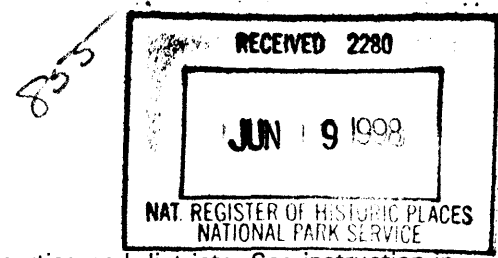


United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Registration Form



This form is for use in nominating or requesting determination for individual properties and districts. See instruction in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

### 1. Name of Property

historic name Sacred Heart Catholic Church  
other names/site number Sacred Heart Catholic Church / 5AL262

### 2. Location

street & number 727 4th Street [N/A] not for publication  
city or town Alamosa [N/A] vicinity  
state Colorado code CO county Alamosa code 003 zip code 81101

### 3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this  nomination  request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant  nationally  statewide  locally.  
( See continuation sheet for additional comments [ ]. )

[Signature] State Historic Preservation Officer  
Signature of certifying official/Title  
June 10, 1998  
Date  
State Historic Preservation Office, Colorado Historical Society  
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria.  
( See continuation sheet for additional comments [ ]. )

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of certifying official/Title  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Date  
\_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal agency and bureau

### 4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:  
 entered in the National Register  
See continuation sheet [ ].  
 determined eligible for the  
National Register  
See continuation sheet [ ].  
 determined not eligible for the  
National Register.  
 removed from the  
National Register  
 other, explain  
See continuation sheet [ ].

[Signature]  
Signature of the Keeper  
[Signature]  
Date  
7-15-98

Sacred Heart Catholic Church  
Name of Property

Alamosa County, CO  
County/State

### 5. Classification

#### Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply)

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

#### Category of Property

(Check only one box)

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

#### Number of Resources within Property

(Do not count previously listed resources.)

Contributing                      Noncontributing

<u>2</u>	<u>0</u>	buildings
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	sites
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	structures
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	objects
<u>3</u>	<u>0</u>	Total

#### Name of related multiple property listing.

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

N/A

#### Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register.

N/A

### 6. Function or Use

#### Historic Function

(Enter categories from instructions)

Religion/religious facility  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

#### Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

Religion/religious facility  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

### 7. Description

#### Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

Mission/Spanish Colonial Revival  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

#### Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Concrete  
walls Stucco  
\_\_\_\_\_  
roof Metal; Stone/slate  
other \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

#### Narrative Description

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

Sacred Heart Catholic Church

Alamosa County, CO

County/State

**Name of Property**

**8. Statement of Significance**

**Applicable National Register Criteria**

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

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

**Criteria Considerations**

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

**Property is:**

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

**Narrative Statement of Significance**

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

**9. Major Bibliographic References**

**Bibliography**

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

**Previous documentation on file (NPS):**

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

**Areas of Significance**

(Enter categories from instructions)

Architecture

Art

**Periods of Significance**

1922-1948

**Significant Dates**

1922

1942

1948

**Significant Person(s)**

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above).

N/A

**Cultural Affiliation**

N/A

**Architect/Builder**

Willison, Robert

Monroe, John K.

**Primary location of additional data:**

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State Agency
- Federal Agency
- Local Government
- University
- Other:

**Name of repository:**

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Sacred Heart Catholic Church

Alamosa County, CO

Name of Property

County/State

## 10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property less than one acre

### UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1. 13 423260 4147130  
Zone Easting Northing

3. Zone Easting Northing

2. Zone Easting Northing

4. Zone Easting Northing

[ ] See continuation sheet

### Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

### Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

## 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Randy Apodaca (parishioner) and Holly Wilson (OAHF)

organization Sacred Heart Catholic Church date 11-24-97

street & number 509 Stadium Drive telephone 719-589-3364

city or town Alamosa state CO zip code 81101

### Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

### Continuation Sheets

### Maps

A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A Sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

### Photographs

Representative black and white photographs of the property.

### Additional Items

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

### Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

name Arthur Tafoya, Bishop of Pueblo

street & number 1001 North Grand Avenue telephone 719-544-9861

city or town Pueblo state CO zip code 81003

**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 *et seq.*).

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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National Park Service

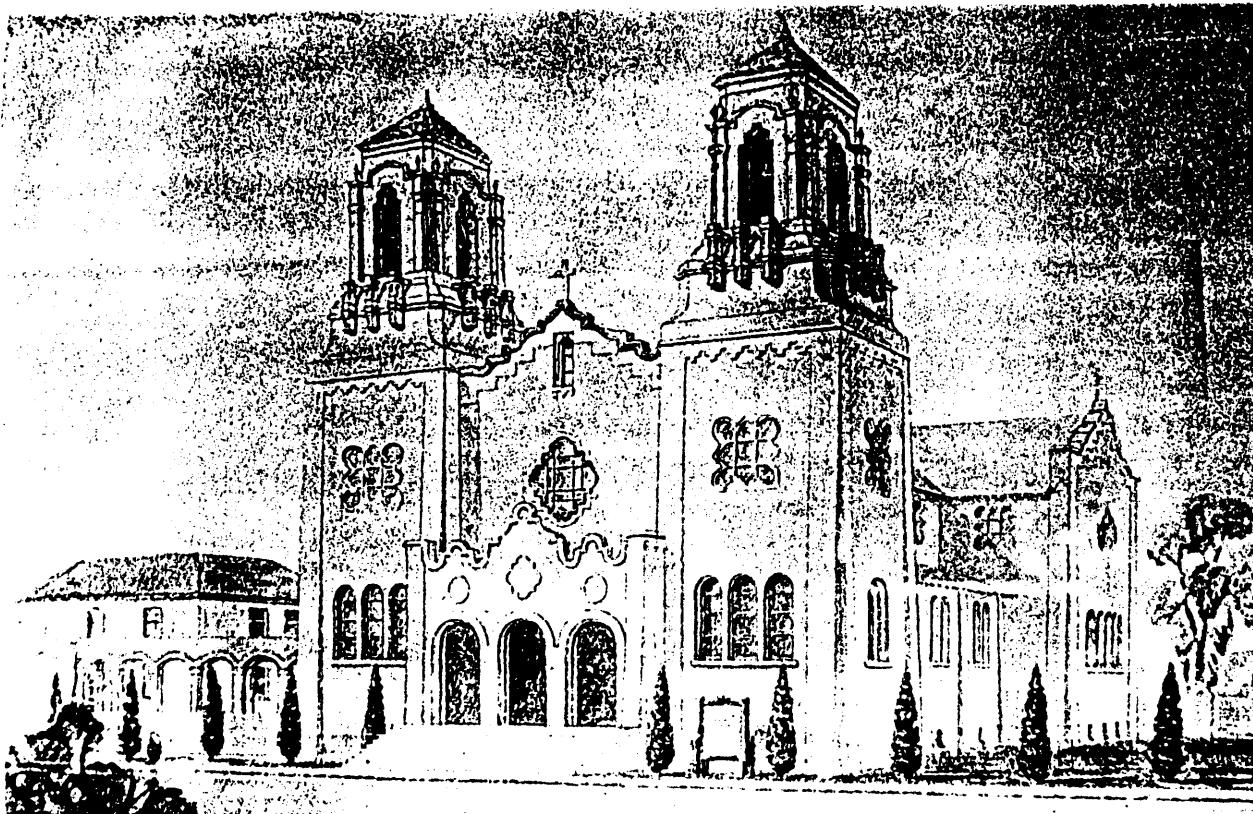
National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Sacred Heart Catholic Church  
Alamosa County, CO

Section number 7 Page 1

DESCRIPTION

Occupying the northeast corner of Edison Avenue and 4th Street, Sacred Heart Catholic Church is one block north of Alamosa's busy commercial street. The church faces 4th Street and is across from the Alamosa County Courthouse. From the southwest corner of the church is an arcade that leads to the rectory. The nomination includes the church that was completed in 1928, the (1938) rectory, and the (1945) arcade that connects them. The church grounds are interspersed with tall, mature, evergreen trees. Adjacent to the sidewalk, a low stuccoed wall (a more recent construction) starts near the entrance of the rectory on 4th Street and winds its way around the southwest corner to the rectory garage. The wall begins again on the north side of the garage and encloses the northwest corner of the property.



