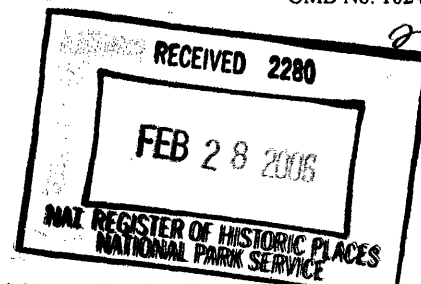


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United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service



NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
REGISTRATION FORM

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If any 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. Catherine's Church of Lomice, ND
other names/site number St. Catherine's Catholic Church; St. Catherine's Church; St. Catherine Church 32WA111

2. Location

street & number 4 mi. W. & 2 mi. S. of Jct. SR 35 & CR 15 N/A not for publication
city or town Whitman (in Nelson County) vicinity
state North Dakota code ND county Walsh code 099 zip code 58250

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, 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.)
Signature of certifying official/Title *Merlan E. Paaverud, Jr.* 2-27-06
Merlan E. Paaverud, Jr. Date
State Historic Preservation Officer (North Dakota)
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 commenting or other official _____ Date _____
State or Federal agency and bureau _____

4. National Park Service Certification

- I, hereby certify that this 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): _____

Edson H. Beall Signature of the Keeper Date of Action 4-12-06

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

Category of Property

Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

(Check as many boxes as apply)

(Check only one box)

Contributing Noncontributing

private

building(s)

1 0 buildings

public-local

district

0 0 sites

public-State

site

0 0 structures

public-Federal

structure

4 0 objects

object

5 0 Total

Name of related multiple property listing

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

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

N/A

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

RELIGION/religious facility

RELIGION/religious facility

FUNERARY/cemetery

FUNERARY/cemetery

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

Late Gothic Revival

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation STONE: Granite

walls STONE: Granite

roof WOOD: Shingle

other CONCRETE

Narrative Description

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

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 is 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 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 the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
B removed from its original location.
C a birthplace or a 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):

Primary location of additional data:

- 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

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

Name of repository:

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

ARCHITECTURE

LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE

SOCIAL HISTORY

Period of Significance

1936 - 1938

Significant Dates

1936

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

Cultural Affiliation

Architect/Builder

Joseph Bell DeRemer; Kaletta Statuary Company

Joseph Vitek

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 5 acres

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

Table with 2 rows and 7 columns: Zone, Easting, Northing, Zone, Easting, Northing. Includes values like 14, 558625, 5347655, 3, 4 and a checkbox for '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 Blain Fandrich/historian and Susan Quinnell, Review & Compliance Officer
organization Ethnoscience /State Historical Society of ND date 12/2005
street & number P. O. Box 30577 / ND Heritage Center , 612 E. Blvd. Ave. telephone (406)252-9163 /701-328-3576
city or town Billings / Bismarck, ND 58505 state MT zip code 59107-0577

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 the SHPO or FPO.)

name Richard Balek, St. Catherine Church Committee
street & number 10661 63rd Street NE telephone
city or town Lawton state ND zip code 58345

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National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 1

St. Catherine's Church of Lomice
Walsh County, ND

Description

St. Catherine's Church is a one and one-half story late Gothic Revival style building constructed from 1936-1938. The building is oriented north-south and is of an irregular L shape plan. It consists of three primary parts: a vestibule and nave at the north end of the building, a sanctuary located south of the nave, and a sacristy, which extends to the east near the southeast corner of the nave/sanctuary block. The building is constructed of randomly coursed granite fieldstone. General architectural details include stone buttresses, 2' thick exterior walls (3' thick on the north side), symmetrical fenestration, a cross-gabled roof with false dormers and a bell gable. The Church rests on a stone foundation with a crawl space and partial basement underneath.

The church grounds, which are surrounded by a wire mesh fence, are flanked by a gravel road on the north, fields on the east and south and a parking lot on the west. Included in the church grounds is a cemetery located on the east side of the Church. Headstones, which are primarily of granite, include bevel markers, flush markers and tablet markers. A *crux buxata* or cemetery cross, is located on the west side of the cemetery.

The church grounds also contain one large grotto and three small grottos. A grotto is a cave or symbolic representation of a cave where statues are placed. The large grotto measures 20' north-south x 35' east-west and faces north. It is located 90' east of St. Catherine's Church. The three smaller grottos measure 4' square and stand 6' high. The first small grotto is located 120' north of the large grotto and faces west. The second small grotto is located 95' west of the church and faces east. The third grotto is located 90' north of the second small grotto and faces east. The small grottos are square at the base with vaulted tops and a niche to hold statuary.¹ The large grotto contains a statue of the Virgin Mary. Parishioners constructed the grottos and the church itself using fieldstone they had gathered.

The large grotto and landscape plan are based on designs conceived by Rev. Mikolasek and drafted by the Kaletta Statuary Company of St. Louis, Missouri. Rev. Mikolasek probably sketched his original idea for the church landscape sometime in 1937, the same

¹ The statues are being stored in the church building at this time.

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National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 2

St. Catherine's Church of Lomice
Walsh County, ND

Description (continued)

year the sketches were submitted to the Kaletta Statuary Company. A reply from the statuary company dated January 27, 1938 states that:

From all indications of the plan sent, the Reverend Father [Mikolasek] has the whole thing pretty well thought out and while certain suggested changes could be made the lay and position of the grounds in appearance when one is there probably figures out best in this way. The grotto seems to form the central point or feature of the grounds with the entrance so placed to front of it.²

The cemetery was not part of the initial landscape design. Landscape design balance is maintained by location of the church to the west of the large grotto and the cemetery to the east of the large grotto. The large grotto, with the churchyard entrance placed to its north, thus remained the focal point of the grounds. Placement of the three small grottos also define a space in the northwest corner of the grounds so that parishioners can proceed in a circuit from the church to the grottos, either beginning or ending with the large grotto, and then back to the church. Though the final landscape design is somewhat different from the early sketches and drafts, there is no question that the current landscape developed out of those early plans and reflects a professional design response to Rev. Mikolasek's initial concept. Professional involvement in church landscape design was rare for rural churches in North Dakota.

