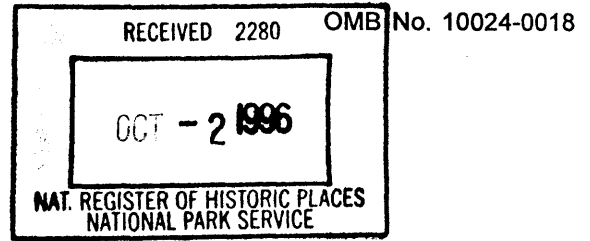


United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service



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 St. Dominic's Church
other names/site number 5DV606

2. Location

street & number 3005 West 29th Avenue [N/A] not for publication
city or town Denver [N/A] vicinity
state Colorado code CO county Denver code 31 zip code 80212

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 [].)

James Edward Hartman State Historic Preservation Officer September 25, 1996
Signature of certifying official/Title 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 [].

Edson H. Beall Signature of the Keeper 11.1.96 Date

Entered in the
National Register

St. Dominic's Church
Name of Property

Denver, 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	
1	0	buildings
0	0	sites
0	0	structures
0	0	objects
1	0	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)

Late Gothic Revival

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Concrete
walls Limestone

roof Terra Cotta
other _____

Narrative Description

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

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 1

ST. DOMINIC'S CHURCH - Denver, CO

DESCRIPTION

The Late Gothic Revival St. Dominic's Church was constructed between 1923-26 and primarily exhibits characteristics of the middle to late Rayonnant and Flamboyant styles. The church faces east and occupies a prominent location overlooking Federal Boulevard and a city park. It is in good condition and retains a high degree of integrity in terms of design, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association. The church is approximately in the center of the half block between 29th and 30th Avenues. It has a latin cross plan with north and south transepts. It is 165 feet long, 85 feet wide, and has a rooftop height of 80 feet. Low, flat roofed wing structures flank the double-portal and rose window nave elevation which extends into a tall parapeted gable. Shed roofed side aisles are set between the porch structures and the parapeted gable transepts. Behind the transepts the side aisles are echoed by flat roofed structures suggesting chapels, actually sacristies, which flank the parapeted gabled rear wall of the presbytery/choir. The church extends to the property line at the public alleyway.

Between the church structure and the intersection of 29th Avenue and Federal Boulevard there is a two-story red brick rectory which is not included in this nomination. To the north is a parking lot extending from the top of the property line retaining wall to a rear alleyway and a modern two-story, red brick school structure which also are not included in this nomination. The school is located at the corner of Federal and 30th Avenue and is no longer owned by the Archdiocese of Denver. Major landscaping includes evergreen shrubbery along the top of the east concrete retaining wall and two large specimen blue spruce trees which flank the facade of the church. A small modern landscaped area is located between the rectory and the church structure and is not included in this nomination.

At Federal Boulevard, the church, is located above the street and public sidewalk on a dias delineated by a low concrete wall. A stone stairway within stepped podia rises from the public sidewalk to concrete paved walks extending around the foundation of the church. Stone steps rise from the front walk to the double portal entrance feature.

The four elevations of the church are clad in coursed ashlar sandstone veneer with varying heights of courses. The veneer is over structural clay tile and a steel frame. It is essentially a two-story structure with a high nave and choir flanked by one-story side aisles. The latin cross plan has north and south transepts and a front narthex. Side aisles are shallow width and the transepts and choir/presbytery are somewhat foreshortened for the French Gothic style.

The symmetrical facade is characterized by a two-story strong vertical element defined by stepped buttresses flanking the tower-like feature. The high buttresses extend to octagonal pinnacles with conical roof structures. Each step of the buttresses has a projecting cap. Each buttress terminates in a gable which faces east. The base of the north buttress contains a corner stone inscribed "St. Dominic's / AD-1923." The octagonal pinnacles have gable forms above each face. Between the buttresses, at the main floor level above a wide flight of stone steps, is a two-portal porch opening into

