

INVENTORY FORM FOR NOMINATED PROPERTIES

Name of property: St. George Melkite Catholic Church

Address: 1617 West State Street

City: Milwaukee

Owner: The Diocese of Newton for the Melkites in the USA, Inc.

Owner's address: 1617 West State Street

Milwaukee, WI 53233

REGISTRATION INFORMATION

160 NRHP Certification (date)

- Listed in NRHP (LI)
 Determined eligible in DOE process (DD)
 Determined eligible in nomination process (DN)
 Additional documentation added to nomination (AD)
 Boundary increased (BI)
 Boundary decreased (BD)
 Delisted (DL)

170 Thematic or Multiple Resource Nomination Name (code)

180 NRHP List Name St. George Melkite Catholic Church

190 Level of Significance

- national (NA)
 state (ST)
 local (LO)

200 District Classification

- pivotal (P)
 contributing (C)
 non-contributing (NC)

210 Applicable Criteria

- event (A)
 person (B)
 architecture/engineering (C)
 information potential (D)

215 Criteria Considerations

- religious property (A)
 moved property (B)
 birthplace or grave (C)
 cemetery (D)
 reconstructed property (E)
 commemorative property (F)
 less than 50 years old (G)

220 Area of Significance (code)

RELIGION/ETHNIC HERITAGE-SYRIAN

Architecture

230 Period of Significance

1917-1934

340 Review Board Date _____

70 USGS Quad Map

SW/A Milwaukee 7.5min 1:24,000

80 UTM Coordinates (Format: 99-999999-9999999)

16-423980-4765800

85 Listed Acreage less than one acre

60 Verbal Boundary Description Well's addition is southeast

quarter section 19 and northeast quarter section

(Continued)

Verbal Boundary Description Cont.

30-7-22 block 17, lots 6-7-8-N 100 $\frac{1}{3}$ feet (lots 9-10 & 11) and that part of lots 4 & 5 commencing northeast corner said lot 5-thence west 37.34 feet, thence southwesterly 12.91 feet, thence southeasterly along a curve 133.97 feet, thence east .59 feet, thence north 135.60 feet more or less to beginning.

Street**Address** 1617 West State Street**ARCHITECTURE**

450 Date of Construction (source)

1917 (A)

460 Dates of Alterations/Additions (source)

1925 (A)480 Builder (source) H. Schmitt & Son (A) (1917)

490 and 500 Designer Type and Name (source)

X architect: E. Brielmaier & Sons (A)/J. Bruecker (1925)(A)

___ artist: _____

___ engineer: _____

___ interior designer: _____

___ landscape architect: _____

___ other: _____

510 Style or Form (code)

Other

520 Building, Structure, Object or Site Type (code)

Church530 Building Materials (code) Asphalt/asbestos/Shingles (roof)(foundation)Brick(trim)540 Interior Visited ___ Yes X No550 Structural System (code) Rectangular with addition

560 Plan Configuration (code) _____

570 Number of Stories

1-1/2

580 Roof Shape (code)

Gable

590 Additional Description _____

620 Condition

___ excellent X good ___ fair ___ poor ___ ruins

650 Related Buildings (code)

HISTORY430 Common/Current Name St. George Melkite Catholic Church440 Historic Names (source) Same (A)

660 Associated Individual(s) (dates) (source)

670 Associated Event (source)

680 Commercial/Industrial Historic Uses (source)

STREET: West State Street

NUMBER: 1617

**SHSW INTENSIVE
SURVEY FORM**

LOCATION

10 County Milwaukee
20 City or Village Milwaukee
30 Civil Town _____
35 Unincorporated Community _____
40 Location 1617 West State Street

50 Town-Range-Section _____

55 Quarter Sections _____

60 Verbal Boundary Description Well's addition in southeast quarter section 19 and northeast quarter section 30-7-22 block 17, lots 6-7-8-N 100 1/3 feet (lots 9-10 & 11) and that part of lots 4 & 5 commencing northeast corner said lot 5 - thence west 37.34 feet, thence southwesterly 12.91 feet, thence southeasterly along a curve 133.97 feet, thence east .59 feet, thence north 135.60 feet more or less to beginning.

