

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

FOR NPS USE ONLY
RECEIVED JUN 26 1979
DATE ENTERED AUG 9 1979

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

1 NAME

HISTORIC

St. John of God Roman Catholic Church, Convent, and School

AND/OR COMMON

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

1488 Highland Drive

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

Kewaskum

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

Ninth

STATE

Wisconsin

VICINITY OF

CODE

55

COUNTY

Washington

CODE

131

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY

OWNERSHIP

STATUS

PRESENT USE

DISTRICT

PUBLIC

OCCUPIED

AGRICULTURE

MUSEUM

BUILDING(S)

PRIVATE

UNOCCUPIED

COMMERCIAL

PARK

STRUCTURE

BOTH

WORK IN PROGRESS

EDUCATIONAL

PRIVATE RESIDENCE

SITE

PUBLIC ACQUISITION

ACCESSIBLE

ENTERTAINMENT

RELIGIOUS

OBJECT

IN PROCESS

YES: RESTRICTED

GOVERNMENT

SCIENTIFIC

BEING CONSIDERED

YES: UNRESTRICTED

INDUSTRIAL

TRANSPORTATION

NO

MILITARY

OTHER:

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

Congregation of St. John of God, Inc. c/o Rev. Rembert Weakland

STREET & NUMBER

345 North 95th Street

CITY, TOWN

Milwaukee

VICINITY OF

STATE

Wisconsin 53201

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Washington County Courthouse, Register of Deeds

STREET & NUMBER

432 East Washington

CITY, TOWN

West Bend

STATE

Wisconsin 53095

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

Wisconsin Inventory of Historic Places

DATE

1978

FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

State Historical Society of Wisconsin

CITY, TOWN

Madison

STATE

Wisconsin 53706

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> GOOD (church)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> RUINS (convent & school)	<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 St. John of God Roman Catholic Church property is a complex consisting of the church building, cemetery, convent, and school. The complex is set in rolling open countryside near the northern unit of the Kettle Moraine State Forest. All structures on the property date from the nineteenth century and are little altered although the convent and school are severely decayed. The surrounding countryside retains the open rural character it had when the structures were built, although the Town of Farmington presently is experiencing substantial growth.

CHURCH

The church is a cream brick Gothic Revival structure three bays wide and four deep. It rests on a fieldstone foundation. Many of the bricks for the structure were salvaged from the congregation's previous edifice. The main (south) facade is dominated by a steeple surmounted by a wooden cross. The steeple projects from the facade and shelters the recessed entrance, which is enclosed in a pointed arch. The belfry has pointed arched vents framed by corner pilasters and rows of corbelling. Brickwork suggestive of windows flanks the steeple on the main facade. The sides of the building are organized symmetrically into four bays each. Bays are separated by pilasters and each contains a stained glass window. All windows in the building are stained glass and have pointed arches. Each window is dedicated to a family of the parish. A row of corbels decorates the eaves of the building. The only visible alterations to the exterior of the building are asphalt shingling on the roof and the addition of a small shed on the rear facade and a concrete stoop at the main entry.

The interior of the church is little altered from the time it was built. Pews appear to be original as is the decorative woodwork on the choir loft and altars. The main altar is flanked by a pair of smaller ones. The altars are painted white and gilded. The ceiling is vaulted. Decorative stenciling has been painted over, and the wooden floor has been carpeted.

CEMETERY

The church cemetery is immediately to the south of the edifice. The oldest grave-stones date from the 1850s.

CONVENT

The convent building stands to the northwest of the church in a grove of second-growth trees. Although the building is in ruinous condition, having lost its roof, floors, windows, doors, and woodwork in the 1930s, the fieldstone walls are sound and the building possesses historical integrity. The structure is one and one half stories high, and walls are eighteen inches thick, constructed of local fieldstone with cut quoins. Window and doorway openings have segmented arches of roughly dressed fieldstone. Vestiges of wooden window frames remain in several openings. The main (south) facade is a gable end. It is symmetrically arranged with two windows on each level and a central doorway on the first floor. A cross of dressed stone is in relief, imbedded in the gable. The west facade of the building has

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Description (continued)

five windows openings on the first floor, arranged symmetrically. The east facade is arranged similarly, although a doorway occupies the space of the northernmost window.

SCHOOL

The school building is of construction similar to the convent structure, and it, too, is in ruinous condition similar to that of the convent building. It is a simple single story structure built of local fieldstone. The walls are about eighteen inches thick; quoins are roughly dressed. Window openings have flat arches of cream brick. Little woodwork remains. The main (south) facade has two doorways, symmetrically arranged. The westernmost was widened in the early twentieth century, and the stonework above it has collapsed. The sides of the building have four window openings each, symmetrically arranged. The rear facade of the building has no openings. There remains evidence of plastering on the interior walls.