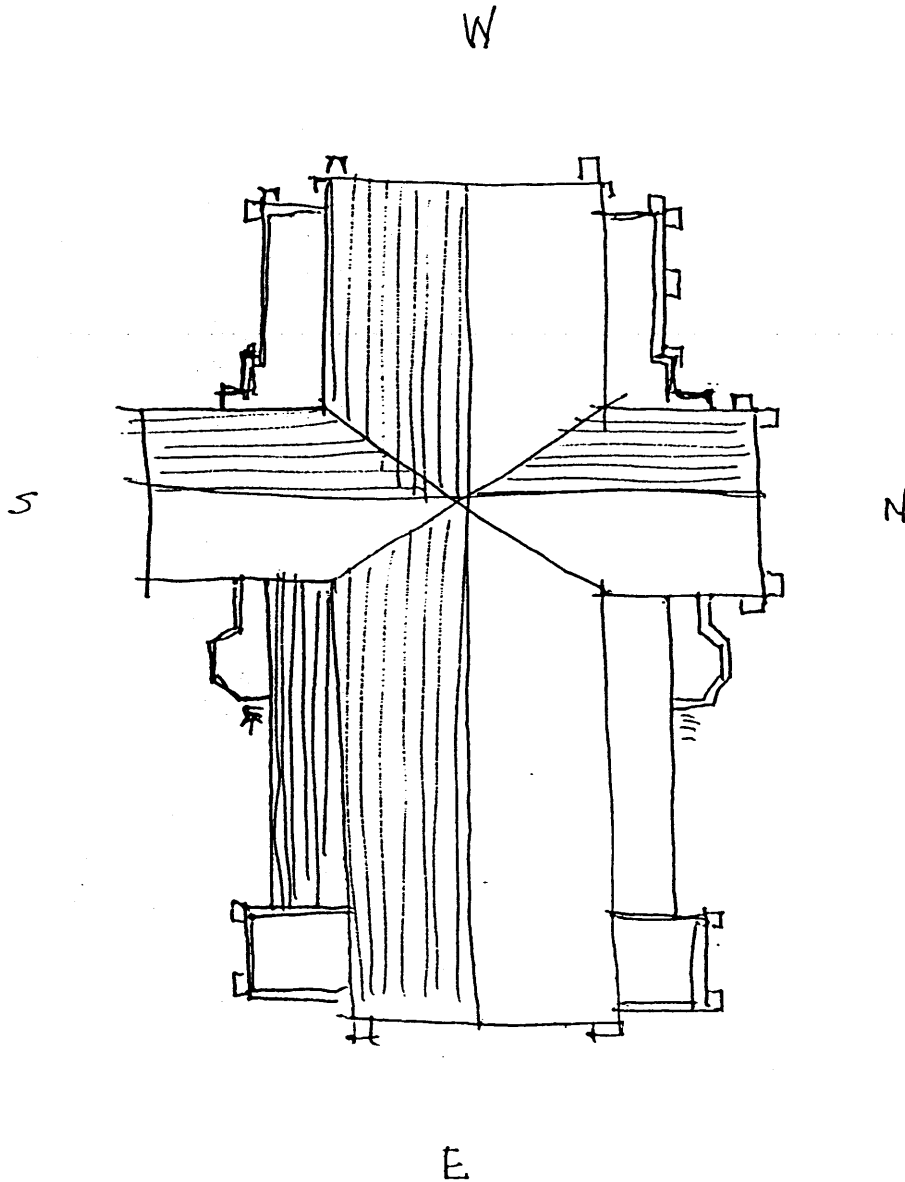
United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 2

ST. DOMINIC'S CHURCH - Denver, CO

ST. DOMINIC'S CHURCH - PLAN VIEW



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National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 3

ST. DOMINIC'S CHURCH - Denver, CO

the narthex. Wrought iron hand rails with decorative bracketing and twisted supports further define the entrance. Each portal, without cross communication, has a recessed pair of doors set below a pointed arch transom that reflects the portal's pointed arch. The transoms are filled with Rayonnant or English decorated tracery. The portals have a three-quarters engaged colonette at each jamb which extends from a plinth to a capital of a Corinthian adaptation with a round abacus block. The capitals support an architrave extending around the arch. A label lintel is carried on the architrave and is terminated on foliated drop pendants similar in design to the capitals. The capitals and drops define the impost of the arches.

The pier between the portals and the side piers extends to a pierced balustrade made up of tracery panels set with heraldic shields. In the center, directly above the center pier, is a tabernacle with side finials. The tabernacle is completed with raked blocking inset with an open trefoil and topped with a Maltese cross at the apex. The projecting corbel of the base is ornamented with foliate forms which extend under the finials.

Stepping back from the portal construction is the main walling of the facade which extends into a large blind pointed arch. The jambs of the arch are set at an angle and merge into the octagonal pinnacles and the buttress piers. A label lintel springs from the jambs without any impost blocking. The blind arch is infilled with a large rose window with geometric Rayonnant tracery consisting of eight main lights springing from a central quatrefoil. The tracery, typically wooden, is set within a molded stone frame. This window and the two lancet windows set below at the portal balcony level light the organ/choir loft above the narthex.