The professional design of the grounds was nicely complemented in the church building by regional architect Joseph Bell DeRemer of Grand Forks. He designed this Gothic Revival Roman Catholic parochial church, choosing several major architectural characteristics that define this building as Gothic Revival. They are the masonry exterior, stone buttresses, symmetrical fenestration, steep gable roof, and arched windows and main entrance. The exterior walls of the building are made of granite fieldstone gathered from parishioners' fields. The fieldstone material defines the rustic charm of this rural church and its setting. The fieldstones were rough cut on location, laid in a randomly coursed pattern and secured with cement mortar. The stone walls are 2' thick on all sides except the north wall of the church which is 3' thick (note that the north wall of the sacristy is 2' thick). The walls are supported by twelve buttresses. Six buttresses are attached to

² Kaletta Statuary Company to H. A. Frommelt, 27 January 1938, St. Catherine's Church papers.

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National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 3

St. Catherine's Church of Lomice
Walsh County, ND

Description (continued)

the west wall of the nave and sanctuary, four buttresses are attached to the east wall of the nave, one buttress is attached to the north wall of the sacristy wing and one buttress is attached to the south wall of the sacristy wing. All of the buttresses are 2' wide, made of fieldstone, and project 2' from the wall.

The church rests on a stone foundation. The foundation stones, like the rest of the exterior stone, are granite fieldstones gathered by parishioners. A polished granite cornerstone is located in the east corner of the north wall and is inscribed with a cross and the legend "St. Catherine" on its north face and "1936" on its east face. Construction began on the church in 1936 and was completed in 1938.

The building has a steeply-pitched, cross-gabled roof still covered with wood shingles. Parishioners re-treated the shingles every five years, hence the longevity of the shingles.³ The roof has open eaves with exposed rafters along the slope sides (i.e., east and west side of building and north and south side of wing) and closed eaves with bed molding along the gable ends (i.e., north and south side of building and east side of wing). The roof slopes also cover the tops of the buttresses. The roof has nine gablet dormers, four each on the east and west slopes of the nave portion of the building and one on the north slope of the wing. All of the gablet dormers are faced with clapboard with bed molding trim and are painted brown. A stone chimney intersects the ridge of the wing near its juncture with the nave/sanctuary roof. A bell gable surmounted by a simple iron cross, donated to the church by Bishop Munch, distinguishes the north end of the building.

The church has three entryways. The main entry is located in the center of the north building wall and consists of paired metal slab doors set in a gothic arch opening. A two-step 5' x 10' concrete stoop provides access to the main entry. A twelve-panel metal door is set into the north end of the east building wall between the first and second buttresses. This door is accessed by a two-step 6' x 3' concrete stoop. A twelve-panel metal door is also set into the north wall of the wing with two concrete steps that project 1' (north), leading up to the door.

³ Personal communication with Mr. Daniel E. Kouba, PO Box 311, Michigan, ND 58259, January 2006.

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National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 4

St. Catherine's Church of Lomice
Walsh County, ND

Description (continued)

There are nineteen windows in the church, of which five are basement windows, eleven are main story windows, and three are gable windows. The basement windows are all one-light hopper windows recessed one foot into the foundation walls, glazed with clear glass, with concrete window wells and wood frames. Three are located in the west wall of the building, one in the east wall, and one in the south wall of the wing. All of the main floor and gable windows, except those in the sacristy wing, have stained glass. The windows are recessed 2' into the north wall of the church and recessed 1' into all other walls. The windows were donated to the church by Bishop Muench.⁴ The main floor windows are mostly one and one-half feet wide, fixed, multi-light, wood-framed windows with concrete sills. Two twelve-light windows are in the north building wall, in the east building wall, two eighteen-light windows; a twenty-five light window fills a gothic arch in the east wall of the wing. In the south wall of the wing, one fifteen-light casement window, four eighteen-light windows, and one twenty-four light casement window in the west building wall. There are three gable windows, a seventeen-light rose window in the north gable above the main entryway, a twenty-seven light cross-shaped window in the south gable, and a seven-light window in the east gable of the wing.

The interior of the church has three levels: the basement, the main floor, and the choir loft. The basement is constructed of fieldstone and is accessed by a stairwell in the east side of the sacristy wing. It has one room beneath the sacristy, one room beneath the old confessional, and one room beneath the sanctuary. A crawl space extends under the nave and vestibule. The basement has a concrete floor; the crawl space has a fieldstone floor. A furnace is located in the room below the old confessional. The basement also once housed a Delco electric generator. The church was wired for electricity at the time of construction, with power supplied by the electric generator until the late 1940s when the rural electrification program reached the church, eliminating the need for the generator.⁵

⁴ "St. Catherine'[s] Church-Lomice, N.D. Financial Statement of Building," on file at St. Catherine's Church, Lomice. The window costs are listed as \$275. The financial statement only lists the windows as being donated by Bishop Muench, but the cost was most likely paid from his personal money.

⁵ Construction on the church began one year after the establishment of the Rural Electrification Administration (REA) and almost two years before the first North Dakota farm received REA-electric services. That farm, the Pierson Farm, Benson County, ND, was listed on the National Register of Historic Places on 8/29/85.

