

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

869

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 PropertyHistoric name: Sacred Heart Public School

Other names/site number:

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: 100 Elm StreetCity or town: Sacred Heart State: Minnesota County: RenvilleNot For Publication: n/a Vicinity: n/a**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

Barbara Howard

Signature of certifying official>Title:

August 25, 2014

Date

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: Barbara Mitchell Howard, Deputy SHPO, MHS

Date

Title :

State or 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: _____)

Joe Cohan Jr. Beall

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

10.20.14

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

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Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1	_____	buildings
_____	_____	sites
_____	_____	structures
_____	_____	objects
1	_____	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register N/A

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

EDUCATION/school

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

VACANT/NOT IN USE

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7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

LATE 19TH AND 20TH CENTURY REVIVALS/Colonial Revival/Georgian Revival

MODERN MOVEMENT

Materials: (enter categories from instructions.)

Principal exterior materials of the property: BRICK; STONE

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance and condition of the property. Describe contributing and noncontributing resources if applicable. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, type, style, method of construction, setting, size, and significant features. Indicate whether the property has historic integrity.)

Summary Paragraph

In 1901, the Sacred Heart, Minnesota school district built a rectangular, brick, two-story school in Georgian Revival style on the edge of town facing north along Elm Street. The district added a two-story brick addition to the west façade of the original building in 1929. This addition, which displays elements of Second Renaissance Revival style, housed a gymnasium/auditorium on its first floor and a second floor dedicated to high school classrooms. In 1953, the district completed an ensemble of modernist additions including a two-story section behind the 1929 building and a series of one-story sections extending south from the rear facade of the 1901 building. In 1964, the district built a single-story brick addition north of the east-west corridor of the 1953 addition and east of the 1901 building. The 1901 building and the 1929, 1953 and 1964 additions retain their essential integrity because, although original doors and sash have been replaced and metal soffits added to the 1901 building, the exterior stone and brickwork throughout and the interior finishes in classrooms and hallways are mostly unchanged. The 1929 gymnasium/auditorium, for example, retains the look and feel of its early years. In 1974 the district built a new gymnasium and lobby facing Second Street attached to the south façade of the 1953 addition. This last addition is a non-contributing resource.

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Narrative Description

1901 Building

Exterior

The original school is a two-story rectangular building with a full basement, an expansive attic, and a hipped roof. The primary facades are in red brick laid in a running bond framed by a darker brick that is used in the foundations, in a two-foot high strip below the eaves, as quoining, and in the main entrance surround on the front façade. The north and south façades are 83 feet long, and the east and west facades are 51 feet. The eaves on all four facades originally had modillions that were removed when metal soffits and fascia were installed in the late 1990s (Photo #1).

The front (north) façade has a 38-foot-wide central bay projecting out eight feet from the main façade (Photo #2). This bay rises to a pediment which intersects the hipped roof. Within this pediment are a pair of one-over-one double hung windows which allow light to enter the attic. The second floor of the central bay has three equally-spaced windows. The window openings are unchanged, but today there are panels on the upper half and two-light sliding aluminum windows on the lower half. Originally the openings were filled by two-over-one wooden sash. The windows were replaced throughout this building in the early 1970s. On the first floor of this bay, a 16-foot-wide main entry projects out about two feet. The door opening is flanked by paired brick pilasters and topped by a classical pediment decorated with dentils. On the entablature are raised letters painted white which read "Sacred Heart Public School" and on the tympanum are the raised numerals "1901," also painted white. Historical photos indicate that the lettering for both was originally in a dark color. Below the pediment the door opening is framed in a brick arch. The arch is filled by a multi-paned fanlight. Originally, there were double wood doors flush with the fanlight, but today there are metal replacement doors which are flush with the exterior wall. There are also single windows on each side of the entry. Although originally one-over-one wooden sash, they now have a panel in the upper half and a two-light sliding aluminum sash in the lower half.

Originally the front façade was strictly symmetrical with two equally-spaced windows on both the first and the second floors east and west of the central bay (Figure #1). The four windows east of the central bay retain their original stone sills and brick segmental arches. Originally they had two-over-one wooden sash, but as elsewhere, there is now a panel on the upper half and a two-light sliding aluminum window on the lower half. When the 1929 addition was under construction, the two windows west of the central bay on both first and second floors were replaced by a band of four large windows, each four-over-four wood sash (Figure #4). Today, this enlarged window opening is filled with four windows which have a panel in the upper half and a two-light sliding aluminum window in the lower half. There are two smaller windows on the basement level both east and west of the central bay.

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A bell tower, removed in 1934, originally sat atop the roof over the central bay and held a 350-pound bell manufactured by the St. Louis Bell Foundry (Figure #1, 2). The bell was not part of the school board's construction budget but instead was financed by a committee of Sacred Heart women. It bore the inscription, "From the Ladies of Sacred Heart to the public school, 1901."¹ When a new heating plant was installed as part of the 1953 addition, the brick chimney that vented the original boiler in the basement was removed.

The east and west facades originally had four evenly spaced two-over-one wood sash windows with stone lintels and brick arches on both the first and second floors. The window openings on the east façade are unchanged but are filled with a panel on the upper half and a two-light sliding aluminum window on the lower half. There are also four smaller windows on the basement level. A similar configuration on the west façade was completely changed when the 1929 addition was built flush on the west wall of the 1901 building.

The school was designed by E. S. Stebbins of Minneapolis and resembles many small-town schools from that era, which tend to be upright, square or rectangular buildings with symmetrical facades and evenly spaced narrow windows.² This simple building had little ornamentation, but the brick construction, the symmetrical facades, the modillions, and especially, the formal detailing of the entrance, suggests the strong influence of the Georgian Revival style.³

Interior

Both the first and second floors of the 1901 building have a wide central hallway running north and south. The corridor on the first floor connects the main entrance on the front (north) façade with the rear entrance on the south façade. These corridors have 1960s-era faux wood paneling covering the plaster walls and carpeting over the original hardwood floors. The first and second floors are joined by a narrow stairway with oak newel posts and spindle balusters (Photo #8, 9).

On each of the first and second floors there are two rooms on each side of the central corridor, although at times the space east or west of the corridor has been combined into one larger room. These rooms have their original hardwood floors and some of their original cabinetry and blackboards (Photo #10, 11). There are suspended acoustical tile ceilings throughout. At various times these rooms were used as the assembly room, study hall, classrooms and the library. There is also a smaller room on the second floor over the main entrance which was originally the principal's office. Some historic drawings indicate that there was a restroom at the north end of the second floor corridor but this room is gone. Today, a large open doorway at the

¹ *Renville Record*, September 25, 1901. For many years the bell was stored in the attic of the 1901 building. In 1976, the Women's Federated Improvement Club restored and mounted the bell for display in the foyer of the new gymnasium. *Sacred Heart Town and Country* (Sacred Heart, MN: Sacred Heart Area Historical Society), 271.

² One example would be the Excelsior School, a Georgian Revival school house built about the same time in Hennepin County and listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1980.

³ Charles Nelson, "Tech Talk: Minnesota Architecture IV: Academic Revival Styles," *Minnesota History Interpreter*, (November 1999), 5. Marcus Whiffen, *American Architecture since 1780* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1992), 159.

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south end of the corridor's west wall provides access to the east-west hallway of the 1929 addition's second floor (described below).

A door on the east side of the first floor corridor provides access to the basement stairway. Several basement rooms were used for academic purposes and at one point for the girls' locker room. The large room in the northwest corner housed the boiler until a new boiler was added as part of the 1953 addition. A door on the north side of the second floor corridor provides access to the attic stairway. The attic is unfinished except for one sheet-rocked and painted room along the south wall which was used as a classroom and for a time as the library.

1929 Addition

Exterior

In 1929 a two-story rectangular addition was built on the west side of the original building. It is a flat-roof structure clad in a light-brown brick and accented in stone. The front (north) facade of this addition is about equal in length to the front façade of the 1901 building (about 83 feet) and flush with it (Photo #1). However, the west façade is about 100 feet long, extending farther to the south than the original building. The north and west facades are topped by a decorative cornice of brickwork topped by stone coping. Above the coping is a stone crest that tapers at its ends. At the center of the crest are the numerals "1929." A similar cornice and crest (without insignia) adorns the west façade.⁴

At either end of the front façade are entrances with double doors topped by a full transom with a stone surround. There are metal doors with a single long narrow glass window which have replaced the original wood doors which had six-light windows (Figure #3). The transoms are now filled with a panel which has replaced the original multi-paned glass. Above each of these doors is a stone panel upon which a light fixture is mounted. These doors open onto stairways which allow access to the gymnasium/auditorium on the ground floor and the classrooms on the second floor. Above both the east and west entrances are paired windows on both the first and second floors. These four window openings are now filled with a panel in the upper half and double aluminum sliding windows on the lower half. These windows replaced the original six-over-six paired windows with stone sills that brought natural light into the stairwells. The original doors and windows were replaced in the early 1970s.

Between the two sets of doors on the lower level are three identical round arches, each about three feet high and about eight feet wide, which enclose multi-paned fanlights which allow light to enter the gymnasium. These arches crown recessed brick panels, each of which contains a smaller rectangular window opening now filled by a panel. When built, these openings were filled by eight-light windows that brought light into the storage area under the bleachers in the gymnasium (Figure #3).

⁴ The rear (south) façade now joins the 1953 addition and no historic photographs have been found.

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The classroom facing north on the second floor level has three sets of tripled windows which are today filled by a panel in the upper half and double aluminum sliding windows in the lower half. Originally these window openings were filled by six-over-six double-hung sash except for the middle set which was two four-over-four windows flanking a six-over-six sash. The stone sills of these windows are incorporated into a belt course that runs the entire length of the façade and continues around the west side. The west façade is unbroken brickwork except for the stone belt course and the double windows at the center of the second floor which allow natural light to enter the second floor hallway. Historic photos (and variations in the brickwork) indicate that there were originally four sets of windows on the lower level of this façade which allowed some sunlight into the gymnasium/auditorium (Figure #3, Photo #3).

The 1929 addition is not a pure example of an architectural style, but clearly shows the influence of the Second Renaissance Revival style, especially noticeable in the three Roman arches that dominate the symmetrical front façade and in the way the belt course separates the building horizontally into two levels, each articulated differently.⁵

Interior

The addition's first floor is below grade to allow a two-story space for the combined gymnasium/auditorium. Visitors enter through the entrance doors at either the east or west end of the north façade and pass through the stairwells that provide access to the second floor. The basketball court with its original hard-wood floor runs east and west, flanked by a proscenium stage along the south wall and by permanent bleacher seating on the north. The stage, about 40 feet wide, is fronted by a proscenium arch and flanked at either end by small doorways that open to short flights of stairs providing access to the stage (Photo #15).⁶ There are twelve rows of wooden bleacher seats stretching across the north wall of the auditorium between the stairwells (Photo #14).⁷ Temporary seating on the stage allowed a larger crowd to watch a basketball game. For a graduation ceremony or a theatrical performance, chairs were set up on the basketball court, greatly increasing the seating capacity of the auditorium (Figure #5).

The second floor has a smaller footprint than the first floor because it did not extend over the area of the stage. There is a wide central corridor running the length of the building from east to west (Photo #12). This corridor is accessed by the two sets of stairways which flank the bleachers and also by a doorway at the east end which opens into the second floor corridor of the 1901 building. The corridor has a painted concrete floor with a high-gloss surface. Some of the original wood doors with fifteen-light glass and all of the wood trim are still in place. There are

⁵ Nelson, 5; Whiffin, 154; John L. G. Blumenson, *Identifying American Architecture*, 2nd Ed. (Nashville: AASLH, 1981), 41.

⁶ Prior to building of the 1953 addition, the stage also served as the cafeteria. Students lined up on the gymnasium floor to get their food and then sat at portable tables on the stage.