Above the blind arch and rose window, a balustrade extends between the two octagonal pinnacles. The balustrade with stone tracery panels, is set with two finial newels. At the base, the molded stringer extends around the octagonal pinnacles. Behind, the gable end of the nave is set with two lancet windows with louvers enframed with simple tracery. The rake of the parapet is set with a molded stone cap. At the apex is a large stone Celtic cross.

The side aisles of the church structure are fronted with one-story wings which enclose a chapel, now the confessional, at the south and a staircase to the loft above the narthex to the north. These wings flank the central feature and are stepped back from the double portal at the main wall plane. The projection of the buttresses further emphasizes the set back. Each of the wings, which are flat roofed, are characterized by a large east window and a north or south side window of the same scale. The buttressed corners extend to the east and to the west creating stepped north and south elevations. The buttresses extend below a parapet which is raised to create panels at the center of each of the three elevations of each wing. A molded stringer defines the base of each parapet which is capped with a molded stone course. At the base, typically the projecting foundation coursing extends around at the height of the window sills. The same foundation projection extends onto the facade buttresses and the lesser corner buttress bases. The windows typically have a steeply raked sill, beveled reveals, and a label lintel with foliated pendant drops. The wooden tracery consists of three vertical lancet arches

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National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

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ST. DOMINIC'S CHURCH - Denver, CO

extending to the impost. Above, the tracery becomes Flamboyant with a large center opening infilling the arch.

Similarly tracery fills the clerestory windows of the nave which are set between shallow buttresses from which spring molded lintels. The clerestory windows, above the sloping roofs of the side aisles, extend nearly to the roof eave which is carried on small modillion like forms. At the side aisle level, at each north and south elevation, the walling, with a similar eave detail, is set with six lancet windows spaced with two shallow buttresses. The window openings typically have steeply raked sills and beveled reveals without any label lintels. Wooden window frames have decorative silhouetted tracery edging the pointed arches typical of all the structure's lancet windows.

Stepped back from the front wings, the side aisles are terminated with semioctagonal, one-story stair towers. The stair towers have parapeted roofs, similar in detail to the front wing parapets, and lancet windows in the north and south elevations. Beveled reveal doorways are above simple stone steps within stone podia and face east. The double leaf doors, like the main doors of the two east portals, have two gothic tracery panels in each door in the upper third and two lower panels separated by the lock rail. The panels have simple panel molds and raised panels. The bronze hardware back plates have Gothic detailing and pull handles. The north door is enclosed in a temporary tent structure that protects an wooden ramp to provide accessibility. The semioctagonal stairtowers are connected to the transepts with infill having capped raked blocking. Each infill construction has a north or south lancet window.

The north and south elevations of the two transepts typically have corner, stepped buttressing that extends to octagonal pinnacles without conical roofs. Buttressing extends perpendicularly from each corner in two directions. At each elevation, the buttressing flanks a two-story blind arch, infilled with three lancet windows at the lower level and two short lancet windows at the gallery level below a rose window. The rose window tracery is similar to the east rose window. The blind arch is defined with a large label lintel extending from molded imposts. The rose windows are enframed with molded stone. The lancet windows have simple beveled reveals and sloped sills. Between the levels, above the three lancet windows, is a projecting sill course of the blind arch. Typically, the foundation coursing projects around the buttressing and below the sills. Above each molded label lintel is a stringer course which carries a parapeted gable end set with two louvered lancet openings. Molded stone caps extend up the rakes. There are no finials. At each side elevation of each transept is a clerestory window typical in detail to the clerestories of the nave and the choir.

Below the north and south clerestories of the presbytery/choir, are two-story sacristy wings having flat roofs. The eave is carried on modillions. Stepped buttresses subdivide the elevation and terminate the corner where the buttress extends above the roof into a pinnacle. A single narrow doorway and a lancet window are set in the eastern bays. The openings have flat heads with pointed arch sash in the transom over the door and in the window. Above is a tripartite decorated Gothic tracery window within a pointed

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ST. DOMINIC'S CHURCH - Denver, CO

arch. The western bay contains a tripartite flat headed window with Gothic sash; a tripartite pointed arch window is located above.

Flanking each side of the presbytery/choir are paneled chimney stacks which extend well above the roof eave.

The west elevation of the presbytery/choir is characterized by a lack of detailing. A central two-story section rises with corner buttresses extending into pinnacles without conical roofs. There is no fenestration except for two louvered lancet windows in the parapeted gable end. The gable parapet is capped with raked coping. A stringer course extends between the pinnacles. Flanking the center section are the rear elevations of the lower two-story sacristy wings. Each has a single flat headed window at the lower level and a single lancet window at the second floor level. Typically, the reveals and jambs are beveled and the sills are steeply sloped.