An artist rendering of the church with the arcade and rectory at left. Note the towers that remain unfinished today.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Sacred Heart Catholic Church  
Alamosa County, CO

Section number 7 Page 2

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*Church*

Sacred Heart Church is a tan stuccoed-brick building in the Mission/Spanish Colonial Revival style. Construction began in 1922 on the two-story (with basement) building that is 78 feet wide and 138 feet long. The modified cruciform plan has multiple roofs that consist of large intersecting gables forming the cross with a polygonal roof over the apse; smaller shed and hipped roofs cover various extensions. The building is distinguished by elaborate curvilinear parapet walls capped with decorative coping, round arched windows and entries on the main floor, and unusually shaped scalloped-edged ("rosa") clerestory windows. Most of the windows are filled with stained glass. Eight of the scallop-edged windows (three on each side of the nave and two in the apse) have painted glass.

The church faces south where concrete steps and wrought iron railings lead to the centrally located, projecting entrance bay. Three round arched openings provide access to the covered entry that is marked by a curvilinear parapet wall topped with a cross. Above each arched opening is a sculptural design on the wall surface--two circles flank a more complex scallop-edged outline. The more ornate design is repeated in a large window on the wall behind the entrance bay. The curvilinear gabled end has a small round-arched window in its apex and is topped with a cross.

Flanking the central bay are two short towers that were originally designed to be four stories, but have never been completed. A large, scallop-edged (rosa) window is positioned high on each tower wall with a trio of round-arched windows below it. The towers' side elevations contain a rosa window above a single round arched window. Shallow corbeling near the top of the towers also adds to the surface decoration, while a subtle buttressing-effect occurs at the corners of the towers. The arcade off the side of the southwest corner tower leads to the Rectory.

With the exception of the arcade, the east and west facades of the church are similar and only differ near the apse. The rosa clerestory windows continue high on the walls of the nave. These three windows are evenly spaced above a shed roof extension that covers three bays delineated by "buttressing" with each containing pairs of narrow, round-arched windows. Each transept has a curvilinear gabled end topped with a cross. A window, shaped like the one above the front entrance, is high on the wall with a series of five, narrow, round-arched windows below it.

On the north end, starting from a curvilinear parapet wall, is the five-sided apse flanked by smaller half-hipped roof sections. A shed roof covers stairs on the northeast side and adjacent to it is a small, gabled roof projection. A flat roof section with garage doors projects off the northwest side.

From the portico three sets of glazed and paneled double doors with semi-circular transom lights lead into the vestibule/narthex. Across the narthex and directly opposite each of the three exterior entries is another set of glazed and paneled double doors with a semi-circular transom that provide access to the nave.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Sacred Heart Catholic Church  
Alamosa County, CO

Section number 7 Page 3

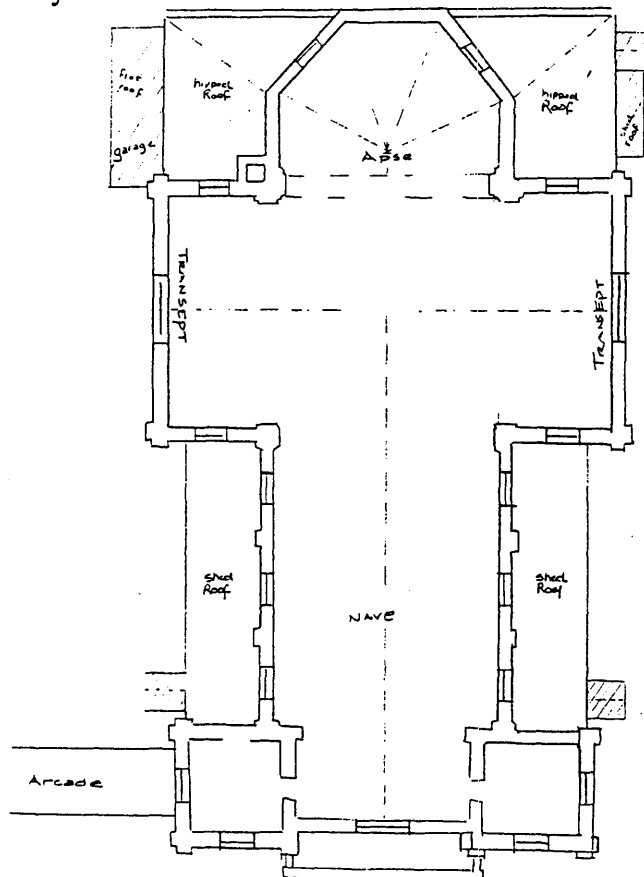
The nave is designed as a two-story space with a barrel vaulted ceiling. An arcade separates the east and west side aisles from the two rows of wooden pews and the central aisle. The series of round arches that make up the arcade spring from square piers with a molded impost. At each pier, a rib highlights the vaulted ceiling.

The transverse portion of the church has a groin vaulted ceiling above the altar table. (The original altar in the sanctuary was abandoned in the aftermath of Vatican II.) Flanking the altar table, each transept contains pews positioned perpendicular to those in the nave. There is a large mural on the north wall of the west transept above a small altar. Josef Steinhage painted this mural depicting the Christmas scene with wise men, angels and shepherds. On the north wall of the east transept is a large wooden case that holds a tapestry woven by female parishioners.

The half dome ceiling of the sanctuary provides the backdrop for the large Steinhage mural painted in 1942 depicting the figure of Christ. Although the space above the main altar is curved, the figure appears erect when viewed from the back of the church. The rich colors and intricate detail make it a focal point of the church.

The walls are plaster, and cylindrical metal and glass light fixtures hang from the ceiling. The furnishings include the pews, altar tables, a lectern, several chairs, and the previously mentioned wooden case with tapestry.

footprint of church



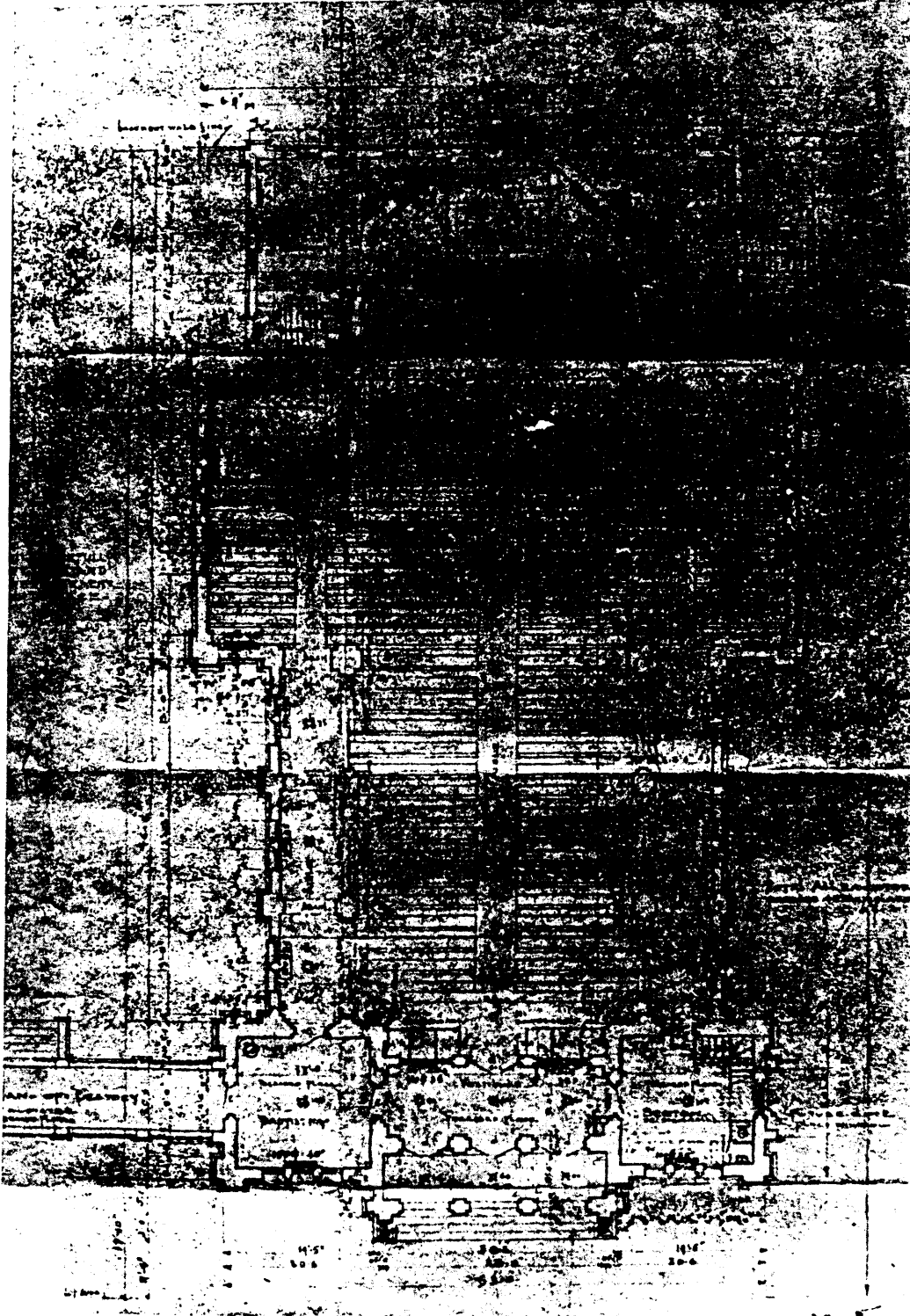
United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Sacred Heart Catholic Church  
Alamosa County, CO

