

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

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

For NPS use only

received JUL 19 1983

date entered

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic Holy Cross Abbey ^{U.S.} 5FN688

and/or common same

2. Location

street & number ~~E Highway~~ 50 n/a not for publication

city, town Canon City n/a vicinity of

state Colorado code 08 county Fremont code 043

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	n/a in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
	n/a being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> museum
			<input type="checkbox"/> park
			<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> religious
			<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
			<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
			<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name Benedictine Society of the State of Colorado

street & number P.O. Box 351, E. Highway 50

city, town Canon City n/a vicinity of state Colorado

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Register of Deeds

street & number Fremont County Courthouse

city, town Canon City state Colorado

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Inventory of Cultural Resources has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date Ongoing federal state county local

depository for survey records Colorado Preservation Office

city, town Denver state Colorado

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved date _____
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Holy Cross Abbey (1924-1926) is a 3½ story T-shaped building located about ½ mile east of Canon City, Colorado. Facing south, the building measures three hundred feet north-south by one hundred ten feet east-west. It is sited on two hundred twenty acres of land which gives a spacious sense to the grounds. (Picture 1) A number of small-scale modern structures, all part of the Abbey School, and all built within the past 35 years, surround the building on three sides. These structures, which are not nominated, do not detract from the overall integrity of the Abbey or its setting.

The basic feeling to this structure might be called Collegiate Gothic, with a detectable Jacobean Revival influence.

The English Gothic Revival can be seen in the overall massing of the structure. (Picture 2), and the treatment of the windows, buttresses and Gothic filigree in the south end of the Chapel wing.

The vertical sweep of the Gothic Revival is also present in the treatment of the windows in the main portion of the structure. Yet here the vertical masses (Picture 4) are softened by the Jacobean Revival influence. This can be seen in the bay window, the treatment of the triangular pediments on both sides of the building (Pictures 5 and 6) and the tall, fluted chimney (Picture 3). The result is an English feeling which is reinforced by the upper story gables and the Abbot's quarters immediately to the north of the chapel. (Picture 5) What seems, at first, to be the English half-timbered style is, in reality, nothing more than stucco and paint.

The focal point for the entire structure is the tower on the south end. Here the vertical lines of the tower culminate in a small, stylized turret (Picture 8).

A notable feature on the ground floor of the east facade is the cloister walk (arcade) which sweeps north from the Chapel along the full length of the building. Framed by a series of Tudor arches (Picture 9), this walk was intended as a quiet place for the monks to use in their contemplation (Picture 10).

The building is constructed of brown brick. The quoins, mullions, belt courses, window frames, etc., which appear to be of stone are, in fact, cast concrete. The gable roof is covered with tile.

The interior of the building consisting of classrooms, hallways, residence rooms and monastic dormitory has been heavily altered and is of no design importance. Even the Chapel is a simple unadorned room; all of the elaborate furnishing including the choir stalls and high altar have been removed.

The exterior of the Holy Cross Abbey is intact. The only alteration that has taken place has been a realignment of the roof drains. Whereas originally the roof drained down the interior, because of problems with freezing, they were changed to drain down the exterior.

The Abbey, situated on its spacious grounds which protect it from the pressures of growth from nearby Canon City, remains a unique architectural landmark in southeastern Colorado.

8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/ humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		

Specific dates 1924-1926

Builder/Architect L. A. Des Jardins

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Holy Cross Abbey possesses both architectural and religious significance. It is a unique example of Collegiate Gothic architecture in southeastern Colorado. Its religious significance grows out of the fact that the Abbey School, since its establishment in 1926, has been important in the history of education in the area.

Benedictine monks first came to Colorado from St. Vincent's Abbey, Latrobe, Pa. in the winter of 1886. Settling first in Breckenridge, the next spring they moved to Boulder to begin establishment of a monastic community. In 1894, the monks were asked to take charge of St. Michael's Church in Canon City and all of the parishes in Fremont County. For the next eight years the priory they established--St. Leander's--was the headquarters for the Benedictines in Colorado.

In 1902, the monks were allowed to transfer their priory to Pueblo. It was felt that this growing industrial center offered more of a chance for a new school. The "Benedictine College"--in reality a high school--was constructed and classes began. Until the end of World War I, this was the center of the Benedictine Order in Colorado. In addition to staffing the school, the monks also served five parishes in Boulder County, four in Fremont, three "national" parishes--Slovenian, Slovak, and German--in Pueblo as well as the area bounded on the west by Fountain Creek; the east, Vineland; on the north by the El Paso county line; and on the south by the Arkansas River.

After closing their school in Pueblo, a result of problems surrounding World War I, the Benedictines moved back to Canon City. The priory, renamed Holy Cross, was established about two miles east of Canon City. Planning began at once for a permanent home for the community and the establishment of a school.

