

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM**

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

STATE: Louisiana
COUNTY: Orleans
FOR NPS USE ONLY
ENTRY DATE

**1. NAME**

COMMON: St. Mary's Assumption Church

AND/OR HISTORIC:

**2. LOCATION**

STREET AND NUMBER: 2030 Constance Street

CITY OR TOWN: New Orleans CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT: 2

STATE: Louisiana CODE: 22 COUNTY: Orleans CODE: 071

**3. CLASSIFICATION**

CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
<input type="checkbox"/> District <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Building <input type="checkbox"/> Site <input type="checkbox"/> Structure <input type="checkbox"/> Object	<input type="checkbox"/> Public <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Private <input type="checkbox"/> Both	Public Acquisition: <input type="checkbox"/> In Process <input type="checkbox"/> Being Considered	<input type="checkbox"/> Occupied <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress
PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)			
<input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural <input type="checkbox"/> Commercial <input type="checkbox"/> Educational <input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> Government <input type="checkbox"/> Industrial <input type="checkbox"/> Military <input 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 (Specify) _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Comments _____

**4. OWNER OF PROPERTY**

OWNER'S NAME: Redemptorist Fathers (Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer)

STREET AND NUMBER: 2030 Constance Street

CITY OR TOWN: New Orleans STATE: Louisiana CODE: 22

**5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.: Conveyance Office, Civil Courts Building, Orleans Parish

STREET AND NUMBER: 421 Loyola Avenue

CITY OR TOWN: New Orleans STATE: Louisiana CODE: 22

**6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE OF SURVEY: Historic Areas and Structures (by Bernard Lemann)

DATE OF SURVEY: February 1967  Federal  State  County  Local

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS: City Planning Commission, City Hall

STREET AND NUMBER: 1300 Perdido

CITY OR TOWN: New Orleans STATE: Louisiana CODE: 22

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

STATE: \_\_\_\_\_  
COUNTY: \_\_\_\_\_  
ENTRY NUMBER: \_\_\_\_\_  
DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

FOR NPS USE ONLY

7. DESCRIPTION

CONDITION	(Check One)					
	<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> Good	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Fair	<input type="checkbox"/> Deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> Ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> Unexposed
	(Check One)			(Check One)		
	<input type="checkbox"/> Altered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unaltered	<input type="checkbox"/> Moved	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Original Site		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

St. Mary's Assumption Church is a large rectangular structure of brick construction, divided into a nave and side aisles by rows of huge plastered brick columns. The tower is of massive construction, attached to the side of the church but built independently of it with a continuous expansion joint separating the two structures. The entire exterior is a virtuoso exercise in the ornamental use of brick masonry.

The base of the tower is square in form, buttressed at the corners by strong projecting pilasters, two on each facade. These pilasters, deeply paneled, generally repeat the pilasters of the nave and the Josephine Street facade. Springing from the tops of each pair of tower pilasters are heavily moulded and highly stilted semicircular brick arches, each surrounding a circular window, again repeating the principal motif of the Josephine Street, or entrance, facade. Above the arches, baroque forms pile up in brick forming a transition from the square of the lower part of the tower to the octagon above the roofline. A rather plain lower octagon with buttresses forms the base of the belfry which contains tall semicircular headed louvered openings. Above these, the clock faces appear and the brick work of the tower terminates in a series of curved mouldings having the same center as the clock faces. The brick dome is covered with metal, with boldly projecting metal ribs which ascend the sides of the drum at the top in the form of short columns, from the tops of which semicircular arches spring and tie the composition together around the huge octagonal moulded ball that forms the base of the terminating gilded cross, 142 feet above the ground.

The entrance facade, repeating the arch and pilaster forms of the lower part of the tower, consists of an arched central bay flanked by slightly smaller side bays containing deeply recessed arched entrance doors. Between these two entrances, the wall of the central bay is decorated by a blind arcade, seven tall brick arches, above which a strong horizontal belt course forms a base for the tall triple arched windows above. Surmounting the arch of each entrance door is a large brick cross on a low square pedestal and standing free of the window mullion behind it.

The church is divided into nave and side aisles by massive fluted columns raised above the height of the pews on plain hexagonal pedestals. The mouldings of the bases are vigorous and classical in feeling, but follow no classic example. Nor are the column flutes strictly classical, but are rather a cluster of reeded forms with slight entasis leading up to Corinthian-like capitals, richly carved but again following no classic model. From the abacus of these capitals heavy moulded plaster ribs rise to form the groins of the semicircular vaults of the nave, and the groined vaults of the side aisles.

