

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" 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

Saint Mary's Church is a long and broad structure constructed of coursed ashlar granite. Its picturesque front elevation is composed of a centrally placed nave and gable framing a highly detailed entrance porch and a corner bell tower featuring an irregular stepped silhouette.

The front (south) elevation of Saint Mary's projects an asymmetrical composition focused on the steep nave gable but offset by the bell tower. Its recessed central two-leaf door is framed by an ornate buttressed porch with corner spirelets and an image of the Immaculate Conception. A trio of casement windows occupies the wall between the porch and the nave's corner buttresses. Immediately above the entrance and framed by two wide stringcourses is an oval window whose tracery defines six units each of which embraces a round multifoil window.

Attached to the church's southeast corner is the narrow two-part bell tower. This irregularly shaped structure consists of a recessed drop arched door framed by buttresses and surmounted by a richly detailed louvered belfry. The belfry is capped by a steeply pitched gable roof that abuts a slender secondary tower. This tower bears an image of Mary Queen of Peace located below a cluster of eight pinnacles which ring the base of the octagonal spire.

Jutting from the west side of the nave is the apsidal baptistry. It contains a recessed door on the facade and five pairs of casement windows in each of its elevations.

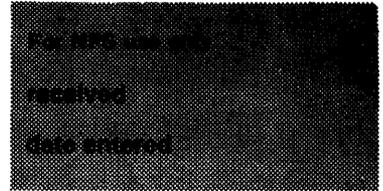
An expansive, steeply pitched roof sheathed in red clay tile covers the long nave. Each bay, seven on the west facade, six on the east, contains five rectangular memorial windows surmounted by ten smaller windows. Buttresses separate the bays, and a trio of hip roofed dormers punctuate the roof. A small gable roofed transept abuts a shed roofed altar recess on the west elevation and a larger transept containing the vestry projects from the east elevation. There is a shed roofed entrance porch on the south side of this transept and a stepped chimney at the rear which abuts the corner of the chancel.

The expansive interior of Saint Mary's, with seating in the nave for 850 persons, remains virtually intact. A vestibule extends across the rear of the nave and aisles between the tower and baptistry. It is detailed with paneled wainscot and entrance reveals and features a coffered ceiling. A broad screen containing stained glass windows in a pattern similar to those on the aisles separates the vestibule from the nave. Immediately above this screen is a cantilevered balcony featuring a coffered ceiling and paneled parapet.

The nave has a center aisle separated from narrow side aisles by arcades whose seven heavily molded drop arches rest on masonry columns. A narrow cornice decorated with painted geometric designs carries along the top of the arcade separating it from the coffered ceiling. The original suspended lights are still in place in the nave. Transverse ribs with paneled spandrels define the bays. The aisles feature paneled wainscot, segmental arches springing from the arcade and coffered ceilings.

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A broad molded arch announces the chancel whose arched coffered ceiling is punctuated by two dormers. An ornate reredos and an arched octagonal pulpit are located in the chancel. When first built, the chancel had a balustrade with short pillars separated by tracery. Two robed figures were formerly located on brackets behind the balustrade. Altar recesses flank the chancel, and to the east is the sacristy.

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 1926-27 **Builder/Architect** O'Connell & Shaw, Architects

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

Saint Mary's Church is among the most architecturally significant religious edifices in Augusta. Built in 1926-27 by the Louis Milo Company of Lewiston, the handsome and richly decorated Gothic building was designed by the Boston architectural firm of O'Connell and Shaw. The deceptively small structure is one of the most picturesque and innovative examples of the churches designed for Catholic parishes throughout the state by the firms in which T.G. O'Connell was a partner.

