



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 National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. 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.

1. Name of Property

Historic name Saint Margaret Mary Catholic Mission
Other names/site number Saint Margaret Mary Catholic Church, St. Margaret Mary's
Name of related multiple property listing N/A
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

2. Location

Street & Number: 9458 Old Alto Hwy
City or town: Decherd State: TN County: Franklin
Not For Publication: n/a Vicinity: Zip: 37324

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 at the following level(s) of significance:
 national statewide local

Applicable National Register Criteria: A B C D

Claudia [Signature] 5/17/17
Signature of certifying official/Title: Date
Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer, Tennessee Historical Commission
State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of Commenting Official: Date

Title: State of Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

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4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register
- determined eligible for the National Register
- determined not eligible for the National Register
- removed from the National Register
- other (explain:)


 Signature of the Keeper
For

7-10-2017
 Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply.)

- Private
- Public – Local
- Public – State
- Public – Federal

Category of Property

(Check only **one** box.)

- Building(s)
- District
- Site
- Structure
- Object

Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1	0	buildings
0	0	sites
0	2	structures
0	0	objects
1	2	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

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6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

Religion / Religious Facility

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

Religion / Religious Facility

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

LATE 19th & EARLY 20th CENTURY REVIVALS: Gothic Revival

Materials: (enter categories from instructions.)

Principal exterior materials of the property:

STONE: Sandstone, Limestone; GLASS; ASPHALT;
WOOD

Narrative Description

Located at 9458 Old Alto Highway, the Saint Margaret Mary Catholic Mission was built in 1938 in the unincorporated town of Alto in Franklin County (2013 population 41,129), Tennessee. The one-story Gothic Revival building has an ell plan containing a one-room sanctuary and a wing protruding from the rear of the west elevation that contains the sacristy. The church was constructed by local craftsmen with a concrete block frame and an exterior covering from locally-quarried sandstone. The sanctuary has the capacity to seat approximately one hundred people. The front- gable roof is clad with asphalt shingles and is decorated at the apex with a metal cross (*see photo 12*). Gothic Revival features include exterior stone buttresses, a steeply-pitched roof, diamond-light stained glass windows, and a Gothic arch front entrance. The St. Margaret Mary Catholic Mission maintains a high degree of integrity with a minimally-altered setting and intact character-defining features.

Setting

The surrounding area of the St. Margaret Mary Catholic Mission is primarily agricultural with some residential homes, churches, and businesses clustered around the crossroads with Roarks Cove Road (*see photos 31 and 32*). The closest incorporated community is the City of Decherd (2013 population 2,445), located nine miles west. The chapel sits atop a knoll with a slight grade going down along the four parcel

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boundaries, particularly to the south. A small, wood sign, located close to Old Alto Highway, reads “St. Margaret Mary Catholic Church, Sun. Mass 8:00AM” across three wood slats (*see photo 35*). A circular exposed aggregate driveway begins on the Old Alto Hwy, curves to the west in front of the church, and wraps around to the west elevation (*see photo 18*). The lot is landscaped with multiple hedges and trees that break up the vista of the neighboring agricultural fields. A row of tall trees demarcates the eastern boundary of the parcel. A non-contributing picnic pavilion is located to the east of the main building (*see photo 34*). A non-contributing, manufactured wood storage shed is located towards the rear of the sacristy on the church’s west elevation (*see photos 28 and 29*). A water pump on small, square concrete slab is located immediately northwest of the shed (*see photo 30*).

Saint Margaret Mary Catholic Mission (contributing building, c. 1938)

Exterior

St. Margaret Mary Catholic Mission is a one-story, ell-plan building of stone construction with a stone foundation. The church is clad with stone quarried from the nearby Roarks Cove and cut into rectangular blocks of various sizes (*see photos 14 and 15*). The principal massing of the building is a rectangular form with four bays divided by stone buttresses. The front-gable roof is steeply-pitched and clad in asphalt shingles. A side wing located at the southwest corner of the building has the depth of the rear bay (*see photos 4 and 5*). The wing has a side-gable, medium-pitched asphalt shingle roof that is about one-half story lower in height than the roof of the sanctuary.

The north façade contains the primary entryway, a set of recessed, double, eight-panel, vertical wood entry doors are centered on the elevation within a pointed semi-circular arch frame (*see photos 1, 2 and 16*). The doors sit beneath an arch-shaped transom filled with ten vertical wood panels and an electric metal-and-glass lantern-style light fixture. A decorative surround of stone blocks cut into trapezoidal and pentagonal shapes borders the transom (*see photo 13*). The stone blocks covering the façade are almost all rectangular, with the exception of two small triangular bricks located approximately six feet apart from the left and right sides of the doors. There is no other fenestration on this elevation. The entrance is accessed by a small, rectangular wood deck with three steps and an ADA-accessible wood ramp that approaches from the east side of the entry doors; beneath the decking are the original stone steps (*see photo 17*). A non-historic cast iron bell is bolted to the wall to the left of the entrance (*see photo 16*).

The east elevation is divided into four evenly-spaced bays, demarcated by three stone buttresses protruding approximately one foot apart from the wall at their bases. The elevation has six, stationary metal casement windows with diamond-light stained glass and metal camework. The first and fourth bays contain one window each, while the second and third bays each contain two evenly-spaced windows (*see photos 10 and 11*).

The west elevation is divided into four bays, mirroring the east elevation; however, the space of the fourth bay is taken up by a small wing containing the sacristy (*see photo 3*). The remaining three bays are divided by two buttresses. Double sets of casement windows fill the second and third bays, while a single casement window sits in the first bay. The sacristy is accessed by a vertical panel wood door on its north elevation. The door is topped with a decorative trim of parallelogram- and trapezoidal-shaped stone blocks. A silver-colored metal lantern light fixture bolted to the wall to the right of the door. A single casement window matching the other windows is located on the west elevation of the sacristy wing.

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The south elevation consists of the back walls of the sanctuary and sacristy (*see photo 6*). There are no windows. A stone chimney bisects the gable field and back wall. A small iron chute for loading coal sits close to the ground six feet to the left of the chimney (*see photo 8*). The coal furnace is no longer in use, having been replaced by a modern HVAC unit located directly in front of the chimney. During a 1990s renovation, asbestos siding on the gable field of the rear elevation was discovered to be infested with bees and was replaced with vinyl material.

