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United States Department of the Interior National Park Service

JUN 12 1989

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

NATIONAL REGISTER

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

1. Name of Property

historic name St. Joseph's Catholic Church other names/site number

2. Location

street & number 253 Main Street city, town Lewiston state Maine code ME county Androscoggin code 001 zip code 04240

N/A not for publication N/A vicinity

3. Classification

Table with 3 columns: Ownership of Property, Category of Property, and Number of Resources within Property. Includes checkboxes for private/public ownership and building/site/structure/object categories.

Name of related multiple property listing: N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, 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. See continuation sheet. Signature of certifying official: [Signature] SHPO Date: 6/7/89 State or Federal agency and bureau: Maine Historic Preservation Commission

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet. Signature of commenting or other official: Date: State or Federal agency and bureau:

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register. See continuation sheet. determined eligible for the National Register. See continuation sheet. determined not eligible for the National Register. removed from the National Register. other, (explain:)

Entered in the National Register 7/13/89 [Signature]

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

**6. Function or Use**

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Religion/Religious Structure  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Religion/Religious Structure  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**7. Description**

Architectural Classification  
(enter categories from instructions)

Late Victorian/Gothic  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation Brick  
walls Brick  
roof Asphalt  
other \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

Saint Joseph's Catholic Church is a T-shaped gable roofed brick building of Gothic design. Its features include a projecting tower capped by a broached spire, buttressed aisles, short round stair towers located at the northwest and northeast corners, and a one-story chapel behind the sanctuary that forms the T. The whole building rests on a brick foundation and is covered by an asphalt shingled roof. It stands on a busy urban site at the southwest corner of Main and Blake Streets.

Facing northwest, the church's front elevation has a three-part composition that consists of a projecting tower framed by the recessed nave end walls and behind this the broad aisle walls. Long flights of granite steps lead up to the entrances. The shaft of the tower is separated into three stages by prominent molded stringcourses. A wooden two-leaf door located within a lancet arched opening with tracery occupies the base of this tower. The door is framed by a corbeled brick surround, a detail repeated throughout the building. Above the entrance is the lower stringcourse that extends below the sill of a long arched stained glass window. This feature and a small teardrop window occupy the second stage. A second stringcourse delineates the beginning of the belfry, each of whose sides is punctuated by a lancet arched window with geometrical tracery. Large mutule blocks decorate the cornice of the belfry below the spire and its four gablets. Four narrow arched windows, located above and below the lower stringcourse and on either side of the tower, are positioned on the recessed nave endwall. The more deeply recessed aisle walls contain doors similar to the one in the tower base and small trefoils above.

The nave walls are divided into three primary bays defined by the octagonal corner stair towers, buttresses and the chapel. Two of the faces of the towers contain a pair of narrow windows. Between the tower and first buttresses are two bays containing tall lancet arched openings with stained glass windows. Three similar windows occupy the central part of the nave and two more are located between the second buttress and the chapel. Paired rectangular clerestory windows are separated by wall panels with blind trefoils. A wide belt of quarry faced granite blocks extend along the nave and chapel walls between the water table and the brick foundation. The one-story chapel has a clipped gable roof and a symmetrical fenestration pattern consisting of trios of windows and a trefoil on each end, as well as eight openings across the rear. Each of these windows is framed by pointed arches. In addition, there are a trio of windows below the belt course on the west side and a door to the basement on the north.

See continuation sheet

### 8. Statement of Significance

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

nationally  statewide  locally

Applicable National Register Criteria  A  B  C  D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions)  A  B  C  D  E  F  G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)

Architecture

Period of Significance

1865-67

Significant Dates

1865-67

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Significant Person

N/A

Architect/Builder

Keely, Patrick C.

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

Constructed between 1865-67 at a cost of \$55,000, St. Joseph's Catholic Church is a handsome and little altered brick edifice in the Gothic Revival style. The Church's significance derives from the fact that it was designed by Patrick C. Keely (1816-1896), one of America's leading architects during the mid to late nineteenth century of Roman Catholic buildings. It is the oldest Catholic Church in Lewiston and one of only two extant parish churches designed by the architect in Maine. The church is eligible for nomination to the Register under criterion C for its architectural significance.

Saint Joseph's Parish was formed in 1857, although Catholic priests had been holding services in the area as early as 1848. The rapid industrial development in Lewiston during the 1850s brought a great immigration of Irish and French Canadian Catholics to work on and in the new mills, thereby creating a tremendous need for a permanent pastor and an organized parish. After the founding of St. Joseph's, services continued to be held in a former Baptist Church building which had been acquired in 1855.

