

1252

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service
**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
REGISTRATION FORM**

1. Name of Property

Historic name St. Cecilia School Building
Other names/site number JF-W P-170

2. Location

Address 2530 Slevin Street not for publication N/A
City or town Louisville vicinity N/A State Kentucky
code KY county Jefferson
code 111 Zip code 40212-1435

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this X nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property X meets does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant nationally statewide X locally.

David L. Morgan 10-12-04
Signature of certifying official **David L. Morgan, SHPO** Date

Kentucky Heritage Council/State Historic Preservation Office

State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the Register criteria.

Signature of commenting or other official Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby certify that this property is:

- Entered in the National Register
- Determined eligible for the National Register
- Determined not eligible for the National Register
- Removed from the National Register
- Other (explain):

Edgar R. Beall 11/26/04
Signature of Keeper Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property	Category of Property
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)
public-local	district
public-State	site
public-Federal	structure
	object

Number of Resources within Property	
Contributing	Noncontributing
1	
	1
	1
	1
	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

Name of related multiple property listing: N/A

6. Function or Use

	Category	Sub-Category
Historic Functions	Education	School
Current Functions	Vacant	Not in Use

7. Description

Architectural Classification: Collegiate Gothic

Materials

foundation	fireproof, reinforced concrete
roof	asphalt
walls	fireproof, reinforced concrete and pressed brick
other	limestone trim

Narrative Description
SEE ATTACHED

8. Statement of Significance

- A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- X C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

- A Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B Removed from its original location.
- C A birthplace or a grave.
- D A cemetery.
- E A reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F A commemorative property.
- G Less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Area of Significance:	Architecture
Period of Significance	1927
Significant Dates	1927
Significant Person	N/A
Cultural Affiliation	N/A
Architect	Nolan, Thomas J. 1884 - 1969

Narrative Statement of Significance SEE ATTACHED

9. Major Bibliographical References SEE ATTACHED

Previous documentation on file (NPS)

preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.

previously listed in the National Register

previously determined eligible by the National Register

designated a National Historic Landmark

recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey #

recorded by Historic American Engineering Record #

Primary Location of Additional Data

X State Historic Preservation Office

Other State agency

Federal agency

X Local government

University

Other

Name of repository: Kentucky Heritage Council, Louisville Landmarks

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property: Less than one acre

Quad: New Albany

Zone 16 Easting 605720 Northing 4235700

Verbal Boundary Description

The proposed boundaries are on the Sketch Map labeled "Proposed Boundaries for St. Cecilia School Building" .

Boundary Justification

The proposed boundaries include the school building and the area around the building historically associated with its use, including the playground and service access for the school building. The current St. Cecilia Church, former church, rectory and other buildings related to the St. Cecilia Church occupy a separate tract, and are not included within the nominated area.

11. Form Prepared By

Name/Title Donna M. Neary
Address 1435 Willow Avenue Louisville, KY 40204
Organization Donna M. Neary, Inc. Date June, 2004

Property Owner

Name Archdiocese of Louisville
Address 212 College Street Louisville, KY 40208
Telephone 502/637-9786

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St. Cecilia School Building

Jefferson County, KY

The St. Cecilia School Building (JF-WP-170) is located at 2530 Slevin Street in the Portland neighborhood of Louisville. The building, now vacant, was originally part of the St. Cecilia Church complex parcel now subdivided onto its own parcel. The St. Cecilia complex is located between 25th and 26th Streets on the east and west, Slevin Street on the north and St. Cecilia Street on the south. The site for the building was completed when several parcels were added to the original St. Cecilia church site in 1927. The city became involved in the project when the Board of Alderman approved the closing of St. John Street, and donated the land to the Archdiocese. The congregation purchased five parcels fronting on St. John Street to secure the land for the construction of the building. A residence, built at the corner of Slevin and St. Johns Streets in 1876 for the Nuns who ran the school, was demolished for the school project in 1927. A combination of chain-linked and iron fence surround the school building and what was used as a playground. The building is set back from the street by a sidewalk and a strip of grass. The remainder of the building is surrounded by pavement.