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Section number 7 Page 5

St. Catherine's Church of Lomice
Walsh County, ND

Description (continued)

The main floor is comprised of the vestibule, a crying or parents' room, the nave, the sanctuary (not physically closed off from the nave, but delineated by a rise in floor height), and the sacristy. The walls are plaster, the wooden floor was covered with acrylic tile in approximately 1965, and the ceiling has fiberboard tiles. When one enters the building through the double metal doors on the north side, the first room encountered is the single story-height vestibule. From the vestibule, stairs to one's right (west) lead to the choir loft, a door to one's left leads to the parents' room (also accessible from the outside through a door in the east wall), and double wood doors lead into the nave. Within the parents' room, double casement windows in the south wall of the room allow visual access into the nave.

The vaulted nave has a red-carpeted center aisle flanked on each side by ten wooden pews. A wooden kneeling rail at the front (south end) of the nave separates the altar/sanctuary area from the public area of the nave. The white plaster walls are hung with fourteen Czech inscribed stations of the cross that were donated to the church by the Rt. Rev. Msgr. T. Bobal. Four electric light fixtures are located on each of the east and west walls (i.e., eight total). The nave's original light fixtures were replaced with three fluorescent ceiling lights around 1967. The two ceiling fans were also installed at that time. A statue of Jesus (originally located on the sanctuary altar) currently stands in the southeast corner of the nave, where a statue of Mary originally stood. The statue of Mary (originally located in the southeast corner) currently stands in the southwest corner of the nave, where a statue of St. Catherine originally stood. The original stands have also been replaced. The old confessional booth, part of which is now used to house the baptismal font, is also located in the southeast corner of the nave. (See photo #7).

The sanctuary, which adjoins the nave at the south end of the building is raised 6" above the nave floor. The original altar, as the church was built pre-Vatican II, was set against the rear (south) wall of the building. A small, cross-shaped window is set high in the wall above the altar. The window is currently partially covered by a crucifix. A fluorescent light fixture hangs from the ceiling. Currently, an altar, pulpit, two tables, four flower stands, three chairs, and a host vessel are located in the sanctuary, and two fabric wall hangings

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St. Catherine's Church of Lomice
Walsh County, ND

Description (continued)

flank the altar. Of these, only the host vessel is known to be original.⁶ The architectural features prescribed by Roman Catholic canon law include the baptismal font, a confessional, a cemetery, and (when in use) the liturgical equipment needed to perform baptisms, marriages and funerals.⁷

From the sanctuary, a wood door in the east wall leads to the sacristy, located in the east wing. Part of the old confessional booth, now used for storage, is located in the north wall where the wing joins the main body of the church. A door in the north wall provides access to both the sanctuary and the basement stairs. Between the stairs, which run along the east wall of the wing, and the sacristy is a long narrow storage closet.

The choir and organ loft sits above the vestibule and parents' room at the north end of the building. It is accessed via a curved stairway on the west wall of the vestibule. Its floor is wood. Two open closets are located, one each, in the east and west walls; a third closet is located on the north wall and is closed by a wood, single-panel door. The rose window on the north wall allows light into this space and through it to the nave below.

The grotto area is the only professionally designed rural church landscape currently known in Walsh County. The grotto landscape was designed by the Kaletta Statuary Company of St. Louis, Missouri, and based on ideas provided by Rev. Mikolasek. Each of the four grottos within the landscape are made of fieldstone, which complements the rural, rustic church architecture and enhances the unity of the overall composition.

Out of over 2,100 churches so far documented in the North Dakota State Historical Society historical site archives, only six are of field stone construction, meaning constructed with field stone walls and not just stone foundations, and only one other is on the National Register, Old Stone Church in Buffalo, Cass County. St. Catherine's Church is one of only two documented churches built with field stone during the Great Depression. The other is

⁶ Changes to the celebration of the mass initiated after Vatican II (1962-1964) included having the celebrant face the congregation from behind the altar, rather than celebrating mass from the front of the altar with his back to the congregation.

⁷ Rev. Stanislaus Woywod, *A Practical Commentary on the Code of Canon Law* (New York: Joseph F. Wagner, Inc., 1945), p. 6.

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Section number 7 Page 7

St. Catherine's Church of Lomice
Walsh County, ND

Description (continued)

Holy Trinity Catholic Church, Dresden, North Dakota, now used as the Cavalier County Historical Society Museum. Holy Trinity was also built using stones the parishioners hauled from their fields.

St. Catherine's Church and its grotto area retain excellent physical integrity and integrity of location, setting, design, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association. The most notable modifications to the church are the acrylic tile floor covering, the fluorescent lights, and the ceiling fans, all of which are minor, easily reversible alterations. The grotto has changed little, except that the small statues for the small grotto niches are kept inside the church.

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National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 8

St. Catherine's Church of Lomice
Walsh County, ND

Statement of Significance

St. Catherine's Church is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under criteria A and C. The property is eligible under criterion A because of the unusually high level of parishioner participation in the construction of the church and because the funding for the church construction, the Catholic Church Expansion Fund, was a landmark innovation in rural Catholic parish economics in the United States. It is a funding mechanism still in use today, especially in Midwestern Roman Catholic churches.⁸ The property is eligible under criterion C because of its late Gothic Revival architectural style, and the use of rough dressed fieldstone in the construction of the church and grotto. Due to the professional design, the rough dressed fieldstone construction works well in its rural landscape. Out of more than 2,100 churches so far surveyed in North Dakota, only six are of fieldstone, and only one other was constructed during the Great Depression. The churchyard grotto is a contributing element to the Church's architectural presence, serving to tie the church building visually to its landscape.