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(Continued)

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**8. SIGNIFICANCE**

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- |  |                                       |  |                                       |
|--|---------------------------------------|--|---------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pre-Columbian | <input type="checkbox"/> 16th Century | <input type="checkbox"/> 18th Century            | <input type="checkbox"/> 20th Century |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 15th Century  | <input type="checkbox"/> 17th Century | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 19th Century |                                       |

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known) 1858

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- |  |   |   |  |
|--|---|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal              | <input type="checkbox"/> Education              | <input type="checkbox"/> Political                      | <input type="checkbox"/> Urban Planning        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Prehistoric             | <input type="checkbox"/> Engineering            | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Religion/Philosophy | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Historic                | <input type="checkbox"/> Industry               | <input type="checkbox"/> Science                        | _____  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture             | <input type="checkbox"/> Invention              | <input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture                      | _____  |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Landscape Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Social/Humanitarian            | _____  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Art                     | <input type="checkbox"/> Literature             | <input type="checkbox"/> Theater                        | _____  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Commerce                | <input type="checkbox"/> Military               | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation                 | _____  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Communications          | <input type="checkbox"/> Music                  |   |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Conservation            |   |   |  |

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Aside from its significance in the religious history of New Orleans, St. Mary's Assumption is a priceless and unique example of the American expression of German baroque art and architecture. The exterior is an amazing display of the brickmasons' skill. The interior baroque plaster work and wood carvings are unsurpassed in New Orleans and perhaps in the Nation.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

**9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES**

**10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA**

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY			O R	LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES		
CORNER	LATITUDE	LONGITUDE		LATITUDE	LONGITUDE	
	Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds		Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds	
NW	° ' "	° ' "		29 ° 55 ' 45 1/2 "	90 ° 04 ' 29 "	
NE	° ' "	° ' "				
SE	° ' "	° ' "				
SW	° ' "	° ' "				

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: **0.9 acres**

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE

**11. FORM PREPARED BY**

NAME AND TITLE:  
**Paul Goeldner, Architect, Historic Sites Survey**

ORGANIZATION: **Division of Historic and Architectural Surveys,  
National Park Service**      DATE: **1/14/74**

STREET AND NUMBER:  
**1100 L Street NW**

CITY OR TOWN: **Washington**      STATE: **District of Columbia**      CODE: \_\_\_\_\_

**12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION**

As the designated State Liaison 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. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:

National       State       Local

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Title \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

**NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION**

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

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Director, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation*

Date \_\_\_\_\_

ATTEST:

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Keeper of The National Register*

Date \_\_\_\_\_

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7. Description (page 1)

St. Mary's Assumption Church

but are rather a cluster of reeded forms with slight entasis leading up to Corinthian-like capitals, richly carved but again following no classic model. From the abacus of these capitals, heavy moulded plaster ribs rise to form the groins of the semicircular vaults of the nave and the groined vaults of the side aisles.

The vault ribs are covered with elaborate and beautifully executed plaster ornament. This rich ornament extends along the entire length of the ridge spreading out at the intersection of the groins where ceiling ventilators are almost lost in the mass of foliage and flowers that surround them and spread from these centers, tentacle-like, along the ribs. This ceiling decoration is perhaps the finest expression of 19th-century German baroque art in America.

The columns of the nave are rather closely spaced so that the arches between them are of a fairly small radius. Each keystone is covered with another piece of exuberant leafage from which another rib rises to the intersection of the nave groins. Like all the arch forms in the church, the nave arches are very much stilted, the center being several feet above the spring line at the top of the columns. Perhaps the most remarkable feature of the nave is the omission of the central column on either side to reveal a large single arched window on one side and a double one opposite. The arches above the columns, however, continue in their same rhythmic form, and where the column is omitted, the capital is replaced by a decorative pendant, a somewhat modified form of the other capitals.

The sanctuary, containing the high altar is rather shallow for such a large church and is flanked by two large columns on each side, columns of exactly the same size and design as those of the nave. They do not, however, support the vault ribs, but seem to stand only slightly engaged to the wall for purely decorative purposes. They form an element of the baroque plan of this area which includes walls curving inward to the altar and connecting the last columns of the nave to these columns. Their lack of any structural function suggests that some design change may have occurred in this area of the building, either during construction or perhaps at the time of the installation of the high altar in 1874. The altar itself, building upward to a climax of the Coronation of the Virgin, is a real "tour de force" and forms a dramatic focal point in this truly remarkable baroque church. Even the pew ends carry out the German baroque feeling of the interior of the building and are composed of heavily moulded scalloped and curved forms. The altar was built in Munich, Bavaria, by the Institute of Mayrs and the exceptionally fine stained glass windows are also of late 19th-century German manufacture.

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7. Description (page 2)

St. Mary's Assumption Church

The Church of St. Mary's Assumption is the second structure to occupy this site. The first church, a small frame building, was erected in 1844 to serve the many German Roman Catholics of the City of Lafayette, then a separate town in Jefferson Parish that was annexed to New Orleans in 1852. Although the German and Irish Catholics of the City of Lafayette had been chartered as a congregation in 1836, it was not until Bishop Antoine Blanc induced the Redemptorist Fathers of Baltimore to take over the parish in 1847 that permanent buildings began to be contemplated. Each of the three principal ethnic groups in the area insisted upon having its own church where sermons and services would be conducted in their native languages. Thus St. Alphonsus Church was built for the Irish in 1855, St. Mary's for the Germans in 1858, and Notre Dame de Bon Secours (now demolished) for the French minority in 1857.

Although Albert Diettel is sometimes credited as the designer, records fail to reveal the names of the architect and craftsmen employed in the construction. The dedication was in 1860. Having survived with minimal alteration or decay for more than a century, St. Mary's was sufficiently damaged by Hurricane Betsy in 1965 to require its closing to the public. Parish services could easily be accommodated in St. Alphonsus across the street. Basic repairs were made immediately and a complete restoration program is underway.