Interior

When entering the doorway on the north elevation, visitors walk into the one room that is publically-accessible (*see photos 19 and 20*). The space maintains nearly all of the same features it has had since 1938. Original, narrow-plank oak floors are present, pierced in a few places by metal ventilation grates. The gabled ceiling attempts the illusion of the gothic vault through three arch-based timber roof trusses, separating the room into four bays (*see photos 21 and 26*). Gothic Revival-style lanterns hang from each truss; these are hexagonal-shaped, metal-and-glass forms with three-lobed clover-like motifs (*see photo 23*). In contrast to the rectangular stone bricks on the exterior, the limestone decorating the interior walls is cut into a more natural rock shape with thicker mortaring. Decorative brick quoins border the windows and the interior of the front entrance (*see photos 24 and 27*). The interior transom above the front entrance contains a painted mural of Mary and Jesus. Eighteen wood pews are bolted to the floor and decorated on the side with an arch motif (*see photo 25*). Ceramic figurines depicting the Stations of the Cross line the east and west wells in the spaces between the windows. In the back of the chancery, statues of Mary and Joseph rest on large ash logs cut by Alf Garner in 1939. A pipe organ is located in the northeast corner of the sanctuary (*see photos 21 and 22*).

Changes to the building over time have been minimal. An outdoor privy located just south of the church was removed in the 1960s (*see photo 9*). During a 1990s renovation, vinyl siding was added to the rear gable field (*see photo 7*). A small, rectangular wood deck with a wood, ADA-accessible ramp now covers the original limestone steps at the front entrance, which remain intact and undamaged underneath. The bell on the exterior of the north façade is not original to 1938. It replaced a bell that was formerly attached atop a small stone cairn to the west of the building (*see photo 33*). The interior of the church maintains its original floors, organ, pews, windows, and light fixtures. A confessional box was removed an unknown date. The sacristy wing has mid-20th century floor and ceiling materials, and a small restroom was installed in the 1960s.

Storage Shed (non-contributing structure, c. 1990s)

Located immediately southwest of the church building is a circa 1990s manufactured wood storage shed. The shed is rectangular with an asphalt shingle gambrel roof and wood panel siding. A double front door is located on the center of the north elevation and opens outward, with iron hardware and hinges. The shed sits atop a concrete block pier foundation.

Picnic Pavilion (non-contributing structure, c. 1990s)

Located east of the church building, the pavilion was constructed circa 1990s to provide additional outdoor space for the congregation (*see photo 19*). The rectangular-shaped pavilion's steeply-pitched hipped roof is clad in asphalt shingles. The pavilion is supported by L-shaped natural stone piers at each corner, and wood

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posts with wood knee braces evenly spaced between the piers. The entire structure sits atop a smooth concrete slab.

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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.)

Areas of Significance
(Enter categories from instructions.)

ARCHITECTURE

Period of Significance

1938

Significant Dates

N/A

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Cunningham, James; Garner, Alf ; Garner, Sam; Garner, Jim; McClean, Jim; Dotson, Ralph; McBee, Edward; Long, Harvey; Long, John; Rose, Dick; Finney, Lee; Hendley, Ed; Long, Dick; Long, Jack; Marlowe, Cooper; Marlowe, Aaron

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 grave.

D a cemetery.

E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.

F a commemorative property.

G less than 50 years old or achieving

significance within the past 50 years.

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Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph

The Saint Margaret Mary Catholic Mission is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion C in the area of architecture at the local level of significance. Built in 1938 by local craftsmen, it is a strong example of a rural Gothic Revival-style chapel. The sandstone building has a rectangular floorplan for the sanctuary, with a small rectangular wing containing the sacristy. The sanctuary portion of the building features a steeply-pitched gable roof, arched entryway, stained glass windows, and stone buttresses. The stone used for the church's exterior has a sandy texture and color, similar in appearance to Crab Orchard Stone, and has been referred to as "Franklin County Sandstone" in historical documents. The Church contextually relates to the history of the Catholic Paulist Father's trailer mission activities throughout rural Southeast Tennessee. The period of significance is 1938, when the church was constructed. The site maintains a high degree of integrity in the area of location, setting, association, feeling, design, materials and workmanship.

Narrative Statement of Significance

Local Context

The Saint Margaret Mary Catholic Mission lies at the northeastern edge of Franklin County, Tennessee along the stretch of the Old Alto Highway between Decherd and U.S. Route 64. Early Euro-American settlement of the area began around 1800 as part of the westward expansion following the Revolutionary War. The county was formally established in 1807 and named after Benjamin Franklin. Prior to the Civil War, Franklin County was a largely agricultural area, with a large portion of the labor being performed by enslaved workers. Although cotton was a major commodity, the soil conditions were better suited to corn, wheat and livestock. The particularly fertile land is formed in large part from the presence of multiple limestone coves, notably Farmer's Cove, Lost Cove, Round Cove, Sinking Cove, and Roark's Cove.¹

The transportation traffic in the county transformed significantly in 1851 with the establishment of the Nashville & Chattanooga Railroad, which built an important depot at what was then just a small crossroads at Decherd. As Decherd grew, a community of Methodists, Baptists and Presbyterians came together to construct a shared church building. The church was later burned by Union troops during the Civil War.² In 1867, the first Catholic Church of Franklin County was built in Winchester. Named St. Martin's after the patron saint of the parishioner who donated funds for its construction, the building was of a simple frame construction and accommodated approximately one hundred people. Although a second and larger St. Martin's Church was completed in 1893, the extremely small Catholic community still had no resident priest or regularly scheduled services. It was the only Catholic Church within Franklin County upon the arrival of the Paulist Fathers in 1901.

Origins and History

Founded in 1858 by New York Priest Isaac Thomas Hecker, the mission of the Paulist Order is to preach the gospel and provide information to American non-Catholics, with the goal of gaining new Catholic converts.

¹ *History of Tennessee, from the earliest time to the present; together with an historical and a biographical sketch of Giles, Lincoln, Franklin and Moore counties* (Nashville: The Goodspeed Publishing Company, 1886) 785-804.

² Ibid.