⁷ Originally there were fewer bleacher seats because they began about six feet above the floor, forming a kind of balcony. In 1953 the bleachers were extended to the floor to add more rows. This expanded the capacity from about 250 to 415. "Board Votes to Increase Seating Capacity of Gym," *Sacred Heart News [SHN]*, March 12, 1953, 1.

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two classrooms on the south side of the corridor. To the north is a large science classroom with ancillary space for an office, storage, and a dark room (originally there were two classrooms on this side) (Photo #13). East and west of the science classroom are restrooms which are accessed from the two stairwells, one for men and one for women.

1953 Addition

Exterior

In 1953, the school district built a series of additions behind the 1901 and 1929 buildings. They include a two-story addition with full basement directly south of the 1929 building and flush with its south façade and a U-shaped series of sections south of the 1901 building and extending east as far as the sidewalk along First Avenue. All sections are connected to each other and to the existing buildings by hallways. The two-story addition behind the 1929 building has a kitchen and cafeteria on the first floor and a band/choral room along with three practice rooms and an office on the second floor (Photo #16). The basement of this section has boys' locker and shower rooms. Just to the west of this section, and directly behind the 1901 building, is an additional basement space that houses a boiler, still operable, which replaced the heating plant in the original building. When this two-story addition was built in 1953, a stairway was added just east of the stage in the 1929 building to provide access to the band/choral room and to the basement locker room.

All the sections of the "U" shaped plan are single-story and have no basement. The bottom of the "U" is formed by a section which contains a wide east-west corridor running parallel to the rear façade of the 1901 building. At the east end of this corridor is an exterior door facing First Avenue. This entrance is protected by a large flat canopy extending to the sidewalk (Photo #5). Along this corridor on its south are a series of rooms. Moving east to west they include a teacher's lounge, a set of restrooms, an administrative suite, a Home Economics classroom, and another set of restrooms. At either end of this east-west corridor are additions bisected by central north-south hallways which form the two legs of the "U." The hallway on the west end extends south into a wing which contains a multi-purpose classroom on the right and ends with two large rooms that housed the Agriculture Shop on the left and the Industrial Arts shop on the right. The two shop rooms have been combined and now serve as the practice room for the wrestling teams. The hallway on the east end leads south through the elementary school wing, which has eight classrooms, four on the right with windows facing east onto First Avenue and four on the left with windows facing the central courtyard of the school (Photo #17).

All sections of the 1953 addition are simple, flat-roofed, brick structures in a restrained modernist style. The classrooms originally had ample natural light thanks to large window openings in which the top two-thirds were filled by glass block and the lower third with rectangular wood-framed windows that opened by tilting inward. In 1995, the wood windows

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were replaced by aluminum sliding windows and the glass block was covered by panels which are painted brown (Photo #4).⁸ The east façade of the section which housed the shop classrooms has a garage door facing the internal courtyard which allowed materials to be delivered directly to those classrooms (Photo #6). The south façade of the elementary school wing is an unadorned brick wall with a double door in metal with glass transoms and sidelights which provides access to the north-south corridor in that wing.

Interior

The second floor of the two-story addition is entirely dedicated to the music program. There is a large choral/band room which has three levels of built-in risers which are covered with linoleum as are all the floors (Photo #15). There is wood trim throughout on this floor and acoustical tile ceilings. The first floor containing the kitchen and dining hall also has acoustic tile ceilings and linoleum floors. The basement contains shower and locker rooms which have beige tile walls and floors.

The corridors, classrooms, and offices of the "U" shaped sections generally have linoleum floors and acoustical tile ceilings. The walls are of painted plaster and there are painted metal doors and trim. However, the two large rooms which originally housed the two "shop" rooms have concrete floors and ceilings of exposed concrete beams. Today, the concrete floor is covered with a thick matt because the rooms are used as the wrestling practice room.

1964 Addition

Exterior

In 1964, the school district built a single-story, flat-roofed, rectangular, brick addition which is attached to the north side of the east-west corridor of the 1953 addition and is similar in style to that addition. It extends north from there for about 90 feet. Its west façade is parallel to the east facade of the 1901 building but separated by a 20-foot passageway with a sidewalk leading to an entrance door which opens onto the east-west corridor. Its east façade runs along First Street about 12 feet from the sidewalk (Photo #5). Both the east and west façades have narrow rectangular window openings, which run vertically from ground level to the top of the façade, with panels at the top and bottom and a two-light window with metal sash in between. The north facade facing Elm Street is about 76 feet long. This facade is unadorned except for the centrally-located double entrance doors that open onto a central hallway running north and south.

Interior

This central north-south hallway runs from the Elm Street entrance on the north to a doorway which opens to the east-west corridor of the 1953 addition on the south. There are two elementary school classrooms with linoleum floors east of the hallway, and two small administrative offices south of these classrooms. To the west of the central hallway is the

⁸ "School Fix Up," *Renville County Star Farmer*, July 25, 1995.

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library, a large, carpeted room with built-in book shelving around the perimeter. South of this large space are two rooms separated from the library by glass doors with glass sidelights (Photo #18). One of these rooms is the librarian's work room and the other functions as a general conference or study room. North of the library are two small classrooms designed for remedial reading and special education services. There is suspended acoustical tile and recessed fluorescent lighting throughout this addition.

1974 Addition

The final addition was built outside the period of significance. In 1974 the school district added a two-story brick gymnasium/auditorium south of the two story section of the 1953 addition, and consequently, south of the 1929 building. The basketball court and bleachers are housed in a large, unadorned, two-story high rectangular box which is 105 feet long on its east and west sides and 98 feet wide (Photo #7). The bleachers, partially permanent and partially retractable, are along the north wall. Originally the basketball court had a synthetic floor (known as Tartan flooring), but in 2012 the school district replaced this floor with a traditional wood gymnasium floor. On the south wall of the gymnasium there is a proscenium stage which is housed in an adjoining rectangular box attached to the south façade. This portion of the building, which has the same width as the gymnasium, is slightly shorter and 30 feet deep. There are locker rooms beneath the stage and storage beneath the permanent sections of the bleachers. There are no windows in the 1974 addition but there are several doorways on each façade. The 1974 addition also included a single-story lobby area between the new gymnasium and the two-story section of the 1953 addition. This area, called the "commons," has also been used for community events. It has linoleum flooring and acoustical tile ceilings.

Integrity

The brick and stone work of the 1901 and 1929 sections is intact and well-maintained. The window openings in the 1901 and 1929 buildings are unchanged, except that the first and second floor window openings west of the central bay in the 1901 building were greatly enlarged when the 1929 building was constructed. As will be explained in Section 8, this was done to make those windows consistent with the 1929 addition and because evolving norms of school architecture had by then put much more emphasis on natural light. The original wood-sash windows were replaced in the early 1970s with metal and their upper halves filled with opaque panels. Most of the original wood doors have also been replaced by metal. However, the fanlight window over the central entrance door in the 1901 building and the fanlight windows in the three arches of the 1929 building appear to be original. The belfry was removed from the 1901 building in 1934 and the chimney in 1953. During the late 1990s, the 1901 building's original modillions were removed when metal soffits and fascia were installed. Of course, construction of the 1929 addition flush on the west façade of the 1901 building also required alterations. The exteriors of the 1953 and 1964 buildings are unchanged except for window replacements. In 1995, the wood-sash windows of the 1953 additions were replaced by metal and the glass block above these windows was covered by panels.

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The interiors of the 1901, 1929, 1953, and 1964 sections retain most of their original finishes. For example, the classrooms in the 1901 and 1929 sections have well-maintained hardwood floors (Photo #10, 11). The hardwood floors of the two central hallways of the 1901 building are in place but carpeted, as are the steps and the risers of the oak staircase. The plaster walls in these hallways are covered by 1960s-era paneling (Photos #8, 9). Blackboards (sometimes replaced by whiteboards) and built-in cabinets are mostly in place in all classrooms. The classroom hallway of the 1929 building retains its finishes and original doors (Photo #12), as does the music room in the 1953 addition (Photo #16). The stage, gymnasium floor and bleachers in the 1929 building are largely unchanged, except for the 1953 expansion of the bleachers and the enclosure of the windows on the west façade noted above (Photos #14, 15).

Each new addition to the school necessitated some reconfiguring of the space in the existing buildings. So, for example, the second floor room in the 1901 building, which was originally the library, was reconfigured as two high school classrooms when the new library was added in the 1964 addition. As will be noted in Section 8, the district obtained a federal grant in the early 1960s to combine the two classrooms on the north side of the 1929 building into one large science laboratory classroom with adjacent storeroom, darkroom, and office. At some point, part of the wall separating the Agriculture and Industrial shop rooms was removed and combined into the space which is now used by the wrestling teams.

The building retains its integrity because it exhibits the essential physical features that convey its historic identity, including design, materials, and workmanship. The stone and brick work which mark the 1901 and 1929 buildings as influenced by Georgian Revival and Second Renaissance style respectively is completely intact. Some interior spaces have been remodeled for new educational uses but the original floor plan is largely unchanged. With the exceptions noted, the corridors display their original flooring and trim. A visitor entering the gymnasium/auditorium, the most important public space, will experience the same hardwood floor, the same wood bleachers, the same proscenium stage, as audiences did in 1929.

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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.)

- 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.)

- 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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Areas of Significance
(Enter categories from instructions.)

EDUCATION
ENTERTAINMENT/RECREATION
SOCIAL HISTORY

Period of Significance

1901-1964

Significant Dates

1901, 1929, 1953, 1964

Significant Person
(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builders

Stebbins, E.S., Architect (Minneapolis): 1901 building
Jacobson & Jacobson, Architects (Minneapolis): 1929 addition
Carlson & Hasslen (Ortonville): 1929 addition
Swanson, Hubert H., Architect (Minneapolis): 1953 addition
Hasslen Construction (Ortonville): 1953 addition
Hendrix & Cording, Architects (Minneapolis): 1964 addition
R. L. Vogt Construction (Olivia): 1964 addition

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Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance, applicable criteria, justification for the period of significance, and any applicable criteria considerations.)

The Sacred Heart Public School is locally significant under Criterion A in the area of education as a distinctive local product of the decades-long efforts of a small prairie town to provide a modern education to its children in an era when enrollments were growing and the mission of public schools expanding. The community built the original building in 1901 fully intending to expand as needs arose. Taking note of the growing demand for secondary education and a new emphasis on physical education, the school board built a high school addition with a combined auditorium/gymnasium in 1929. A series of additions were added in 1953 as the consolidation of rural districts led to increasing enrollments and as evolving ideas about curriculum called for new types of spaces specifically designed for subjects such as industrial arts or music. Finally, the school built an addition in 1964 primarily to house, for the first time, a library which met national and state standards for school libraries. The Sacred Heart Public School is also locally significant in the areas of social history and entertainment/recreation because it was the public space most closely associated with the town's identity and the venue for most public functions throughout the period of significance. The period of significance begins with the construction of the initial building in 1901 and ends with the construction of the 1964 building. The property is related to the statewide historic contexts of "Railroads and Agricultural Development, 1870-1940."

Narrative Statement of Significance (Provide at least **one** paragraph for each area of significance.)

The settlement of Renville County and the founding of the village of Sacred Heart

The first Europeans to appear in the Dakota lands which became Renville County were fur traders, mostly of French or of mixed French and Dakota descent. One of these "mixed bloods" was Joseph Renville, who for a time had a trading post near present-day Renville. He later moved west to the area around Lac Qui Parle. More Europeans arrived after the Treaty of Traverse des Sioux in 1851 and especially after the removal of the Dakota from the north bank of the Minnesota River in 1858.⁹

A seminal figure in the European settlement of the region was Joseph R. Brown, a Yankee who established himself in Sacred Heart Township. He represented the area in the territorial legislature which was instrumental in moving Minnesota toward statehood in 1858. He was present at the Treaty of Traverse des Sioux and played a role in inducing the Dakota chiefs to sign an agreement favorable to the traders. When the Dakota war broke out, he was traveling in

⁹ William Lass, *Minnesota A History* 2nd Ed. (New York: Norton, 2000), 110-114, 127-128.