The former St. Cecilia School is a two-story building with full basement which faces Slevin Street. Constructed of reinforced, fireproof concrete, the flat-roofed structure is clad with cherry-red, pressed brick. Indiana limestone provides the trim. These building materials were common choices among the collection of buildings designed by Nolan for the Archdiocese. The St. Cecilia School Building exhibits the Collegiate Gothic style of architecture, a revival style often selected for churches and schools in the first decades of the twentieth century. Architect Thomas J. Nolan designed a number of buildings in this, and other revival styles for Catholic educational and institutional uses during his career. The original architectural plans for the building exist and are on file at Nolan and Nolan Architects.

The symmetrical building is 167 feet long and has 96 feet deep wings. The central, recessed entrance on the main façade faces north and is divided into thirds. The main façade features a gable limestone parapet over the main entrance. The parapet is punctuated with stone tracery including a central cross motif in the detailing. Smaller, shaped parapets top the east and west bays of the main façade, and are detailed with similar tracery. Stone trefoils accent the string course. Three paired wooden panel doors accented by stone drip moldings provide access to the building. Stone steps approach the main

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entrance. Stone detailing accents the main entrance. A stone water-table surrounds the building.

The east and west façades are nearly identical. Similar to the main façade, a central entrance is topped with a gable parapet detailed with tracery, and trefoils stone detailing.

The central bay serves as the entrance of the seven bay façade and is approached by stone steps. The south, or rear façade lacks the detail of the other facades. This façade provides the fire escape exits and utilitarian access to the building. The fire escape routes are covered by cantilevered overhangs. One metal flight of stairs with metal railings exit the south façade. The southeastern corner of the façade contains the chimney from the boiler. Changes on the south façade include bricking in of windows on the basement level of the rear, south façade. The windows on all facades are a combination hopper and awning of metal frame construction. Limestone drip molds complement the paired windows on the north, east and west facades. The rear façade is devoid of the window trim detail.

The basement of the building was originally designed to house a kitchen and cafeteria, and separate playroom for boys and girls. The building contains sixteen classrooms, eight classrooms on both the first and second floors with identical floor plans. The interior of the building has only minimally changed. The interior main entrance hallway was enclosed with sheetrock in the 1970s, but is easily reversible. The statues positioned in alcoves on both the first and second floors are intact. A statue of St. Cecilia is at the the main entrance on the first floor, and a statue of Christ occupies the same position on the second floor.

A small, non-contributing frame rectangular building sits to the rear, south of the school building. Clad in metal sheeting, the building was used for storage. It appears to date from circa 1940 and is in poor condition. The sills, and frame are rotting and the sheeting is rusted through in several places.

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St. Cecilia School Building
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Overview

The St. Cecilia School Building (JF-WP-170) meets National Register Criterion C, and is significant within the context "Collegiate Gothic Style in Louisville, Kentucky 1920 -1930." The school, one of the more modest examples of Collegiate Gothic Style identified in Louisville¹, is important for showing the evolution of Collegiate Gothic style locally. In the earlier buildings, Collegiate Gothic was both a prescribed (cruciform) floor plan and decorative overlay. As such, it tended to be used only for churches and schools. Later buildings were freed from the prescribed floor plan, allowing the style to be applied to a wider range of functions. St. Cecilia Church, built in 1910, follows the earlier dictates of the style, with its cruciform plan and polychrome brick exterior. By the late 1920s, when St. Cecilia School is built, the style was being used to decorate utilitarian buildings... "whose over-all character [floorplans and orientations] has been determined by other factors, functional or economic. But that is not to say that they may not be skillfully applied..."² St. Cecilia School Building represents the local evolution of the Collegiate Gothic style from a complete building design with prescribed floor-plan to a decorative style used by architects for a variety of buildings.

Collegiate Gothic Style of Architecture in Louisville, Kentucky 1920-1930

The Collegiate Gothic style of architecture had its origins in the Gothic Revival style, which evolved from the Gothic architecture of medieval Europe. The Gothic Revival style entered the North American architectural milieu in the 19th century. The style was most popular in the United States from 1830 to 1860 and selected as suitable for buildings ranging from frame outbuildings to grand residences and churches.³ The Gothic Revival Style came to North America via England where it had been associated with Christianity and the aristocracy.⁴ By the mid-nineteenth century the style was widely used in the United States, Kerr speculates, because... "of its moral overtones for academic, political and religious buildings."⁵ Architects Andrew Jackson Downing and Alexander Jackson Davis published house plans designed in the Gothic Revival style that saw wide distribution.