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Over the course of the 20th century, the Paulists became known for their outreach among the rural and urban poor, making innovative use of radio, film screenings, and print media. In the late-19th century, the Paulists chose Tennessee as the location of their southern apostolate, where they planned to serve the small Catholic population and spread their message throughout a particularly non-Catholic area. Rural Tennessee had no significant Catholic population at that time, apart from a community of German-Americans who had established several parishes throughout Lawrence County.³ The new Paulist mission also came at the request of Bishop Thomas Byrne (5th Bishop of Nashville), who in 1899 wrote to Paulist Superior General George Deshon with a formal proposal for the Paulists to set up a mission in Tennessee. He stated, "...there is a great spirit of enquiry among them, and while they have the hostility against the Church of people who have been misinformed by their leaders from infancy, they are nevertheless honest and open to conviction." Bishop Byrne furthermore believed the Paulists would make the best evangelists in the area due to them being "mostly American." He described Tennesseans as "very sensitive on the point of nationality. They are Americans through and through, and are rather impatient in listening to one with a foreign accent."⁴

While some argued for Paulist headquarters in the city of Nashville, Father Walter Elliot believed such a move would be a slight to the authority of the Nashville Diocese. Father John Marks Handley of Winchester Tennessee, a convert and Paulist priest, is credited with brokering the deal that led the Paulists to acquire Albert S. Marks' (his cousin's) former estate, Hundred Oaks. Despite concerns about Winchester's isolation from major urban centers, the Paulists arrived in 1901 and Hundred Oaks became the headquarters of their third mission serving American Protestants. They rechristened the estate "The House of St. Francis de Sales" and converted the library into St. Michael's Chapel. Hundred Oaks was soon the location of the first Paulist Convention, at which the order's national mission to evangelize Protestants was formally defined and planned.⁵ In 1907, construction of the Good Shepherd Church (burned in 1967) led Winchester to become a major site of Catholic religious activity, and the reputation of the "monks" from Hundred Oaks grew steadily throughout the south.⁶ Hundred Oaks was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1975, but has since been delisted due to major fire damage in 1991 that caused a loss of integrity.

Although they came to convert others to their faith, the Paulists soon found themselves modifying ancient Catholic practices in order to suit the customs of rural Tennessee. The Catholic liturgy calls for a prescribed set of architectural features, most notably the chancel, altar, and crucifix. Indeed, the concepts of religious practice and religious buildings are so intertwined that the institution is often referred to in architectural terms, "The Church." In contrast, some rural Tennesseans have a religious heritage that is distinct from its architecture. John Kiser describes early Tennesseans as a religious people with "little need for fine church

³ National Register of Historic Places, Sacred Heart of Jesus Church, Lawrence County, Tennessee, National Register # 84000093.

⁴ Marian Howard, Rosilyn Flanagan and Larry Gibney. *Led by the Spirit: The Paulist Fathers in Rural Tennessee, 1900-1954*. 2001.

⁵ National Register of Historic Places, Hundred Oaks Castle, Franklin County, Tennessee, National Register #75001753, removed November 16, 1994.

⁶ Historic American Buildings Survey: Hundred Oaks, HABS No. TN-122.

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buildings. Theirs was a preaching religion, not a sacramental religion, and the Word could be preached in open air, under brush arbors, or in log “meeting houses” as they preferred to call their churches.”⁷

In crafting a successful approach for their endeavors, the Paulists modified their evangelism to place greater emphasis on preaching the gospel and less emphasis on the other Catholic sacraments. This shift of focus was embodied most clearly in the famous “motor missions” that the Paulists hauled across Tennessee in the 1930s and 40s. The first motor chapel (the “St. Lucy”) was acquired in the 1930s with the help of The Paulist League and donation from a wealthy New York business man. Father James Cunningham drew up the specifications and placed the order with the Vagabond Company of New Hudson, Michigan. The St. Lucy was twenty-one feet long with twin axles, a front section with sleeping accommodations, and a rear section with swinging doors that opened to create a platform and altar. The motor chapel was pulled by a 1937 Ford V8 tow car, and was also installed with a loud speaker and a pull-down screen to display films.⁸ Thus, Catholic ritual and ceremony were adapted to suit the open-air worship style of southern evangelicals.

The trailer missions were run by teams of two priests who would travel and set up sites for mission revivals in farmers’ fields and vacant lots. They quickly became a form of rural entertainment, especially when they played music and films. News spread in the form of handbills and posters. Nightly attendance would reach up to 200 for screenings of the Cecil B. DeMille film “King of Kings.” The motor chapel also had a secular community function when the priests volunteered use of the loud speaker for high school sports games, horse shows, and other local events.⁹ The most successful site for mission trailers was in Alto, TN, where locals who became interested in the Catholic faith began to hold meetings in the home of Mike Kennedy. The Paulists would visit on Sundays to say mass for the town’s two Catholics and a growing group of catechumens. Before long, the Paulists knew this community would need a brick and mortar church.

On June 9, 1938, Fr. James Cunningham wrote to Bishop Adrian seeking permission to build a chapel in Alto on land donated by Mr. Kennedy. The deed to the property would be made out to the Bishop, but the property would revert back to the Kennedy heirs if it ever ceased its use for church services. For this reason, it was import for the building to be a permanent structure “of stone and practically indestructible. It will not be easy to tear down the building or use it for a purpose other than that designed.”¹⁰ The Bishop approved these plans and also helped the Paulists obtain funding from the Catholic Extension Society, a charitable organization for building churches in rural areas. With \$1,000 dollars from the Extension Society, \$1,000 from the Paulist League, and \$2,000 in private donations, the Catholics of Alto had the funds to start construction. The original plan to use land donated by the Kennedy family was changed when Alf Garner offered a parcel more centrally-located on the Alto-Decherd Highway.¹¹ Construction began in July 1938 and

⁷ John Kiser, “Introduction,” *A Treasury of Tennessee Churches*, edited by Mayme Hart Johnson. Brentwood: JM Productions, 1986.

⁸ Howard, Rosalind and Gibney.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ James Cunningham to Bishop Adrian, June 9, 1938, Diocese of Nashville Archives, Nashville, TN.

¹¹ Buford Gipson, *Saint Margaret Mary Catholic Church*, parish brochure, n.d.

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was completed by November. Local residents provided all of the carpentry and masonry and quarried the stone from nearby Roarks' Cove.¹²

At the dedication of the Saint Margaret Mary Mission on December 4th, the Paulists proudly parked the St. Lucy Motor Chapel directly in front of the stone edifice and posed for a group photograph (see figure 4). They made sure to let the newspapers know that the work of the trailer mission would continue and that the success of St. Margaret Mary would be duplicated. The *Chattanooga Free Press* reported, "Chapel Brings Christianity to Mountains: Motor-Chapel Finds Great Need Near Alto and New Parish is Dedicated by Bishop Adrian," making special note of "the familiar Catholic cross atop it and a beautiful altar."¹³

Between 1901 and 1954, the Paulists established other parishes and missions in South Pittsburg, Tullahoma, Shelbyville, Murfreesboro, Brownington, and Eastlands. Their most active period corresponded with the heyday of the trailer missions in the late 1930s. Undoubtedly, their travel was made easier by the Civilian Conservation Corps' construction of a new road stretching from Sewanee Mountain to Cowan, now known as U.S. Route 61/41A.¹⁴ Yet, as their influence grew, the community's need for them diminished. The growing population of Catholics in South Central Tennessee captured the attention of the Nashville Diocese, which offered up increased oversight and resources to supplement Paulist activities. During World War II, the Air Force base in Tullahoma brought in "cradle Catholics" from other parts of the county, lessening the need for evangelism, but growing the need for continuous support from the diocese. Trailer mission activities furthermore slowed significantly as gasoline was rationed and priests were called up to serve as Army Chaplains.