PROGRAM REVIEW

250 Tax Case Number _____
260 Compliance Case Number _____
270 A or D Grant Yes No
275 Covenant/Easement Dates _____
320 Ownership
 private (P)
 local-public (L)
 state-public (S)
 federal-public (F)
 mixed, private-public (M)
330 Lead Agency (code) _____

SURVEY

90 Photo Codes MI 71-24, 25, 26, 27
100 Survey Map 390
110 Map Code 71-24
120 Reconnaissance Survey Date 1979
130 Reconnaissance Surveyor Wenger/Hunton/Jensen
140 Intensive Survey Name (code) Westside
150 Intensive Surveyor Wenger/Hatala
155 Intensive Survey FY 1983
235 Survey Evaluation
 eligible (E) not eligible (N)
237 Survey District Classification
 pivotal (P) non-contributing (NC)
 contributing (C)
240 Survey Level of Significance
 national (NA) local (LO)
 state (ST)
243 Survey Evaluation Criteria
 event (A) architectural/engineering (C)
 person (B) information potential (D)
245 Proposed District _____
280 NHL Date _____
290 HABS No. _____ 300 HAER No. _____
310 Local Landmark (code) _____
315 Associated Archeological Site(s) _____

DESCRIPTION

St. George's is a single-story beige brick, gabled church that rests on an elevated basement level. Its simple planar north or main facade is reminiscent of Middle Eastern Byzantine architecture and features three bulbous domes. The largest dome tops the central tower and is flanked by two smaller ones at each gable end. The unornamented facade is punctuated by a central entrance flanked by arched sidelights and full height windows surmounted by a large arched window of leaded glass. The nave walls have six windows each. To the east and west of the church building are broad side yards with minimal landscaping. A 1925 addition to the church's south elevation is situated perpendicular to the nave. This addition includes the church offices, pastor's study lavatory and storage rooms.

Interiors were not visited.

ARCHITECTURAL/ENGINEERING STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Although primarily of historical significance, St. George's Melkite Catholic Church is the best example of Byzantine Revival inspired architecture in the city when compared to S.S. Cyril and Methodias Russian Orthodox Church, the other examples.

It also exemplifies the association between ethnicity and architectural design. Where as Milwaukee's other ethnic groups, regardless of origin or creed, almost always selected a version of either the Gothic Revival or of the Classical Revival, for their church buildings, the Melkites strove to reflect their near Eastern origins in the design of their church.

690 BIBLIOGRAPHIC REFERENCES (SOURCES)

- A. Milwaukee City Building Permits.
- B. Cornerstone
- C. Golini, Rev. Ronald, Pastor St. George's Church. Paper sent to Milwaukee Landmarks Commission, April 1974. This paper recounts, in brief, the history of the Syrian-Lebanese in Milwaukee as it relates to the founding of St. George's Church. There is also a short description of how the Byzantine rite of the Catholic church differs from that of the western Roman Catholics.
- D. Milienewicz, Rev. Frank, current pastor of St. George's Church. Telephone conversation between Rev. Milienewicz and Carlen Hatala, research consultant,

(Continued)

700 STUDY UNITS (CODE)

_____	_____
_____	_____

350 Demolished

_____ Yes _____ No

360 Date Demolished

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

St. George's serves Milwaukee's Syrian-Lebanese community as a cultural as well as spiritual center. The first Syrian immigrants arrived in Milwaukee in 1895 and formed a community in the area bounded by Kilbourn, Highland, 6th and 20th Streets. Their background in the Eastern Church plus their unfamiliarity with English or Latin liturgy compelled them to form their own parish. In 1911 Archbishop Sebastian Messmer appointed the Reverend Timothy Jock to serve the congregation. The first services took place in a former dance hall at 627 West State. In 1915 the congregation purchased a house at 1615 West State and used it as a place of worship. On September 20, 1917, the cornerstone was laid for the present building, which was dedicated on December 23, 1917. The Milwaukee architecture firm of Erhard Brielmaier and Sons designed the present church. In 1925 the building was enlarged to its present size. It continues to house its original congregation which today numbers about 125 members. (C,D,E).

HISTORICAL STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Normally religious properties are excluded from listing in the National Register but, St. George Melkite Greek Catholic Church is of statewide historical significance because it was the first and remains the only surviving Melkite church in Wisconsin. It is an expression of a period in Wisconsin's history when numerous Lebanese immigrants settled in the state. One sizeable Syrian community formed in LaCrosse in the early years of this century and established a congregation in the 1920s. That congregation dissolved by the 1970s when its pastor was transferred to the East Coast and no further priests were sent from Syria. Wisconsin's only other Syrian-Lebanese colony formed in Milwaukee where a strong community developed that became the nucleus of St. George's. The Melkite Greek Catholic Church is an eastern sect of the Roman Catholic Church which derives its liturgical forms and authority from the Patriarch of Constantinople who currently resides in Damascus. (C)

Bibliographic References (Sources) (Cont.)

Department of City Development, on the congregation's history, August 15, 1984. In this conversation, Rev. Milienewicz confirmed that St. George is the only Melkite congregation in the State of Wisconsin.

- E. Rummel, Leo. History of the Catholic Church in Wisconsin. Madison, Wisconsin, Wisconsin State Council, Knights of Columbus, 1976. pp. 119.