In Louisville, the Cathedral of the Assumption, designed by architect William Keeley, was executed in the American Gothic style. The Cathedral of the Assumption was built in 1852 on Fifth Street as the flagship of the Roman Catholic Diocese, now Archdiocese. The monument to faith provided stylistic influences for subsequent parish churches and administrative buildings built in Collegiate Gothic style in the early twentieth century, including St. Cecilia Church, and the St. Cecilia School Building. The Theodore Brown House/Woodhaven (JF310), completed in 1853, may have been based on a design in an A.J. Downing pattern book. The building maintains a high level of integrity today, and serves as a bed and breakfast.

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The Gothic Revival of the mid-nineteenth century evolved into the High Victorian Gothic style following the Civil War. Used primarily on churches and other public buildings, such as libraries and schools, the style was also chosen for residential construction, as seen in Louisville on the John Webb House (JF651), a rural frame residence built circa 1870. The Anchorage Presbyterian Church (JF-625) is a brick structure with limestone trim, and the high style of this era of Gothic architecture. One of the best examples of the style during this period is found on The Anchorage (JF-599) built circa 1868. The two-and-one-half-story brick residence features a steeply pitched roof, paired chimneys, bay windows and an octagonal room. Four outbuildings also executed in the Gothic style are intact. The Gardeners Cottage (JF663) of the Sherley Mansion was built in 1865, featuring an octagonal roof with louvered octagonal cupola.

The Late Gothic buildings in the outlying communities around the city of Louisville strove to capture the defining elements of the popular architectural style. St. Luke's Church in Anchorage (JF617) was built in 1873 of rusticated stone, and features a crenellated tower and traceried windows. Designed by architect Arthur Loomis, he alone and with his partner architect Charles Clarke, designed many of the Late Gothic and Collegiate Gothic buildings in Louisville. The Late Gothic period is expressed by examples of reserved rural churches including the Cooper Memorial Church (JF95). This diminutive building, completed in 1897, relies on minimum detail to convey style. The Middletown United Methodist Church (JF-353) built in 1899 may have been designed by builder William Benjamin Wood. The simple design features pointed arch windows with tracery and the entrance in the base of the belltower.

The Collegiate Gothic style evolved in the United States, with Louisville following the national pattern, from the high style Gothic Revival designs and Late Victorian Gothic styles. American examples relied on British models for inspiration.⁶ The original or classic expression of Gothic Revival guided design of the building, not only the ornament, and central to the design was the cruciform (cross-like) floor plan intended to represent the cross of Christ. That feature made the style easy to identify with church architecture.

Buildings designed in the Collegiate Gothic Style did not slavishly adopt a cruciform plan. Their plans could follow several programs. The Collegiate Gothic expressed itself more as an ornamental treatment. Buildings in this mode could feature any combination of the following elements: Recessed entrances, often framed by arches, low balustrades of stone, wood, metal, or brick, buttresses, crenellation, finials, gargoyles, parapets, relief sculpture or plaques, quoins, tracery, likely built of brick or stone.⁷

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The trend of Collegiate Gothic buildings began on the campus at Bryn Mawr in the early 1890s, and gained wide popularity when the style was used for campus buildings at Princeton University, Princeton, New Jersey in 1896. Collegiate Gothic was the primary style used for the campus at Princeton through the 1930s. The style was chosen at Duke University, Chapel Hill, North Carolina and the University of Chicago for campus buildings during the 1910s to the 1930s.⁸ The acceptance and use of the Collegiate Gothic style locally follows closely on the heels of the movement's beginnings. Architects D.X. Murphy, Clark and Loomis, and Thomas Nolan, to name a few, began designing in the Collegiate Gothic style from its earliest introduction.⁹ The Gothic Revival, and Late Gothic styles transitioned into the Collegiate Gothic style in Louisville as elsewhere. One of the largest and arguably finest examples of the Collegiate Gothic style in Louisville is the Waverly Hills Sanatorium Building (JF-75) built in 1926, designed by Arthur Loomis, assisted by DX Murphy and Brother. The four story hospital building features a square tower topped with finials and an arched recessed entrance.

