposition. The final choice was to be local architect James W. Martin. The completed plan was announced in March 1891;

"...The church had been figuring with outside architects for some time, but on account of the inconvenience of distance and other considerations, the matter was placed in the hands of local architects, who have been figuring on the structure for some time" (Sioux City Journal, 5 March 1891, p. 8).

That same source described the plans, indicating that the building was built fully in accordance with those plans.

The building survived unchanged until a disastrous fire destroyed the roof and much of the interior on 9 December 1922. The fire started in the northwest basement. Water damage was considerable. Many of the original windows were cracked or destroyed. The fire account noted "...The interior of the building was considered one of the finest in the city." The church was soon repaired but only the recent final phases of restoration have fully recreated the original interior. Mr. Howard trevillian, one-time architect in residence at the Washington Cathedral, was director of the work. the birchwood cemetery was restored. Chancel and sacristy tiling was replaced as was needed. The floors were refinished and the walls replastered and painted. The replacement asphalt roof has already been largely replaced by a slate roof with the exception of the chapel, chancel and sacristy areas.

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c. 1900 Interior View of St. Thomas Episcopal Church

8. Significance

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

Specific dates 1891-2, 1922 **Builder/Architect** James W. Martin, arch., John M. Poorbaugh, contractor

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

St. Thomas Episcopal Church (1891-92) is an outstanding example of the Richardsonian Romanesque style of architecture. Restored following a disastrous fire in 1922, the building compares favorably with other examples of a Sioux City quartzite or "Sioux Falls Granite" building tradition.

St. Thomas Episcopal Church, organized in 1857, occupied a frame chapel until 1890 which was located at 7th and Nebraska. In June 1890 they purchased a new site at 12th and Douglas. After considering several eastern architects, the church selected the plan drawn by local architect James W. Martin in March 1891. John M. Poorbaugh was the building contractor. Hopes for rapid construction would not be realized. The March 1891 account noted "...The architect has been instructed to complete the specifications at once, so the bids may be asked for. It is hoped, with no unlooked for delays, and with a fair season for building, to have the structure completed by Christmas time. The estimated cost is about \$50,000." The cornerstone was laid on 12 August 1891, but completion took nearly another year. The formal dedication took place on 25 September 1892. The original cost estimate was close, the lots were valued at \$20,000, the building at \$60,000.

James W. Martin, architect, is listed as practicing in the Sioux City area between 1886 and 1894. His other commissions included business blocks (Dr. A. J. Rederick, 1885, W. E. Higman, 1886, Menler and Uepper, 1886, C. H. Kluckholm of LeMars, 1887, J. H. Partridge of LeMars, 1887, The Union Hotel, LeMars, 1887, Dr. F. Griffin of Mapleton, 1887, Abel Anderson, 1887, and E. Cortright, 1888), private residences (F. Clark, 1885, H. Neensted, 1885, Joseph Sullivan, 1887, C. E. Foster, 1887, F. F. Beck, 1887, and L. E. Skinner, 1890), one school (1886), this church (1891-92), and one amphitheater (for the Pioneer Agricultural Society of Sibley, 1887). His St. Thomas commission then was one of his last area designs. He relocated his practice to Detroit in 1894.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Refer to Continuation Sheet 9-2

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property less than one acre

Quadrangle name Sioux City North, IA-S.DAK.

Quadrangle scale 1/24,000

UTM References

A

1	5	7	1	3	1	9	0	4	7	0	8	6	8	0
Zone		Easting				Northing								

B

Zone		Easting				Northing								

C

Zone		Easting				Northing								

D

Zone		Easting				Northing								

E

Zone		Easting				Northing								

F

Zone		Easting				Northing								

G

Zone		Easting				Northing								

H

Zone		Easting				Northing								

Verbal boundary description and justification

Lots 5 and 6, Block 71, Sioux City East Addition, also known as Parcel No. 27525.
This parcel includes the church and excludes a parking lot on the north side.

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

state N/A code county code

state code county code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title James E. Jacobsen, National Register Coordinator

organization Iowa SHPO date August 22, 1984

street & number E. 12th & Grand Ave. telephone 515-281-4137

city or town Des Moines, state Iowa 50319

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national state local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature Adrian A. Anderson

title Executive Director Iowa State Historical Department date 23 August 1984

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

Entered in the National Register

date 9-27-84

James M. Sammons
Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

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Bibliography:

History Of The Counties of Woodbury and Plymouth, Iowa. Chicago: A. Warner & Co., Publishers, 1890-1, p.196.

Withey, Henry F. and Elsie Rathburn Withey. Biographical Dictionary of American Architects (Deceased). Los Angeles: Hennessey & Ingalls, Inc. 1970, pp.135, 653-4,

"The New Episcopal Church..." The Sioux City Journal, 3 March 1891, p. 8.

"Flames Damage Fashionable North Side Church." The Sioux City Journal, 10 December 1922.

The Churchman, 15 October 1892, p. 30 (an Iowa Episcopal diocesan newspaper).

Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps, 1902, 1924, Sioux City, Iowa. Sanborn Fire Insurance Map Company, New York.