

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

DATA SHEET

5.21.

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED

JUN 27 1978

DATE ENTERED

JUN 18 1979

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

1 NAME

HISTORIC

St. Gertrude's Convent and Chapel

AND/OR COMMON

LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

West of Cottonwood

CITY, TOWN

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

VICINITY OF Cottonwood

First

STATE

Idaho

CODE
16COUNTY
IdahoCODE
049

CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY

☐ DISTRICT
☒ BUILDING(S)
☐ STRUCTURE
☐ SITE
☐ OBJECT

OWNERSHIP

☒ PUBLIC
☒ PRIVATE
☐ BOTH

PUBLIC ACQUISITION

☐ IN PROCESS
☐ BEING CONSIDERED

X STATUS

☐ OCCUPIED
☐ UNOCCUPIED
☐ WORK IN PROGRESS
☒ ACCESSIBLE
☐ YES: RESTRICTED
☐ YES: UNRESTRICTED
☐ NO

PRESENT USE

☐ AGRICULTURE
☐ COMMERCIAL
☐ EDUCATIONAL
☐ ENTERTAINMENT
☐ GOVERNMENT
☐ INDUSTRIAL
☐ MILITARY
☐ MUSEUM
☐ PARK
☐ PRIVATE RESIDENCE
☒ RELIGIOUS
☐ SCIENTIFIC
☐ TRANSPORTATION
☐ OTHER

OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

Prioress Mother Mary Marge Goeckner

STREET & NUMBER

Sisters of St. Gertrude
Box 108

CITY, TOWN

Cottonwood

VICINITY OF

STATE

Idaho

LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Idaho County Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

Grangeville

STATE

Idaho

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

Idaho State Historic Sites Inventory

DATE

1972

☐ FEDERAL ☒ STATE ☐ COUNTY ☐ LOCALDEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

Idaho State Historical Society

CITY, TOWN

Boise

STATE

Idaho

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

Saint Gertrude's Convent and chapel are three-story buildings sitting on a raised foundation in the Romanesque revival style. Constructed of blue porphyry stone, quarried nearby, the structures consist of a 50' x 127' basilican chapel with a 127' x 164' convent wing attached on the south side.

The chapel has a pair of 97' high corner towers on the east front. These rusticated towers have louvered belfry openings which are capped with domed roofs in a Bavarian style. All openings are round arched.

The facade's outset center bay holds a statue of Jesus Christ in a central niche flanked by windows.

The chapel is seven bays long with abbreviated buttresses making the bays. Each bay contains a round arched window surmounted by an oval window. The gabled roof terminates at both ends with a parapet gable. There is an exterior entry on the chapel's north side.

The altar inside the chapel is also noteworthy. It is hand carved oak, with all parts mortised and glued together. A triple baldachin, 27' high, resting on six pillars, dominates the altar. A tabernacle, flanked by angels covered with gold leaf, is under the baldachin. Behind and above the tabernacle is a space for a 8' 9" x 5' 6" painting which is changed to correspond with the ecclesiastical season. Either the Holy Trinity, Holy Family, Resurrection, Good Shepherd, or Immaculate Conception are used. The blue and gold painting on the baldachin's vault is similar to that in the pilgrimage chapel in Beuron, Germany. The Holy Ghost in the center of the baldachin is covered with gold leaf and the pelican in the front center is heavily coated with silver.

The convent is nine bays wide with the center bay serving as the entry. Steps lead to the one-story porticoed entrance. Romanesque columns support a second story balcony. Again all openings are round arched except for the third story windows which were originally dormers in a Mansard roof. This roof has been re-modeled and modernized. A brick addition has been built on the south side.

The building remains unaltered except for the reworking of the convent's roof, and the addition.

8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD		AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
☐ PREHISTORIC	☐ ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	☐ COMMUNITY PLANNING	☐ LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	☐ RELIGION	
☐ 1400-1499	☐ ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	☐ CONSERVATION	☐ LAW	☐ SCIENCE	
☐ 1500-1599	☐ AGRICULTURE	☐ ECONOMICS	☐ LITERATURE	☐ SCULPTURE	
☐ 1600-1699	☒ ARCHITECTURE	☒ EDUCATION	☐ MILITARY	☐ SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN	
☐ 1700-1799	☐ ART	☐ ENGINEERING	☐ MUSIC	☐ THEATER	
☒ 1800-1899	☐ COMMERCE	☐ EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	☐ PHILOSOPHY	☐ TRANSPORTATION	
☐ 1900-	☐ COMMUNICATIONS	☐ INDUSTRY	☐ POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	☐ OTHER (SPECIFY)	
		☐ INVENTION			

SPECIFIC DATES

1919-1924

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

Engelbert Gier

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Saint Gertrude's Convent and Chapel is architecturally significant as a good example of the Romanesque style. With its massing, and dome-roofed towers it stands as the only example of traditional Benedictine architecture in the state.