Historical Overview

The land on which St. Catherine's Church is located was originally settled by Marie Pesek, who received a homestead patent title for the land in 1899. Marie, also known as Mary, emigrated to the United States from Trebon, Lomnice, Bohemia (now the Czech Republic) in 1881, shortly after her husband passed away.⁹ Marie, age 54 at the time, was accompanied to the United States by her three sons, Thomas, 18, John, 16, and James, 14. The family landed in New York, where they stayed for five years. They then moved to New Prague, Minnesota, in 1886. It is not exactly known when Marie and her children moved to Walsh County, but they were established residents by 1899, when Marie received her homestead patent. Marie sold the land to her son Thomas in 1905, who retained ownership of the land until 1928, when he sold it to Joseph T. Pesek, the second of his nine children. Joseph retained ownership of the land until 1931, when he sold the

⁸ Sample dioceses and churches using a Catholic Church Expansion Fund in January 2006 include Dioceses of Fargo and Bismarck ND, St. Joseph Catholic Church Baraboo WI, St. Christopher's Church Dickinson ND, and St. Paul Catholic Church in Carrollwood near Tampa, FL.

⁹ Myrtle Balkee, ed., *Walsh Heritage*, vol. 4 (Grafton, N. Dak.: Walsh County Historical Society, 1981), pp. 1229-1230.

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National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 9

St. Catherine's Church of Lomice
Walsh County, ND

Statement of Significance (continued)

land back to his father, Thomas. The deed was then immediately sold by Thomas back to Joseph. Joseph Pesek and his wife Mary donated two acres of land to St. Catherine's Church in late 1936 for construction of St. Catherine's Church and sold an additional three acres of land to the church for future use as a cemetery, for a total of five acres.¹⁰

The story of the Pesek family is similar to that of many of the Czech immigrants who settled in Sauter Township of Walsh County; they either came directly into the region from Czechoslovakia (known as Bohemia prior to 1918) or after briefly living in other areas of the United States before settling in North Dakota. For example, Frank Matejcek, Frank Kubat, Vaclav Pesek and Joseph Shimek all either moved to Sauter Township directly from Czechoslovakia, or lived for just a brief period in another part of the United States before settling in Sauter Township.¹¹ Other settlers in Sauter Township, such as Vendal Skalicky and Frank Kvasnicka, Sr. were born in Czechoslovakia, but emigrated to the United States with their parents at an early age, grew up in another part of the United States, and moved to Sauter Township as young adults.¹² All of these people, however, were born in Czechoslovakia and are first generation immigrants, as opposed to the Czech settlers in nearby Prairie Centre Township who were often second or third generation immigrants.¹³ For the first generation immigrant settlers of Sauter Township, the primary language was Czech.

Having the land to build upon was a start, but finding the capitol to finance a parish church was a great struggle for the parish people. St. Catherine's of Lomice began as a mission, a place of worship without a consecrated church. It came into existence on July 17, 1934, with the occasion marked by the celebration of Solemn High Mass. For many of the local Czech immigrants living in the area, the establishment of the mission represented the first step toward building their own church, a dream that many of the immigrants had held since

¹⁰ [Mikolasek], n.p..

¹¹ Balkee, pp. 1217-1235.

¹² *ibid.*

¹³ *ibid.*, p. 1133. Many of the Czech settlers in nearby Prairie Centre Township, were second and third generation immigrants who moved to North Dakota from Czech communities in Iowa.

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National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 10

St. Catherine's Church of Lomice
Walsh County, ND

Statement of Significance (continued)

they first called for the establishment of their own church in 1916.¹⁴ The mission was initially only a station: a place without a church building where mass is said at designated times, often outdoors. Though there is no available documentation confirming the location of outdoor services, it is likely that some of the outdoor services were held at the future site of St. Catherine's. The use of this location for the outdoor services may have increased after construction of the church began.¹⁵

The parish priest, Rev. Vaclav Mikolasek suggested St. Catherine of Alexandria as the patron saint of the proposed church.¹⁶ St. Catherine of Alexandria, was a martyr who supposedly died in AD 305 at age eighteen.¹⁷ Rev. Vaclav Mikolasek also sought to obtain

¹⁴ Historical Record: St. Catherine's Church of Lomice, N. Dak. *Fargo Diocese Parish Records*, on file at the North Dakota State Archives, Bismarck. Microfilm, Roll #0602., p. [1].

¹⁵ Vaclav F. Mikolasek, *Souvenir of the Golden Jubilee of SS. Peter and Paul Parish in Bechyn, N.D., with the History of St. Joseph's Parish in Lankin, N.D., and the New Mission of St. Catherine in Lomnice, N. D.* (n.p., [1936?]) and Carol Ackerman, "Christmas Bells are Ringing," *The Nodak Neighbor* 42, no. 7 (1993): 4. A photograph of the first field mass held in the New Mission of St. Catherine's of Lomice shows a wood frame building (possibly the F. Baiek farm) in the background, suggesting that the masses were held at various convenient locations prior to completion of the church in 1938. The use of other locations is also supported by the first baptism within the new mission, which occurred on December 6, 1936. It is highly unlikely that parents would expose an infant to North Dakota winter temperatures for a baptism, suggesting that the baptism was held at a location other than the building site of the still uncompleted St. Catherine's Church. On the other hand, the first marriage held in the parish on July 13, 1937, may have been performed at the church site, which was dedicated by Bishop Muench a few days earlier, on July 1, 1937.

¹⁶ Personal communication with Mr. Daniel E. Kouba, PO Box 311, Michigan, ND 58259, February 6, 2006.

¹⁷ The stories about her life and death, though not contradictory, vary greatly because no historical facts about her have been established. She was reputedly from a patrician family who devoted herself to learned studies, particularly philosophy. Catherine was converted to Christianity along with many other women from Alexandria. Since then St. Catherine has become one of the most popular saints in Christendom. She is one of the Fourteen Holy Helpers, a cult first advanced by Dominicans and Benedictines during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries in what is now southern Germany and east central Europe. St.