The east double entrance portals open into the narthex which has a groin vaulted ceiling without ribs. Typically, the plaster is scored throughout to resemble coursed stone. Vaulting extends over each of the two entrances and the corresponding entrances into the nave which have pairs of swinging doors set below a wide transom bar. Rayonnant tracery infills the pointed arches extending into the groin vaulting. Gothic Revival light fixtures hang from the vaulting intersections. At the south end of the narthex, a single leaf doorway opens into the chapel/confessional. A large blind arch reveal fills the wall space from floor to vault. The reveal is beveled. A lancet arch within a beveled reveal contains the single leaf doorway. The door detail is typical with two upper panels with trefoil tracery and two lower panels. In the interior, the two top panels are glazed. The transom above the doorway is infilled with a flush panel. At the north end of the narthex a low restroom addition infills space. The walling extends above the impost line of the main entrances. This room within a room contains a restroom. It has a flat headed doorway with a transom. The door is the typical design. The top of the wall is finished with a fascia board and an overhanging cap. The groin vaulting extends over this room. The door and window frames are stained dark and are set into the reveals without any trim. In the north wing adjacent to the narthex is a dog-leg oak staircase with closed stringers. The stringers are paneled. Newels with simple Gothic paneling and a curved cap are at the bottom and at each landing. The square balusters are infilled with open trefoil motifs set below the hand rail. The open soffit of the staircase is plastered and scored to resemble stone. Access to this stairway is from the north side aisle through double swinging doors. Similarly a south side aisle double doorway provides access into the chapel/confessional room.

The nave is designed as a three-story space. An arcade separates the side aisles from the nave. Beveled piers form the columns. Spanning between the piers, east to west, are flattened Perpendicular Gothic arches with heavily molded labels. Above at the gallery level in each bay, are two blind pointed arch windows set on a projecting sill. Each blind opening has simple Rayonnant tracery. Above these is a clerestory window set on a continuous sill spanning between the piers. Each clerestory window has a label lintel set at the intersection of the ceiling groin vaulting. Five bays of groin vaulting extend

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National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
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ST. DOMINIC'S CHURCH - Denver, CO

down the nave to the crossing. Ribs exist only where the piers extend across the ceiling. The projecting ribs are further defined with moldings that are received on foliated pendant drops mounted on the piers at the arcade level. All of the plaster work is scored to resemble stone and stone construction.

The narthex doors are ornamented with label lintels set into the cavetto curve supporting the loft balcony. The projecting balcony has blind arch balustrading and pinnacle newels. A free standing pipe organ is set in the southeast corner. The pipes extend to the rose window.

The side aisles are generally for circulation only. Like the nave the crossings are heavily emphasized with plaster moldings defining bays of shallow groin vaulting. The side entrances from the north and south semiocagonal concrete stairwells, which also provide access to the undercroft, open into the side aisles near the transept crossing. The crossing is characterized by a large groin vault with heavy ribbing at each side springing from the piers.

The presbytery/choir lacks the side aisles and piers except at the first bay. Here the cross axes provides access to the two chapels which flank the choir. The proscenium of the presbytery/choir lacks the pendant drops, and the molding applied to the piers extends to the base. Behind the intermediate rib, the presbytery/choir is defined with molded plaster extending to a pendant drop mounted on the wall above the choir paneling.

Furnishings include the pews, with open trefoil insert panels, which extend down the nave in two tiers with a center aisle. The pews are fit around the piers and are widened in the transepts to fill the space. The pews are oak. The choir/presbytery, three steps above the nave, is paneled around all three walls. The oak paneling is sectioned with pinnacles which form tall, narrow panels having an open trefoil motif at the top. The top of each panel contains a carved Gothic motif. Between the pinnacles, the cornice is capped with crenellations. Choir stalls are located in front of the paneling and behind a paneled rail.

The panelling extends onto the west, altar wall. Here paneled buttresses extend up the wall to support a canopy. The canopy is carved with Flamboyant Gothic tracery. The flat top is completed with crenellations and is centered with a small tabernacle. The side buttresses contain tall niches with statuary. The field between is vertically paneled and has carved rosettes. This extends from the height of the choir paneling which extends through the altar. The entire composition provides the backdrop for the full sized carved crucifix hanging above the altar which is three steps above the choir. A narrow ambulatory extends behind the altar providing access between the sacristy spaces and robe rooms.