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the East. His family was spared by the Dakota because of the “mixed blood” ancestry of his wife, but the stone mansion he had built was burned and left in ruins.¹⁰

Following the defeat and exile of the Dakota and the passage of the Homestead Act in 1862, a much larger influx of Europeans began, primarily of settlers who had settled temporarily in Iowa, Wisconsin and southern Minnesota before relocating to Renville County. Originally part of a much larger subdivision, Renville County as it is known today was established in 1866. The area around Sacred Heart was on the western edge of the county, just north of the Minnesota River. The immigrants who came to the Sacred Heart area were mostly Norwegians, although Swedes and Germans also came to this area.¹¹ Seeking economic independence, they were drawn to the Midwest because of the possibility of acquiring land they could afford. They travelled by foot, ox cart, and covered wagon on the rough trails which followed the Minnesota River. Their first difficult years were spent in dugouts or log houses with sod roofs as they began the arduous process of establishing farmsteads in the valley and on the prairie. They had to break up the sod in order to plant potatoes, turnips and small grains. Once established, they generally became wheat farmers, although later they turned increasingly to corn. All the while they had to survive diseases like diphtheria and whooping cough, and in the 1870s, an invasion of grasshoppers.¹²

In 1869, the new migrants organized North and South Sacred Heart Township, two entities governed from the beginning by a single town board. There was, however, no commercial center until the railroad arrived. Development was delayed by the economic depression in 1873, but in 1878, the Hastings and Dakota Railway Company, which had earlier built a line from Hastings to Glencoe, extended its line to Montevideo, and in the next year to Ortonville. The railroad built repair shops at Bird Island and platted villages along the new route, including Sacred Heart, situated about 110 miles west of Minneapolis. The Hastings and Dakota was already under the control of the Chicago, Milwaukee and St. Paul Railway Company (CM&StP). However, the CM&StP kept the Hastings and Dakota intact as a corporate entity because it was a land grant railroad that controlled over 376,000 acres of federal lands. After the line was completed, the CM&StP became the direct proprietor of the route from Hastings to South Dakota. Subsequently, the repair yard was moved to Montevideo.¹³

¹⁰ Theodore Blegen, *Minnesota: A History of the State* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1963, 1975), 277-278. The remains of his home in Sacred Heart Township was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 1986.

¹¹ Census data on the various ethnic groups in Renville County can be found in Carlton C. Qualey and Jon A. Gjerde, “The Norwegians,” 223 in June Drenning Holmquist, Ed. *They Chose Minnesota: A Survey of the State’s Ethnic Groups* (St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society, 1981); Hildegard Binder Johnson, “The Germans,” 159, in Holmquist; John G. Rice, “The Swedes,” 251, in Holmquist. According to the 1880 census, there were 3,416 Norwegians, 2,307 Germans, and 931 Swedes in Renville County.

¹² *Sacred Heart Town and County* (Sacred Heart, MN: Sacred Heart Area Historical Society), 8-21, 232-233. Renville County was one of the counties severely damaged by the Rocky Mountain locust (which local farmers called grasshoppers) between 1874 and 1877. Annette Atkins, *Harvest of Grief: Grasshopper Plagues and Public Assistance in Minnesota, 1873-78* (St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 1984).

¹³ Andrew Schmidt, et. al, “Railroads in Minnesota, 1862-1956, NRHP Multiple Property Listing Form,” (2007), 65-66 (available at the Minnesota State Historic Preservation Office).

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In 1879, the railroad built a depot and very quickly entrepreneurs opened several commercial enterprises nearby. Soon a “railway village” emerged and quickly grew into a local trading center for the surrounding townships. More than a dozen stores, as well as two hotels, two saloons, two grain elevators, and a doctor, established themselves in just a few years. The railroad platted the town under the name Sacred Heart in 1879 and it was incorporated under that name in 1883.¹⁴

From rural education to a town school for Sacred Heart

Similar to settler communities throughout the state, immigrants in western Renville County moved quickly to establish “common schools” for the education of their children. These schools were ungraded one room schools with one teacher, almost always a woman. Throughout the state, a system of locally controlled school boards was established to manage this system. To qualify for the modest subsidy the state offered, they had to meet certain standards of teacher preparation and length of school year. From the beginning, the school boards used their power to levy property taxes as their main source of income.¹⁵

When the town of Sacred Heart was established, local students attended an ungraded rural school. The growth of the village led to the creation of a new smaller district, called District No. 40, which was served by an ungraded rural school outside of town. In 1880, this small wooden school was moved into town to the corner of First Avenue and Maple Street, in the heart of the commercial district. Several years later, the district built a two-story brick school house on the same site. By 1890, this school had 160 pupils and the local newspaper began calling for an expanded school.¹⁶

During the 1890s, the school district began acquiring property south of the originally platted area of Sacred Heart in a new area called Lannings Subdivision.¹⁷ In 1900, workers began excavating the basement of a new school house on this property, three blocks south of the original schoolhouse. In the spring of 1901, voters in the district passed a \$60,000 bond referendum to

¹⁴ The town was named Sacred Heart most likely because the township already bore that name. The origin of the township name is less clear. Two stories appear in the sources, and both are linked to the early French presence in the area. One concerns a fur trader named Charles Patterson and the name given by local Indians to his bearskin hat. The other concerns the name given to a creek by an early French missionary priest. Given the French origins of settlement in the area, the name of Sacred Heart, which resonates with Catholic theology and ritual, makes sense. The irony is that the predominantly Lutheran population adopted it as the name of their town, and retained it over the years. Warren Upham, *Minnesota Place Names*, 3rd Ed. (St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 2001), 493.

¹⁵ Clark A. Chambers, “Educating for the Future,” 475 in Clifford Clark, Jr., *Minnesota in a Century of Change* (St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 1989).

¹⁶ *Sacred Heart Town and Country*, 248-249.

¹⁷ The original town plat was composed of 24 blocks arranged in a rectangle south of the rail line, six blocks long running east and west, and four blocks deep running north and south. The southern border was Elm Street, although the street was not named until later. Lannings Subdivision was immediately south of that street.

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fund the building of the school. The new school was also a two-story brick building, but larger than the former school. It had five rooms for grades, an assembly room, two recitation rooms and a library. This rectangular building had a hipped roof and a projecting central bay topped by a pediment which contained the main entrance. Sitting at the central bay was a bell tower. There was a full attic space (which later accommodated an additional classroom and other uses) and a steam heating plant in the basement.

The *Renville Record* suggested that when the Sacred Heart school was completed, it would be “one of the prettiest and up-to-date school houses in this part of the state.” The writer then went on to editorialize what must have been a common attitude among city leaders:

In no better way can a community spend money than in the building of its educational institutions. Every citizen should use his most strenuous efforts to further the interest of education.¹⁸

In 1904, the district added high school classes, and in 1908, the first graduating class, composed of eight women and one man, earned high school diplomas. During that same year, a bitter controversy broke out over funding of the school. Because of the way Sacred Heart developed, District No. 40 was much smaller than the neighboring school districts, even though it had a higher population density because of the town. As a result, District 40 had a relatively small tax base with which to fund the growing school. To remedy this, the district filed a petition before the county board to annex property from surrounding districts. When this petition was granted, citizens in other districts appealed to the district court, and the case was eventually twice heard by the Minnesota Supreme Court. In the end, District No. 40 prevailed and was able to expand its tax base.¹⁹

On the eve of the United States entry into World War I, Sacred Heart was a thriving community of 800 functioning as a trading center for the surrounding townships. By this time, corn had already overtaken wheat as the main cash crop. The history of the county published in 1916 noted that the town had five grain elevators, several livestock dealers, a produce company, two lumber yards, two banks, two hardware stores, and a number of other retail establishments.²⁰ Sacred Heart owed its existence to the railroad, but the county history nevertheless noted that it was “quite an automobile town,” with two service stations. The town was on the Yellowstone Trail, and tourists who were beginning to explore the country in cars stopped there. Tourists and business travelers stayed in the Sacred Heart Hotel, which had opened in 1914.

The town had concrete sidewalks, electric street lights, a waterworks plant, a fire department of ten men, a jail, and a bandstand. It also had five churches, four of which were Lutheran and one Methodist. The authors of the county history were most impressed by the school:

¹⁸ *Renville Record*, July 10, 1901.

¹⁹ Curtiss-Wedge, *History of Renville County* (Chicago: H. C. Cooper Co, 1916), 672-673.

²⁰ Curtiss-Wedge, 911.

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Sacred Heart takes a proper pride in its public school which is housed in a building embodying the most modern improvements in heating and ventilating and well adopted in every way to local requirements.²¹

By this time, the school had 225 pupils and eight teachers, and the district would soon face the issue of expanding the 1901 building.

Population grows and educational philosophy evolves

After World War I, several statewide trends in education led to the construction of a major addition to the Sacred Heart School in 1929. By this time the state was committed, as Theodore Blegen put it, to “an extraordinary experiment” in universal public education through the elementary and secondary school levels. It had become clear that a “little red school house” in each rural community could not provide education on this scale.²² In fact, progressive reformers had long been arguing against the one-room, ungraded rural school. These changes were already being felt in Sacred Heart. Several rural schools had already been closed, and three bus routes brought rural students into the Sacred Heart School.²³ In 1927, the high school graduated fourteen students (eleven women and three men).²⁴ Two years later, there were 17 seniors, and the school board could have no doubt that high school enrollment would continue to grow because there were 39 freshmen.

This growing number of elementary and high school students overloaded the 1901 building which they all shared. As a stopgap, a classroom had been created in the attic and the basement was also used for recitation rooms. In December 1928, the school board presented voters with a \$55,000 bond referendum for a high school addition.²⁵ The referendum passed, and in March 1929 the bids were opened. Contracts were given to Carlson and Hasslen of Ortonville as the general contractor and to several subcontractors.²⁶ Excavation of the basement began in April, and the addition was finished in October 1929.

The addition reflected progressive changes in the nature of education. Although physical education had been introduced especially in urban schools even in the late nineteenth century, American involvement in World War I greatly increased interest in integrating physical education into the curriculum. In 1920, for example, the National Educational Association recommended that every school have a gymnasium. Not surprisingly, the centerpiece of the new addition was a gymnasium with permanent bleacher seating for several hundred people. The

²¹ Curtiss-Wedge, 909.

²² Blegen, 412.

²³ *Sacred Heart News (SHN)*, October 17, 1929.

²⁴ “Exercises to take place June Second,” *SHN*, May 19, 1927.

²⁵ *SHN*, December 13, 1928, 1. The paper printed an architectural drawing by Jacobson & Jacobson, Minneapolis architects who specialized in schools and armories. They designed the Owatonna Junior-Senior High School built in 1920. Several subsequent articles in this newspaper speak of a “spring bond election.” It may be that the December vote was unsuccessful, or postponed.

²⁶ *SHN*, March 21, 1929.

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gymnasium also had a large proscenium stage which allowed the room to function as an auditorium not only for the school but for the larger community.²⁷ The second floor of the addition was designed to be exclusively for the high school program, including five new classrooms, one of which was a science laboratory.

The new educational philosophy also influenced school design, and in fact, the 1901 building and the 1929 addition illustrate how design trends changed in a short time. At the turn of the century, schools tended to be upright structures that resembled the courthouses of the time, often with some kind of tower. The windows tended to be narrow and spaced on the facades. There was often just one relatively narrow stairway. All these elements can be seen in the 1901 building. By the time the high school addition was built in 1929, there was much more emphasis on natural light and good ventilation.²⁸ As a result, the second floor classrooms facing north have very large banks of windows. At this time, the first and second floor window openings west of the projecting central bay in the 1901 building were enlarged to mirror the new building. The second floor of the 1929 addition is served by two wide stairways, each lit by ample windows, servicing entrances on the ground level on the north façade.