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**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 8 Page 11

St. Catherine's Church of Lomice
Walsh County, ND

Statement of Significance (continued)

funding for the church building project in 1934, but it was difficult. Drought and depression had left parishioners with little or no money to contribute towards their dream of a church. Thus, they turned to the Fargo Diocese, which covered all of eastern North Dakota, as their best hope of obtaining the money. Bishop James O'Reilly refused the request for building funds presented by Rev. Mikolasek because the diocese was heavily in debt at the time.

The already bleak economic situation within the Fargo Diocese continued to worsen after the death of Bishop O'Reilly in December 1934, and Rev. Mikolasek feared that without a church the new mission would soon fail. Rev. Mikolasek had little choice, however, but to bide his time until a new Bishop was installed and hope that the economic situation would improve so that he could obtain funds and approval for construction of a new church. When Bishop Aloisius J. Muench was installed on November 6, 1935, the Fargo Diocese was heavily in debt. To remedy the perilous economic situation of the diocese during the Great Depression, Bishop Muench organized the Catholic Church Expansion Fund, "which was eventually to be copied by virtually every diocese in the country."¹⁸ It was under these severe economic conditions that Rev. Mikolasek approached the new Bishop of Fargo with a request for funds to build a church for the St. Catherine's mission.

When Rev. Mikolasek asked Bishop Muench for building funds, he was both pleased and surprised by the Bishop's response. In spite of the diocese debt, Bishop Muench replied, "I was born in a Czech parish in Milwaukee and baptized by a Czech priest, so in a way I'm half Czech myself. I'd like these good Czech people to have a church, and one like those in the Old Country, so they might remember their Fatherland. I'd like the church to be proof that an attractive church can be built at no great expense. I'll take care of the matter,

Catherine is also the patron saint of thirty groups, including librarians, millers, nurses, philosophers, secretaries, schoolgirls, spinsters, students, universities, lawyers and wheelwrights. Additionally, St. Catherine is invoked against ailments of the tongue. Her feast day is November 25th.

¹⁸ Michael Glazier and Thomas J. Shelly, "Catholic Church in North Dakota," *The Encyclopedia of American Catholic History*, (Collegeville, Minn: The Liturgical Press), 1997, p. 1058.

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Father."¹⁹ The tasks of providing funds for the new church and reducing the Diocese of Fargo's debt proved to be challenging, as the Diocese covers all of eastern North Dakota. Bishop Muench's innovative financial solutions established him as a leading economic reformer within the Catholic Church.

Soon after his assignment to the Fargo Diocese, Muench discovered that banks and lending institutions were unwilling to refinance the diocese's debt. Muench learned from a friend at the Northwestern Mutual Life Insurance Company in Milwaukee (where Muench grew up), that North Dakota was an area where institutional loans were to be refused. This unwillingness to make loans to North Dakotans was due in part to extremely low farm commodity prices and in part to Governor William Langer's moratorium on mortgage foreclosures - neither condition of which augured well for lending institutions intent on at least minimizing their lending losses during difficult economic times.²⁰ Individual parishes were also unable to obtain loans because parish funds were based on voluntary contributions and people were often unable to contribute. Bishop Muench, a trained economist, resolved the diocese's financial problems by creating what he called the Catholic Church Expansion Fund of the Diocese of Fargo (often called just the Expansion Fund). Based upon the same economic principles as cooperatives and credit unions, the Expansion Fund was organized as an audited, separate corporation that pooled the financial resources of all the parishes in the diocese into a central account.²¹ The diocese then acted as investment and loan agent for the parishes by providing financial support for parishes throughout the diocese. Individual parishioners were also encouraged to invest in the Expansion Fund and earned interest rates of 2% for one year to 4% for five-year investments.²² For parishioners able to invest, the Expansion Fund was an instant success because it offered an attractive investment alternative to banks, which had proven

¹⁹ Mikolasek, n.p.

²⁰ Barry, p. 33.

²¹ *ibid.*, p. 37.

²² *ibid.*

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unstable as of late. The Expansion Fund concept was soon adopted by other dioceses throughout the United States. By 1938 the Expansion Fund had a \$100,000 credit line, and by 1945 it had distributed over one million dollars in loans to parishes throughout the Fargo diocese.²³

After establishing a stable financial situation for the construction of a new church, the Diocese of Fargo hired well-known regional architect Joseph Bell DeRemer of Grand Forks to design St. Catherine's Church.²⁴ Mr. DeRemer, a native of Washington, New Jersey, was born in 1871 and studied architecture at Columbia University in New York City in 1896. He, along with his wife Elizabeth and their two children, moved to Grand Forks, North Dakota in 1903. During his first year of residency in Grand Forks Mr. DeRemer designed the President's House at the University of North Dakota (now the Alumni Association House and listed in the National Register). Other DeRemer designs in the region include the Grafton Carnegie Library, the original gymnasium at the University of North Dakota, the old Grand Forks Public Library, United Lutheran Church in Grand Forks, and numerous private homes.²⁵ DeRemer charged the diocese \$400 for the design of St. Catherine's and \$230.78 for supervision of the construction.²⁶

St. Catherine's Church cost \$12,825.79 to construct, of which \$9,000 came from the Catholic Church Expansion Fund.²⁷ Bishop Muench donated the windows and tower cross, as well as a complete set of vestments, linens and sacred vessels worth a total of

²³ *ibid.*

²⁴ Historical Record, Microfilm, Roll #0602., p. 3

²⁵ "Joseph Bell DeRemer" (Grand Forks, N. Dak.: Grand Forks Herald Silver Anniversary Edition, n.d.), pp. 8-9.

²⁶ Expenses, Building of the St. Catherine's Church-Lomice, N.D." on file at St. Catherine's Church, Lomice.