The architect selected for the project was L. A. Des Jardins. Born in Fort Collins, in 1885, he spent the first half of his career in Denver. He was the first architect in the state to qualify for licensing by examination. In 1931, he left Denver for Oklahoma. Returning in 1935, he settled in Trinidad where he died in 1967. In southeastern Colorado, some of the buildings he designed were the Woodruff Memorial Library in La Junta and the First National Bank in Florence.

Des Jardin's plan for the property called for an elaborate educational complex of buildings reminiscent of an English university. Included were a monastery and chapter house--the only building constructed--a monastic cloister, a cathedral, a preparatory school, a university, ten dormitories, a hospital and a stadium. The complex was to front onto an elaborate esplanade. Even though only one building was built, the combination of its scale and architectural style--Collegiate Gothic--make it unique in this area of the state.

9. Major Bibliographical References

See attached continuation sheet.

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property 9.2 acres

Quadrangle name Canon City

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UTM References

A

1	3	4	8	2	5	2	0	4	2	5	4	2	0
Zone			Easting				Northing						

B

Zone			Easting				Northing						

C

Zone			Easting				Northing						

D

Zone			Easting				Northing						

E

Zone			Easting				Northing						

F

Zone			Easting				Northing						

G

Zone			Easting				Northing						

H

Zone			Easting				Northing						

Verbal boundary description and justification

See attached continuation sheet.

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state n/a code county code

state n/a code county code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Warren J. Heidgen, O.S.B.
Rt. Rev. Warren J. Heidgen, O.S.B., President and Abbot

organization Benedictine Society of the State of Colorado (Holy Cross Abbey) date March 4, 1983

street & number P.O. Box 351, 2951 E. Hwy. 50 telephone (303) 275-8631

city or town Canon City state Colorado

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national state local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature Barbara Sudler

title State Historic Preservation Officer (Acting) date July 11, 1983

For NPS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

Delores Byers
Keeper of the National Register

Entered in the
National Register

date 8/18/83

Attest:

Chief of Registration

date

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

MAY 19 1987

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 1

Holy Cross Abbey, Fremont County, Colorado

Biography of Joseph Dillon

Mr. Joseph Dillon, Architect of Holy Cross Abbey, Canon City, Colorado, completed the structure in partnership with the firm of L. A. Des Jardins. Mr. Dillon was both architect and contractor of the structure.

Mr. Dillon studied architecture at the University of Southern California, Los Angeles, California. His first partnership was with Mr. Gile in Pueblo, Colorado. (Mr. Gile was Supervising Architect for the Brown Palace Hotel and Boston Building in Denver, Colorado.) Mr. Dillon was offered the designing of Holy Cross Abbey in Canon City, Colorado. Since his partner, Mr. Gile, had retired, Mr. Dillon entered partnership with Mr. L. A. Des Jardins to contract for the Abbey.

Frank Kirchof of Denver, Colorado and Whitney Steen and James Stewart Company of New York were some of the contractors with whom Dillon had experience. (Whitney Steen built the Daniels and Fisher Tower, Denver, Colorado.)

After several years partnership with Mr. Des Jardins, Mr. Dillon moved to Kansas City, Missouri and there practiced architecture in his own name.

Compiled by Doris Dillon, 1987

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

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

For NPS use only

received

date entered

Continuation sheet Holy Cross Abbey

Item number 8

Page 2

Construction began on the monastery building, the structure herein nominated, in 1924. Completed in 1925 at a cost of about \$500,000, the same year that Holy Cross was raised to an abbey, it was dedicated in April 1926.

That fall the Abbey launched a four-year high school and a junior high. Thirty-seven students registered that first year, but enrollment grew quickly. By 1929, approximately 100 boys enrolled. Over the years the curriculum has changed from a four year high school to an emphasis on industrial arts, to four year college, to, currently, a college preparatory school. From its beginning, the Abbey School has been an important educational force in southeastern Colorado. It has been considered from its inception, the foremost Catholic School in the area. Today (1983), its reputation has grown and it has students from nineteen states and a number of foreign countries.

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

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

Major Bibliographical

Continuation sheet

References

Item number

9

Page 2

For NPS use only

received

date entered

Abbey School

1982 Self-Evaluation Report for the Association of Colorado Independent
Schools and the Colorado Department of Education

Des Jardin's Review. Denver, Colorado.
1928

Heidgen, Warren, Rt. Rev., O.S.B.
1982 Personal Communication.

Peter, Rev. Vincent, O.S.B.
1975 Fifty Years of Holy Cross Abbey History. The Abbey 11(5)7-22.