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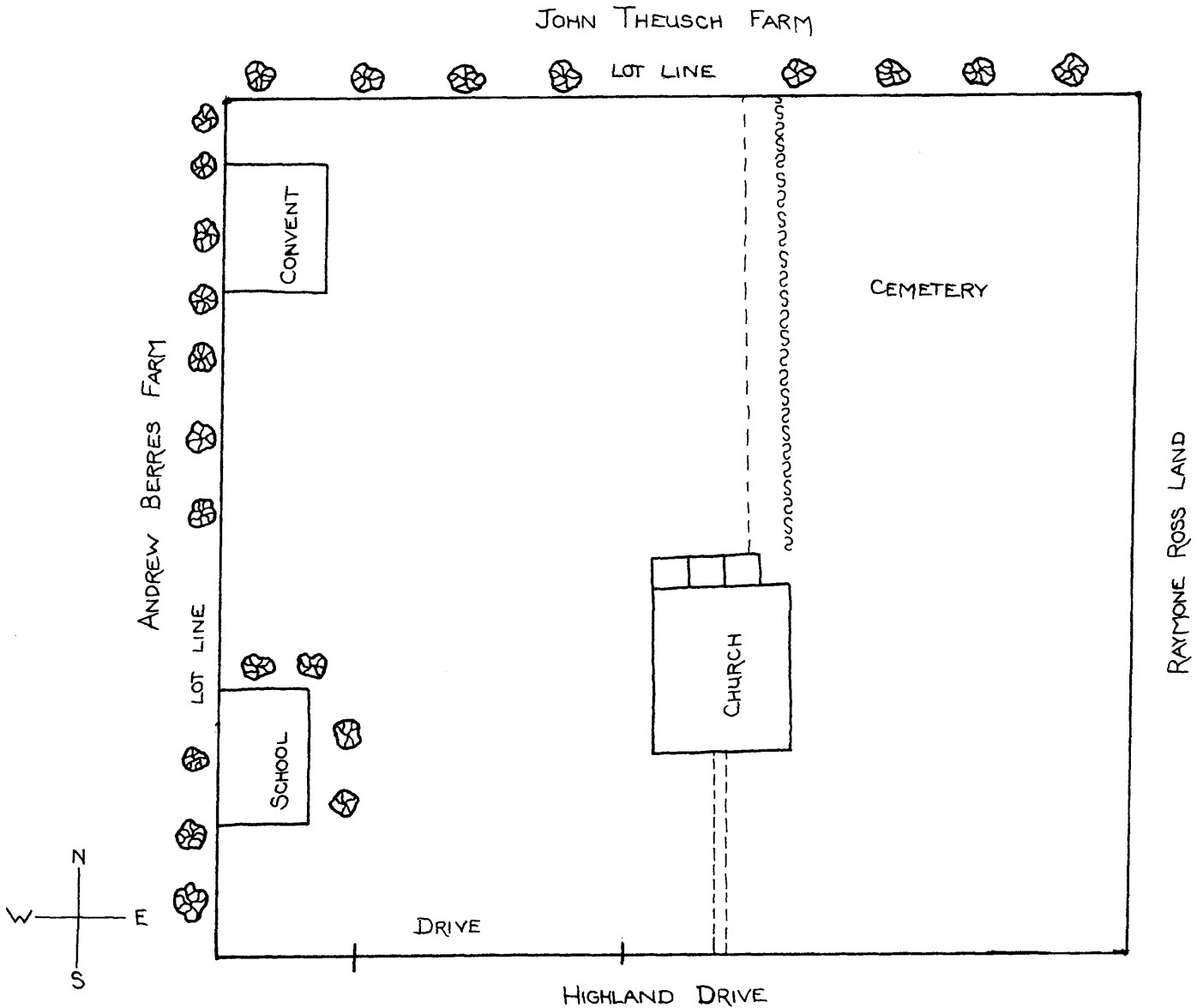


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SCALE .25" = 10'

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 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		ethnic: Irish

SPECIFIC DATES 1869, 1891

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The buildings of the St. John of God Roman Catholic Church complex are significant to the history of the Boltonville area as historical remnants of the Irish agricultural settlement that became established there in the mid-nineteenth century. Their history is an interesting example of parochial and public cooperation in providing the children of a pioneer area with an education. The convent and school buildings are architecturally significant as examples of pioneer architecture using indigenous materials. The church building is architecturally interesting as a good example of rural nineteenth-century small church architecture, using locally made cream brick. The combination of the church, cemetery, convent, and school on a single property, all retaining their essential historical integrity without modern intrusions, makes the historical value of the whole nominated property greater than the sum of its parts.