²⁷ Expenses, Building of the St. Catherine's Church-Lomice, N.D." and "St. Catherine'[s] Church-Lomice, N.D. Financial Statement of Building," on file at St. Catherine's Church, Lomice.

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\$1,500.²⁸ Upon completion of the Church in 1938, Bishop Muench and the parishioners of the mission of St. Catherine's had definitely proved that "an attractive church can be built at no great expense."²⁹

St. Catherine's Church was the first construction project financed by the Expansion Fund and helped establish Bishop Muench as a leading financial innovator within the Catholic Church. In addition to financing the construction of St. Catherine's Church, Muench had an active role in selecting the architectural style of St. Catherine's Church, but he left most of the design details to Rev. Mikolasek, a native born Czech, and architect Joseph DeRemer. The result of this collaboration between Muench, Mikolasek and DeRemer is a beautiful stone church and complementary grounds.

The construction of St. Catherine's Church began in 1936 and was completed in 1938. Most of the church construction was done by parishioners, who had gathered the fieldstone used in building the church. The masonry work was supervised by Joseph Vitek, a Czech born stone mason who was a member of the parish. Nothing is known about Mr. Vitek other than secondhand accounts which state that he was born in Czechoslovakia and emigrated to the United States, where he learned stone masonry. He does, however, appear in photographs of the church construction, including the dedication photographs. It is likely that he assisted Bishop Muench in placing the church cornerstone. Bishop Muench dedicated and blessed St. Catherine's Church on July 1, 1937, celebrating High Mass. The ceremonies were attended by more than 1,000 parishioners and visitors.³⁰ Photographs indicate that the church was not completed at that time. Photographs also suggest that Bishop Muench laid the church cornerstone during the dedication and blessing ceremony. Bishop Muench may also have visited the site in 1936 during his tour of all the parishes in the Fargo Diocese.³¹

²⁸ *ibid.* The vestments, linens and sacred vessels were valued at \$1,185, the windows were valued at \$275, and the tower cross was valued at \$40, for a total value of \$1,500. All of these items are identified as donated to the Church by Bishop Muench.

²⁹ [Mikolasek], n.p.

³⁰ *Park River (N. Dak.) Walsh County Press*, 8 July 1937, 1; and *Grafton (N. Dak.) Walsh County Record*, 15 July 1937, 7.

³¹ Barry, p. 38.

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By one account, the church was built on the site of the former Lomice post office, which operated from June 1900 to October 1905.³² The Lomice post office was named for

Lomnice, Bohemia, where many of the area residents were born, including postmaster Frank Kvasnicka.³³ The name of Lomice was retained when the mission station was established in 1934, and became part of the official name of the church when construction began two years later. Official church records identify the site as St. Catherine's Church of Lomice, North Dakota.

Saint Catherine's Church architecture and constructed landscape are significant to the history of Walsh County. First, Saint Catherine's Church is the only rural church in Walsh County constructed in fieldstone as the primary building material; this not only saved money on construction materials (an important part of Muench's plan), but it also resulted in an unusually high level of personal involvement of local parishioners in the preparation and construction of the Church. Rev. Mikolasek noted that materials (i.e., fieldstone) were constantly being brought by parishioners to the construction site.³⁴ The parishioners also donated construction labor under the direction of the stone mason Joseph Vitek. Third, despite its availability, fieldstone is a relatively uncommon building material in North Dakota. The fieldstone added notably to the Church's already distinctive architecture. St. Catherine's Church remains one of the most architecturally distinct and historically significant buildings in Walsh County. This building and its story exemplify the connection between architecture and history.

³² Douglas A. Wick, *North Dakota Place Names* (Bismarck, N. Dak.: Hedemarcken Collectibles, 1988), p. 116.

³³ It is somewhat surprising that the post office was established in the NE1/4 of Section 3, considering that Frank Kvasnicka homesteaded in the NW1/4 of Section 4, T155N R59W, Sauter Township. Presuming that Frank Kvasnicka established the post office, this raises the question of why he would establish a post office almost two miles from his home on someone else's land. A township map dated 1910 indicates that a hall (probably a township hall) was also located in the NE1/4 of Section 3, but west of the future site of St. Catherine's Church. If the post office was located in the NE1/4 of Section 3, it seems more likely that it was located at the hall, which is located on Wavrenica Bina's land, not Thomas Pesek's land where the church was built. The Pesek family history recounted in Balkee, pp. 1229-1230, makes no reference to a post office located on their land, nor do the county deed records. Further research is suggested to clarify the exact location of the former Lomice post office.

³⁴ [Mikolasek], n.p.

