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United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL
REGISTER

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 Immaculate Conception Church

other names/site number _____

2. Location

street & number 590 Pyramid Way not for publication

city or town Sparks vicinity

state Nevada code NV county Washoe code 031 zip code 89431

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 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.)

Ronald M. Jones 11/10/92
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

State of 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): _____

for Signature of the Keeper Date of Action
Autawith of Bee 12/23/92

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply)

Category of Property
(Check only one box)

Number of Resources within Property
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

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

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

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1		buildings
		sites
		structures
		objects
1		Total

Name of related multiple property listing
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)
Thematic Nomination of the Architecture
of Frederick J. DeLongchamps

**Number of contributing resources previously listed
in the National Register**
0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

RELIGION/Religious Facility

RELIGION/Religious Facility

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)

LATE 19th and 20th CENTURY REVIVALS/
Mission/Spanish Colonial Revival

foundation Not visible
walls Brick
roof Terra Cotta
other

Narrative Description

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

See continuation sheet.

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.)

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

Criteria Considerations

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

Property is:

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

Narrative Statement of Significance

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

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

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

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
previously listed in the National Register
previously determined eligible by the National Register
designated a National Historic Landmark
recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey #
recorded by Historic American Engineering Record #

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

ARCHITECTURE

RELIGION

Period of Significance

1932-1942

Significant Dates

February 22, 1932 (Dedication date)

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

Cultural Affiliation

Architect/Builder

Frederick J. DeLongchamps, Architect

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
Other State agency
Federal agency
Local government
University
Other

Name of repository:

University of Nevada, Reno
Library, Special Collections
Department

Immaculate Conception Church
Name of Property

Washoe County, Nevada
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property Less than one acre

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 6 | 3 | 5 | 4 | 0 | 4 | 3 | 7 | 9 | 9 | 5 | 0 |
Zone Easting Northing
2 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

3 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
Zone Easting Northing
4 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
 See continuation sheet

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 Ana Beth Koval, Patricia Lawrence-Dietz and Lucy Scheid

organization Rainshadow Associates date September 1984

street & number P.O. Box 352 telephone (702) 849-1438

city or town Carson City state Nevada zip code 89702

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 the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of 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, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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Summary

The Immaculate Conception Church of Sparks, Nevada is an attractive, one-and-one-half story, brick structure influenced by the Mediterranean Revival style. The building was designed by the prominent Nevada architect, Frederick Joseph DeLongchamps and built in 1932. The structure has served continuously as a church and is in excellent condition. The original facade is somewhat obscured by the addition of a small, one story vestibule and porch. This sensitive 1970 addition provides handicap access and continues the major architectural elements of the building: the red brick exterior, the semi-circular arched openings, and the red tiled roof. The majority of the original aspects of the building remains intact.

Exterior

The Immaculate Conception Church is a cruciform-in-plan building resting on a brick foundation. Its uniform, red brick exterior is laid in common bond with a header course every seven courses. The building is topped by a medium pitched, red tiled, gabled roof which overhangs the building's walls slightly. The gable ends of the building face the street and the alley. Five, stepped semi-circular arched windows, separated by columns with cubiform capitals, pierce the upper portion of the facade and light the church balcony. A cross projects from the peak of the facade gable.

Attached to the facade and to one side are additions made in 1970: a small, one story, brick clad, shed roofed, entry vestibule and porch with semi-circular arched openings; a small, one story, brick clad, shed roofed wing on the north side of the church, off center to the front. Access into the building is now by both stairway and ramp.

Side walls are articulated by pilasters with cubiform capitals. Five sets of paired, semi-circular arched, stained glass windows pierce each side wall and illuminate the nave. These windows have a simple, radiating brick surround and splayed sill. Transept windows are multi-light and rectangular.

A tall, thick, stepped, gabled parapet capped with red tile rises from the rear wall of the church and serves as a belfry with the bell contained within a semi-circular arched opening. Attached to one side of this rear wall is a tall chimney. Three, tall and narrow, semi-circular arched windows provide rear wall fenestration.