The St. John of God congregation developed as one of several mission churches established in the 1850s by the itinerant Catholic priest, Father Caspar Rehrl. Father Rehrl was an Austrian priest who, between 1845, when he came to Wisconsin, and his death in 1870, established a string of churches and schools in Washington, Ozaukee, Fond du Lac, and Sheboygan Counties. He was also instrumental in the founding of the Sisters of St. Agnes, a teaching order.

In the 1850s a substantial Irish Catholic settlement developed in the Town of Farmington, Washington County, surrounded by a population made up primarily of Germans. In 1860 there were thirty-five families in Farmington of which one or both parents had been born in Ireland. (Federal Census) Linguistic and cultural differences led the Irish Catholics to form their own congregation rather than to join one dominated by their German coreligionists, and in 1860 the Irish erected the first substantial edifice of the St. John of God Catholic Church, a cream brick structure costing \$2000. (Washington County, 1881: 432) Through the 1860s the congregation was most often under the pastoral care of Father Rehrl.

By the late 1860s the need for schools in Farmington was pressing. In 1868 construction began on two fieldstone school buildings on the church property, one a public school and the other a parochial school and convent. The building project was a cooperative venture of the members of the parish and their neighbors. The church leased the public school parcel to the school district, and the church and district engaged the services of the Sisters of St. Agnes to teach both public and parochial school classes. (Catholic Directory, 1869: 220-221) Constructed of readily available indigenous fieldstone, the school buildings were built by volunteers from the community.

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Please see attached Bibliography

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 1.38

QUADRANGLE NAME Kewaskum, Wisconsin

QUADRANGLE SCALE 1:62:500

UTM REFERENCES

A 16 410300 48182000

B

ZONE EASTING NORTHING

ZONE EASTING NORTHING

C

D

E

F

G

H

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The nominated property occupies a parcel of land 210' x 220' at the extreme SW $\frac{1}{4}$ of the SW $\frac{1}{4}$ of Section 9, T12N, R20E.

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

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
NONE			
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

MaryLou McKee, Registered Agent

ORGANIZATION

Friends of St. John of God, Inc.

DATE

February 16, 1979

STREET & NUMBER

1560 County Highway H, Route 3

TELEPHONE

692-9146, 692-9571

CITY OR TOWN

Kewaskum

STATE

Wisconsin 53040

12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL

STATE

LOCAL X

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

Richard M. Muey

TITLE

Director, State Historical Society of Wisconsin

DATE

5/14/79

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

Cheryl Sturges
KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE 8-9-79

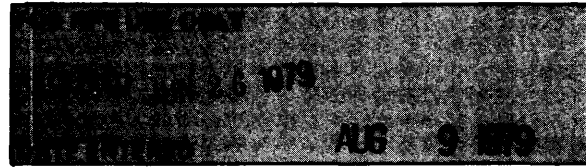
ATTEST: *Emma Jane Sage*
CHIEF OF REGISTRATION

DATE 7-17-79

Regional Review Coordinator

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Significance (continued)

The Sisters of St. Agnes, an order of teaching nuns, was organized in the early 1850s by Father Rehrl. The purpose of the order was to provide quality education in pioneering villages, and consequently Rehrl insisted that the sisters meet the qualifications of the state and be officially certified to teach. With a central convent in Barton, the Sisters of St. Agnes operated seven local schools in Washington County in 1870. (Palen, 1976: 114)

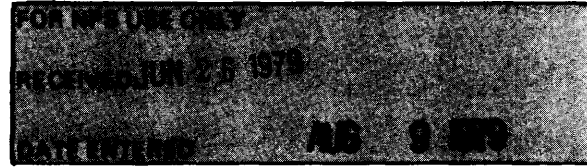
Parochial school was held on the first floor of the convent building from 1869 to 1879, and the nuns occupied quarters upstairs. Public school classes, taught by the nuns, were held in the other building at least until 1892. (Catholic Directory, 1869-1892) After the turn of the century both buildings were left vacant, and during the 1930s they were stripped, leaving only the walls.

The present church building was erected in 1891, utilizing bricks from the 1860 structure. Local tradition recalls that each family in the parish was given a certain number of old bricks to clean as part of the construction project.

The heavily Irish character of the parish remains to the present time. Recently a controversy over what should be done with the convent and school buildings has arisen within the church. A substantial portion of the parish opposes the proposed demolition of the old fieldstone buildings, wishing rather to see them preserved and perhaps eventually restored as a historical resource for the area.

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- Pedersen, JoAn (William), direct descendant of Thomas Dowling, interviewed February 13, 1979.
- Plaum, Elmer, Town Clerk of Farmington and local historian, interviewed in August, 1976.
- Riley, William, direct descendant of original settlers, interviewed February 13, 1979.
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- Steinhaus, Frederick, architect from The Stubenrauch Associates, Inc. and President of the Sheboygan County Historical Society, interviewed July, 1978, and letters especially September 19, 1978.
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- Washington County Courthouse (West Bend), Office of the Register of Deeds.
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