Open pointed arches with iron grills are located in the two western bays at each side at the gallery level. These openings provided an ambulatory at the second floor level. The two rooms on either side of the presbytery/choir are used for storage. Stairways are similar to the northeast stairway adjacent to the narthex. The sacristy contains a multidrawer cabinet with a counter top and overhead cabinets and

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Continuation Sheet

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ST. DOMINIC'S CHURCH - Denver, CO

vestment storage wardrobes. There is a vault for communion silver. Typically service doorways are pointed arched and contain doors with two long vertical panels with open trefoil work at the top of each panel.

Flanking the presbytery/choir are side chapels with similar paneling along their back walls only with a center tabernacle containing the statuary. The paneling is set within blind arches corresponding to the side aisles across the transepts. Plaster tracery infills the upper part of the blind arches.

Historic hexagonal light fixtures are suspended from the apex of the groin vaulting of the side aisles. Electric fans are suspended from the apex of the nave and presbytery/choir groin vaulting. Typically, the fixtures are hung from a large molded rosette. Flooring is generally nonhistoric asphalt tile.

In general, the glazing is amber, textured glass in large panes which casts an amber glow into the interior. The walls are presently painted in two shades of taupe, the architectural moldings being darker. The decorative bosses are highlighted with brushed gold. The interior is very simple owing more to the light color scheme and plain glazing than the use of restrained architectural detail. Regardless, the overall effect of the interior space is monumental with a aisle-gallery-clerestory nave, proportioned transepts, and a deep presbytery/choir.

World War II affected the parish deeply, with many men and women participating in the conflict. Various minor changes to the church were made, including the entrance ramp on the north under the supervision of the Fr. Vincent Reginald Hughes. Under Hughes' direction, Fr. Tom McGlynn worked as associate pastor, beginning in 1945. A sculptor, McGlynn was commissioned in 1945 to carve a crucifix as a memorial to the parishioners who had served during World War II. McGlynn worked on sketches, and in three months time the corpus was finished; the Crucifix was dedicated on Epiphany, 1946. The work is more than double life size and carved from pine. Parish tradition maintains that Fr. McGlynn used himself as a study for the corpus.¹

In 1951, the sanctuary was remodeled under the supervision of Fr. Pat Roney, O.P. New wooden altar backdrops from the Hackner Company in La Cross, Wisconsin were installed.

In 1983, the interior treatments of the church were further modified after a fire, that caused considerable smoke damage, under the supervision of Fr. Kevin Thissen, O.P. For example, reflecting Vatican II, the confessionals and altar railings were removed. However, structural changes were not made. The memorial crucifix and wooden backdrops and altars were saved.

In 1995, the exterior wood tone doors of the sanctuary were repainted in black and dark red with white detailing. In February of 1996, church directors expanded the choir area located in front of the north side altar, by removing a number of pews, and built a carpeted platform for an organ and piano.

¹ Fr. Albert Judy, O.P., "St. Dominic Parish--100 Years", n.p.

St. Dominic's Church
Name of Property

Denver, CO
County/State

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

Periods of Significance

1923-1926

Significant Dates

1926

Significant Person(s)

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above.)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Willison, Robert

Primary location of additional data:

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

Name of repository:

Province of Saint Albert the Great, Chicago, Illinois; and Provincial Offices, 141 East 65th St., New York, NY 10021-6606

St. Dominic's Church
Name of Property

Denver, CO
County/State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property Less than 1 acre

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1. 13 497840 4400800
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 William Patrick O'Brien, Ph.D. and Rodd L. Wheaton, M.A.

organization St. Dominic's Church date February 15, 1996

street & number P.O. Box 28202 telephone 303-477-7667

city or town Lakewood state CO zip code 80228

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 Archdiocese of Denver

street & number 200 Josephine telephone _____

city or town Denver state CO zip code 80206-4720

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

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Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 8

ST. DOMINIC'S CHURCH - Denver, CO

SIGNIFICANCE

St. Dominic's Church is significant under Criterion C as an important Denver example of ecclesiastical architecture executed by Robert Willison, one of Denver's important architects. Its Late Gothic Revival design reflects the talent and expertise of Willison as well as the hopes and aspirations of Denver's Dominican religious community. Examples of Willison's work include a wide range of building types, architectural styles, and choice of materials. During the 1920s, Willison received several commissions for the design of Catholic churches in Colorado. In addition to St. Dominic's, the most complex and imposing, these commissions included: Fruita's 1921 Romanesque Revival style St. Malachy's of coursed rock faced ashlar; the 1926 Mission style brick and stucco St. Cajetan's, a Denver Landmark now utilized as an arts and cultural center as part of the Auraria Higher Education Center; and the late 1920s, State Register listed, Mission style stuccoed brick Sacred Heart Church in Alamosa. As St. Dominic's is a religious property that derives its primary significance from architectural distinction, the building also meets criteria consideration A.