The addition was formally opened at a Friday evening event in the new gymnasium/auditorium in October 1929. The local newspaper reported that several hundred people attended and “all the visitors expressed their approval of the new building.” The chair of the school board presided over a program at which the superintendent and the faculty were introduced; a band played, the Freshman Octet sang, as did a quartet made up of four faculty women; and a local notable gave a speech.²⁹

Consolidation and Postwar Change

During the Depression and World War II, there was little change to the organization or the physical plant of the Sacred Heart Public School. By the late 1940s, however, pressure was building on districts to confront the controversial issue of school consolidation. Because of the way that public education had developed in Minnesota, there were about 8,000 districts in 1900. The legislature provided some incentives for consolidation in the first half of the 20th century, but by 1947 there were still 7,679 districts.³⁰ More students were graduating from rural school districts which were not large enough to sustain a high school. As a result, rural students came to “town schools,” like Sacred Heart Public School, which did not have the tax base to support increasing enrollments.

²⁷ Many Progressive theorists argued that the school should be the focal point of community life, and that the school auditorium should be constructed with this in mind. See William W. Cutler III, “Cathedral of Culture: The Schoolhouse in American Educational Thought and Practice since 1820.” *History of Education Quarterly* 29, No 1 (Spring 1989), 26-27.

²⁸ Amy Weisser, “Little Red School House, What Now? Two Centuries of American Public School Architecture,” *Journal of Planning History* 5, No. 3 (2006), 202.

²⁹ SHN, October 29, 1929, 1.

³⁰ Jim Pearson and Edgar Fuller, *Education in the States: Historical Development and Outlook* (Washington: National Education Association, 1969), 624.

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In that year the legislature provided a mechanism by which the school districts of a region could voluntarily reorganize themselves.³¹ Following the process laid out by the legislature, school officials and school board members from 18 rural districts met with Sacred Heart school officials in April 1950 to craft a proposal for a newly expanded District 40 centered in Sacred Heart. On June 23, 1950, voters went to the polls to consider this proposal. Under the law, reorganization could only proceed if majorities of both the rural and town voters approved the proposal. When the votes were counted, the proposal was overwhelmingly approved by a vote of 246 to 7 in Sacred Heart and 223 to 70 in the rural districts.³² As a result, the school boards of the rural districts were dissolved, and the property of the rural districts, including eight rural school buildings, was auctioned off.³³

Almost immediately the school board of the newly enlarged Sacred Heart community school district began to consider a major expansion of the physical plant of the Sacred Heart Public School.³⁴ In part, the school board was reacting to growing student enrollments, a result not only of the reorganization of the district but also of the post-war “baby boom” which was about to impact schools nationwide. However, decades of change in educational philosophy also drove the expansion. Educational reformers starting in the Progressive Era had succeeded in building a consensus that the public school should be a comprehensive institution that educated all the youth of the community, no matter what their background or career goals.³⁵ As a result, school administrators and school boards sought to expand their curriculum to include health education, citizenship training, vocational training (including industrial and agricultural arts), home economics, and business education. There was also interest in improving music education. Finally, the movement to strengthen physical education continued. In addition to curricular expansion, reformers also argued that effective teaching and learning required that a hot lunch be available to all students.

Determined to insure that its school met all the standards of educational advancement, the Sacred Heart school board put a \$395,000 bond referendum before the voters to finance a building project that was much more ambitious than the 1929 addition. In the run-up to the election, the local newspaper published drawings by Minneapolis architect Hubert H. Swanson. The voters were introduced to the planned expansion, which included a two-story addition behind the 1929 building and a series of one-story sections in a U-shaped plan extending south from the rear façade of the 1901 building. The two-story addition housed the kitchen and cafeteria on the first floor, the band and choral room on the second floor, and new lockers and showers on the basement level. The expansion also provided for a new boiler for the entire complex. The one-story sections, which had no basements, included an elementary school wing with eight new classrooms, an administrative corridor with offices and a teachers’ lounge, a home economics

³¹ Chambers, 498.

³² “Re-organization Carries 469 to 77 in School Elections Friday night,” *SHN*, June 29, 1950, 1.

³³ “School Property in District 40 Sold at Auction,” *SHN*, October 19, 1950, 1.

³⁴ “School Bond Vote Coming in December,” *SHN*, November 30, 1950, 1.

³⁵ Chambers, 479-480; Lawrence Cremin, *The Transformation of the School: Progressivism in American Education, 1876-1957* (New York: Knopf, 1961), vii-ix, 306-7.

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classroom, and a special department wing with industrial and agricultural “shop” classrooms. These changes allowed for reconfiguration of space in the 1901 building, including a somewhat larger library, a commercial classroom, a visual arts room, and new girls locker and shower room in the basement.³⁶

On December 22, 1950, citizens of the Sacred Heart school district approved the bond referendum by a 3 to 1 margin.³⁷ Optimism ran high that the new space would be ready by the end of 1951. However, a legal action by several citizens blocked the sale of bonds until the case was dismissed in September 1951.³⁸ The bids were then quickly sold, and construction bids were taken in January 1952. Contracts were awarded in February to Hasslen Construction of Ortonville as general contractor, Knutson Brothers of Granite Falls for mechanical work, and the Radio Electric Shop of Echo for electrical work.³⁹

The new additions were complete and ready for use at the beginning of the 1953 school year, but the community dedication ceremony was not held until October 24 of that year. There was an open house during the afternoon and a program in the auditorium at 8:00 p.m. The high school band played several numbers, the boys’ octet sang “Stout Hearted Men,” and a mixed ensemble sang “Alma Mater.” The featured speaker was Dr. J. O. Christenson, head of the School of Agriculture at the University of Minnesota. The ceremony culminated with architect Hubert Swanson “presenting” the building to George Kohls, president of the school board.⁴⁰

New impetus for reform during the Cold War

Beginning in the late 1950s, American schools began to confront new social and political conditions. New social movements were demanding that greater attention be paid to underserved racial minorities, women, and the handicapped. Youth from all backgrounds were changing, and adults were increasingly concerned that school-age children were less respectful, more sexually active, and more prone to drug use than in the past. Meanwhile, the tense competition with the Soviet Union for global influence led many to demand that science, math and foreign language curriculum be strengthened. These trends tended to call into question the long-standing consensus around progressive reform, although the core progressive concept that schools should be “student-centered” enterprises survived.⁴¹

³⁶ “Mass Meeting Tonite on School Building,” *SHN*, December 14, 1950, 1,3,7.

³⁷ “School Bond Issue Passes 361-124; Danube Carries Too,” *SHN*, December 28, 1950, 1.

³⁸ “Village, School District Go ahead with Major Construction Plans,” *SHN*, September 27, 1951, 1.

³⁹ “Contracts Awarded Contractors on School Building,” *SHN*, February 21, 1952, 1.

⁴⁰ “New \$395,000 school addition to be dedicated at Saturday evening program,” *SHN*, October 22, 1953, 1.

⁴¹ Thomas R. Peek et al., *Minnesota’s K-12 Education: the Current Debate, the Present Condition* (Minneapolis: Center for Urban and Regional Affairs, 1985), 27.

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One reform movement with roots in the Progressive Era adapted to changing times and came to fruition in this period.⁴² After years of campaigning, a national movement succeeded in the 1950s in building a consensus that the library should be the “the heart of the school” and the “physical unit around which the remainder of the school is built.”⁴³ Library reformers argued that a well-equipped library offered students of diverse capabilities and interests a flexible means of independent learning and skill-building. Moreover, technological change led to the conclusion that the library should be more than a repository of books and magazines. The library must be a “multi-purpose resource center” where students could access a variety of audio-visual materials.

Minnesota had provided some minimal funding for school libraries since the 1880s and recommended “booklists” to help schools assemble appropriate volumes. When the legislature created the Department of Education in 1919, its Library Division contained the office of the Supervisor of School Libraries who advised and supervised school libraries around the state.⁴⁴ When Ruth Ersted took this position in 1936 she could advise local schools about their library’s book collection but she had little to say about the size and equipment of the library room. Many rural schools in Minnesota did have libraries, at least in the sense of a room with some books and furniture, but they had limited book collections and often functioned primarily as “study halls.” The library in the Sacred Heart Public School was typical. In her 1948 report, Ersted noted that the Sacred Heart library had only 1,422 books and no trained librarian.⁴⁵

The successful rise of this new concept of the school library as the “heart of the school” can be traced in a series of national standards published after World War I. The first standards were promulgated by the National Educational Association (NEA) and the American Library Association (ALA) in 1918.⁴⁶ They recommended that secondary schools maintain substantial libraries staffed by professionally trained librarians. In 1925, these two organizations made similar recommendations for elementary schools. In 1945, the ALA issued new standards, this time specifying precise quantifiable measures for a minimally acceptable book and periodical

⁴² The relationship between library reform and Progressive educational reform is outlined in Judy Drury and Anne Masters, “School Libraries and the Progressive Movement: A Study of the Role of the Librarian in Implementing Progressive Education,” in Kathy Howard Latrobe, ed., *The Emerging School Library Media Center* (Englewood, CO: Libraries Unlimited, Inc, 1998), 17-38.

⁴³ Nicholas Engelhardt, et al. *Planning Elementary School Buildings* (New York: Dodge, 1957), 82. An insider’s history of this movement, described as the “crusade for school libraries,” is related in Virginia H. Mathews, “The Way We Were and How It Was: 1945-1970,” in Kathy Howard Latrobe, ed., *The Emerging School Library Media Center* (Englewood, CO: Libraries Unlimited, Inc, 1998), 75-90.

⁴⁴ Margaret Briggs, “The Development of Public School Libraries in Minnesota 1861-1938,” *Minnesota Libraries* 16 (December 1948): 372-375.

⁴⁵ Ruth Ersted, “School Library Statistics,” *Minnesota Libraries* 16 (December 1948): 382.

⁴⁶ Linda Gann, “School Library Media Standards and Guidelines: A review of their significance and impact,” in Kathy Howard Latrobe, ed., *The Emerging School Library Media Center* (Englewood, CO: Libraries Unlimited, Inc, 1998), 154.

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collection. For example, they recommended 2,000 volumes for a school of 200 students and 15,000 volumes for a school of 5,000 students.⁴⁷

This process came to a climax in 1960 when the American Association of School Librarians (AASL) formed a national committee to prepare new standards. The committee was co-chaired by Dr. Frances Henne of Columbia University and Ruth Ersted, Minnesota's Supervisor of School Libraries. The committee had representatives from 19 professional organizations (including the NEA and the ALA) who agreed to support and publicize the new standards. As a result, the standard had much greater impact than the previous versions.⁴⁸ Based on statistical analysis of successful school library programs, they recommended that a school library have a book collection of at least 6,000 to 10,000 books for schools of 200 to 999 students and 10 books per students for larger schools. They also made recommendations for the number of trained librarians and the size of the budget for books, periodicals, and audio-visual materials.⁴⁹

National standards promulgated by professional organizations could only function as recommendations to individual schools. Permanent change depended on the states adopting standards and giving them teeth. Given that Ruth Ersted was a national leader of this movement, it is not surprising that Minnesota already had state guidelines in place requiring substantial school libraries. In 1957, the Minnesota Department of Education published its *Guide for Educational Planning of Public School Buildings and Sites in Minnesota* which for the first time contained detailed requirements for school libraries. The *Guide* noted that the legislature had given the State Board of Education the power to prescribe rules for school buildings and that all plans for construction or remodeling of school buildings had to be approved by the state department of education before contracts could be let.⁵⁰

The *Guide* required a library and extensive audio-visual facilities in both elementary and secondary schools.⁵¹ The school library, it noted, is "an essential learning laboratory for all levels of education in the school program."⁵² Libraries provided for individual differences (in reading ability) and for the stimulation of new interests. The *Guide* stated that the library must have one or more reading rooms (depending on the size of the school), a separate work and storage area, a conference room for small group work, viewing and listening rooms, and office space for librarians. The *Guide* set down very detailed specifications for the size of reading

⁴⁷ Joan Michie and Barbara Holton, *Fifty Years of Supporting Children's Learning: A History of Public School Libraries and Federal Legislation from 1953-2000* (Washington: U. S. Department of Education, 2005), 7-8.