Several churches and schools completed during the period of significance were designed by architect Thomas Nolan, Sr. He designed Holy Cross Catholic Church and School at 32nd and Broadway, completed the same year as St. Cecilia School Building, 1927, and Christ the King Church and school at 44th and Broadway in 1928. The buildings all feature the stylistic influences of the Collegiate Gothic Style, based on a similar approach to St. Cecilia, with the elements used as decoration. St. Joseph's Infirmary built in 1926 and demolished in 1980, was designed by D. X. Murphy, and Thomas Nolan, Sr. in the Collegiate Gothic style, occupying a highly visible site at Preston Street and Eastern Parkway.

The choice of Collegiate Gothic style waned at the end of the 1920s in Louisville. Architectural designs for schools and churches built the final years of the 1920s into the 1930s¹⁰ represented the Second Renaissance Revival, Spanish Mission Style, Mexican Spanish Baroque and Italian Revival styles. The shift in Louisville from the Anglo-French inspired Collegiate Gothic style to those inspired by Spanish, Mediterranean and Mexican cultures followed national trends. These newly popular styles migrated from California to Florida and Texas, where they were first seen, to cities in every region of the country.¹¹

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History of St. Cecilia

The St. Cecilia School Building is a landmark in the Portland neighborhood of Louisville. The parish was founded in 1873 to service a growing Irish descent population, many of whose ancestors had built the Portland Canal. The parish of Our Lady was formed in 1839 and the St. Patrick parish in 1855, were unable to serve the growing Irish Catholic numbers in the Portland vicinity.

The heirs of James Slevin donated the land for St. Cecilia church to Bishop McCloskey in 1873. James Slevin's widow, Mary, his children, a brother and sister-in-law deeded the land to the diocese for the construction of a church or school.¹² The Slevin family was developing Slevin's Western addition, a grid of streets platted and the east/west streets named by 1868. All of the lots in the development had been sold by 1900.¹³ The first church building was completed in 1873, facing St. Cecilia Street.

The educational needs of the first students were met when classes were held within the church building, with the pews serving as desks. By 1876, Pastor Father Rock had raised funds to complete the lower level of the first church building as classrooms. Following construction of the current church building in 1910, the vacated original church building became the school.

The parish school continued at a capacity level until school years 1924 and 1925, when the school could not accommodate all children seeking enrollment.¹⁴ The parish voted unanimously in 1925 to erect a new school to accommodate the needs of the parish families, although funds were not immediately available to accomplish the task. Parishioners gave donations, and the first funds raised quickly. The completion of the St. Cecilia School building in 1927 finally provided an adequate school to meet the demands made by the parishioners in Portland.¹⁵

This school was constructed during the peak of Collegiate Gothic construction nationally. The school complements the architecture of St. Cecilia Church, built in 1910 according to the Collegiate Gothic design of D.X. Murphy. Architect for the school building, Thomas J. Nolan, Sr., (1884 – 1969) was working with D.X. Murphy during the time that St. Cecilia Church was designed. Nolan began his career designing ecclesiastical buildings in the Murphy offices. Nolan began his own architectural firm in 1911 where he continued designing schools, churches and other institutional buildings for the Catholic Archdiocese. The Nolan firm completed a number of commissions for other Catholic structures during the Period of Significance designed in the Collegiate Gothic Style.

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Integrity Consideration

The St. Cecilia School Building maintains an excellent level of integrity of design, location, workmanship and materials. Few changes have been made to the building's exterior, and those that have are easily removed. The integrity of association and feeling are intact, as the school's relationship with the adjacent church and rectory, and neighborhood buildings and streetscape, remaining nearly identical with conditions as at the time of the school's construction.

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Endnotes

¹ National Register files, Louisville Landmark files.

² Whiffin, Marcus , p.177.

³ Blumenson, pp. 30-31.

⁴ Poppeliers, et. al, pp. 40-41.