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Verbal boundary description

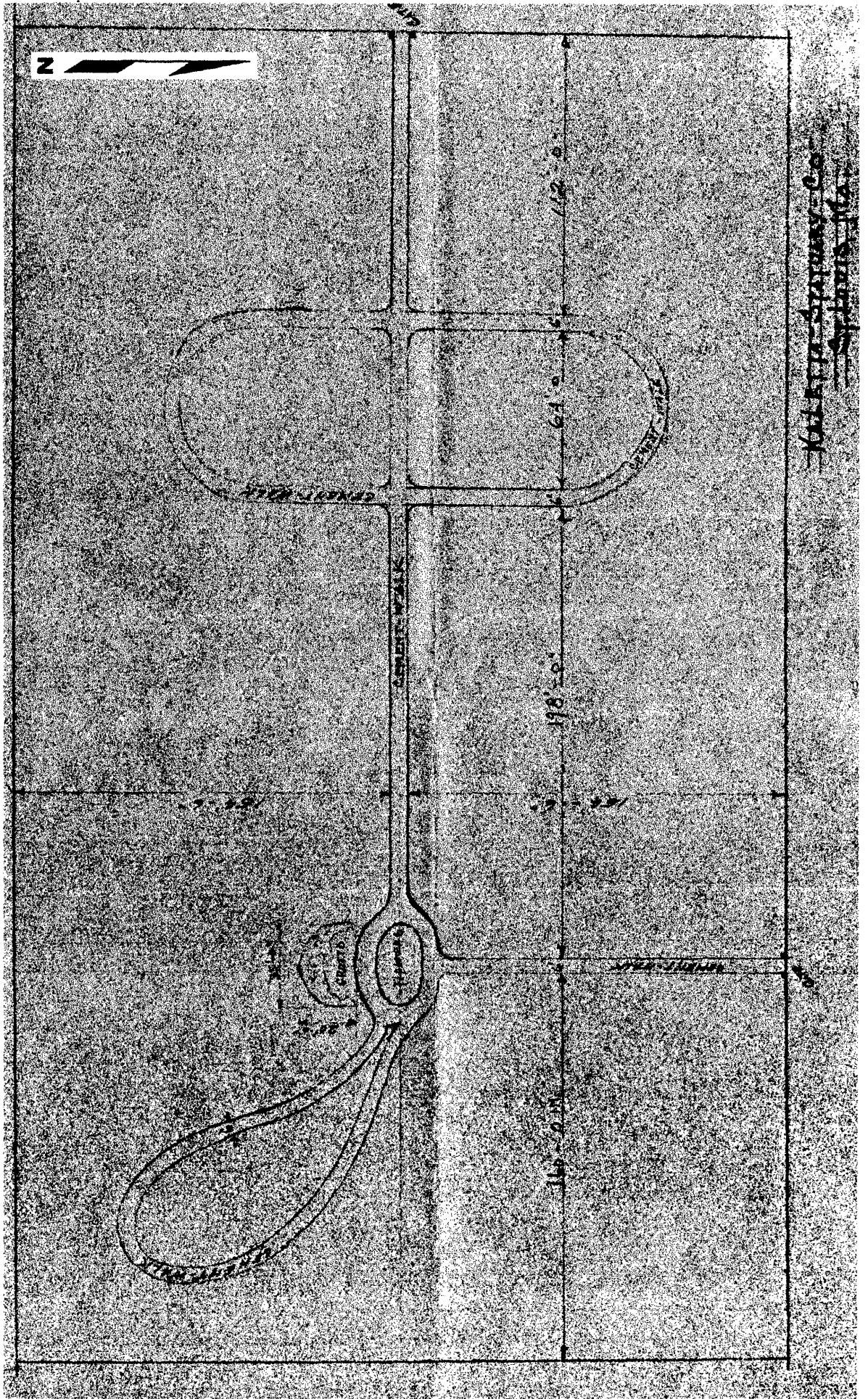
Beginning at the northwest corner of the northeast quarter of the northeast quarter of Section 3, Township 155 North, Range 59 West, Walsh County, North Dakota, thence due east 35 rods, thence due south 23 rods, thence due west 35 rods, thence due north 35 rods to the place of beginning.

Verbal boundary justification

The St. Catherine's Church boundary includes the acreage (approximately 5 acres) which was sold (3 acres) and donated (2) acres to the St. Catherine's parish in 1936 for a church and cemetery. The area nominated includes the Church, four grottoes, and a cemetery. The site is circumscribed by a woven wire fence.

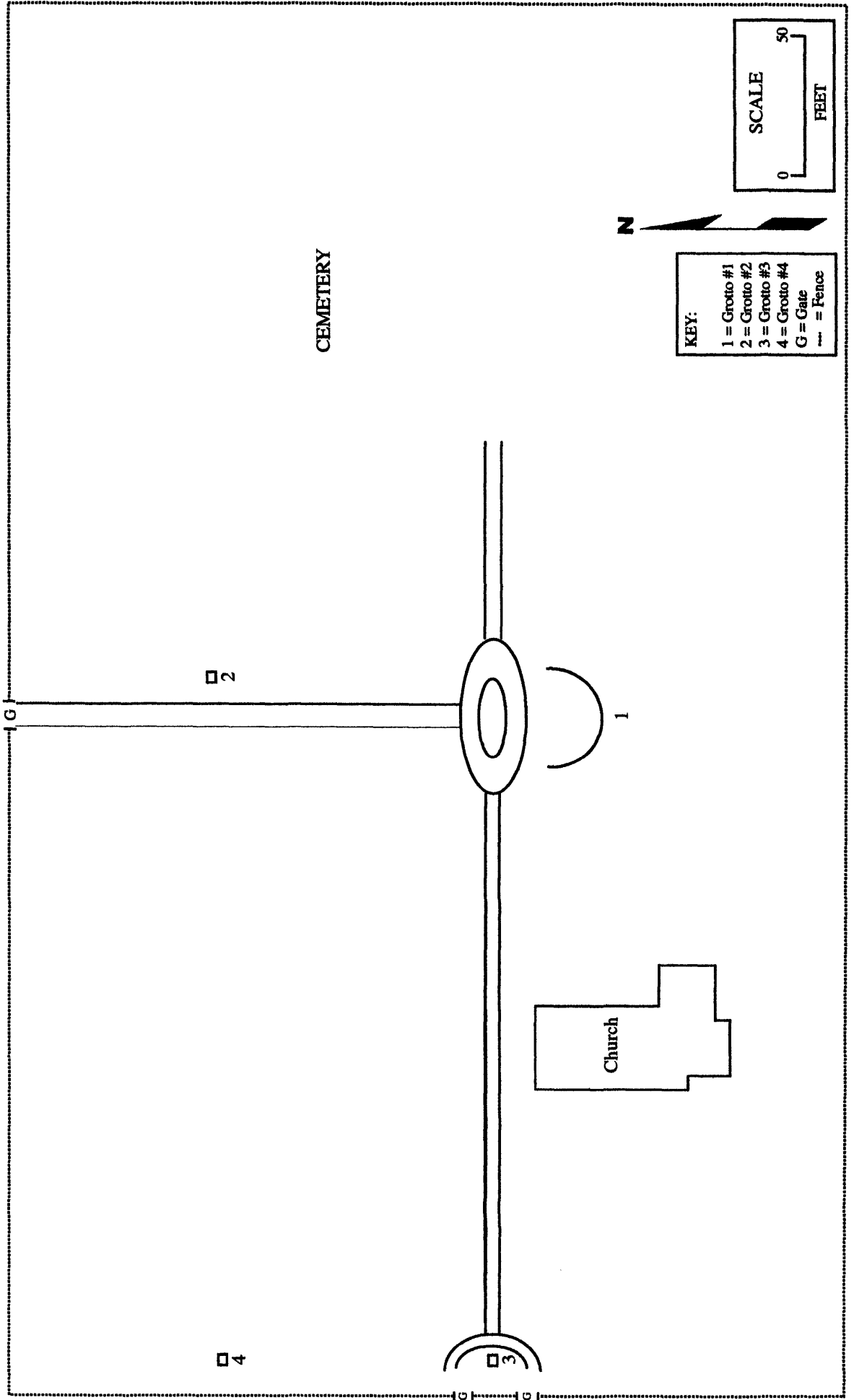
NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