Willison's Late Gothic Revival style St. Dominic's Church, clad in ashlar sandstone veneer over structural clay tile, has been in continuous use since its dedication in 1926. The building is well preserved and retains a high degree of integrity. The exterior remains as conceived by Willison. On the interior, the modifications to the sanctuary undertaken in 1951 and after the 1983 fire, as well as any made more recently, reflect the church's evolving use during the second half of the 20th century. The scale, proportion and various architectural relationships reflect Willison's and the Dominican's original design intent of the 1920s.

Robert Willison (1865-1935) represents one of Denver's most active and significant architects of the "City Beautiful" movement. According to Colorado poet-laureate Thomas Hornsby Ferril, Willison was one of Mayor Robert W. Speer's "most trusted advisors in his plans for Denver." Born in Kilmarnock, Scotland on September 1, 1865, Willison graduated from the London School of Science and Art and emigrated to Denver in 1890. Willison married in 1895, and in the intervening years he and his wife Anna had three sons. Willison worked for Denver architects R.S. Roeschlaub and J.J. Huddart before joining the firm of F.E. Edbrooke as an architect in 1896.

Appointed city building inspector and architect by Mayor Speer, Willison served in this civic capacity from 1904 to 1910 during the peak of the national "City Beautiful" movement in which Denver participated by building civic structures and parkways. In 1908, Willison designed the 12,000 seat, Renaissance Revival style, National Register listed, Denver Municipal Auditorium using terra cotta, stone and brick. He also designed the city's first municipal bathhouse (1908) at 20th and Curtis, still in use as a neighborhood recreational center.²

² Ann L. Jones, "Willison, Robert, (1865-1935)" as printed in Thomas J. Noel and Barbara Norgren's Denver: The City Beautiful (Denver: Historic Denver, Inc, 1987), 224.

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National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

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ST. DOMINIC'S CHURCH - Denver, CO

During his public employment, Willison wrote a weekly column for a publication entitled Denver Municipal Facts in which he listed information, updated weekly, concerning the construction codes and costs of the city. He was a member of the AIA and was secretary of the State Board of Architectural Examination (1909-1912).

Willison left public employment to join the architectural firm of Montana S. Fallis. From 1910 to 1914 Willison and Fallis designed various offices, churches, homes, factories, storage buildings and public halls. Among their church designs are the 1911, tan brick, modified Gothic Revival style, Capitol Heights Presbyterian Church in Denver and the 1912, National Register listed, red brick Late Gothic Revival, Sacred Heart Cathedral in Pueblo. Other projects included the 1911 Vail Hotel in Pueblo and the 1911 West Court Hotel and 1912 Annex to the Oxford Hotel in Denver. In 1914 Willison founded his own architectural firm. Three years later he was elected to the Colorado State legislature where he served for a number of years.³

In 1921, Robert Willison was commissioned by the Dominican Province of Saint Joseph in New York City and St. Dominic's Parish to execute the design for the new church.⁴ A new rectory, designed by Willison, replaced the home of Frank Goudy at 29th and Federal in 1923 at a cost of \$30,000. After various consultations with Dominican superiors, review of plans and various technical and financial difficulties, the church was dedicated in February of 1926 after three years of construction. The cost was \$270,000.⁵

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid.

According to Fr. Stan Drongowski, O.P., a member of the church staff from 1984 to 1987, there is some question as to Willison's degree of involvement in the actual design of the structure. According to him, the Dominican offices in New York, upon seeing the recently completed rectory, noted that the new church would not be built of brick, made a loan available for a larger structure and sent plans for the same from the provincial office to the parish in Denver. However, documentation for this story is lacking, and blueprints indicate Willison as the architect.

⁵ Tom Noel, "St. Dominic's Centennial." The Denver Catholic Register September 27, 1989, 12; Fr. Albert Judy, O.P., "Saint Dominic Parish--100 Years." Speech given to the congregation on the occasion of Saint Dominic's Centennial Mass, October 9, 1988, reprinted in St. Dominic's Parish Centennial Calendar (Denver Colorado: St. Dominic's Parish, [1989], n.p. Blue prints: Heating plans for Saint Dominic's Church, Rev. R.E. Larpenteur, Pastor, Robert Wilson, Architect, 12/19/23, Saint Dominic's Church Office Records, Denver, Colorado.