⁵ Kerr, Hugh T., pp. 125-127.

⁶Poppelier page 40.

⁷ Historic Sites Guide, pp. 1-2.

⁸ (Whiffin, pp. 174-175)

⁹ (National Register nomination files, Architect files Louisville Landmarks)

¹⁰ National Register files, Louisville Landmarks files; St. Francis of Rome, St. Therese Roman Catholic Church, etc., and St. Francis of Assisi National Register nominations.

¹¹ Howe, pp. 302-314.

¹² Jefferson County Clerk, Deed Book 225, Page 638, and Book 230, Page 639.

¹³ St. Cecilia Church Diamond Jubilee: 1873-1948, pps. 12-13.

¹⁴ Portland Civic News, February, 1925, np.

¹⁵ Portland Civic News, April, 1927, np.

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Section PHOTOGRAPHS

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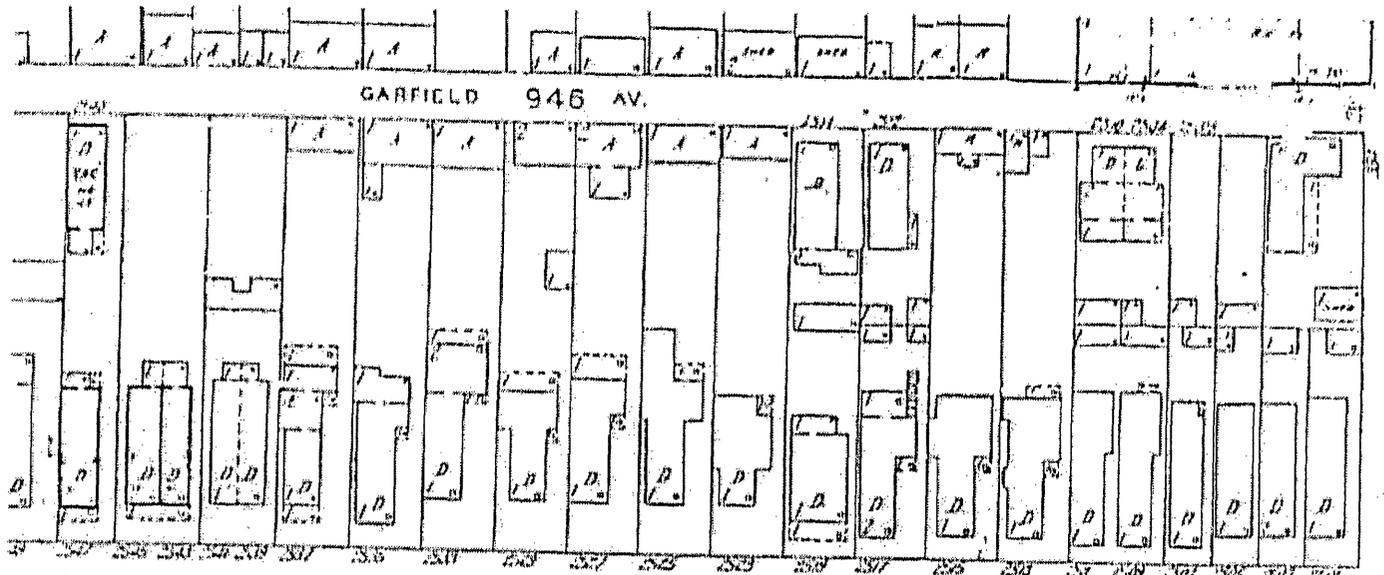
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Photographer: Donna M. Neary