EARLY DESIGN IDEA FOR ST. CATHERINE'S CHURCH LANDSCAPE DRAFTED BY THE KALETTA STATUARY COMPANY



NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

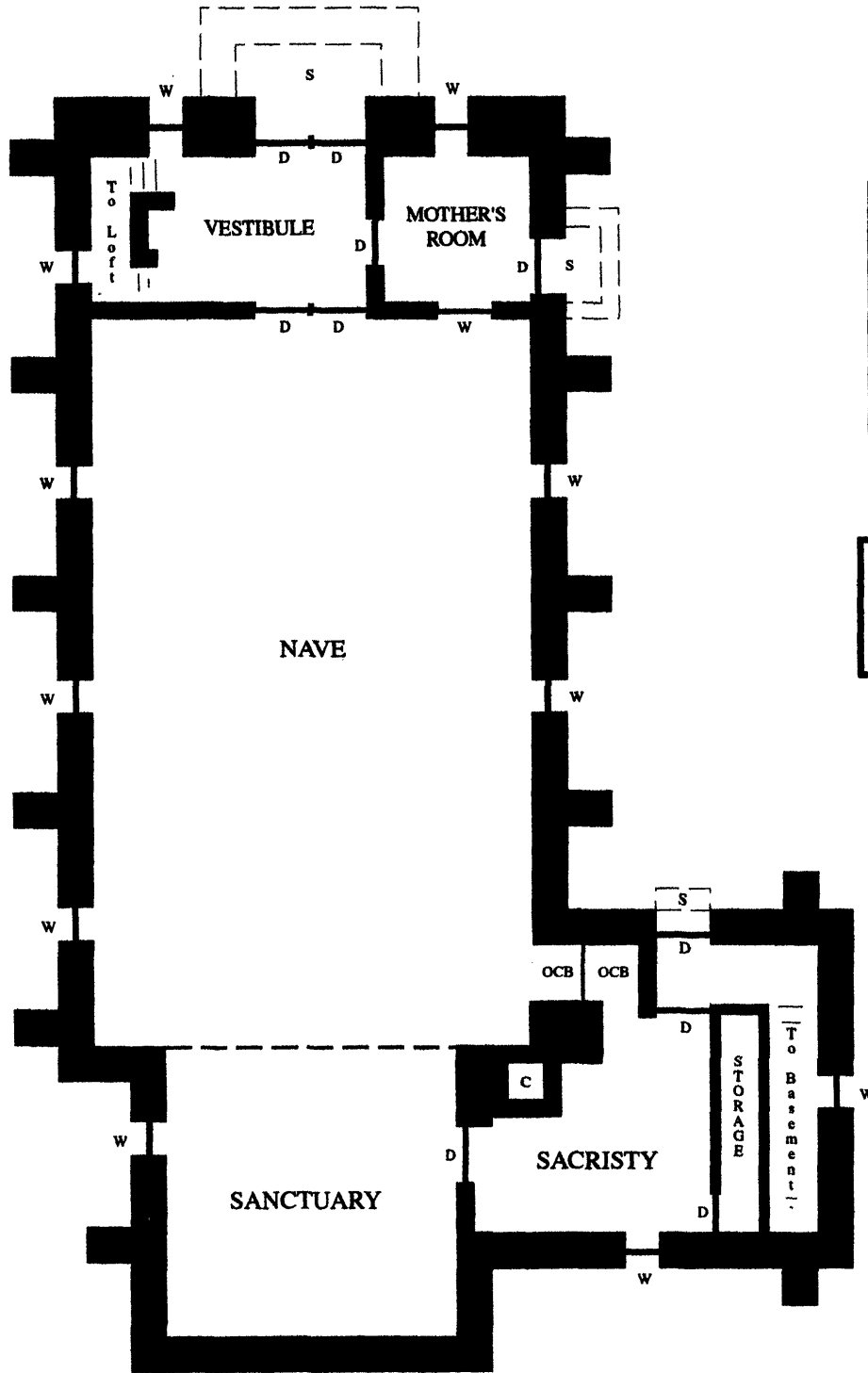
SKETCH MAP OF ST. CATHERINE'S CHURCH GROUNDS



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SKETCH MAP OF ST. CATHERINE'S CHURCH

N



KEY:

- W = WINDOW
- D = DOOR
- C = CHIMNEY
- S = STOOP
- OCB = OLD CONFESS. BOOTH

SCALE

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