Section number 7 Page 4

Floor plan of Sacred Heart before Vatican II changes which reconfigured the transverse portion of the church.





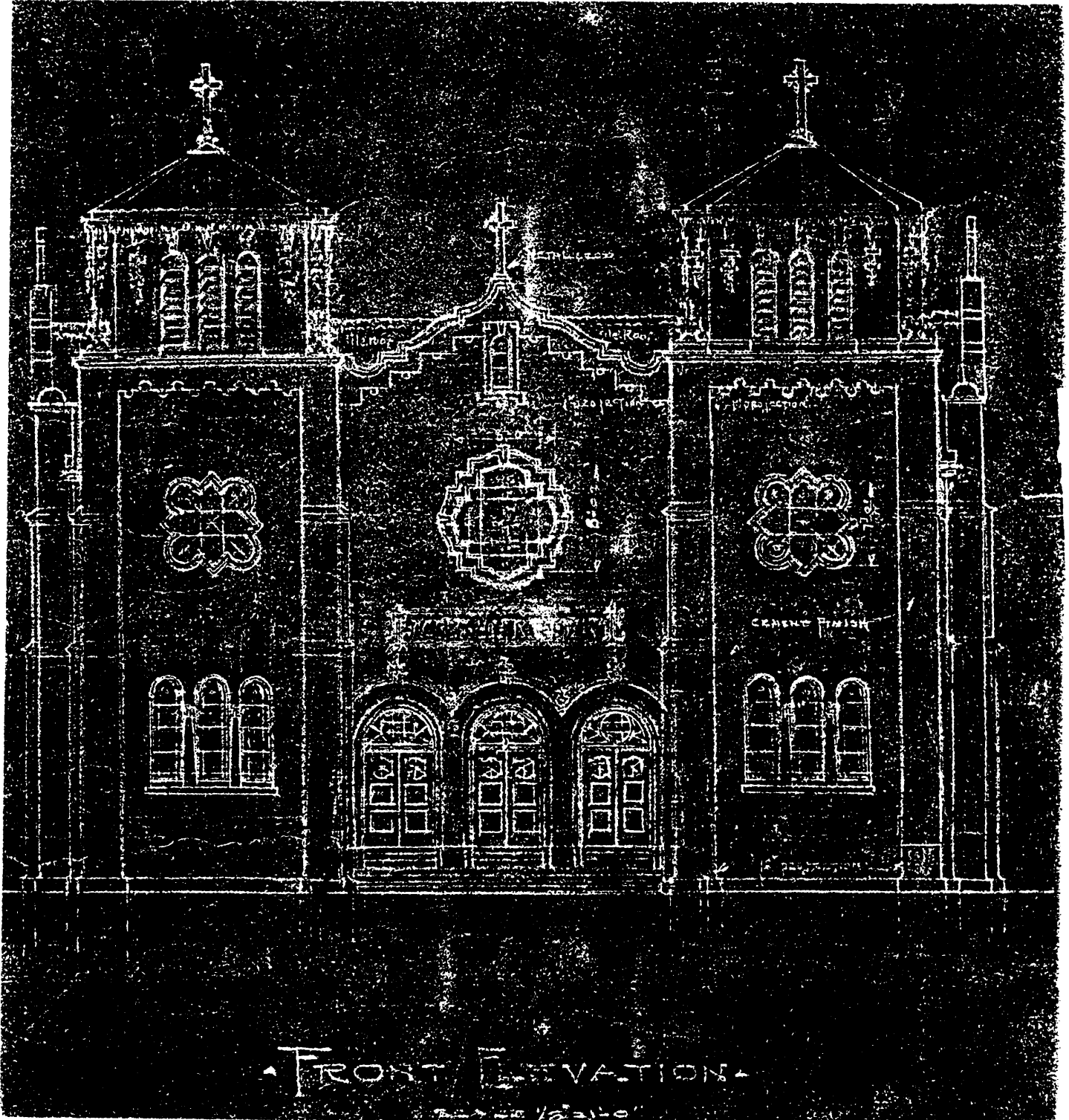
United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Sacred Heart Catholic Church  
Alamosa County, CO

Section number 7 Page 5

front elevation of church





**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Sacred Heart Catholic Church  
Alamosa County, CO

Section number 7 Page 7

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*Arcade*

From the southwest corner of the church is an arcade of brick covered in stucco that leads to the rectory. Identified on the architectural drawings as a "cloister," it has a concrete floor and a flat roof behind a parapet with cast concrete coping. The series of arches rest on square pillars with simple capitals.

*Rectory*

The rectory is a square plan, two story building with stuccoed brick walls and a truncated hipped roof covered with slate. Ornamentation is limited to a dentilled cornice, an upper story string course, and the entry portal with its arches and curvilinear parapet. Most of the windows are double hung sash with 8-over-8 lights. The basement windows are multi-light, single sash hoppers (hinged at the bottom and swing in). An offset chimney pierces the west slope of the roof.

Like the church, the rectory faces south. The centrally located portal that marks the entry is given an offset appearance by its connection to the arcade on the east side. Above the round arched entry is a scalloped medallion, continuing the Churrigueresque (Spanish Baroque) motifs of the church. The arched opening on the west of the portal contains a low wall. Flanking the portal are two windows and three evenly spaced windows punctuate the upper story.

The west face of the rectory is broken by the offset chimney. The first floor fenestration consists of a window at each end with a coupled window in the center. Directly above these windows are the second story windows with a small window centered above the coupled window. Off the northwest corner is a flat roofed garage. Its overhead doors open onto Edison Avenue.

The north (rear) side of the rectory also has evenly spaced window openings, one above the other. The central opening on the first floor is a door protected by a shed roof. Side stairs lead to the platform that serves as the porch.

The east side of the rectory faces the courtyard created by the church and connecting arcade. Three windows on each floor pierce the facade and a concrete sidewalk runs the full length of the building, rising to the level of the arcade floor.