Interior

This small church is simple and elegant. The nave is entered through a small hall with a room to the north and to the south a staircase to the balcony. The nave has a slightly vaulted ceiling, plastered walls, and carpet on the floor. Rows of wooden pews from one central aisle. The nave is decorated with ten stained glass windows in paired arrangements on each side wall. Six original lighting fixtures hang from the ceiling. Two recessed semi-circular arched niches holding figures of Jesus and Mary flank a semi-elliptical compound arch separating the nave and chancel. The balcony is lighted by five, stepped, stained glass windows.

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The Immaculate Conception Church is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under criterion A as the oldest, extant Catholic Church in Sparks and one of the first Catholic churches built in the state after Nevada was granted diocesan status by Pope Pius XI on March 27, 1931, and also under criterion C, as one of the many outstanding works of Nevada's premier architect, Frederick Joseph DeLongchamps (1882-1969), who designed this building in the Mediterranean Revival style. The Mediterranean Revival style is relatively rare in northern Nevada. DeLongchamps is known for the magnitude of his work, the variety of his styles, and the span of his influence.

The Catholic Church had a long history in the Great Basin, predating even the creation of the Nevada Territory in 1861. At first the Comstock Mining District with its famed Virginia City became the center of development of the Church, dominated at the time by Irish and Mexican immigrants. Slumps are endemic to mining, however, and growth in the Church was almost always followed by declines. New groups of Italians, Basques and others changed the character of the Church. Following the stock market crash of 1929, the Nevada State Legislature eased its divorce requirements and legalized gambling, creating a firmer foundation for economic growth. The creation of a Nevada diocese occurred just when events ensured that Nevada population and economy would never again decline: the 1930 population of Nevada was 91,058 with 8,500 Catholics.

The first Catholic Church of Sparks was built in 1905 at 729 F Street. Father Horgan headed the drive to raise money for the church, a wood frame building. This structure burned on Easter Sunday of 1930. After the fire, Father O'Connor raised the funds for the present brick building. The Church was designed by DeLongchamps, a Catholic, who also designed the Saint Thomas Aquinas Parish and School in Reno in 1931. The Immaculate Conception Church was dedicated on February 22, 1932. The building was constructed for approximately \$20,000 and has a seating capacity of 400. The rebuilding of the Immaculate Conception Church after the fire coincides, therefore, with a time of growth within the Church and the state. It occurred at the beginning of the "Modern Era" as defined in Dr. Kevin Rafferty's chapter on the Catholic Church planned for publication in the third edition of the Nevada Comprehensive Preservation Plan.

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The Immaculate Conception Church contributes to the City of Sparks's architectural and historical heritage. It is similar in scale to the other commercial and religious buildings from this period in Sparks. It is one of two Mediterranean Revival style buildings in this community. The other is the Sparks Justice Court (1931), also designed by DeLongchamps and listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Other Frederick J. DeLongchamps buildings in Sparks include three schools constructed between 1916 and 1938.

As mentioned above, DeLongchamps was very prolific; his architecture firm was responsible for the designs of over 500 buildings as well as numerous additions and alterations to existing structures. Although the architect favored Neo-Classical designs, many other styles, including Gothic Revival, Moderne, and American Colonial architecture can be found in his work. Brick was a favorite building material. Further information can be located in the "Thematic Nomination of the Architecture of Frederick J. DeLongchamps," listed on the National Register on August 8, 1986.

In 1938 Father William Devlin purchased the bell from the firehouse of Virginia City for \$75 and added it to the rear wall of the church. In 1970, the stained glass windows, the front vestibule and porch, and the air conditioning were added under the direction of Father James McGrath. Nevertheless, the structure retains its historic integrity.

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"Catholic Church Burns Down," Sparks Tribune, April 21, 1930

Immaculate Conception Church, pamphlet 1984

Immaculate Conception Church Presents the Birth of Sparks, Nevada and
the History of the Catholic Church in Sparks, pamphlet, 1972

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Parcel # 33-241-01
O'Sullivan Tract Amended, Block Q, Lots 7-12 (142.5' x 150')

The nominated property includes the entire parcel historically associated with the community hall.