By the end of the war, the location of Hundred Oaks in Winchester was starting to feel hopelessly isolated. The property had costly maintenance and the land was not turning over a profit. Paulist priests were not earning salaries at the churches where they served.¹⁵ In 1954, arrangements were made with Bishop Adrian to move the Paulist Tennessee Headquarters to St. Patrick's Church in Memphis. Although their buildings and their legacy remained, there were those who felt the rapid departure dealt quite a blow to the community. Several families sending their children to the Good Shepherd School in Winchester had depended on the Paulists to personally provide transportation. Rev. Edward O. Heymer, who took over at Good Shepherd Church and School after the Paulist departure, wrote to the Nashville Chancellor in frustration, saying "The Paulists burned all records and their bridges behind them."¹⁶

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Tom Raines, "St. Margaret Mary Catholic Mission, Alto, History," *Chattanooga Free Press*, Dec 11, 1938, Diocese of Nashville Archives, Nashville, TN.

¹⁴ Carol Van West, *Tennessee's New Deal Landscapes: A Guidebook*. (Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 2001) 218.

¹⁵ Howard, Rosalind and Gibney.

¹⁶ Rev. Edward O. Heymer to Chancellor Charles Williams, August 25, 1958; *Good Shepherd, Decherd: History & Hundred Oaks Castle, Paulist Trailer Chapel, Commemorative Books*, n.d., Diocese of Nashville Archives, Nashville, TN.

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Architecture and Integrity

To match Fr. James Cunningham’s vision of permanence and tradition, the builders of the St. Margaret Mary Mission incorporated multiple elements of gothic architecture into the building’s design. Gothic Revival architecture in Tennessee is frequently associated with the Anglican and Episcopalian traditions, having been first introduced in Middle Tennessee by Bishop James Harvey Otey in the 1830s. The style quickly spread in popularity into West Tennessee, finally also reaching parts of East Tennessee towards the end of the 19th century.¹⁷ Like Catholics, Episcopalians have historically placed a greater emphasis on architecture and physicality than what may be found in the Methodist and Baptist traditions of the simple meeting house. James Patrick attributes this to the 19th-century “Roman Movement” within the Episcopalian Church, where it was thought “the architecture and liturgy of the Middle Ages would, if successfully re-created, evoke by its symbolism the piety and ethics of the thirteenth century.”¹⁸

When the Paulist Fathers first arrived in Winchester in 1901, one of their first actions was to build the Good Shepherd Church in the Gothic Revival style (*see figure 1*). Larger than the second St. Martin’s which was finished in 1893, Good Shepherd approached a high-style expression with molded concrete block, exposed woodwork, stained glass, arched windows, and a tower with a castellated parapet. The fathers may have drawn influence from the nearby Trinity Episcopal Church in Winchester, the Hundred Oaks Estate, and the multiple other Paulist churches in New York and California. In 1927, the Paulists played a key role in establishing the Our Lady of Lourdes Parish in South Pittsburg, Tennessee.¹⁹ Built in the Spanish Mission style, rather than Gothic Revival, Our Lady of Lourdes nevertheless conveys a sense of ancient religious ritual through its architecture.

Although the St. Margaret Mary Catholic Mission was constructed decades after the peak of popularity for Gothic Revival architecture, the builders chose this style because it fit their concept of how a proper Catholic church should look. Through the use of local building materials and techniques, they simplified the iconic gothic features of vaulted ceilings, stained glass, and flying buttresses by using exposed roof trusses, frosted glass, and traditional buttresses in full contact with the exterior wall. Brick quoins decorating the interior borders of the windows and front entrance add a particularly medieval touch. The aesthetic is made complete with an arch motif that is carved into the sides of the wooden pews, and Gothic Revival-style chandeliers hanging from each truss in the ceiling.

The St. Margaret Mary Catholic Mission maintains a high degree of integrity in **location** and **setting**, as the rural context of Alto has not undergone any substantial development or change since the building’s construction. A picnic pavilion was constructed on site in the 1990s in a compatible style of local limestone and is spaced at an appropriate distance from the historic building. St. Margaret Mary Catholic Mission in Alto is arguably the best surviving example of a building **associated** with the Paulists of Hundred Oaks.

¹⁷ James Patrick, *Architecture in Tennessee, 1768-1897*, Contemporary photography by Michael A. Tomlen (Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 1981), 105.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 111.

¹⁹ National Register of Historic Places. South Pittsburg Historic District. Marion County, TN. National Register #90001573.

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While the Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Church is currently listed in the National Register district (South Pittsburg Historic District, NRHP 10/25/1990), it does not share the same strong association with the Paulist trailer mission activities. Paulist churches in Winchester, Murfreesboro, and Tullahoma have been demolished or destroyed and replaced with more modern buildings, while the locations and Browington and Eastlands are possibly no longer extant. St. William Church in Shelbyville (1941) still stands, but may lack integrity due to a large addition on the rear elevation. Over the past seventy-nine years, St. Margaret Mary has preserved its original **design** and **workmanship**, its congregation mindfully not altering any character-defining features or replacing a significant amount of **materials**. Through its picturesque setting and vernacular construction, St. Margaret Mary Catholic mission continues to exude the **feeling** of the Paulist spirit.

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9. Major Bibliographic References

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- History of Tennessee, from the earliest time to the present; together with an historical and a biographical sketch of Giles, Lincoln, Franklin and Moore counties*. Nashville: The Goodspeed Publishing Company, 1886.
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Previous documentation on file (NPS):		Primary location of additional data:	
<input type="checkbox"/>	preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67 has been requested)	<input type="checkbox"/>	State Historic Preservation Office
<input type="checkbox"/>	previously listed in the National Register	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other State agency
<input type="checkbox"/>	previously determined eligible by the National Register	<input type="checkbox"/>	Federal agency
<input type="checkbox"/>	designated a National Historic Landmark	<input type="checkbox"/>	Local government
<input type="checkbox"/>	recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey #	<input type="checkbox"/>	University
<input type="checkbox"/>	recorded by Historic American Engineering Record #	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other
<input type="checkbox"/>	recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey #	Name of repository:	
Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): FR-661			