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ST. DOMINIC'S CHURCH - Denver, CO

Historic Background

In 1875 the creation of a community named Highlands northwest of Denver signaled an era of prosperity and boom. Dominican Fr. J.T. Murphy visited Fr. Joseph P. Carrigan at St. Patrick's parish, located at 33rd and Osage, at which time Fr. Carrigan convinced Fr. Murphy that an additional parish was needed. Bishop Nicholas Matz approved the creation of St. Dominic's parish, which was established in Denver, Colorado on October 6, 1889 in a former feed store at 25th and Decatur Streets by the Roman Catholic Order of Preachers (Dominicans).

Dominican Fr. Edward D. Donnelly served as the first pastor with Dr. Murphy as assistant. After a brief move to the Highlands town hall, the order built a new church at 25th and Grove in 1890. Dominican sisters from the Convent of St. Clara at Sinsinnawa, Wisconsin started a school at the building soon after its construction. Sisters Evangelist, Dolora, Aquin and Zita began to teach at the building which served both as church and school. A fire in 1891 caused the order to rebuild the church. By 1898 the school had 180 students. The Dominican community in Denver continued to grow as the order established two convents, one as a residence and one as a home for tubercular members of the order. The order served primarily in the teaching and community welfare fields. The parish consisted primarily of Irish, German and Italian peoples, many of whom worked for the railroads or in mining or agriculture. ⁶

Pastors came and went in the early years with Dominicans serving including B.F. Logan (1892-1894); M.P. O'Sullivan (1894-1896); S.R. Brockbank (1899-1902); Francis A. O'Neal (1902-1909); Phillip J. valley (1909-1914); P.B. Doyle (1914-1918) and Roscoe F. Larpenteur (1918-1927). By 1915, the work of the Dominican order in Denver had expanded and plans were made by Fr. P.B. Doyle for a new church. Doyle established a building fund. World War I and the national influenza epidemic took a toll on parish activities, but Fr. R.F. Larpenteur continued to work for the construction of a new church. Finally, in 1921, Denver architect Robert Willison was hired to design a new church. Willison had completed the new Denver Municipal Auditorium thirteen years earlier.⁷

Ku Klux Klan activity in Denver in the 1920s and 1930s caused the members of St. Dominic's to redouble their efforts in building a parish community for which the new church became a powerful symbol. A parish credit union was established in 1933. A mission and retreat were established in

⁶ Noel, "St. Dominic's Centennial." The Denver Catholic Register September 27, 1989, 12; Judy, O.P., "Saint Dominic Parish--100 Years." Speech given to the congregation on the occasion of Saint Dominic's Centennial Mass, October 9, 1988, reprinted in St. Dominic's Parish Centennial Calendar (Denver Colorado: St. Dominic's Parish, [1989], n.p.

⁷ Noel, "St. Dominic's Centennial", 12; Judy, "St. Dominic Parish--100 Years.", n.p.

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ST. DOMINIC'S CHURCH - Denver, CO

Nederland, Colorado in the 1930s. Teaching remained the primary concern of the order, but community involvement and welfare became increasingly important to the parish.⁸

In 1951, a new school was built to the north of the church under the pastorate of Fr. Peter O'Brien at a cost of \$350,000. The 12 room school housed 475 students taught by 11 nuns. The school closed in 1973, and the school building was sold in 1995. After a brief tenure by Fr. Forquer in the 1950s, Fr. Pat Roney supervised the remodeling of the sanctuary.⁹

⁸ Judy, "St. Dominic Parish--100 Years", n.p.

⁹ Noel, "St. Dominic's Centennial", 12; Judy, "St. Dominic Parish--100 Years.", n.p.; Blue prints: Saint Dominic's Church, Denver, Colorado--Altars and Woodwork, Hackner Company, La Cross, Wisconsin, no date, Saint Dominic Church Office Records, Denver, Colorado.

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ST. DOMINIC'S CHURCH - Denver, CO

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O'Brien, William P. Telephone conversation with Fr. Stan Drongowski, O.P. Saint Dominic's Novitiate, Denver, Colorado July 28, 1992.

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VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The boundary includes all of Lots 3 to 5 inclusive, and the south 18 feet of lot 6 of Block 32 of Highland Park Subdivision of Denver, Colorado.