During the pastorate of Father James Durnin (1859-62) discussions began regarding the construction of a new building and funds were solicited. However, the fulfillment of these plans fell to his successor Father Michael Lucey. Laying of the cornerstone was reported in the September 28, 1865, edition of the Bangor Whig and Courier along with the name of the builder, J. T. Emery, and the architect, P. C. Keely. Frescoing of the basement was carried out in 1877 by Charles J. Schumacher of Portland, memorial stained glass windows were added in the period 1917-34 and a chime of twelve bronze bells were installed in the tower in 1926.

The selection of Keely to design their new church was probably an easy one for the building committee. Born in Kilkenny, Ireland, Keely was the son of a builder but apparently had no formal architectural training. He emigrated to New York in 1842 and settled in Brooklyn. Keely's notable woodworking skill, examples of which could be found in several metropolitan New York churches, came to the attention of the Rev. Sylvester Malone who

See continuation sheet

**9. Major Bibliographical References**

Murphy, Robert T. "Patrick C. Keely: 1816-1896." A Biographical Dictionary of Architects in Maine. Vol. IV, No. 7. Augusta: Maine Historic Preservation Commission, 1987.

St. Joseph's Parish: The First 125 Years. Lewiston: St. Joseph's Catholic Church, 1982.

See continuation sheet

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 # \_\_\_\_\_

Primary location of additional data:

- State historic preservation office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Specify repository: \_\_\_\_\_

**10. Geographical Data**

Acreeage of property less than 1

UTM References

A 

1	9
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4	0	2	6	7	0
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4	8	8	3	4	8	0
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Zone Easting Northing

B 

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Zone Easting Northing

C 

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D 

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See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

The nominated property of less than one acre occupies the City of Lewiston tax map 23B lot 253 Main Street.

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

The boundary embraces the city lot historically associated with the church.

See continuation sheet

**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title Kirk F. Mohny, Architectural Historian  
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The interior of the church is of formal design consisting of an entrance vestibule located below a balcony that projects into the nave, aisles, sanctuary, and a chapel behind and to the side of the sanctuary. The expansive nave is distinguished by its equilateral arched arcades that separate the nave from the aisles. These arches are supported by octagonal columns decorated with ornate capitals. The transverse ribs have triangular spandrels and decorative corbels. Multiple pairs of triangular arches distinguish the paneled balustrade wall of the balcony at the rear of which is a tall arched structure that supports the tower. The sanctuary is located in a five-sided enclosure distinguished by ribs and two arched windows. Doors flanking the sanctuary lead to the chapel and vestry, the latter of which is located behind a paneled and glazed screen. The basement consists of a large open space at one end of which is a stage. There is no remaining visible evidence of the painting which artist Charles J. Schumacher executed in 1877.

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subsequently hired him in 1847 to design a Gothic style church in Williamsburgh. Thus was launched a prolific career in which Keely is credited with having designed more than 600 churches, almost exclusively for the Roman Catholic Church. In fact, he gained the internationally known title of "The Church Builder". Despite this fame, Keely's achievements and his name were virtually forgotten within five years after his death.

In addition to his widespread reputation throughout the Catholic community, Keely had previously demonstrated his ability in Maine through two commissions: St. John's Catholic Church in Bangor (1855-56), and St. Mary's Catholic Church in Biddeford (1856), which has been destroyed. During and after the Lewiston project Keely also designed in Portland the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception Chapel (1866), the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception (1868-69), and the Bishop's Residence (1868-69) all of which survive and are listed together in the National Register (6/20/85).

The design of Keely's three parish churches (Bangor, Biddeford, Lewiston) followed the same basic scheme, namely a long nave fronted by a projecting square tower. Specific variations between the three, however, are numerous. St. John's, for example, employs short transepts, multiple buttresses along the nave walls, a trio of entrances on the facade, and a more elaborate tower. The church in Biddeford was the most modest of the three lacking the stone voussoirs of the arched windows and featuring only a single entrance through the tower. St. Joseph's falls between the two in its ornamentation and scale, but is also differentiated from the others in the use of aisles that are visually distinct from the envelope of the nave. In sum the building clearly exhibits the essential features of the architect's style, characteristics that were widely recognized during his career.