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

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

For NPS use only

received

date entered

Continuation sheet Holly Cross Abbey

Item number 10

Page 2

Verbal Boundary Description

Beginning at the northwest corner, twenty-eight feet northwest of the corner of the building, the boundary follows an existing walkway around the building.

The boundary is drawn to exclude surrounding contemporary buildings and to follow the natural physical boundary presented by the walkway.

Fremont County, Colorado

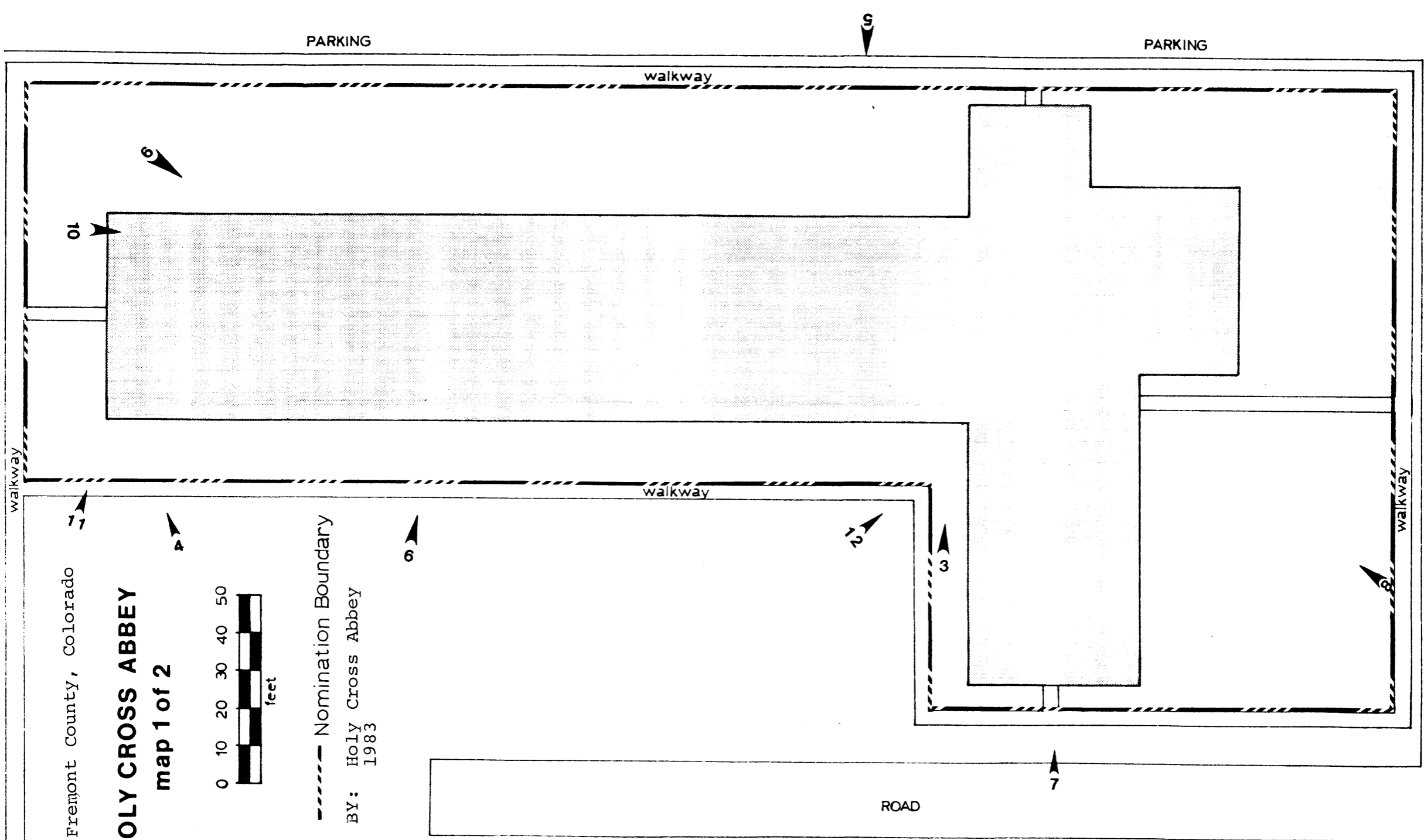
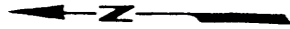
HOLY CROSS ABBEY

map 1 of 2



--- Nomination Boundary

BY: Holy Cross Abbey
1983



United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number _____ Page _____

Holy Cross Abbey Fremont County, CO

Date/Signature

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Substantive ~~Header~~ Keeper

William B. Bushong
7/1/87

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

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

For NPS use only

received 2/21/85

date entered

Continuation sheet

Holy Cross Abbey, Fremont County, Colorado

Item number

8

Page

1

#8 Area of Significance

Architect: J. P. Dillon and L. A. Des Jardins