⁴⁸ Linda Gann, 170-171. See also Milbrey L. Jones, *Survey of School Media Standards* (Washington: U.S. Department of Education, 1977), 2.

⁴⁹ Michie and Holton, 8.

⁵⁰ Minnesota Department of Education, *Guide for Educational Planning of Public School Buildings and Sites in Minnesota* (St. Paul: Department of Education, 1957), 1.

⁵¹ *Guide* (1957), 45, 102, 107. In the 1966 edition of this guide, the state called for a "Instructional Materials Center" comprised of a library and an audio-visual education center. Minnesota Department of Education, *Guide for Educational Planning of Public School buildings and Sites in Minnesota* (St. Paul: Department of Education, 1966), 29.

⁵² *Guide* (1957), 102.

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rooms. For schools like Sacred Heart which had a combined K-12 program serving less than 500 students, the library should seat at least 65-70 students in a reading room that was at least 1,925-2,100 sq. ft. The minimum book collection for such a school should be 6,500 books which would be supplemented by at least 35 magazine subscriptions.⁵³ There were also detailed specifications for audio-visual facilities, including equipment for producing, copying, and presenting educational materials.

These state standards put significant new burdens on all schools, perhaps most especially on smaller rural schools. Where would the funds come from to fill the Instructional Media Center with books, magazine, films, filmstrips, transparencies, and maps? A breakthrough on this issue came from an unexpected source. On October 4, 1957, the Soviet Union launched *Sputnik 1*, the first artificial satellite, which set off a national debate about the quality of American education. One result of this debate was the *National Defense Education Act of 1958*, the purpose of which was to improve U.S. education in the areas of science, mathematics and foreign languages to meet the defense needs of the nation.⁵⁴ For example, federal funds could be obtained to remodel a science classroom in a rural school. It also meant that federal funding was for the first time available for school libraries, because the act provided funds that could be used for the purchase of audio-visual materials and printed materials other than textbooks. The funding mechanism sent a message to every school district that the issues of national preparedness should be the concern of every local school.

The school board reacts

In the late 1950s, the Sacred Heart school board seemed out of touch with these changes, and more than that, out of step for the first time with the voters in the district. On December 1, 1959, the district, now called Independent School District No. 655, asked the voters to approve bonds for \$385,000 to finance the demolition of the 1901 building and the construction of a new high school addition in its place.⁵⁵ In the event the first question was approved, the voters were also asked to approve \$260,000 in bonds to finance the construction of a new gymnasium/auditorium for the high school. About 90% of eligible voters came to the polls, and they spoke with a clear voice. They rejected the first bond question by a vote of 517 to 187 and the second by a vote of 589 to 108.⁵⁶ The voters were not won over to the idea of replacing the 1901 building, and found the need for a new gymnasium even more suspect.

⁵³ *Guide* (1957), 102-104. In the 1966 version of the *Guide*, the minimum for the book collection was raised to 8,000 and for the magazines subscriptions to 75. *Guide* (1966), 55

⁵⁴ Wayne J. Urban, *More than Science and Sputnik: The National Defense Education Act of 1958* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2010). Urban points out that the long term impact of the NDEA was to greatly increase federal involvement in local education.

⁵⁵ Due to a change in state law, the Sacred Heart Public School district changed its name in 1957. As noted below, later consolidations with neighboring districts led to further name changes after 1980. *Sacred Heart Town and Country*, 276.

⁵⁶ "Voters roar 'NO' to school bonds," *SHN*, December 3, 1959. The paper noted that as far as it knew, "this is the first time that a bond issue has been defeated here."

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The board quickly regrouped and put a new proposal before the voters which for the first time clearly addressed the need for a library that met the state standards and for stronger science and business education. On February 16, 1960, they asked voters to approve a bond sale of \$180,000 to finance an expansion that would include a new library addition north of the 1953 addition and east of the 1901 building, and new classrooms for science and business education on a second floor addition behind the 1901 building. Demolition of the 1901 building was no longer part of the package. Nevertheless, the voters once again rejected the bond, this time by a vote of 390 to 178.⁵⁷

The school board then turned to the federal government to help fund the needed upgrades in its science program. Supplemented by a \$5,500 National Defense Education Act grant, the board tapped into revenues generated by its levy power to finance a \$35,000 upgrade to its science department by remodeling the classroom and adding new equipment. At this time, the two classrooms on the north side of the second floor of the 1929 building were combined into one large science classroom with smaller adjacent rooms for an office, a store room, and a dark room.

Meanwhile, the gap between the now well-defined concept of a school library as “an essential learning laboratory” and the reality of the Sacred Heart Public School’s library had become impossible to ignore. In March 1963, the State Department of Education inspected Sacred Heart Public School and found several serious space limitations, especially in the library. The state found that the Sacred Heart school library contained only 880 sq. ft., which was about 45% of the minimum space required. The state also found that the library sat only 16 students, although the state guidelines required at least 50 seats based on the enrollment of the school.⁵⁸ Moreover, overcrowding meant that the library was used for study halls part of the school day. The state also held that the library needed to have a work room for processing new books and periodicals, a storage area, and a conference room in which students could work on group projects.⁵⁹ The state also noted that Sacred Heart was out of compliance with respect to the state standards on special education classes and remedial reading instruction. The Department of Education’s *Guide for Educational Planning of Public School Buildings and Sites in Minnesota* required that rooms be set aside for special education of handicapped students and for remedial reading instruction.⁶⁰

As a result, the board again went to the voters in May 1963, seeking approval of a \$110,000 bond issue to finance a one-story addition east of the 1901 building and north of the 1953 elementary school wing. This addition would contain a new all-school library designed to meet the state and national standards. It would have a large reading room, ample shelving, a work and

⁵⁷ “School bonds voted down,” *SHN*, February 18, 1960.

⁵⁸ Since the 1957 *Guide* appears to require more than 50 seats, the Department of Education may have moderated its requirement in this case. Nevertheless, Sacred Heart was far from having a reading room that sat 50.

⁵⁹ “Reasons for SH School Expansion Are Cited,” *SHN*, April 25, 1963.

⁶⁰ *Guide* (1957), 54-62.

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storage room, and a librarian's office.⁶¹ The addition would also contain two First Grade classrooms, a conference room which would be used for remedial reading instruction, a special education room, and several administrative offices. This would allow the existing library on the second floor of the 1901 building to be converted into two high school classrooms.

The school board put out a brochure encouraging voters to support the bond referendum. In addition to growing enrollments, the brochure repeated in detail the State Department of Education's findings that their library fell short of state standards. The brochure also made the case that remedial reading was a crucial area which needed its own designated space.⁶² This time the board's proposal was endorsed by a vote of 299 to 228.⁶³ The board acted quickly, and by August, the bonds were sold and the board had hired R. L. Vogt Construction of Olivia as the general contractor. The news building was formally dedicated at an evening program on November 10, 1964 in conjunction with the annual PTA-sponsored open house. Given the impetus behind this expansion, it is no surprise that Ruth Ersted, the State Supervisor of School Libraries, was invited to give the dedication address.⁶⁴

With the 1964 addition, the Sacred Heart Public School had completed its transformation as a town school, providing universal public education to the surrounding rural communities in an era of constantly increasing expectation about what that education should include.⁶⁵ Although a very small town, it had created a school that delivered, under one roof, universal elementary and secondary education that met the evolving standards set by Minnesota Department of Education. The school finally had a library that met state and national standards, accommodations for remedial reading and special education, a gymnasium, and auditorium, up-to-date science classrooms, industrial arts and agricultural shops, a business classroom, a band and choral room, varsity sports, and a cafeteria serving hot lunches.

⁶¹ Apart from academic standards, the larger library also benefited the local citizens. Because Sacred Heart had never had a public library, adults in the community had traditionally been welcome to use the school library's meager resources. The new addition was laid out in such a way that adult users could enter the library directly from the street without passing through school area. The school's library had been moved several times in the 1901 building, and for a time even occupied the attic space.

⁶² "For our children...tomorrow's leaders: Special Bond Election, Independent School District No 655, Tuesday May 7, 1963." Printed brochure, Sacred Heart Area Historical Society archives.

⁶³ "School Bond Issue Carries 299 to 228," *SHN*, May 9, 1963, 1.

⁶⁴ "Program: Sacred Heart Independent School District #655 Open House and Dedication, Tuesday, November 10, 1964, 7:30 P.M.," 4-page typescript, Sacred Heart Area Historical Society archives.

⁶⁵ As noted below, there was one more expansion in 1974, but that was only an upgrade of the existing gymnasium/auditorium.

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The school as the community's cultural center

The local school house played a special role in small town Minnesota as the one place where the community was unified by a common identity.⁶⁶ The school house served, as Clark Chambers wrote, "as an all-purpose community center."⁶⁷ This was certainly the case in Sacred Heart. On a given Sunday morning in the early twentieth century, Sacred Heart citizens went their separate ways to worship in five different churches, four of which represented different variants of Lutheranism and one of which was Methodist.⁶⁸ During the rest of the week, the entire community came together in the school, and after 1929, the new gymnasium/auditorium was the focal point of the town.

Much of this involved school-related activities, such as physical education, school plays, music performances, sports, Parent-Teacher Association meetings, and community education classes. This was where the junior/senior class banquets were held. This was where the graduation ceremonies were held each spring (Figure #5). This is where the all-school reunions were held. This was also where community forums were held whenever the school board wanted to put a bond issue before the voters to build a new addition. This was also where citizens voted. When a new addition was completed, the community would gather in the auditorium for the dedication ceremony.

In a very small town like Sacred Heart, the gymnasium/auditorium also provided the indispensable venue for a host of meetings and gatherings which were not strictly school related. This was where groups like the Boy Scouts and the Women's Federated Improvement Club met. As late as 1953, the local chapter of the Women's Christian Temperance Union held a full-day institute in the auditorium.⁶⁹ Groups of Norwegians whose ancestors hailed from a common area of Norway (called *lags*) used the auditorium for their annual meetings (called *stevnes*).⁷⁰ Private events like weddings, anniversaries, retirement and farewell parties were held here.

The auditorium was also the chief venue for a variety of entertainments. In 1942, the PTA brought the Tom Thumb Circus to the auditorium, a miniature traveling circus sponsored by the General Extension Division of the University of Minnesota.⁷¹ Bands of all kinds, including traveling dance bands, played in the auditorium. This was where the Sacred Heart Municipal Band held its free concerts. One memorable concert in 1956 featured the Kitchen Band, a group of nine local housewives who came together for a PTA fundraiser and received national attention when they appeared on the Gary Moore Show in New York.⁷²

⁶⁶ Thomas Harvey, "Small-Town Minnesota" in Clifford Clark, ed. *Minnesota in a Century of Change* (St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 1989), 119-120.

⁶⁷ Chambers, 476.

⁶⁸ *History of Renville County*, 910.

⁶⁹ "WCTU Institute at Sacred Heart Friday," *SHN*, April 16, 1953, 1.

⁷⁰ *Sacred Heart Town and Country*, 333-336.

⁷¹ *Sacred Heart Town and Country*, 380-381.

⁷² *Sacred Heart Town and Country*, 376-377.

