

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

JUL 28 1987

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 Holy Cross Polish National Catholic Church  
other names/site number n/a

2. Location

street & number Third and Queen  not for publication  
city, town Pe Ell  vicinity  
state Washington code 053 county Lewis code 041 zip code 98572

3. Classification

Ownership of Property	Category of Property	Number of Resources within Property	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	Contributing	Noncontributing
<input type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input type="checkbox"/> district	<u>1</u>	<u>      </u> buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> public-State	<input type="checkbox"/> site	<u>      </u>	<u>      </u> sites
<input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<u>      </u>	<u>      </u> structures
	<input type="checkbox"/> object	<u>1</u>	<u>0</u> objects
			<u>0</u> Total

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.

Jacob E. Jrv Date 7/13/87  
Signature of certifying official  
Washington State Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation  
State or Federal agency and bureau

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. William B. Burby 9/2/87  
 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:) \_\_\_\_\_

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 Gothic Revival

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation wood

walls weatherboard

roof wood shingles

other

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

Holy Cross Polish National Catholic Church is a rectangular wood frame structure located in a residential neighborhood on the southwestern edge of Pe Ell, Washington. The church reflects a vernacular interpretation of a Gothic Revival style and is distinguished from the surrounding neighborhood by its size and by the twin bell towers which spire above the community. Built in 1916 by the local Polish parish, the church retains outstanding interior and exterior integrity.

The church measures approximately 50 by 150 feet and is constructed of frame construction with fir framing members and a wood post and pier foundation. The exterior of the church is sided with narrow gauge bevelled wood siding (except for the side walls of the towers which are sheathed in cedar shingles). The church houses a rectangular auditorium and has a front-facing gable roof. At either corner of the front facade, square towers (flush with the front facade) rise above the roof line and are capped with octagonal spires with flared eaves and crowned with wooden crosses. The two towers flank the gable peak and create a symmetrical appearance on the front facade.

The exterior of the church reflects the simple arrangement of the interior. A panelled double door entry with fanlight provides access to the church and is sheltered by a shallow pedimented portico. Above the entry are three Gothic windows with movable lower sash and pointed arched upper sash. The windows illuminate the balcony of the church. An oculus in the gable peak provides ventilation for the attic. Each tower is illuminated with a similar pointed arched window and louvered panels in the third stage of the towers provide ventilation. Each window is framed with a simple surround and has a projecting sill. Trim boards outline the cornice and the corners of the facade. The octagonal spires of the towers begin at a point equal to the height of the central gable peak. The side elevations (one story in height) are punctuated with six pointed arched wood sash windows similar to the windows on the front facade. Like the windows on the front, they are framed with plain surrounds and have projecting sills. A polygonal apse projects from the rear.

The church is entered from a small vestibule which leads to the main auditorium. The interior of the auditorium is distinguished by a barrel vaulted ceiling above the central aisle of the nave. Wooden pillars support the lower flat ceiling along the side aisles. The walls and ceiling are finished in narrow tongue and groove siding and the windows are framed with molded surrounds. The sanctuary is a raised platform with pulpit bordered by an altar rail and terminated by an apse. The apse is dominated by an ornately carved main altarpiece and two side altarpieces. Two small rooms are built off the sanctuary--a sacristy and a storage room. At the rear of the auditorium, the choir loft is supported by pillars. The loft, however, was enclosed with plywood sometime in the middle of the 20th century and the space was used for meetings. The interior includes an historic pump organ. The original cast iron bell still hangs from the north tower. It was manufactured by the American Bell Foundry Company of Northfield, Michigan.

**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)

Ethnic Heritage: European (Polish)

Religion

Architecture

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Period of Significance

1916 - 1937

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Cultural Affiliation

n/a

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Significant Person

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Architect/Builder

Unknown

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

Holy Cross Polish National Catholic Church is historically significant for its associations with the large Polish community in the logging towns of Lewis County, Washington and with the development of a national Polish church in Washington State. Constructed in 1916, the church was built by Polish Americans anxious to retain the customs of their homeland and the traditions of their native church. The church they formed reflected a unique American blend of Polish culture and the democratic parish organization of an American Protestant church. Today, the church is the only example of a Polish National Catholic church in Washington State or the Pacific Northwest and one of the few west of the Mississippi River. Architecturally, the building is the finest example of a vernacular Gothic Revival building in Pe Ell, distinguished by its twin towers, its vaulted ceiling, its elaborate altarpiece and its outstanding integrity.

Historical Background

Pe Ell: Pe Ell was established in the late 1880s along a branch line of the Northern Pacific Railroad which connected Chehalis with South Bend. The rail connection led to a booming lumber industry and numerous Polish and Swiss immigrants (many of who came from the lumber districts of Michigan, Wisconsin, and Minnesota) settled in Pe Ell and surrounding communities, drawn by opportunities in the forests and mills.

In 1892, Polish and Swiss immigrants established the Roman Catholic parish of Saint Joseph in Pe Ell. A Polish priest from the Polish mission of Saint Stanislaus in Tacoma (and later Sacred Heart parish in Enumclaw), Michael Fafara, served the parish from 1892 until 1903. After Fafara's tenure, Polish Catholics in Pe Ell hoped to attain a resident Polish priest for the church. But Bernard Korke, the pastor appointed by Seattle Bishop Edward O'Dea, was not Polish. Korke served the parish from 1903 to 1909 and from 1916 to 1926.