Saint Margaret Mary Catholic Mission
Name of Property

Franklin County, TN
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10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 1.6 acres **USGS Quadrangle** Alto 93-SW

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates

Latitude: 35.269527

Longitude: -85.957104

Verbal Boundary Description

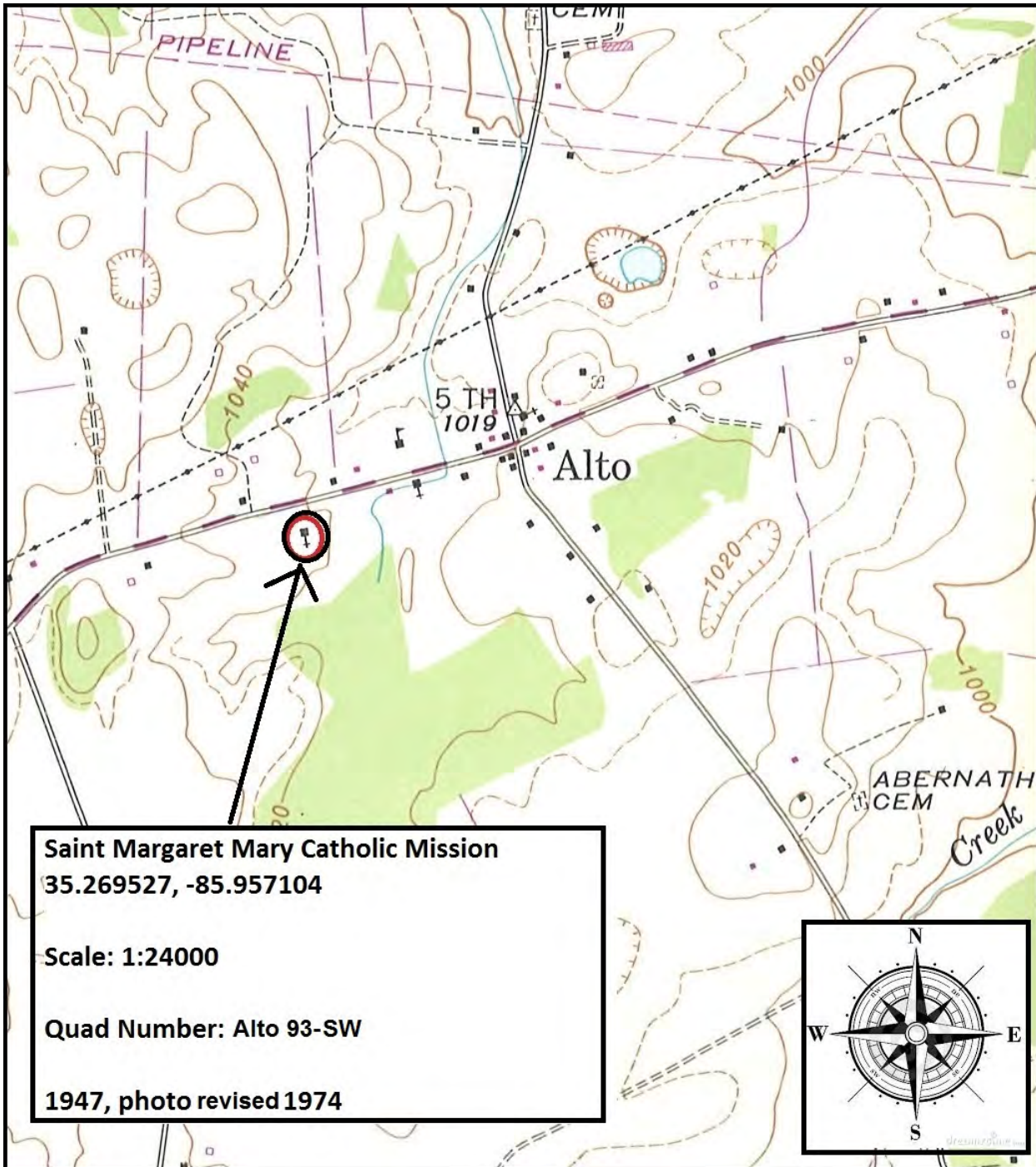
The boundary for the St. Margaret Mary Catholic Mission begins on the southern side of the Old Alto Hwy approximately halfway between Coleman Lane and Rutledge Ford Road/Roark's Cove Road. The northern boundary runs along Old Alto Hwy for approximately 420 feet. The main church building sits towards the southwest corner of the 1.60 acre roughly rectangular parcel. The parcel is loosely outlined by trees, particularly along the eastern edge. Beyond the parcel boundaries, the adjacent land is in active agricultural use.

Boundary Justification

The boundary represents the 1.60 acre parcel that has been historically associated with the church.