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Some events originated as part of the school program and became full-scale town events. This was especially true of the “operettas” produced by music teacher Joseph Olson starting in 1953. His goal was to include every elementary school student in the cast, a number which reached as high as 200 in some years. Although operettas were produced in the spring going back to the 1930s, Olson’s spectacles were Christmas operettas produced in December on the auditorium stage. The entire town was involved, not just as an audience but also because the mother of every cast member was responsible for sewing the costumes that their children would wear.⁷³

It was not just school children who graced the stage of the auditorium. The adults of Sacred Heart had a remarkable proclivity for staging large scale historical pageants, history plays, musicals, and talent shows in the school’s auditorium. Given the size of the town, a remarkably high percentage of the population took part. In June 1949, for example, the Women’s Federated Improvement Club created a historical pageant commemorating the Minnesota Territorial Centennial.⁷⁴ To commemorate Sacred Heart’s 75th birthday in 1953, a cast of 70 appeared in the “Follies of 1878” in the auditorium, accompanied by an eight-piece orchestra.⁷⁵ In 1958, the WFIC produced “Heart of the Prairie,” a historical play created in commemoration of the centennial of statehood.⁷⁶ Striking a different tone, the American Legion Rifle Club sponsored a “home talent show” called, appropriately enough, “Everybody’s Here” in April 1940 (Figure #7). The advertisement in the local paper promised that “you’ll laugh yourself sick.”⁷⁷ In the 1950s, the VFW post sponsored a variety musical called “Going Places.” Each of these productions involved large casts on stage and many more people building sets, preparing costumes, selling tickets, and of course, providing an audience.

Finally, the gymnasium was the venue of the local independent basketball team. Starting in 1904 basketball enthusiasts had organized town teams which played independent teams from towns around the region. After 1929, the Sacred Heart team, now called the Whippets, played home games in the gymnasium. Lively inter-town rivalries brought spectators to the games. In 1930, however, the Whippets faced a new and unexpected opponent.

In that year, the Harlem Globetrotters, a barnstorming team of African-American basketball stars organized in the late 1920s by Abe Saperstein, a Chicago entrepreneur, made its first venture into Minnesota. Although they became international celebrities in the 1950s, in those early years they traveled by Model T through the Midwest playing local teams for a portion of the gate.⁷⁸ In

⁷³ *Sacred Heart Town and Country*, 273. In 2003, the Sacred Heart Area Historical Society presented a style show using operetta costumes in its collection. The operettas continued through 1978. “A look back on operettas of the Sacred Heart School,” SHN, July 24, 2003, 1.

⁷⁴ A copy of the program can be found in the archives of the SHAHS.

⁷⁵ *Sacred Heart Town and Country*, 390.

⁷⁶ “Sacred Heart centennial event was resounding success,” SHN, August 14, 1958, 1; *Sacred Heart Town and Country*, 391.

⁷⁷ SHN, April 25, 1940.

⁷⁸ The Harlem Globetrotters, founded in Chicago in 1929, toured small towns in Illinois, Iowa, Wisconsin and Minnesota beginning in the 1929-1930 season. Ben Green, *Spinning the Globe: the Rise, Fall, and Return to Greatness of the Harlem Globetrotters* (New York: Harper Collins, 2005). Green provides a good overview of the early barnstorming years of the Globetrotters at 51-71.

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February 1930, the Globetrotters faced, and defeated, the Whippets, in the Sacred Heart gymnasium. The local newspaper reported that everyone in attendance “enjoyed a most hilarious evening.”⁷⁹ When a return engagement was organized in January 1931, the paper noted that “record attendance is anticipated for the evening of laughs with the black men.”⁸⁰ On that evening, about 700 packed the gymnasium to see the rematch (Figure #8). The local newspaper reported that the crowd was delighted by the fast style of play and humorous antics of the Globetrotters.⁸¹ The newspaper also stated that the team made Sacred Heart their base for a week while they traveled to play in neighboring towns, apparently because “everyone treated them civilly” in Sacred Heart and there were no racial epithets shouted during the game.⁸² It is not clear how many times the Globetrotters appeared in Sacred Heart, but newspaper advertisements and articles document their appearance in 1939 and then again in 1947 (for the 1939 game see Figure #9).⁸³

Developments after the period of significance

In recent decades, changing demographics led to school district consolidations and school closings throughout rural Minnesota. Given these trends, it was inevitable that the Sacred Heart community would become part of a larger consolidated school district.

However, the Sacred Heart school board successfully mounted one final building program before its demise. On December 2, 1972, voters went to the polls to approve a \$405,000 bond issue to finance a new gymnasium/auditorium seating about 1,000, along with new locker and shower rooms, a large community room, and new storage areas. This addition would be located directly south of the western side of the 1953 addition. Voters approved the plan by a vote of 432 to 190. In April 1973, the project hit a snag when the low bids came in at over \$571,000. The board then worked with its architect, Kenneth H. Walijarvi of St. Paul, to trim the project without shrinking the footprint of the addition. In June, a new set of bids was accepted, and W.S.W. Construction of Willmar was chosen as the general contractor. On Sunday, November 17, 1974,

⁷⁹ “Whippets Easily Lose to Colored Team,” *SHN*, February 6, 1930.

⁸⁰ “Whippets to Meet Fast Redwood Team,” *SHN*, January 8, 1931; “Colored B.B. Team Here Sat. Jan 24,” *SHN*, January 15, 1931.

⁸¹ “Elusive Colored Boys Win From Whippets,” *SHN*, January 29, 1931.

⁸² “Round about the Town,” *SHN*, February 5, 1931. All histories of the Globetrotters note that the deep and pervasive racism in the U.S. meant that the team often had problems finding lodging and restaurants willing to serve them and sometimes had to quickly leave at the end of a game to avoid violence. See Green, *ibid*. The fact that they stayed a week in Sacred Heart indicates that they found lodging in town, possibly at the Sacred Heart Hotel, a building that still exists. With respect to the team’s relationship with the town, a local memoirist recalled that Abe Saperstein asked a Whippets player named Harry Strand to fill in for an injured Globetrotter sometime during this period. If so, he may have been the first person to play on the team who was not African-American besides Saperstein himself, who sometimes had to substitute because the team could only afford to travel with five players. Beverly Webster, *Aase’s Family* (1993), 145; quoted in *Sacred Heart Town and Country*, 364.

⁸³ “Colored 5 Win in Riot of Fun,” *SHN*, December 7, 1939; *SHN*, December 4, 1947, 6; *SHN*, December 18, 1947, 1.

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the board hosted a dedication ceremony for the new building. The Sacred Heart girls' basketball team had already christened the gymnasium with a game on October 24, 1974.⁸⁴

In 1976, the Sacred Heart Public School received a grant of \$50,000 from a family foundation associated with Edythe Chernstrom Dowling, a 1918 graduate of the Sacred Heart High School, who had spent most of her life on the East coast. She and her husband were interested in helping small town libraries, and she noted that when growing up, there was "rather limited reading material" available to her.⁸⁵ The grant was used to upgrade the school library with more books and new shelving and furniture. The goal was not only to strengthen the library for academic purposes, but also to make it a richer resource for the wider community. On November 17, 1977, the school hosted a dedication ceremony for the refurbished library.⁸⁶

In spite of this, the problem of declining rural populations eventually required that difficult decisions be made. In the spring of 1979, the district entered into a "pairing" agreement with neighboring Renville school district whereby all the ninth graders would go to Sacred Heart and all the tenth graders to Renville.⁸⁷ By 1982, Sacred Heart and Renville had a "joint" school board and had full K-12 pairing. In 1995, the school boards of Belview and Danube joined the "pairing" agreement and were folded into this "joint board."⁸⁸ In 2000, this evolved into a new consolidated school district which is known today as Renville County West (RCW).

As enrollments dropped it became increasingly clear that the new district could not maintain schools in all participating towns. RCW closed the Danube school in 2005. The Sacred Heart School stayed open for four more years, offering grades one through six. Since 2009 all students in the district have attended school in Renville. However, RCW has continued to use the 1974 gymnasium for district athletics, especially junior high school sports including basketball and wrestling. In October 2012, the district installed a new floor in the gymnasium.⁸⁹ Other parts of the building have also been used for community events. Although no classes are held in the Sacred Heart School, RCW continues to maintain the entire school as it seeks a buyer or other adapted use of the building.

⁸⁴ "Dedication of School Addition Next Sunday," *SHN*, November 14, 1974, 1.

⁸⁵ "SH School to receive \$50,000 in Grant," *SHN*, September 9, 1976.

⁸⁶ "Open house, library dedication set for Thursday during Education Week," *SHN*, November 10, 1977.

⁸⁷ "Sacred Heart and Renville school boards reach an agreement for pairing for next year," *SHN*, March 15, 1979.

⁸⁸ "It's BDRSH No 6068: Enhanced Pairing Agreement ratified," *SHN*, June 21, 1995.

⁸⁹ Abby Buehler, "Gym at Sacred Heart school in use," *Renville County Register*, March 28, 2013.

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Previous documentation on file (NPS):

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

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
 Other State agency
 Federal agency
 Local government
 University
 Other: Sacred Heart Area Historical Society Archives

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): RN-SHC-20

10. Geographical Data Acreage of Property 3.6 acres

UTM References Datum (indicated on USGS map):

NAD 1927 or NAD 1983

Zone: 15 Easting: 314060 Northing: 4961350

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

Lots 1-4 of Lanning's Subdivision of Out lot 19 to Sacred Heart, MN

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The boundary includes the city lots historically associated with the property.

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11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Greg Gaut
organization: Historic Preservation Consultant
street & number: 673 E. Wabasha
city or town: Winona state: Minnesota zip code: 55987
e-mail GregGaut@gmail.com
telephone: 507-452-0536 date: June 15, 2014

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 this map.

Photographs

Name of Property: Sacred Heart Public School

City: Sacred Heart **County:** Renville **State:** Minnesota

Photographer: Greg Gaut

Location of original digital files: Minnesota State Historic Preservation Office and the author each have copies of the digital photographic files.

Date Photographed: March, 2013, February 2014 **Number of photographs:** 18

Photo #1: (MN_Renville Co_Sacred Heart Public School_0001)
Sacred Heart Public School, north façade, camera facing southeast.

Photo #2: (MN_Renville Co_Sacred Heart Public School_0002)
Sacred Heart Public School, north façade, central bay of 1901 building, camera facing south.

Photo #3: (MN_Renville Co_Sacred Heart Public School_0003)
Sacred Heart Public School, west façades, 1929 and 1953 additions, camera facing northeast.

Photo #4: (MN_Renville Co_Sacred Heart Public School_0004)
Sacred Heart Public School, east façade, 1953 addition, elementary school wing, camera facing northwest.

Photo #5: (MN_Renville Co_Sacred Heart Public School_0005)
Sacred Heart Public School, east façade, 1964 addition, camera facing northwest.

Photo #6: (MN_Renville Co_Sacred Heart Public School_0006)
Sacred Heart Public School, east elevation, 1953 addition, Agricultural and Industrial Arts shops. 1901 building in background. Camera in rear courtyard facing northwest.

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Photo #7: (MN_Renville Co_Sacred Heart Public School_0007)
Sacred Heart Public School, west elevation, 1974 gymnasium, camera facing southeast.

Photo #8: (MN_Renville Co_Sacred Heart Public School_0008)
Sacred Heart Public School, second floor hallway, 1901 building, camera facing north.

Photo #9: (MN_Renville Co_Sacred Heart Public School_0009)
Sacred Heart Public School, stairway, first floor, 1901 building, camera facing southeast.

Photo #10: (MN_Renville Co_Sacred Heart Public School_0010)
Sacred Heart Public School, second floor classroom, northeast corner of 1901 building,
camera facing northeast.

Photo #11: (MN_Renville Co_Sacred Heart Public School_0011)
Sacred Heart Public School, first floor classroom, southwest corner of 1901 building, camera
facing northeast.

Photo: #12: (MN_Renville Co_Sacred Heart Public School_0012)
Sacred Heart Public School, second floor hallway, 1929 addition, camera facing east.

Photo #13: (MN_Renville Co_Sacred Heart Public School_0013)
Sacred Heart Public School, second floor science classroom, 1929 addition, camera facing
southwest.

Photo #14: (MN_Renville Co_Sacred Heart Public School_0014)
Sacred Heart Public School, bleachers in the auditorium/gymnasium, 1929 addition, camera
facing northwest.

Photo #15: (MN_Renville Co_Sacred Heart Public School_0015)
Sacred Heart Public School, stage in the auditorium/gymnasium, 1929 addition, camera
facing southwest.