Date: June, 2004

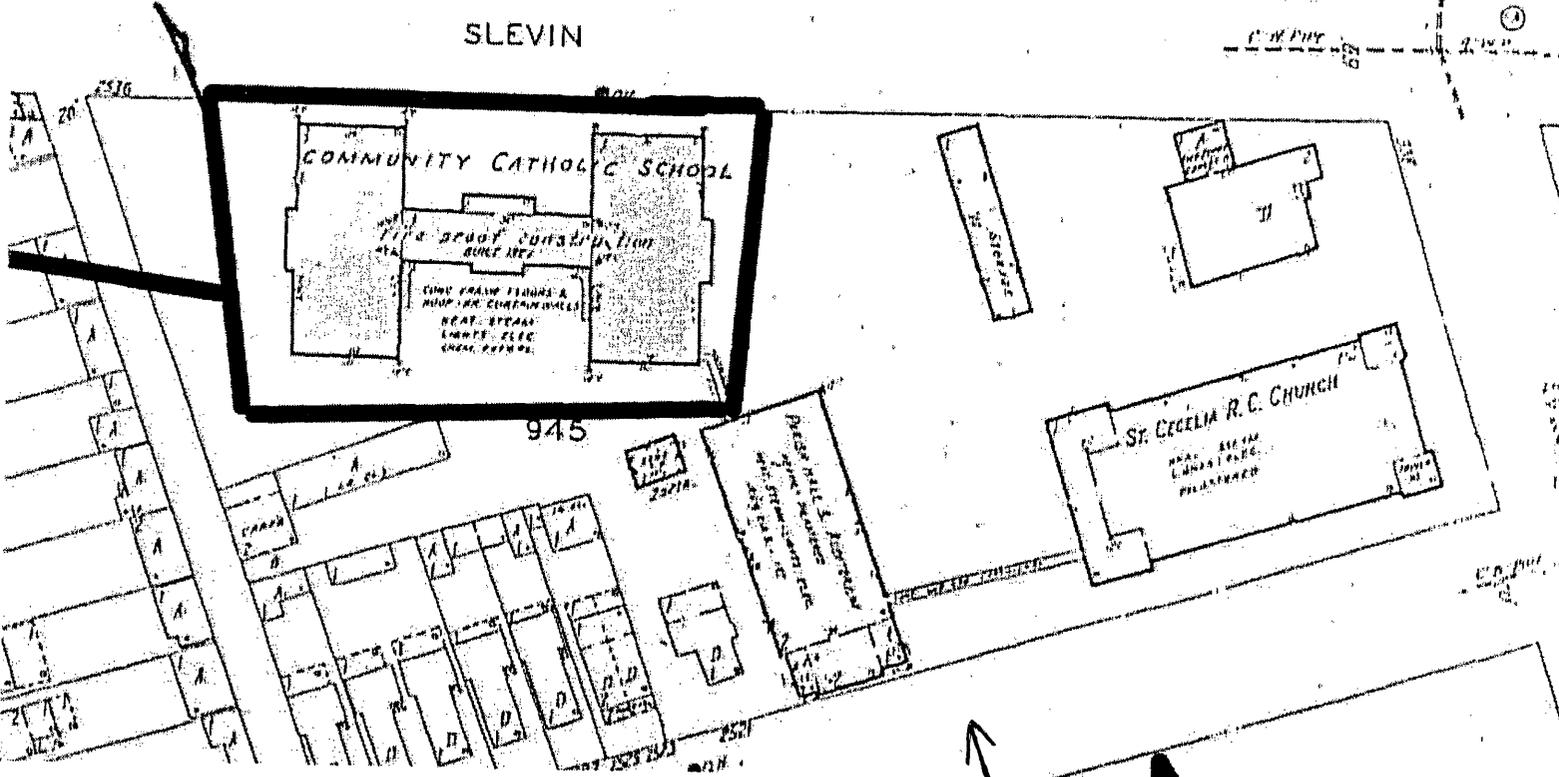
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1. Facing South, View of main facade
2. Facing South, View of main facade
3. Facing South, View of main facade
4. Facing South, View of main façade, east corner of building
5. Facing Southwest, View of site
6. Facing West, View of East facade
7. Facing West, View of East facade
8. Facing West, View of East façade, entrance
9. Facing West, View of East façade
10. Facing Northeast, View of West facade
11. Facing Northeast, View of West façade, window detail
12. Facing Northwest, View of rear, South facade
13. Facing Northwest, View of rear, South facade
14. Facing Southwest, View of frame outbuilding clad with metal sheathing
15. Facing West, View of interior hallway, first floor
16. Facing South, View of statue of St. Cecilia, first floor hallway



N. 25TH ST

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Proposed Boundary for
 St. Cecelia School Building
 Jefferson County, KY
 Scale: 1" = 80'