The present church building is the third house of worship in Augusta to have served Saint Mary's congregation.¹ The growth in the size of the city's Catholic community during the 1830's necessitated the purchase, in 1836, of the former Bethlehem Church (Unitarian). In 1845, a new edifice was erected on State Street. This rectangular wooden frame building featured a squat two-stage bell tower and a belfry capped by a mansard roof.² During the pastorate of the Rev. Thomas J. Nelligan the former Kinsman estate on Western Avenue was acquired for the use of a proposed new church. Nelligan was subsequently transferred to a parish in Bangor and the work fell to his successor, Rev. Thomas J. McLaughlin. Following the 1920 purchase of the Frank Dutton estate, which adjoined the Kinsman estate; Saint Mary's convent removed to the newly acquired Dutton house, whereas the rectory was transferred to the remodeled Kinsman house. On May 6, 1926, a ground breaking ceremony was held for the new church building. It was dedicated on May 30, 1927, by the Rt. Rev. Bishop Murray of Portland.

Judging from the list of known commissions given to the various firms in which T.G. O'Connell was a partner, Maine's Roman Catholic Church proved to be a faithful client.³ Beginning in 1905 the firm of Chickering and O'Connell designed Saint Louis Church in Auburn, Saint Joseph's Convent (1908) in Portland, Saint Andre Church (1909) in Biddeford, Saint Louis Church (1910) in Fort Kent, the Saint John School (1911) in Bangor and Saint David's Church (1911-12) in Madawaska. The wide geographic distribution of these commissions combined with their exclusive Catholic origin is suggestive of the firm's recognition by the ecclesiastical hierarchy.

O'Connell's partnership with Chickering had ended prior to 1915-16 when he alone was credited with the design of Saint Augustine's Roman Catholic Church in Augusta. His next known project was Saint Mary's Church (1926) in Lewiston, but by then Shaw had become his associate. In addition to Saint Mary's in Augusta this firm was responsible for the design of the John Bapst High School (1928) in Bangor. O'Connell is singularly credited with the design of Saints Peter and Paul Church (1928-30, NR 7/14/83) in Lewiston, a commission which perhaps represents the crowning achievement of his career.

9. Major Bibliographical References

O'Connell File, Maine Historic Preservation Commission, Augusta.
Saint Mary's Register. Augusta: Saint Mary's Church, 1927,1936.

10. Geographical Data

Acreege of nominated property Less than 1 acre

Quadrangle name Augusta, Maine

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

UTM References

A

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

B

Zone			Easting				Northing							

C

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D

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H

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Verbal boundary description and justification

The nominated property is contained within the boundary as drawn on the City of Augusta Tax Map 27, Lot 193. This does not include the adjacent school which stands on the same property.

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

state code county code

state code county code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Kirk F. Mohny, Architectural Historian

organization Maine Historic Preservation Commission date April 14, 1987

street & number 55 Capitol Street, Station #65 telephone (207) 289-2132

city or town Augusta state Maine 04333

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 *Eileen S. Threlkeld*

title J. H. P. O. date 5/8/87

For NPS use only

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

located in the National Register

Jayne M. Nefferson date 6/12/87
Keeper of the National Register

Attest: _____ date _____

Chief of Registration

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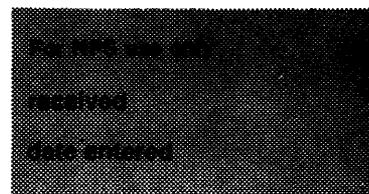
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The formal classical massing of the school buildings and the symmetrical and often academic designs for churches, particularly evident in Saints Peter and Paul Church, provide a framework in which to consider the unique characteristics of Saint Mary's Church. Unlike its cousins Saint Mary's evokes the picturesque image of a small rural parish church. In this respect the building represents a departure from O'Connell's previous and subsequent Maine commissions.

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ENDNOTES

1. The historical background for Saint Mary's Church was taken from the twenty-fifth anniversary edition of Saint Mary's Register (Augusta: Saint Mary's Church, 1936), pp. 8,10,12.
2. A documentary photo postcard of this building is on file at the Maine Historic Preservation Commission, Augusta.
3. Information on T.G. O'Connell's commissions in Maine is on file at the Maine Historic Preservation Commission, Augusta.