

**United States Department of the Interior  
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

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



882

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

**1. Name**

historic St. Francis Xavier Church

and/or common Same

**2. Location**

street & number 420 West Pine N/A not for publication

city, town Missoula N/A vicinity of Western congressional district

state Montana code 030 county Missoula code 063

**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	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> religious
	<u>N/A</u> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
			<input type="checkbox"/> other:

**4. Owner of Property**

name Catholic Bishop of Helena, Montana, a corporation

street & number P.O. Box 1729

city, town Helena \_\_\_\_\_ vicinity of Montana state 59601

**5. Location of Legal Description**

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Clerk & Records Office, Missoula County Courthouse

street & number 200 West Broadway

city, town Missoula 59801 state Montana

**6. Representation in Existing Surveys**

Montana Historic Preservation Plan with Historic Site Compendium  
title Missoula Historic Resource Survey has this property been determined eligible?  yes  no

date July 1975, March 1980  federal  state  county  local

depository for survey records Montana State Historical Society

city, town Helena state Montana

## 7. Description

### Condition

excellent  
 good  
 fair

deteriorated  
 ruins  
 unexposed

### Check one

unaltered  
 altered

### Check one

original site  
 moved date \_\_\_\_\_

### Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

St. Francis Xavier Church, located at the corner of Orange and Pine Streets in Missoula, is a monumental Romanesque Revival structure with a central square tower at the entrance. The use of a steepled single tower to define the entrance suggest a neo-colonial influence in the design. The polygonal tent roof spire easily rises above the surrounding residences and trees and is a familiar landmark on the city's skyline.

The church is a masonry building, conforming to a cruciform plan and measuring 54 x 122 feet. The brick walls are laid in a 7-course English bond, supported by a 7 foot high random stone base with a sandstone band dividing the base from the walls. A sandstone cap is also used to trim the dressed granite main stairs and platform at the front end of the church. The central tower body is built of brick to the point of intersection with the gable and is constructed in wood from that point to a height slightly higher than the peak of the gable. Atop this square tower are a wooden steeple and cross. The height of the tower from the ground to the top of the cross on the belfry is 144 feet.

The side walls are divided into six vertical bays with the transepts occurring in the fifth bay. The plan is terminated with a polygonal apsidal end. The height of the side of the wall is 33½ feet. The bays are clearly defined by angle buttresses at each corner and engaged buttresses along the walls. Centered in each bay are tall rounded arched windows with leaded glass. The walls are detailed below the closely cropped eaves with traditional dentil work and blind arcading just below the fascia. The roof is a steeply pitched gable with recently applied metal shingles. The interior of the church is divided into three spaces, one large central aisle flanked by two side aisles. The transepts seen on the exterior do not appear on the inside. Instead the transepts become side entrances with a double door system; one door on the exterior, a foyer, and a second door on the interior side aisle. The three divisions are defined by fluted composite columns painted with gold leaf. The columns support rounded arches which support the vaulted ceiling above. No structural vaulting is visible.

The ceiling and walls are plastered to become a background for lavish handpainted murals and intricate stencil painting. Incorporated into the plaster is ornate gesso detailing which accents the arches, windows, and ceiling. This gesso ornamentation is further accented by polychromatic painting and stencil painting around specialized elements. Lower walls are covered with a beadboard wainscoting which is painted.

The building's integrity is excellent but some modifications have occurred. The belfry was remodeled to remove a rounded arch window from each face of the polygonal tent roof. The tent roof and its fascia were re-roofed with a metal skin, and the gable roof was reshingled with metal shingles. The leaded glass windows, once exposed to the elements have been carefully covered with a plexiglass shield. The exterior brick is in good condition considering it was once cleaned by sand blasting. This cleaning was done before studies revealed this method to be harmful to the brick. Records indicate the brick was waterproofed at the time of the cleaning.

St. Francis Xavier Church has stood as an architectural and religious landmark in the Missoula community since its construction in 1892. It remains as the largest and one of the most beautifully detailed churches in the community, and is a credit to the architects and the craftsmen of its period.

# 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 checked="" 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 type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

**Specific dates**                      1892                      **Builder/Architect**                      Patrick H. Walsh/Blanchard

**Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)**

St. Francis Xavier Church has been a dominant architectural feature in Missoula, Montana since its construction in 1892. It is an excellent example of Romanesque Revival architecture, exhibiting superior craftsmanship and careful detailing. For more than 88 years, St. Francis Xavier Church has been an inspiring place of worship, serving the entire Catholic community of Missoula for the first 25 years of its existence. The interior murals were painted by Brother J. Carigano, an early Jesuit Missionary in the Northwest. Carigano, who was born in Turin, Italy in 1853, also did the fresco work at the St. Ignatius Mission in Montana (National Register 6/19/73) and decorated numerous churches and chapels in Washington and Idaho. Father L. B. Palladino, noted author on Indian--white relations in Montana and a participant in the Roman Catholic christianizing effort among the Indians, served as priest for many years at St. Francis Xavier Church. The bell steeple is dedicated to Palladino. The significance of St. Francis Xavier is evident in its architectural eminence, its continuing role as a place of worship, and its association with the early founders of the Catholic Church in Montana.

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

- Hamlin, Talbot, Architecture Through the Ages, New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1953.  
Koelbel, Lenora, Missoula the Way it was, Missoula, MT: Gateway Printing, 1972.  
Pierson, William H. Jr., American Buildings and Their Architects, New York: Anchor Press, 1976  
Schoenberg, Wilfred, "Jesuits in Montana", Portland, Oregon: "The Oregon-Jesuit", 1960

## 10. Geographical Data **UTM NOT VERIFIED** **ACREAGE NOT VERIFIED**

Acreege of nominated property .5

Quadrangle name Southeast Missoula

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

### UMT References

A 

1	2	2	7	1	6	4	0	5	1	9	5	3	9	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

South 2/3 of the east 1/3 of (the Catholic) Block 14, McCormick Addition, City of Missoula, Missoula County, Montana

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

state	code	county	code
N/A			

state	code	county	code
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## 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Kirk Michels, Mary Fran Moylan, James R. McDonald

organization James R. McDonald Architect

date November 4, 1980

street & number P.O. Box 8163

telephone (406) 543-3787

city or town Missoula

state Montana

## 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 Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

*Maureen Shafrin*

title Deputy SHPO

date 12-15-80