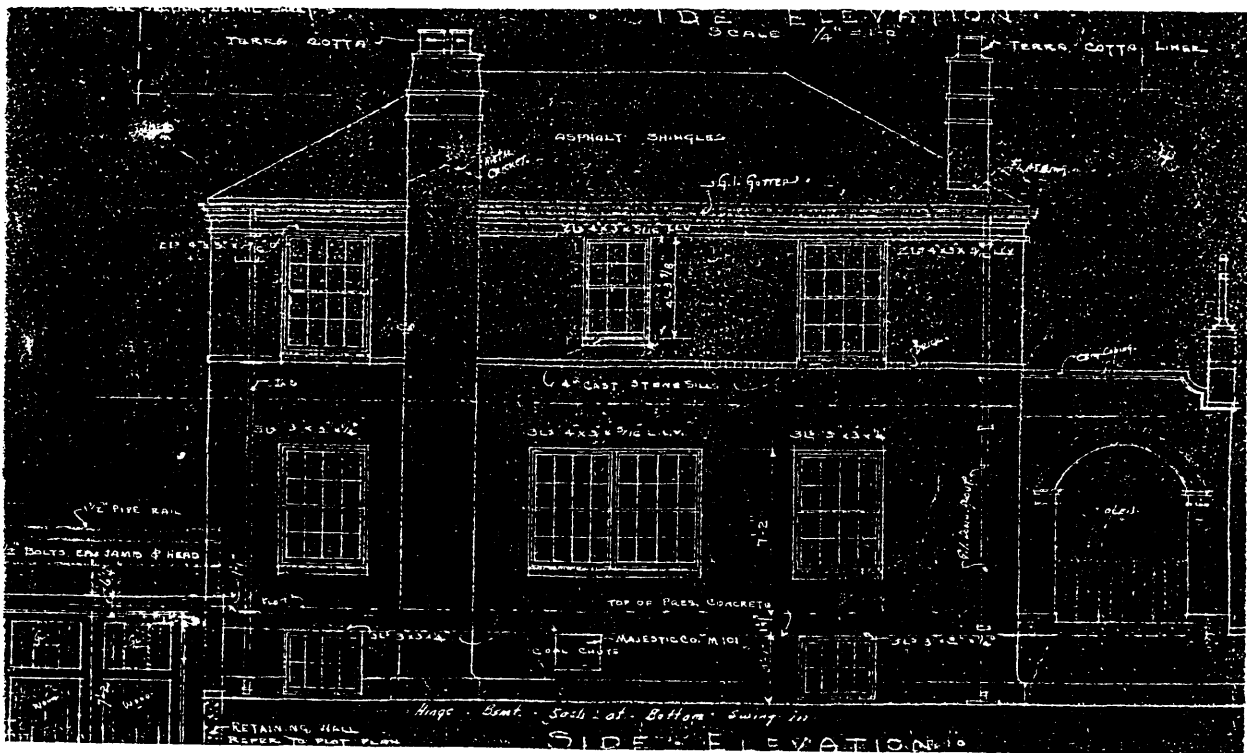
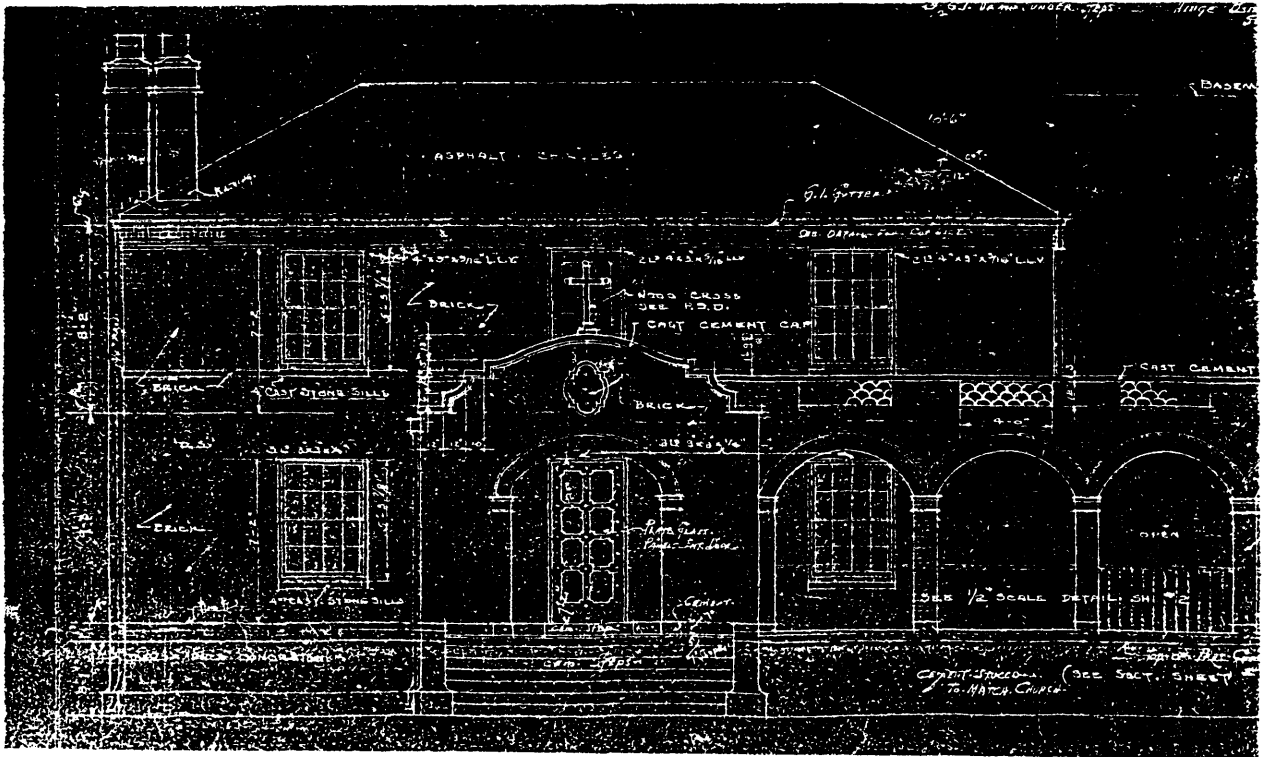
United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Sacred Heart Catholic Church  
Alamosa County, CO

Section number 7 Page 8

front and side elevations of rectory



**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Sacred Heart Catholic Church  
Alamosa County, CO

Section number 7 Page 9

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The church has undergone very few alterations and most of them have been historic. These changes have had little impact on the property's integrity of location, setting, design, material, and workmanship. The original architect's drawings (by Willison) of the church show a stucco building with prominent towers and an arcade. The towers have yet to be completed, but the brick walls did receive their stucco coating in 1953. (It is assumed that the Rectory was stuccoed at the same time.) The arcade connecting the church with the rectory was constructed in 1945. The flat roofed extension with garage doors at the northwest corner of the church was added in the 1950s. It is not known when the three small gabled roof projections which provide access to the basement of the church were added, although the two on the east elevation were included in revised drawings, and the one on the southwest corner is visible in a 1961 photograph. The original slate roof of the church was replaced with an aluminum one in 1960. Over the years, most of the clear glass in the windows was painted or replaced with stained glass.

Most of the interior changes have been minor, such as the installation of padded kneelers (1947), a public address system, and carpeting in the central aisle. On several occasions the interior was repainted and the heating system replaced. The pews were refinished (early 1970s) and the building was rewired. A new table, lectern and a ramp to the sanctuary were added in the 1980s. The large murals on the walls and ceilings were painted between 1942 and 1948. Two clerestory windows above the altar were sealed in 1942 to protect the large mural from the destructive rays of the sun. One of the more significant interior changes occurred in the aftermath of Vatican II. Between 1964 and 1967, the altar was abandoned and a new altar table was placed closer to the congregation. This move brought activity fifty feet closer to the people and allowed the priest to face them. The communion rails disappeared and the pews on the sides were turned to face the new altar table.

Most of the small additions to the church occur at the rear and are not readily seen from the street. The larger, more visible changes--the addition of the arcade and the rectory--are considered valid, historic changes as they are more than fifty years old. They were also part of the master plan envisioned by the architect Willison, although they were constructed later and another architect would "re-work" his original drawings. (To what extent Monroe "revised" Willison's vision of the rectory and the arcade is not known as none of the latter's drawings have been found.) The rectory is a simple, compatible neighbor to the church and the arcade is a definite continuation of the Mission tradition. The stucco surfacing unites all three to form a well-appointed complex. The property retains a great deal of integrity.