Photo #16: (MN_Renville Co_Sacred Heart Public School_0016)
Sacred Heart Public School, choral/band room, second floor, 1953 addition, camera facing
southwest.

Photo #17: (MN_Renville Co_Sacred Heart Public School_0017)
Sacred Heart Public School, corridor of elementary school wing, 1953 addition, camera
facing north.

Photo #18: (MN_Renville Co_Sacred Heart Public School_0018)
Sacred Heart Public School, library, 1964 addition, camera facing southwest.

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National Park Service

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Historic Photos

Figure #1: The 1901 building, photographed circa 1902 (Sacred Heart Area Historical Society Photo Archive).

Figure #2: The 1901 building with school children, photographed circa 1910 (SHAHС Photo Archive).

Figure #3: Photo of the 1929 addition taken shortly after construction in 1930 (SHAHС Photo Archive).

Figure #4: The 1901 building with the 1929 addition photographed in 1952. The bell tower was removed from the 1901 building in 1934 (SHAHС Photo Archive).

Figure #5: Yearbook picture of 1955 commencement ceremony in auditorium/gymnasium. Graduating class on the stage, with audience seating on the gymnasium floor (*The Viking*, 1955, from SHAHS archives).

Figure #6: Fifth Grade class picture from 1964 yearbook taken in the rear courtyard, showing parts of the 1952 additions with the second story of the 1901 building in the background (*The Viking*, 1964, from SHAHS archives).

Figure #7: Example of a non-school cultural event involving many members of the community in the Sacred Heart Public School auditorium (From *Sacred Heart News*, April 25, 1940).

Figure #8: Advertisement for the January 24, 1931 game between the Harlem Globetrotters and the Sacred Heart Whippets (*Sacred Heart News*, January 15, 1931).

Figure #9: Advertisement for the December 5, 1939 game between the Harlem Globetrotters and the Sacred Heart town team (*Sacred Heart News*, November 30, 1939).

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Figure #1



Figure #2

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Figure #3



Figure #4

United States Department of the Interior
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Figure #5



Figure #6

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

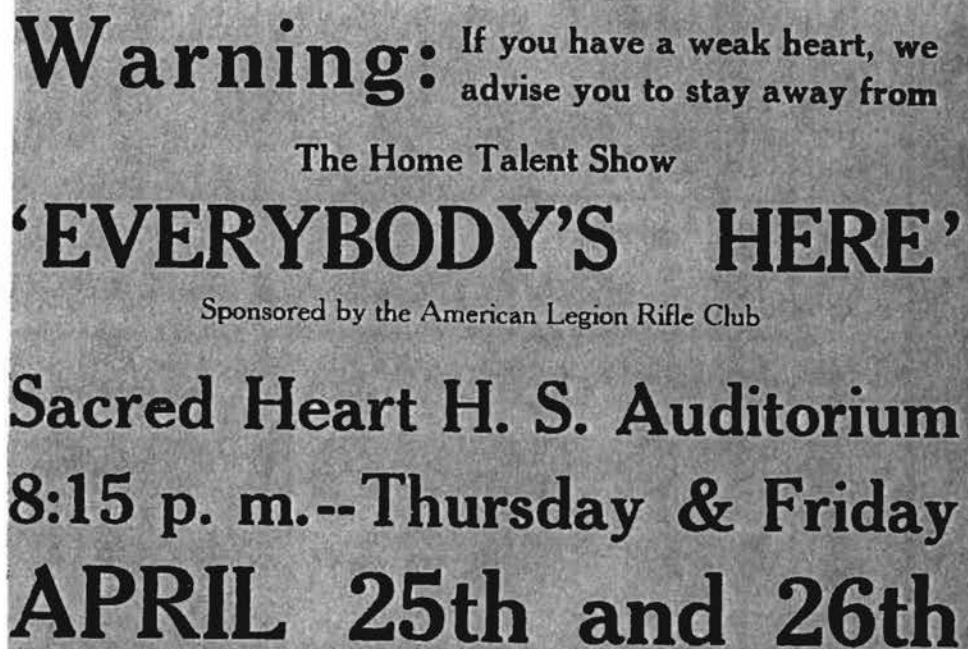
National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

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YOU'LL LAUGH YOURSELF SICK

SHN 25 April 1940

Figure #7

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Figure #8



Figure #9

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

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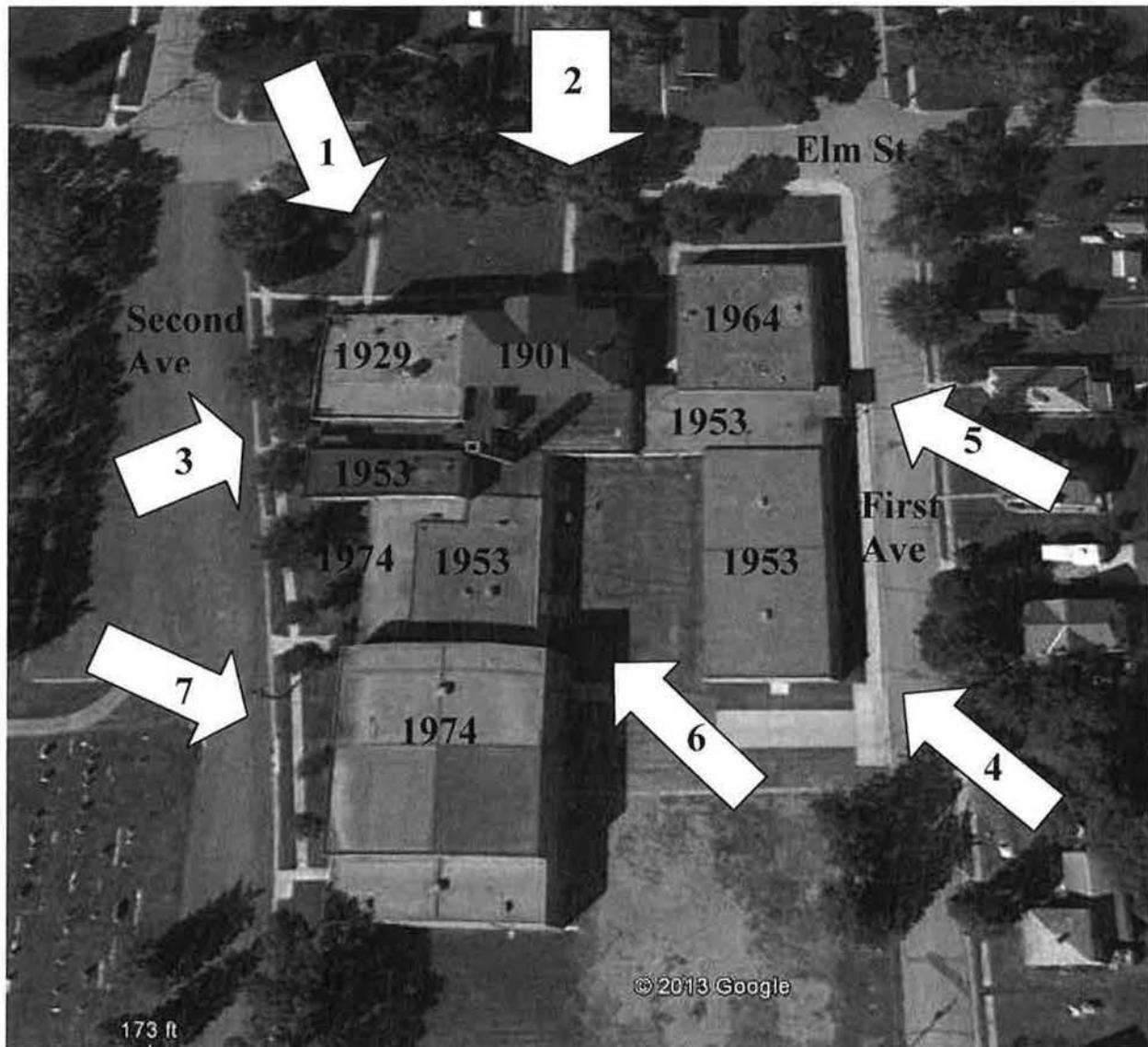
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County and State

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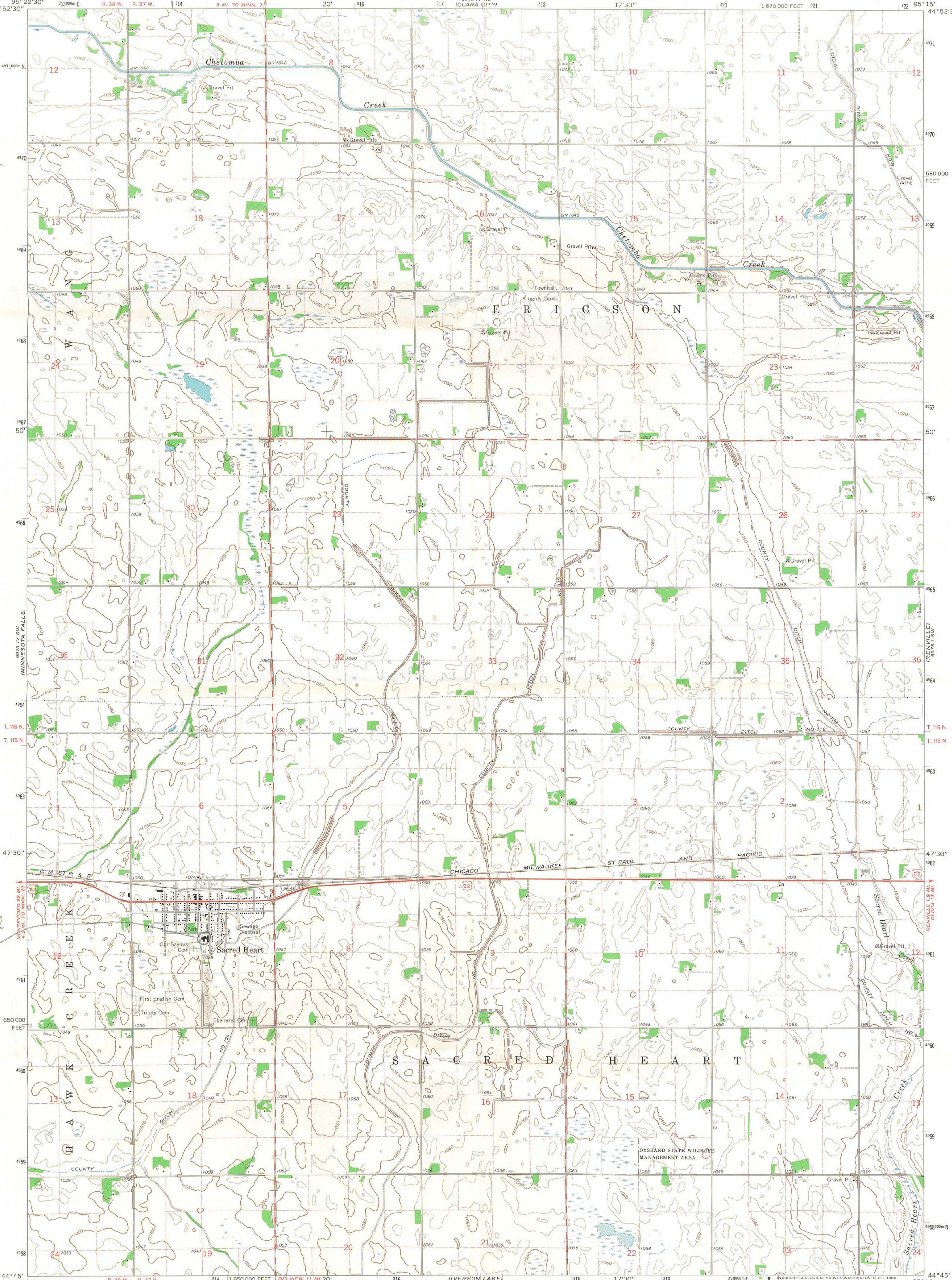
**Google Earth view showing construction dates of the various parts of the building,
surrounding streets, and direction of exterior photos #1-7**



UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
GEOLOGICAL SURVEY

STATE OF MINNESOTA
DEPARTMENT OF ADMINISTRATION

SACRED HEART QUADRANGLE
MINNESOTA-RENNILLE CO.
7.5 MINUTE SERIES (TOPOGRAPHIC)



Mapped, edited, and published by the Geological Survey

Control by USGS and USC&GS

Topography by photogrammetric methods from aerial photographs taken 1964. Field checked 1965

Polyconic projection. 1927 North American datum
10,000-foot grid based on Minnesota coordinate system, south zone
1000-meter Universal Transverse Mercator grid ticks,
zone 15, shown in blue

Fine red dashed lines indicate selected fence and field lines where generally visible on aerial photographs
This information is unchecked

UTM GRID AND 1965 MAGNETIC NORTH DECLINATION AT CENTER OF SHEET

1°38' 78°
29 MILS 133 MILS

SCALE 1:24,000
CONTOUR INTERVAL 10 FEET
DATUM IS MEAN SEA LEVEL

THIS MAP COMPLIES WITH NATIONAL MAP ACCURACY STANDARDS
FOR SALE BY U.S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, DENVER, COLORADO 80225, OR WASHINGTON, D.C. 20242
A FOLDER DESCRIBING TOPOGRAPHIC MAPS AND SYMBOLS IS AVAILABLE ON REQUEST

ROAD CLASSIFICATION
Heavy-duty — Light-duty —
Medium-duty — Unimproved dirt —
U.S. Route

S8 d
SACRED HEART, MINN.
N4445-W9515/7.5

1965

AMS 6973 IV SE-SERIES V872



1901

SACRED HEART PUBLIC SCHOOL











134-CTK

EXIT

PULL







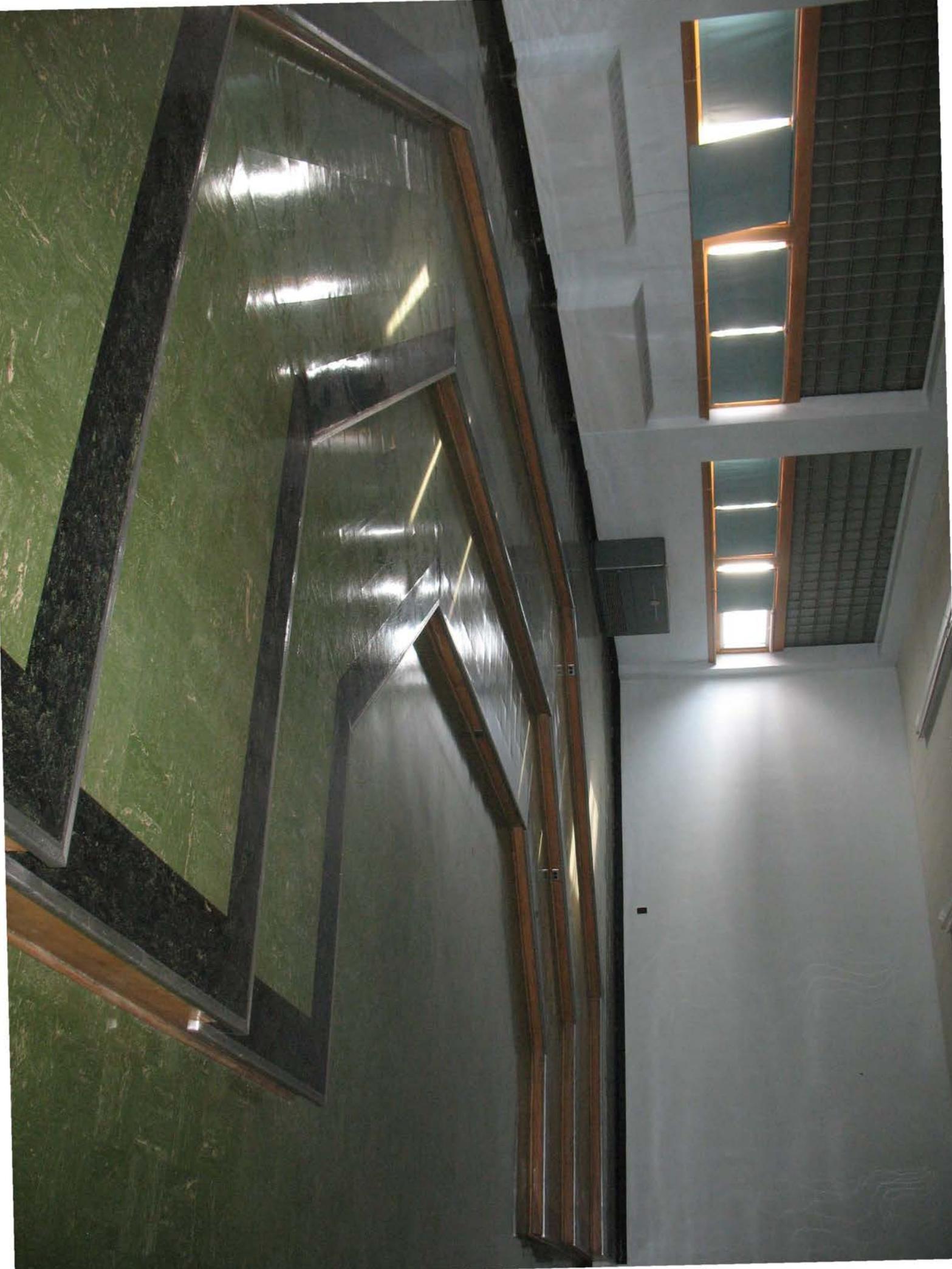
















UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION

PROPERTY Sacred Heart Public School
NAME:

MULTIPLE
NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: MINNESOTA, Renville

DATE RECEIVED: 9/05/14 DATE OF PENDING LIST: 9/29/14
DATE OF 16TH DAY: 10/14/14 DATE OF 45TH DAY: 10/22/14
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 14000869

REASONS FOR REVIEW:

APPEAL: N DATA PROBLEM: N LANDSCAPE: N LESS THAN 50 YEARS: N
OTHER: N PDIL: N PERIOD: N PROGRAM UNAPPROVED: N
REQUEST: N SAMPLE: N SLR DRAFT: N NATIONAL: N

COMMENT WAIVER: N

ACCEPT RETURN REJECT 10.20.14 DATE

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

Entered in
The National Register
of
Historic Places

RECOM./CRITERIA _____

REVIEWER _____ DISCIPLINE _____

TELEPHONE _____ DATE _____

DOCUMENTATION see attached comments Y/N see attached SLR Y/N

If a nomination is returned to the nominating authority, the nomination is no longer under consideration by the NPS.

City of Sacred Heart

Ph.: (320) 765-2559

PO Box 128
Sacred Heart, Minnesota 56285

RENVILLE COUNTY

THIS INSTITUTION IS AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY PROVIDER

August 13, 2014

Dear Nominating Committee:

This letter is in support of the Sacred Heart Public School in Sacred Heart, Minnesota. The school was originally built in 1901. Over the years, additions have been made but, the original part of the building still holds the unique design and features of the old school. The school in its days functioned not only for classes but was also the community gathering location for weddings, funerals, and other events in the City of Sacred Heart.

We are a community with quite a few elderly that still look upon the school for great memories of their past. With the local school district closing the school, the local residents are hoping to not see the school demolished in the future. By placing it on the National Register, their hope is that grants can be received to do improvements and possibly additional developments to the property.

As the City Council, we wish that you would please vote for the placement of our school on the National Register.

Sincerely,

Sacred Heart City Council

S_{acred} H_{eart} E_{conomic} D_{evelopment} A_{uthority}

PO Box 128
Sacred Heart MN 56285

August 13, 2014

Dear Nominating Committee:

Please accept this letter as support of the Sacred Heart Public School in Sacred Heart, Minnesota to be placed on the National Register.

The School was erected in 1901, functioning as a school and a gathering place for the community. This school has been the center of the community providing education, entertainment and stability of our community. Many residents of Sacred Heart, both past and current, are passionate about preserving this building. The Economic Development Committee has been trying to entice new residents into our community by providing space for development of business and housing needs for an increase in our elderly population.

There are many possible uses for this building and we hope that by it being placed on the National Register, funding would become available. We would use the money to complete a feasibility study, which would lead to ways that we can preserve this beautiful building and space. We have entertained many ideas for development of the building providing it to be a useful place for our community. We are excited to put those ideas to work!

Please consider the nomination of the Sacred Heart Public School to be placed on the National Register. We thank you in advance for considering our request and for understanding the importance of this historic building to our community and the people who take pride in the rich history it provides!

Sincerely,

Sacred Heart Economic Development Authority



Sacred Heart Area Historical Society

PO Box 462
300 5th Avenue
Sacred Heart, MN 56285
320-765-8868
shahs@hcinet.net
www.sacredheartareamuseum.org

August 13, 2014

Dear Denis Gardner,

The Sacred Heart Area Historical Society (SHAHs) is pleased to support the nomination of the Sacred Heart Public School to the National Register. The historical society is a community-based, all-volunteer run 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization since incorporating in 1996. We are dedicated to collecting, preserving and sharing history of the Sacred Heart area.

Driven by our mission statement which includes helping to preserve buildings of historical value, we addressed public concern for preservation of the Sacred Heart Public School. We identified the Sacred Heart Public School as one of the Nation's historic places worthy of preservation and took on the project to get it nominated to the National Register.

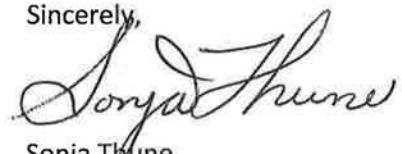
In 2012 and 2013 we partnered with Renville County West (RCW) school and were awarded two Minnesota Arts and Cultural Heritage Legacy Fund grants through the Minnesota Historical Society, one to evaluate and another to nominate the Sacred Heart Public School for National Register listing.

Built in 1901, the original school building in the existing complex expanded to meet the needs of increased enrollment, to meet national and state standards for school curriculum and libraries, and as other needs arose. In addition to providing a place for education and school-related events in our small rural Minnesota town, the school house played a special role as an all-purpose community center. It was the center for many public functions not strictly school related, such as anniversaries, funerals, musicals, local group gatherings, and independent basketball games with towns around the area and even the Harlem Globetrotters.

National Register listing of the Sacred Heart Public School will have a positive impact on our community. It opens a number of doors. In addition to preserving one of Minnesota's historic buildings and the history associated with it, listing provides national recognition, increased potential for reuse of the building, and economic development for the Sacred Heart community, thereby, furthering SHAHS's mission of preservation and education.

We look forward to National Register designation of the Sacred Heart Public School.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Sonja Thune".

Sonja Thune

Sacred Heart Area Museum Curator

Minnesota Historical Society
State Historic Preservation Office
345 Kellogg Blvd West, St. Paul, Minnesota 55102
651/259-3451



TO: Carol Shull, Keeper
National Register of Historic Places

FROM: Denis P. Gardner

DATE: 8/25/2014

NAME OF PROPERTY: Sacred Heart Public School

COUNTY AND STATE: Renville County, Minnesota

SUBJECT: National Register:

- Nomination
- Multiple Property Documentation Form
- Request for determination of eligibility
- Request for removal (Reference No.)
- Nomination resubmission
- Boundary increase/decrease (Reference No.)
- Additional documentation (Reference No.)

DOCUMENTATION:

- Original National Register of Historic Places Registration Form
- Multiple Property Documentation Form
- Continuation Sheets
- Removal Documentation
- Photographs
- CD w/ image files
- Original USGS Map
- Sketch map(s)
- Correspondence
 - Owner Objection

The enclosed owner objections

Do Do not constitute a majority of property owners

STAFF COMMENTS: