

MINNESOTA HISTORIC PROPERTIES INVENTORY FORM

MAR 2 1982

HISTORIC NAME: Ss. Peter and Paul Catholic Church Complex COUNTY: Benton
 CURRENT NAME: Saints CITY/TWP.: Gilman Village
 LEGAL DESC.: Auditor's Subdivision Plat 1 of Gilman ADDRESS: State Street
 Block 2, Lot 2

CLASSIFICATION:	CONDITION:	SIGNIFICANCE:	THEME/S:
Building <u>X</u>	Excellent <u>X</u>	Local <u>X</u>	Primary <u>Settlement</u>
Structure _____	Good <u>X</u>	State _____	Secondary <u>Architecture</u>
Object _____	Fair _____	National _____	Others <u>Religion</u>
District _____	Deteriorated _____		<u>Education</u>

OPEN TO THE PUBLIC: Yes X No _____ Restricted X PRESENT USE: Church
 VISIBLE FROM THE ROAD: Yes X No _____
 OCCUPIED: Yes X No _____

DATE CONSTRUCTED: See below ORIGINAL USE: Catholic Church complex

ORIGINAL OWNER: Ss. Peter and Paul Church ARCHITECT/BUILDER: see below

OWNER'S NAME AND ADDRESS: SS Peter and Paul Catholic Church
 Gilman, MN 56333 ACREAGE: Less than one acre X

LOCAL CONTACT/ORG.: Benton County Historical Society
 Sauk Rapids, MN 56379

FORM PREPARED BY: Mark Haidet
 DATE: November 1980

UTM REFERENCE:

15 / 426480 / 5065000
 Foley, MN Quad 7.5

DESCRIPTION:

Ss. Peter and Paul Catholic Church Complex is located in the hamlet of Gilman (Pop. 111) in north central Benton County. The scale and masonry construction of the buildings make them locally distinctive.

The Polish Catholic parish in Gilman dates to 1872 when a log church was constructed on a parcel of land donated by the St. Paul and Pacific Railroad. The remainder of the nineteenth century witnessed construction of a larger frame church (which was destroyed by fire in 1891 and rebuilt in 1893), erection of a frame rectory in 1895, and the establishment of a parochial school in the original log church structure in 1890. Continued parish growth in the 1890s and the twentieth century necessitated construction of the present structure -- church (1930), school (1909), and rectory (1924). Description of the buildings follows:

Ss. Peter and Paul Catholic Church, designed in the Beaux Arts style by the Minneapolis architectural firm of Cordella and Olson, is the focal building of the complex. The basilica type church is constructed of polychromed brick and rests on an elevated banded brick foundation. The front facade is symmetrical with a central coped gabled section flanked by a pair of identical square towers. The three bay wide central section features a monumental staircase, a traditional classicized tri-part entry portico, bays defined by engaged pilaster strips and corbels, and a wheel window in the central bay. Each of the flanking towers is crowned by an octagonal open belfry capped by an onion dome and cross and adorned with urn decorations.

Identical side facades are eight bays long with each bay defined by engaged pilasters, corbels, and coupled arched windows. The second bay from the west on either side contains a semi-polygonal apse housing simple side altars at the rear of the nave.

A semi-circular apse with clerestory and adjoining single story rectangular side rooms is located at the rear of the church.

The interior retains much of its original design integrity. The nave features a vaulted ceiling and stained glass windows. Free-standing highly polished granite columns of the Corinthian order define each of the seven bays. An organ loft is located above the narthex. The apse with its Corinthian pilasters houses a tabernacle beneath a baroque baldacchino and the central altar which rests on a dais in front of the baldacchino. The apse is flanked by two side altars situated in semi-circular niches featuring Doric pilasters and statuary.

(see continuation sheet)

St. Adelbert School, constructed in 1909, is located immediately south of the church. The two story L-shaped structure is constructed of buff-colored brick and rests on a raised rusticated granite foundation. It is covered by a flat roof concealed by a parapet supported by corbels. The symmetrical front facade features a central Doric portal with complete pediment and evenly spaced rectilinear windows with granite sills. (The original glass has been replaced with glass block.) Several courses of protruding brick join with the sills to form belt courses beneath the upper two rows of windows. Projecting entries are located on both the north and south facades and an exterior brick chimney is situated in the rear of the structure.

The structure, which originally housed the parochial school and a small convent, has not been used by the parish since 1969 when the school closed. The building is presently leased by the St. John's Area Catholic School.

The 1924 Rectory, also designed by Cordella and Olson, is situated north of the church. The two story square brick structure is covered by a low hip roof and features a three bay symmetrical facade. A full length enclosed porch with hipped roof shelters the principal entrance. A continuous band of projecting brick extends around the perimeter of the structure beneath the first and second story windows.

SIGNIFICANCE:

Ss. Peter and Paul Church Complex is primarily significant as a highly visible landmark associated with the substantial Polish settlement in north central Benton County. This area continues to maintain its identity as the county's most concentrated, close-knit ethnic community. The Catholic parish has been the focal point of the community since its organization in 1872 shortly after the arrival of the first Polish settlers. At first, the settlement grew slowly. Then in 1877, several prominent Poles from Chicago, headed by the proprietor of the influential Polish newspaper Pryzjacieł Luda, purchased 25,000 acres of railroad land near the church for the expressed purpose of establishing a large Polish colony. As this settlement prospered, the small agricultural service center of Gilman grew up in the vicinity of the church and the parish expanded its services to meet the growing educational and social needs. The scale and masonry construction of the present structures and the elaborateness of the church reflect the community's continued growth in the early twentieth century and the central role of the parish in community life.

BIBLIOGRAPHY:

Saints Peter & Paul Church: 1872-1972. 1972. (Copy in Minnesota SHPO files.)

Sauk Rapids Sentinel. December 25, 1877.