Saint Margaret Mary Catholic Mission
Name of Property

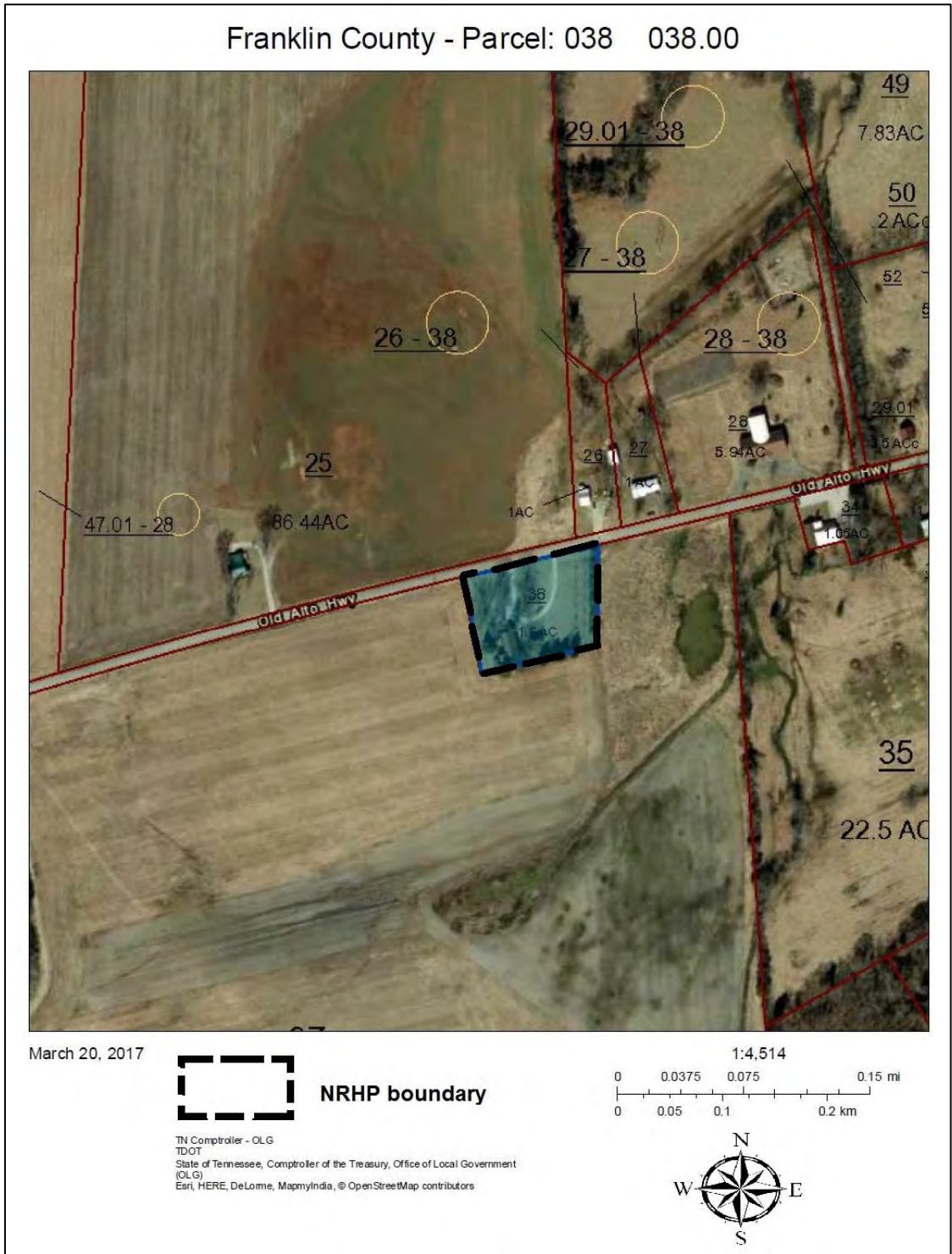
Franklin County, TN
County and State



USGS Topographical Map (Alto Quadrangle, 93-SW) showing location of the St. Margaret Mary Catholic Mission.

Saint Margaret Mary Catholic Mission
Name of Property

Franklin County, TN
County and State



Parcel tax map with National Register Boundary for St. Margaret Mary Catholic Mission.

Saint Margaret Mary Catholic Mission
Name of Property

Franklin County, TN
County and State

11. Form Prepared By

Name Jane-Coleman Harbison
Organization Tennessee Historical Commission
Street & Number 2941 Lebanon Pike Date March 21, 2017
City or Town Nashville Telephone 615-770-1088
E-mail Jane-Coleman.Harbison@tn.gov State TN Zip Code 37209

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A **USGS map** or equivalent (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to map.
- **Photographs** (refer to Tennessee Historical Commission National Register *Photo Policy* for submittal of digital images and prints)
- **Additional items:** (additional supporting documentation including historic photographs, historic maps, etc. should be included on a Continuation Sheet following the photographic log and sketch maps)

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.460 et seq.).
Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 100 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 Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.

Saint Margaret Mary Catholic Mission

Franklin County, TN

Name of Property

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Photo Log

Name of Property: St. Margaret Mary Catholic Mission
City or Vicinity: Alto
County: Franklin State: Tennessee
Photographer: Jane-Coleman Harbison
Date Photographed: December 11, 2016

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera:

- 1 of 35. Northeast oblique. Photographer facing southwest.
- 2 of 35. North elevation. Photographer facing south.
- 3 of 35. Northwest oblique. Photographer facing southeast.
- 4 of 35. North elevation of sacristy entrance. Photographer facing south.
- 5 of 35. West elevation. Photographer facing east.
- 6 of 35. South elevation. Photographer facing northeast.
- 7 of 35. South elevation gable field and chimney detail. Photographer facing northeast.
- 8 of 35. Old coal depository on south elevation. Photographer facing north.
- 9 of 35. Former privy site. Photographer facing south.
- 10 of 35. Southeast oblique. Photographer facing northwest.
- 11 of 35. East elevation. Photographer facing west.
- 12 of 35. Cross on roof near north elevation. Photographer facing south.
- 13 of 35. Front entrance detail. Photographer facing south.
- 14 of 35. Stonework detail east of entryway. Photographer facing south.
- 15 of 35. Stonework detail west of entryway. Photographer facing south.
- 16 of 35. Cast iron bell mounted to exterior wall east of entryway. Photographer facing south.
- 17 of 35. Original stone steps at front entryway. Photographer facing south.