**United States Department of the Interior**  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places**  
**Continuation Sheet**

Sacred Heart Catholic Church  
Alamosa County, CO

Section number 8 Page 10

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**SIGNIFICANCE**

Sacred Heart Church in Alamosa is eligible for listing in the National Register under criterion C for its significance in the areas of Architecture and Art. The church, constructed between 1922 and 1928, represents the work of prominent Colorado architect Robert Willison and is the only example of his work in Alamosa. While Willison designed many churches throughout Colorado, this is a particularly good example of his work in the Mission/Spanish Colonial Revival style. Willison's use of *rosa* windows as clerestories represents an unusual application of this Spanish Baroque detailing. Part of the master plan drawn by Willison included a rectory connected to the church by an arcade. The rectory was completed in 1938 from revised drawings by architect John Monroe. The arcade that gracefully connects the two buildings was constructed in 1945. Both complement the church and convey the design originally conceived by Willison. An outstanding interior feature of Sacred Heart is the art work by Josef Steinhage. Murals painted in 1942 and between 1946 and 1948 adorn the walls and ceilings of the church. These paintings are unlike any others found in the Diocese of Southern Colorado and were recognized nationally in Catholic circles. As a religious property that derives its primary significance from architectural and artistic distinction, criteria consideration A applies.

**ARCHITECTURE**

The numerous Spanish missions constructed between 1769 and 1823 throughout California by Franciscans and native labor provided the inspiration for a new architectural style that emerged at the end of the nineteenth century. The "California Building" designed in 1893 for the World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago introduced the Mission Style. Popular for domestic and public architecture, the Mission style is easily recognized by the curvilinear-shaped gabled wall and the semicircular arched openings used in windows and arcades. The style is characterized by simplicity with smooth walls that are usually stuccoed or plastered and devoid of any ornamentation. In contrast to the plainer, flat surfaces of the Mission style, Spanish Colonial Revival buildings have more sculptural surfaces and ornamentation (often called Churrigueresque or Spanish Baroque detailing). The unique feature of this style is the ornate, low relief carvings highlighting parapets, window surrounds, doorways, arches, columns and cornices. The Spanish Colonial Revival style was most common in California, Arizona, and Texas--regions with a strong Spanish influence. The style first received extensive exposure after the 1915 Panama-California Exposition in San Diego. The Exposition served to revive and spread the style to other areas of the West where the red-tiled roofs, plastered walls, and patios were well-suited to the Western land and climate. The style reached its apex in the 1920s and 1930s, and then rapidly decreased in popularity during the 1940s. Sacred Heart Church possesses characteristics of the Mission/Spanish Colonial Revival style that include brick exterior walls finished with stucco; round arched openings; and low relief carving that highlight the curvilinear parapet, window surrounds, and the cornice.

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Sacred Heart Catholic Church  
Alamosa County, CO

Section number 8 Page 11

Fifty percent of the population of Alamosa is Hispanic and the architecture of the community reflects this influence. Sacred Heart is one of three examples of the Mission style identified in Alamosa and all are located along 4th Street. St. Thomas Episcopal Church, constructed between 1919 and 1929, is a very simplified statement of the style with curvilinear gabled ends reduced to a segmental arch. The 1938 Alamosa County Courthouse (listed on the National Register) exemplifies the Mission style. Across the street from the church, the brick courthouse with its red tile roof is also the largest expression of this style in the city. However, neither St. Thomas or the Courthouse possess the wall surface ornamentation or the elaborately-shaped clerestory windows of Sacred Heart Catholic Church.

Robert Willison (1865-1935) was born in Scotland and came to Denver in 1890. He worked as a draftsman for R. S. Roeschlalub and J. J. Huddart before joining the firm of F. E. Edbrooke as an architect in 1896. Appointed by Mayor Speer, Willison served as city building inspector and architect from 1904 until 1910. He is best known for designing the Denver Municipal Auditorium. In 1910, Willison joined another prominent Denver architect, Montana S. Fallis and together they designed numerous residences, factories, warehouses, offices and apartment buildings. Their projects also included the Capitol Heights Presbyterian Church in Denver, the Vail Hotel and the Sacred Heart Cathedral, both in Pueblo. Willison established his own architectural firm in 1914, and three years later he was elected to the Colorado House of Representatives. He designed St. Malachy's Church in Fruita and was commissioned by the Roman Catholic Church to design St. Dominic's Church and St. Cajetan's, both in Denver. Of all these churches, only St. Cajetan's and Sacred Heart Catholic Church in Alamosa are designed in the Mission/Spanish Colonial Revival style.

A partial list (by date) of buildings designed by Robert Willison follows:

- Municipal Auditorium, Denver (1908) - listed in the National Register
- Municipal Bath House, Denver (1908)
- McClintock Building, Denver (1910)
- Capitol Heights Presbyterian Church, Denver (1911)
- Vail Hotel, Pueblo (1911) - listed in the National Register
- West Court Hotel, Denver (1911) [demolished in 1982]
- Sacred Heart Cathedral, Pueblo (1912) - listed in the National Register
- Oxford Hotel Annex, Denver (1912) - listed in the National Register
- J. P. Dunn Shoe and Leather Company, Denver (1912)
- Reed-Curran House Addition, Denver (1912)
- Robert W. Steele Gymnasium, Denver (1914)
- St. Malachy's Church, Fruita (1921)
- Sacred Heart Catholic Church, Alamosa (1922)
- St. Dominic's Church, Denver (1926) - listed in the National Register
- St. Cajetan's Church, Denver (1926)
- Stratford Apartment Hotel, Denver (1929)

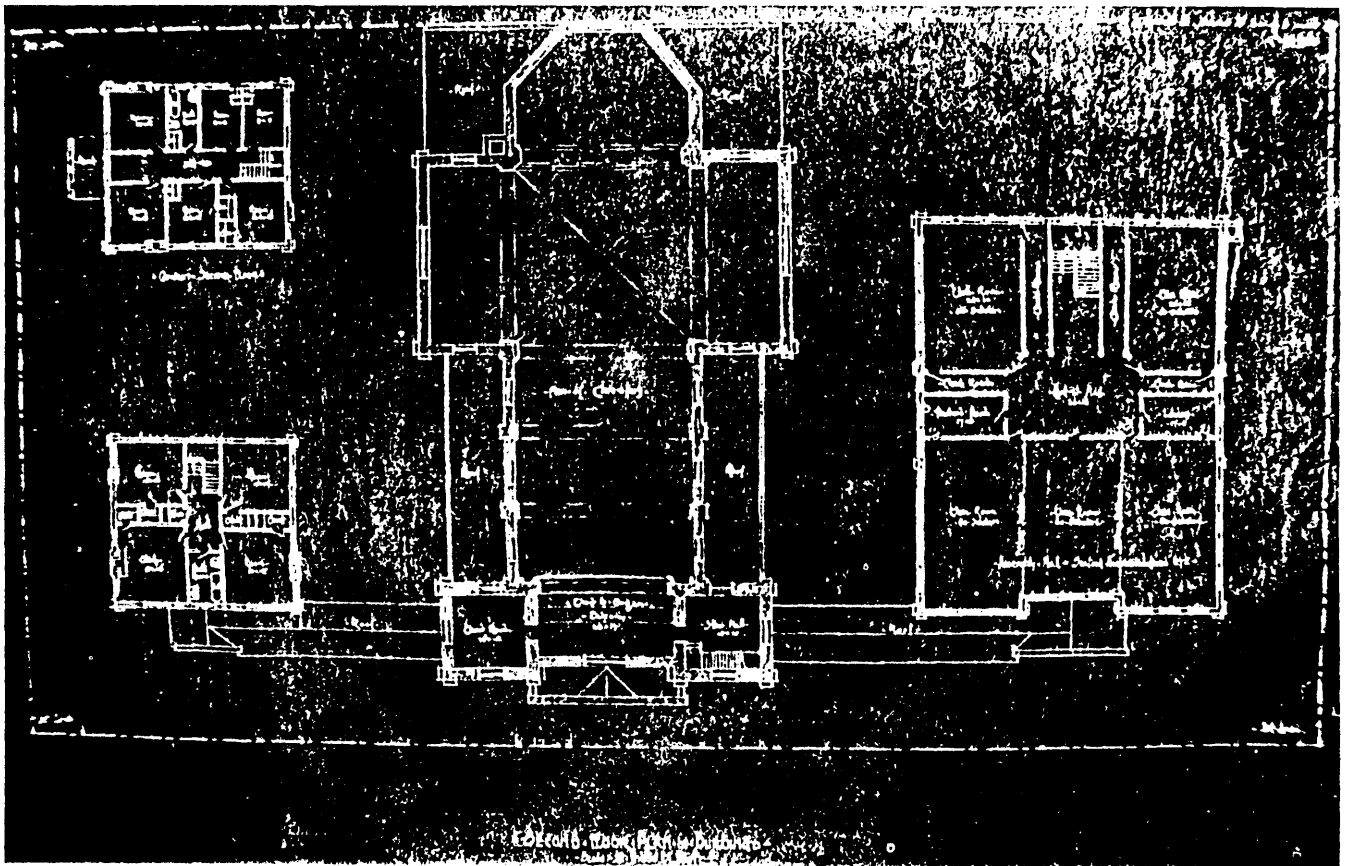
United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Sacred Heart Catholic Church  
Alamosa County, CO