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

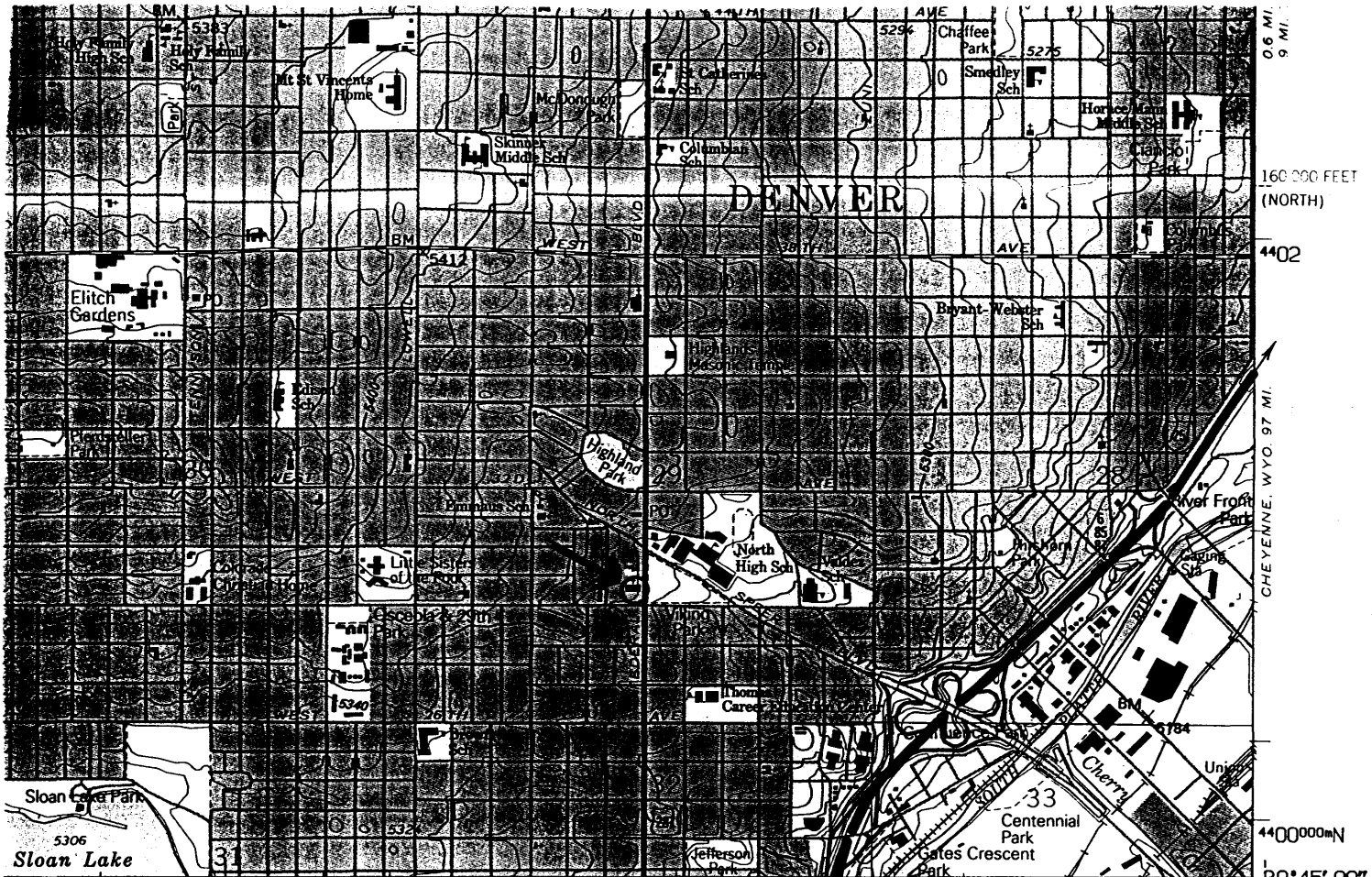
The nominated property includes only the lots associated with the church building. Adjacent structures belonging to St. Dominic's Parish are not included.

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USGS TOPOGRAPHIC MAP
Arvada, CO

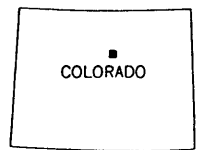
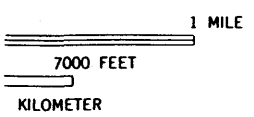


INTERIOR-GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, RESTON, VIRGINIA-1994
 CASTLE ROCK 31 MI. 2 140 000 FEET (NORTH)
 COLORADO SPRINGS 67 MI. 105° 00' 00"

ROAD CLASSIFICATION

Primary highway, hard surface	Light-duty road, hard or improved surface
Secondary highway, hard surface	Unimproved road

○ Interstate Route ○ U. S. Route ○ State Route



QUADRANGLE LOCATION

INGLEWOOD
5963 III NW

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SITE PLAN