Saint Margaret Mary Catholic Mission
Name of Property

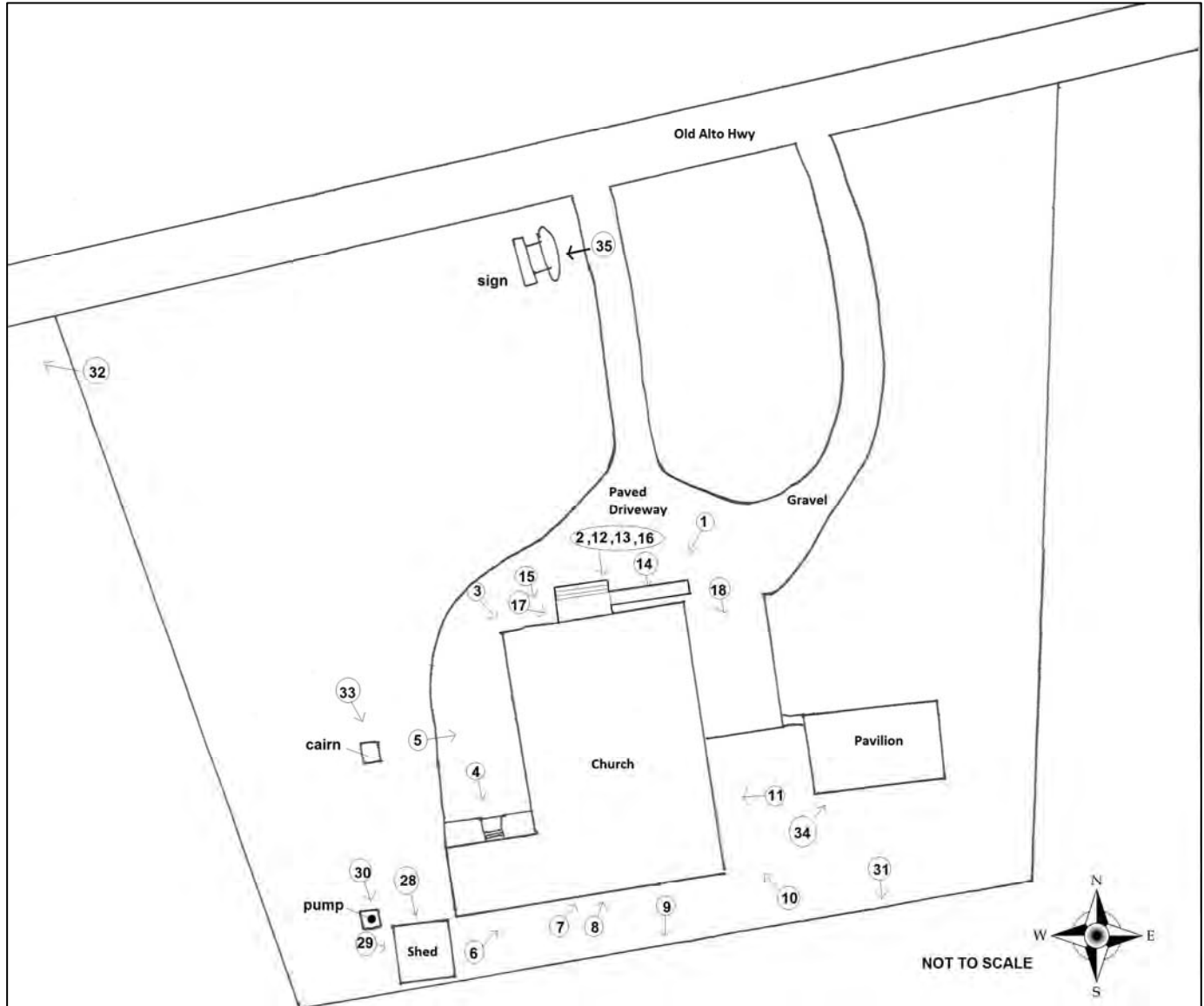
Franklin County, TN
County and State

-
- 18 of 35. Driveway located along church's east elevation. Photographer facing south.
- 19 of 35. View of sanctuary and chancel. Photographer facing south.
- 20 of 35. View of sanctuary and front entry. Photographer facing north.
- 21 of 35. View of sanctuary and pipe organ. Photographer facing northeast.
- 22 of 35. Detail view of organ. Photographer facing east.
- 23 of 35. View of sanctuary. Photographer facing northwest.
- 24 of 35. Interior view of window on west elevation. Photographer facing west.
- 25 of 35. Detail view of side pews. Photographer facing west.
- 26 of 35. Detail of buttressing and chandeliers. Photographer facing upwards and southwest.
- 27 of 35. Detail of door and mural above front entry. Photographer facing north.
- 28 of 35. North elevation of shed. Photographer facing south.
- 29 of 35. Northwest oblique of shed. Photographer facing southeast.
- 30 of 35. Water pump. Photographer facing south.
- 31 of 35. View of land south of parcel. Photographer facing south.
- 32 of 35. View of land northwest of parcel. Photographer facing northwest.
- 33 of 35. Original cairn for church bell. Photographer facing southeast.
- 34 of 35. View of pavilion. Photographer facing northeast.
- 35 of 35. Sign next to paved driveway and Old Alto Hwy. Photographer facing west.

Saint Margaret Mary Catholic Mission
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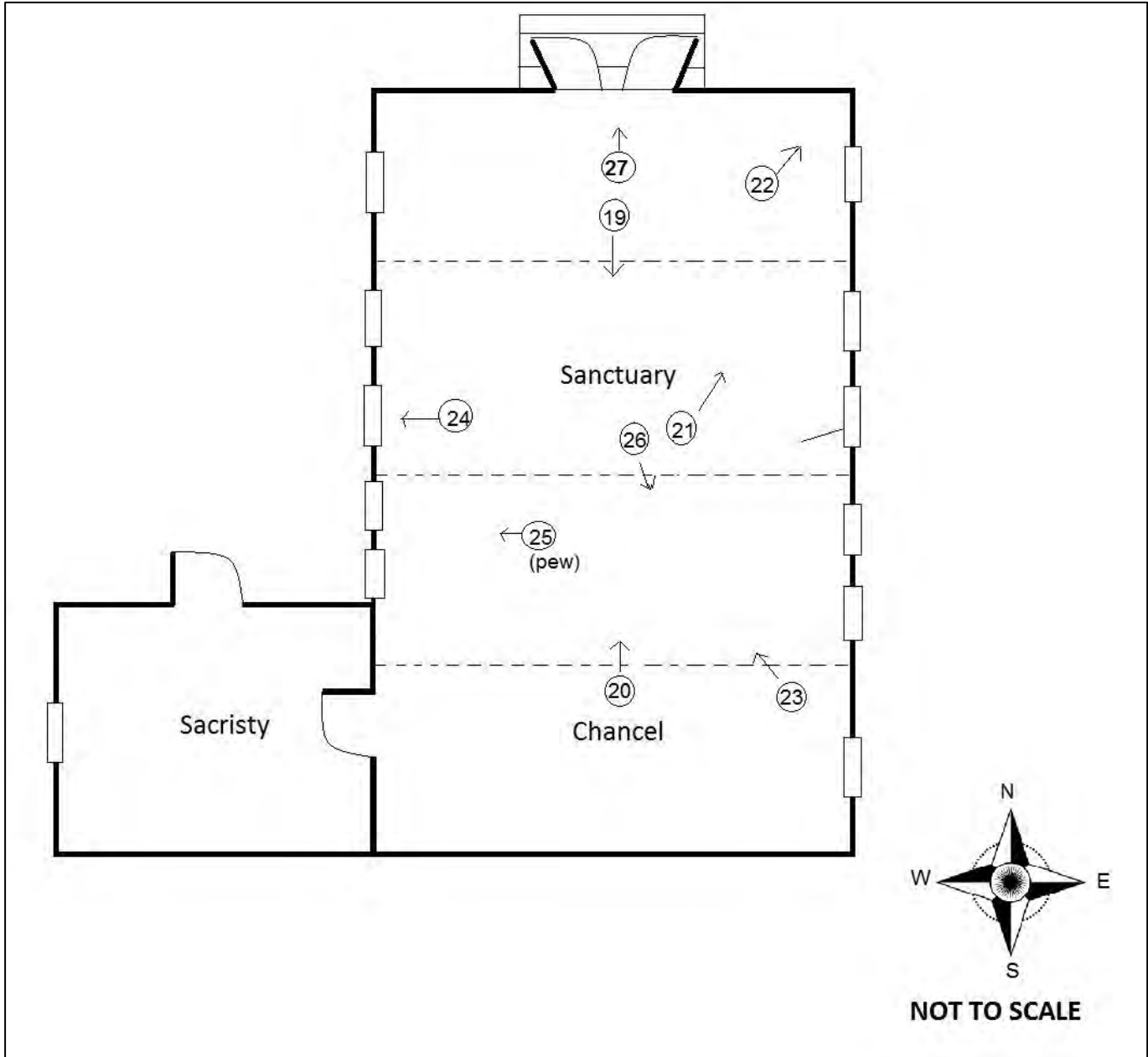
Site Plan w/Photo Key