Section number 8 Page 12

John K. Monroe (1893-1974) revised the original plans for the rectory. These architectural drawings provide no indication as to the nature of Willison's design and the extent of the revisions. (There has been little success in tracking down the original Willison drawings of the rectory, if any do indeed exist.) Monroe was born in Denver and received his Bachelors in Architecture from Washington University in St. Louis. He returned to Denver and joined the office of architect J. J. B. Benedict as his chief assistant. Though still associated with Benedict, he established his own practice in 1931. Through his association with Benedict, Monroe became the principal architect for the Catholic Archdiocese of Denver. In this capacity, Monroe designed hundreds of churches, schools and other archdiocesan structures throughout northern Colorado.



Robert Willison's master plan for Sacred Heart Parish



United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Sacred Heart Catholic Church  
Alamosa County, CO

Section number 8 Page 13

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ART

One of the outstanding features of Sacred Heart Catholic Church is the magnificent murals painted by Josef Steinhage. Steinhage was a native of Germany who came to the United States in 1936 from Westphalia to paint the chapel at St. Scholastica's mother house in Chicago. Benedictine sisters from St. Scholastica, who came to teach summer school in Alamosa, told the Rev. Edward McCarthy at Sacred Heart Church of his works. After seeing his work, McCarthy invited Steinhage to paint the Sacred Heart of Jesus on the rotunda at his church.

The artist prepared a miniature painting of the Sacred Heart of Jesus that was approved by the parish. Steinhage arrived in Alamosa in June of 1942 and began painting in the space above the main altar. Although painted on a curved surface, the figure appears erect from the back of the church. The head of Christ is three feet high and the large toe is the size of a man's hand. The intricate detail and rich colors make it a focal point. The mural was dedicated and blessed at a special celebration on November 22, 1942 which about 1,000 people attended. The Catholic press gave the mural a great deal of publicity that included a full color picture on the front of the *National Catholic Register*. (Carter)

In 1943, Steinhage received a commission to complete decorations in the center portion of the sanctuary but was interrupted by World War II. The artist entered the army in 1943, received his citizenship, got married, and spent two years in Europe before being discharged. He returned to Alamosa in February 1946 and resumed painting the church. Another mural was planned for a side panel depicting the Christmas scene. Started in 1947 and dedicated July 11, 1948, this mural includes the nativity scene with wise men, angels and shepherds.

Steinhage and his wife, Mary, moved to Chicago where he again worked for the Benedictines and studied at the Chicago Art Institute. The couple returned to Alamosa to live after the birth of their son in 1950. Steinhage drove an ambulance for Butler-Showalter Funeral Home for 22 years. In 1980, he became interested in sculpting. Despite losing his left eye to glaucoma and having no depth perception in his right eye, the first public show of his sculpture occurred in 1992 when he was 72 years old!

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

In 1887 when Machebeuf became the Bishop of Denver, one of his first actions was the purchase of land in the 400 block of Eighth Street in Alamosa. Sacred Heart became official when a frame building that seated about 200 was built at this location and blessed by Machebeuf. By 1916, the parishioners wanted a new building in a central location on property purchased at 4th and Edison by Father Montell. Father Behiels, Montell's successor, objected to the plan, preferring to remodel the existing building and that year a new addition was completed. The move to build a second church continued to gain momentum. As the town was growing north and east, a church on the 4th and Edison property would provide a place of worship closer to the homes of parishioners. In 1918, St. Rita's chapel was constructed on this parcel of land.

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Sacred Heart Catholic Church  
Alamosa County, CO

Section number 8 Page 14

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In 1919, Alamosa County was designated as Sacred Heart Parish, ending decades of status as a mission. Discussions of building a new church began in 1920. Fund raising and special collections were successful and the well known architect who designed the Denver Auditorium, Robert Willison, was hired.

Willison was directed to design a church, rectory, school and convent. The church was to be in the center of the property with the school on the east, the rectory on the west, and the convent at the back facing Edison Avenue. (Willison's master plan indicated an arcade off the southeast side of the church connecting to the Parish Hall, which would never be built. However, the rectory with its arcade on the southwest would be realized, although another architect would re-work the design.) Bids were solicited for the church, which was to be built first. While the old church on 8th Street remained the center of parish activity, St. Rita's chapel was sold in 1922 to the Lutheran congregation and moved in order to make room for the present Sacred Heart church.

A contract was awarded for the installation of the foundations for both the church and rectory and this work was completed in the fall of 1922. The foundations stood for several years as money ran short and work was halted. In 1926, work resumed with the help of a \$50,000 bond issue and the cornerstone of the church was laid in October. The following year the walls and roof were completed. But then work slowed again. Dedication ceremonies for the church would not be until May 13, 1928.

Foundations for the rectory stood empty for sixteen years while the priest lived in the small room off the sacristy of the church. Estimates for the construction of the building in 1935 were \$6,500 and it was decided to leave the second floor unfinished. Two years later, an anonymous gift of \$3,000 would spur the congregation in a drive to match the amount. In 1938, another Denver architect, John K. Monroe, revised the original 1922 plans which were displayed in church. Monroe, like Willison, would become a principal architect for the Archdiocese of Denver. The pastor decided that local bidders would be given preference as the people needed work. A local contractor was selected for the house with the garage and "cloister" (arcade) eliminated. (They would be constructed later.) The house "was under roof" before Christmas and opened for public viewing by March 1939.

In November 1941, Pope Pius XII created the Archdiocese of Denver. At the same time he created the Diocese of Southern Colorado and appointed the first bishop, Joseph C. Willging. The following year, Willging was installed in Pueblo. The ownership of Sacred Heart Church was eventually transferred to the Bishop of the Diocese of Southern Colorado.