Polish Catholics in the area were disappointed in the appointment and felt that Bishop O'Dea was inattentive to their needs. In response, they contacted the Polish National Catholic Church based in Scranton, Pennsylvania to request the formation of a Polish parish in Pe Ell.

Polish National Catholic Church in America (PNCC): Most Polish immigrants to America before 1924 were Catholics from rural areas where the church was often the focal point of community and personal life. As a result, many Polish-Americans desired Polish parishes

**9. Major Bibliographical References**

Andrews, Theodor, The Polish National Catholic Church in America and Poland, London 1953.  
Kubiak, Hieronim, The Polish National Catholic Church in the USA from 1897 to 1980, Krakow 1982.  
Pearson, Arnold, Early Churches of Washington State, Seattle 1980, pp. 10, 128-129.

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:

Polish National Catholic Church of  
America, 529 E. Locust St., Scranton, PA  
18505

**10. Geographical Data**

Acreeage of property less than one

UTM References

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5	1	5	6	9	6	0
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Zone Easting Northing

C 

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Zone Easting Northing

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U.S.G.S. Quad: Pe E11, WA  
Quad Scale: 1:24,000

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

The nominated property is described thusly: Lots 1 and 2, Charnesky's Home Addition to Pe E11, Washington.

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

The nominated property includes the entire parcel historically associated with the church.

See continuation sheet

**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title Robert Hicker (edited by Leonard Garfield, OAHP)  
organization n/a date April 1987 (rev. May 1987)  
street & number 28841 23rd Avenue South telephone (206) 839-4529  
city or town Federal Way state WA zip code 98003

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in the United States as a way of maintaining cultural cohesion. The PNCC was a American organization that reflected the strong desire among Polish immigrants to retain traditional religious customs in their adopted homeland.

The PNCC split from the American Catholic Church in 1898 over two major issues. First, the PNCC sought to use the Polish language in parish life, even replacing the Latin liturgy with Polish. The PNCC strongly believed in maintaining Polish language and traditions at a time when the American Catholic hierarchy opposed national churches and sought to "Americanize" a largely immigrant church. Secondly, the PNCC placed ownership of each church in the hands of the local parish council rather than in the local bishop as was customary in the Roman Catholic Church. This gave Polish Catholics more control over the destiny of their parish.

Holy Cross: Polish Catholics in Pe Ell were faced with an important decision. They could choose between maintaining loyalty to the Roman Catholic Church in an English-speaking parish, or they could transfer their allegiance to the young but growing Polish National Catholic movement. Polish religious traditions and the use of Polish in the liturgy were so important that the Polish community opted for the latter, and the decision split the Catholic community in the area. In so doing, Poles in Pe Ell were taking a pointed stand against Bishop O'Dea and the mainstream Catholic Church in Washington State.

Under the leadership of Andrew Krasniak and John Trzesniowski, the new Holy Cross Polish National Catholic Church was built by church members with local materials and dedicated in 1916 by Father P. Parzychowski. Joseph Foltynski served as pastor from 1918 until 1922. John Toporowski served as pastor from 1922 until 1930. Between 1916 and 1930, 175 children were baptized at Holy Cross, including children from Polish communities in Raymond, Aberdeen, and Tacoma. The congregation also established a Polish National Catholic cemetery in Pe Ell.

Holy Cross PNCC was an integral part of the vibrant Polish community in the area. Together with the Polish National Alliance, a fraternal organization which maintained a social hall in the city, the church gave immigrants a sense of spiritual stability and continuity, allowing them to worship according to familiar traditions and in the native tongue.

But the PNCC in Pe Ell did not reflect pure Polish tradition. Instead, it reflected a blending of Polish culture and new-found American ideals. By adopting a congregational model for the church, Poles were borrowing from the traditions of the American Protestant movement. The articles of incorporation and the by-laws of Holy Cross clearly stated that anyone of Polish or Lithuanian ancestry or whose spouse was of Polish or Lithuanian ancestry could join the parish. The by-laws also placed responsibility for parish finances in the parish council rather than with the priest as was typical of Roman Catholic churches. Further, the parishioners could vote approval or dismissal of the priest (with a two-thirds majority) at any time. Finally, the parish council, not the bishop, held the deed to the church property. The combination of Old World customs and New World organization led to a truly Polish-American institution.

During the Depression of the 1930s, several sawmills ceased operation and people left Pe Ell in search of employment elsewhere. Father Toporowski was transferred from Pe Ell and his post remained vacant because of declining church membership. The parish community was held together by Peter Kus, president of the parish council. Between 1953 and 1979,

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Holy Cross was served by Episcopal priests from Chehalis and since 1979 by Old Catholic priests from Portland and Seattle. Today, a handful of Polish-American families still attend Holy Cross for monthly mass.

Architecturally, the church is the most distinguished example of a Gothic Revival structure in Pe Ell. The vernacular frame building gains a monumental quality through the twin towers which flank the facade. Inside, the church features a vaulted ceiling, a polygonal apse and notable altarpieces.