Saint Margaret Mary Catholic Mission
Name of Property

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Floor Plan w/Photo Key



United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

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Saint Margaret Mary Catholic Mission
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Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

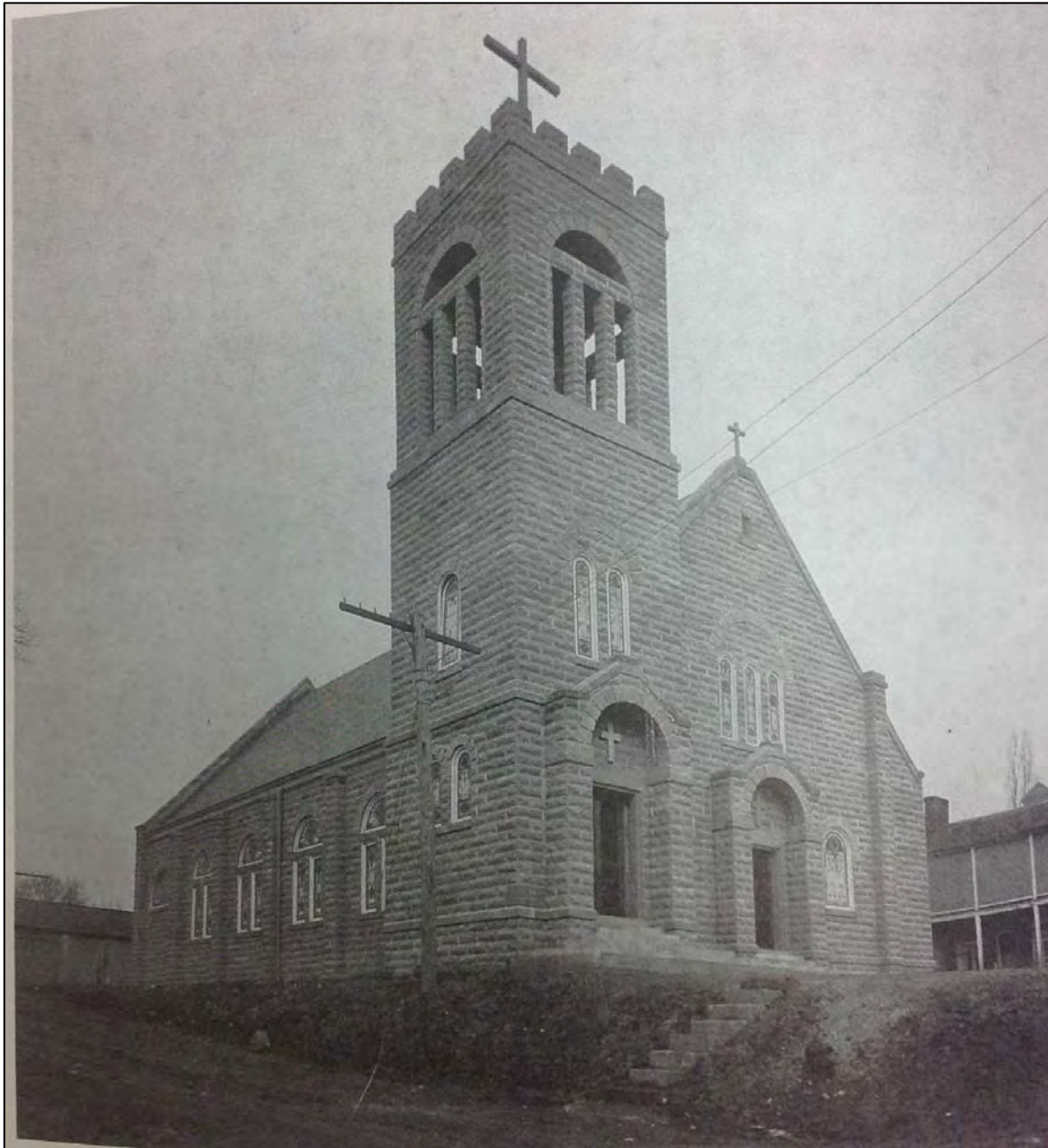


Figure 1: Undated photograph of Church of the Good Shepherd (1907), Winchester, TN.
Source: Diocese of Nashville Archives.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places
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Saint Margaret Mary Catholic Mission
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Figure 2: Photograph from dedication of the St. Margaret Mary Catholic Mission, ca. 1938.
Source: Diocese of Nashville Archives.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

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Saint Margaret Mary Catholic Mission
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Figure 3: Exterior view (northeast oblique) of St. Margaret Mary Catholic Mission, 1938.
Source: Diocese of Nashville Archives.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
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Figure 4: Interior of the St. Margaret Mary Catholic Mission, 1938. Photographer facing northeast.
Source: Diocese of Nashville Archives.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

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Figure 5: Interior of the St. Margaret Mary Catholic Mission, 1938. Photographer facing south.
Source: Diocese of Nashville Archives.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

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Figure 6: Artist rendering of the St. Margaret Mary Catholic Mission (1938).
Source: Diocese of Nashville Archives.

















WHEELING





















































**ST. MARGARET MARY
CATHOLIC CHURCH
SUN. MASS 8:00AM**





TENNESSEE HISTORICAL COMMISSION
STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICE
2941 LEBANON PIKE
NASHVILLE, TENNESSEE 37243-0442
OFFICE: (615) 532-1550
E-mail: Claudette.Stager@tn.gov
(615) 770-1089

May 17, 2017

J. Paul Loether
Deputy Keeper and Chief
National Register and National Historic Landmark Programs
National Register of Historic Places
1849 C St. NW
Washington, D.C. 20240

Dear Mr. Loether:

Enclosed please find the documentation to nominate the *St. Margaret Mary Catholic Mission* to the National Register of Historic Places. The enclosed disks contain the true and correct copy of the nomination for the listing of the *St. Margaret Mary Catholic Mission* to the National Register of Historic Places.

If you have any questions or if more information is needed, contact Caroline Eller at (615) 770-1086 or Caroline.Eller@tn.gov.

Sincerely,

Claudette Stager
Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer

CS:ce

Enclosures (3)