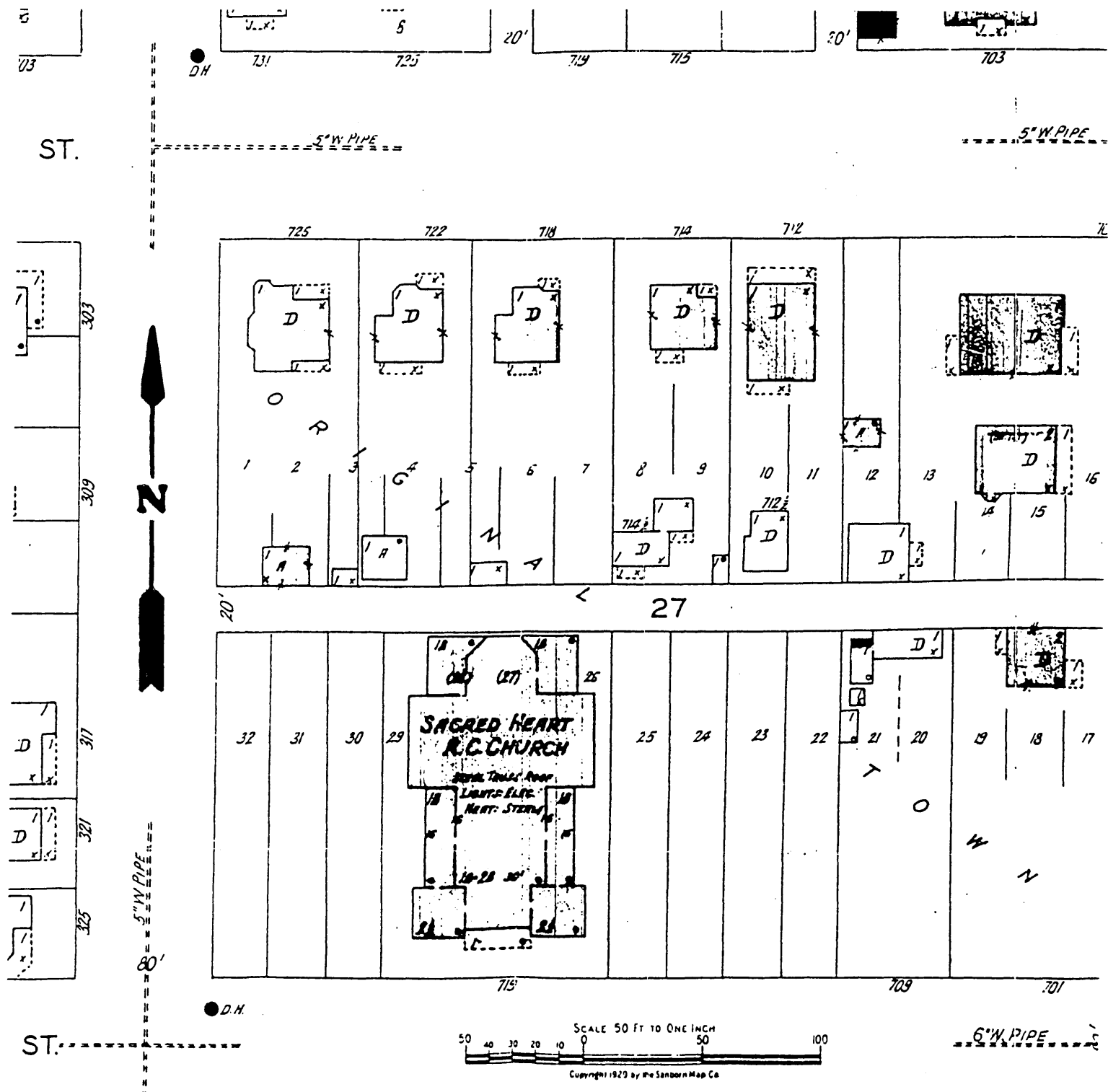
United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Sacred Heart Catholic Church  
Alamosa County, CO

Section number 8 Page 15

1929 Sanborn Map



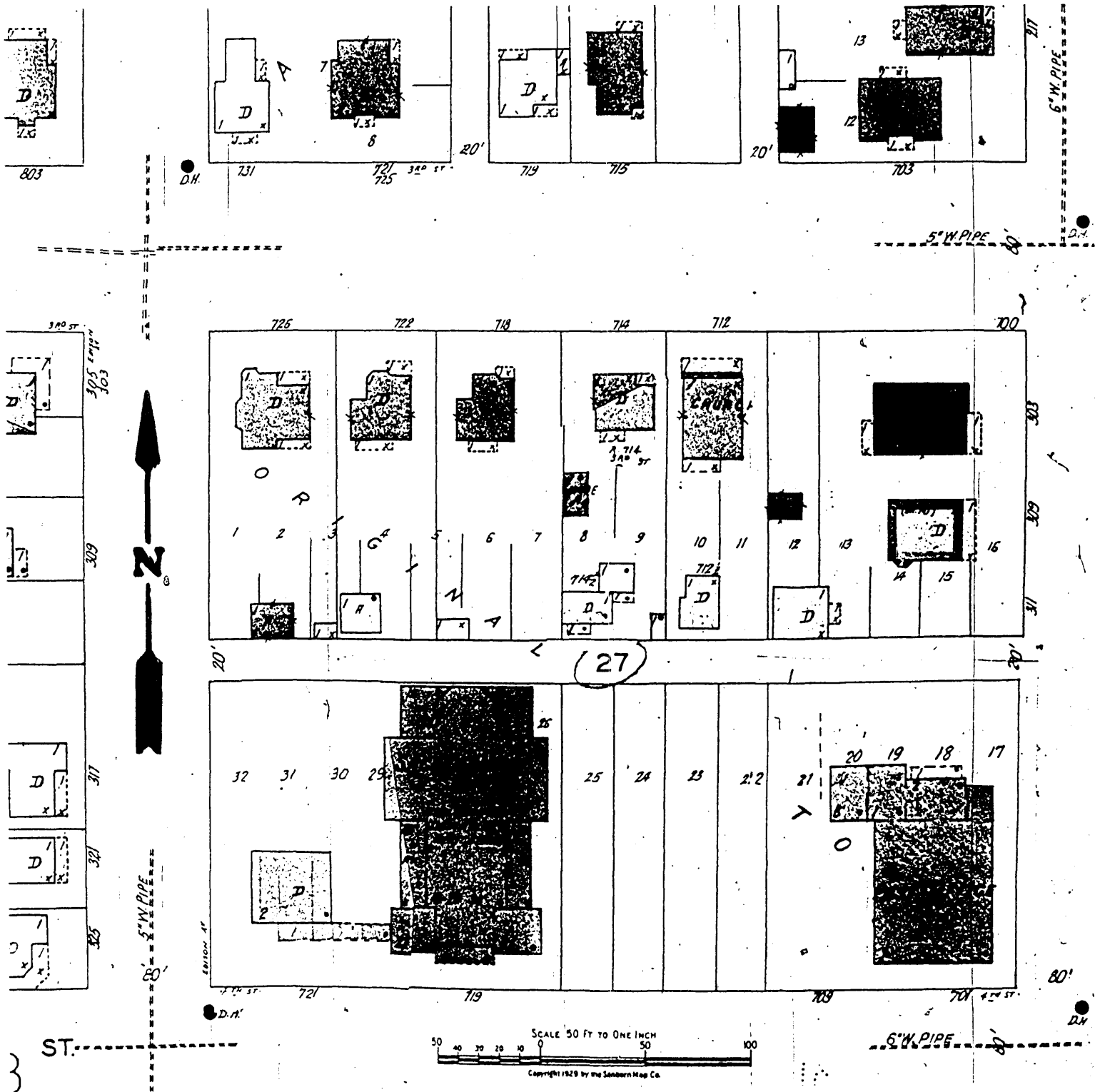
United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Sacred Heart Catholic Church  
Alamosa County, CO

Section number 8 Page 16

1946 update of Sanborn map



United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Sacred Heart Catholic Church  
Alamosa County, CO

Section number 9,10 Page 17

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**VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION**

Lots 26 through 32, Block 27, Original Townsite of Alamosa

**BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION**

The nominated property includes the parcel of land historically associated with the church.

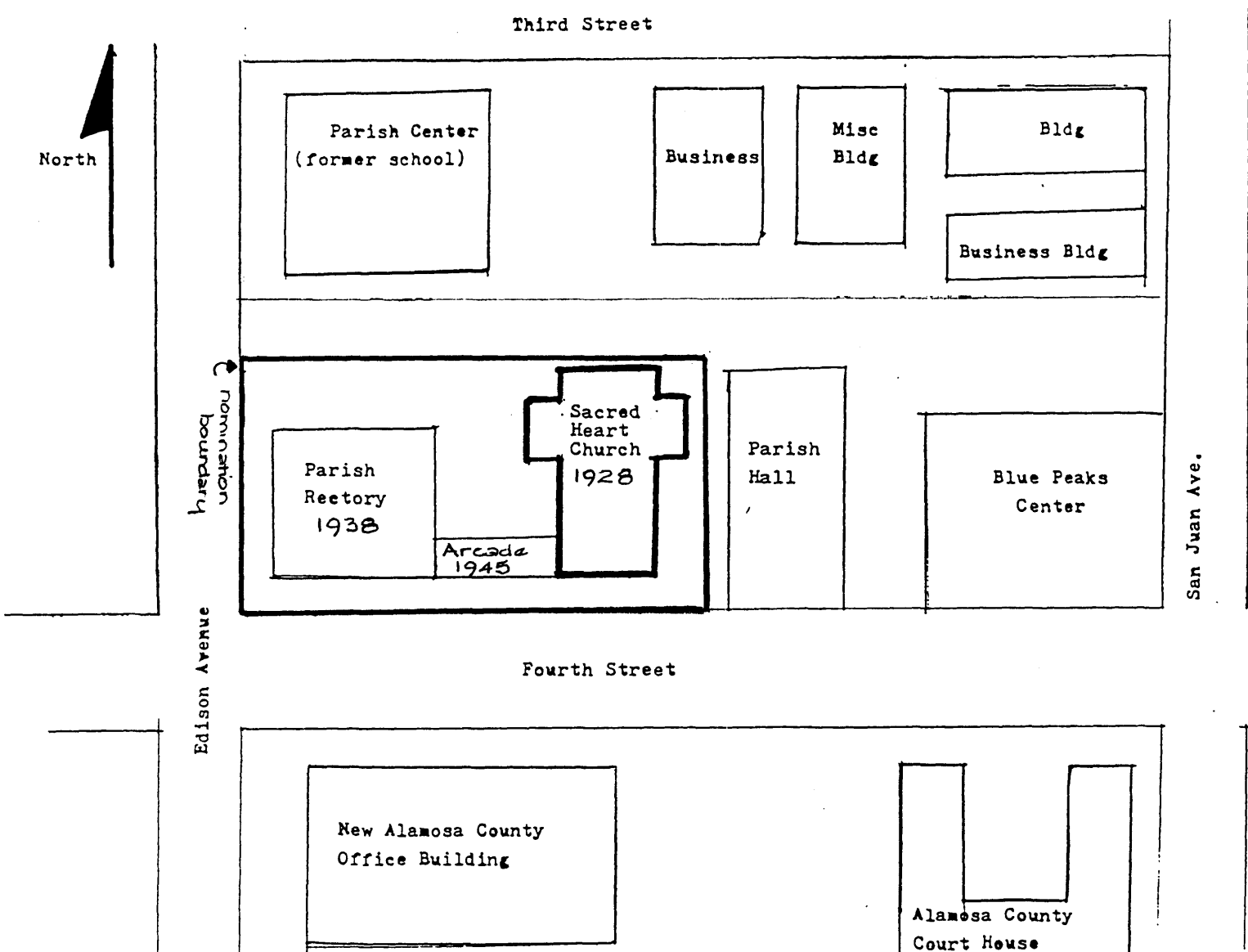
United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Sacred Heart Catholic Church  
Alamosa County, CO

Section number \_\_\_\_\_ Page 18

sketch map



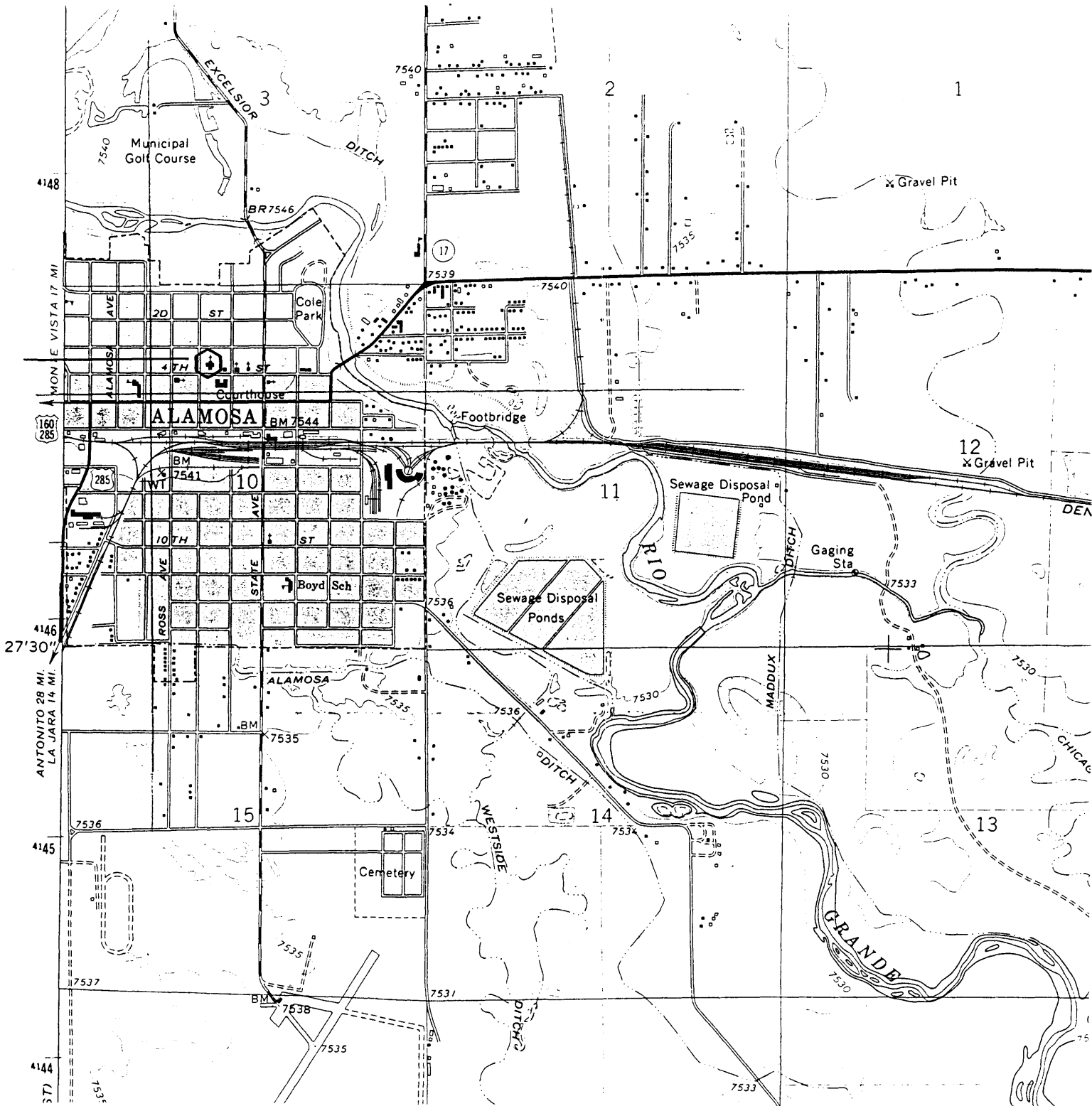
United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Sacred Heart Catholic Church  
Alamosa County, CO

Section number \_\_\_\_\_ Page 19

U.S.G.S. Map - Alamosa East Quadrangle



United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Sacred Heart Catholic Church  
Alamosa County, CO

Section number \_\_\_\_ Page 20

PHOTOGRAPH LOG

The following information is the same for all photographs, except where noted:

name of property: Sacred Heart Catholic Church  
city, county, state: Alamosa, Alamosa County, Colorado  
photographer: Gary Atencio  
date: February 1998  
location of negative: SHPO, Colorado Historical Society

photo

description

- #1 south end (front) of church from 4th Street; camera facing north
- #2 southeast corner of church; camera facing northwest
- #3 east side of church and east transept; camera facing northwest
- #4 southwest corner, rectory is behind trees with arcade connecting it to the church; camera facing northeast
- #5 west side of rectory from Edison Avenue; camera facing east
- #6 northwest corner of church with west transept; camera facing east
- #7 north end (rear) of church; camera facing south
- #8 interior of church with Christmas scene mural on wall at left; camera facing north
- #9 interior, painted dome of sanctuary, camera facing north