The Convent of St. Gertrude has its beginning in 1882 when three sisters from St. Andrews convent in Sarnen, Switzerland came to Oregon to establish a daughter convent in the new world. This was to serve as a refuge should anti-Catholic persecution break out in Switzerland as it had in other European countries only a few years before. The sisters established a convent in Uniontown which was moved three miles northwest to Colton in 1888. Due to increasing numbers the convent relocated in Cottonwood in 1909. John J. Uhlenkott, two of whose daughters had joined the convent, donated the land. A temporary convent was built and in 1919 the present building was begun. It was dedicated July 25, 1924.

The altar was made in 1928 in Sigmaringen Germany by a company whose master recently had been awarded the insignia "Pro Papa Et Ecclesia" (for the Pope and Church) for outstanding service to the cause of religious art. This distinction is rarely conferred and this man was, as far as is known, the only one so honored in Germany up to that time.

Architect Engelbert Gier of Mount Angel, Oregon, designed both the building and the altar. The convent-chapel is the only structure attributed to him in Idaho.

The convent serves as a major Roman Catholic center in north Idaho, operating an academy and Idaho's only Roman Catholic college.

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Sister Mary Alfreda Elsensohn, History of Saint Gertrude's Convent, 1962.
Cottonwood Chronicle, July 18, 1924, p. 1, c. 1.

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY less than one acre.

UTM REFERENCES

A

1	5	4	7	1	8	0	5	0	9	7	7	4	0
ZONE			EASTING				NORTHING						

B

ZONE			EASTING				NORTHING						

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

This nomination includes the convent and chapel and the grounds owned by the Church which immediately surround this structure. The more recent school buildings to the north of the chapel are not included.

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

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Don Hibbard, Architectural Historian

ORGANIZATION

Idaho State Historical Society

DATE

22 June 1978

STREET & NUMBER

610 North Julia Davis Drive

TELEPHONE

384-2120

CITY OR TOWN

Boise

STATE

Idaho

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 National Park Service.

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

Merle Wells

TITLE

State historic preservation officer

DATE

22 June 1978

FOR NPS USE ONLY

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

W. Ray Luce
DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHAEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

ATTEST: *W. Ray Luce*
KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

6-18-78

DATE

6/18/79

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CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 8 PAGE 1

The architectural significance to Idaho of St. Gertrude's convent and chapel is both intrinsic and extrinsic. The structure is of intrinsic interest as a large and imposing structure in a Romanesque style, constructed from local material on the edge of a small Idaho town. It is of extrinsic interest in that it appears to be less a late example of the more essentially 19th century impulse to revivalism--as is the case with, for example, several medievalizing structures erected by Idaho Methodists in the 'teens and 'twenties--than an instance of a survival of a European architectural type which was associated in the minds of the builders with the Benedictine order in Switzerland of which this convent is a direct offshoot. A number of things about the siting and construction of the building suggests this kind of direct influence from Europe, as opposed to extended filtration through the eclectic styles of 19th century America: the distinctly south German treatment of towers and domes, the fact that the original Swiss sisters were still in residence, that the somewhat secluded and elevated 10-acre site was donated by a European emigrant, that the architect-builder was a European associated with the Catholic colony in Mt. Angel, Oregon, that the altar was shipped from Germany as a benefaction from "friends in Switzerland." St. Gertrudes appears in this light more as a colonial building, in the manner of Cataldo Mission, than as a fully acclimated American one. It is one of the latest major structures in the state of which this can be said.

In accordance with the traditional emphasis of their order on education, these Benedictine sisters have been involved in education since shortly after their arrival in the Northwest, when one of their number met the requirements of the State of Washington to teach school. Sisters from St. Gertrude's, the only Motherhouse in Idaho, have been sent to teach in Catholic schools all over the state. At Cottonwood they conducted a Catholic high school from 1927 to 1970, and since 1956 have conducted the College of St. Gertrude. This adult education service to the Camas Prairie area is conducted in conjunction with Lewis-Clark College and the University of Idaho, serves 150 students per semester, and awarded its first bachelor's degree in 1976.

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ITEM NUMBER 10 PAGE 1

Verbal boundary description: This nomination includes only the blue porphyry structure which contains the chapel and convent of St. Gertrude's, and the ground on which this structure stands for a distance of 20 yards in all directions. The attached USGS map distinguishes between the convent-chapel and the more recent school buildings to the north, which are excluded from this nomination.



St. Gertrude's convent and chapel:
Interior
Cottonwood, Idaho

Photographer: Duane Garrett

1978

Idaho Co.

Negative on file at Idaho State
Historical Society
Boise, Idaho

#1 of 2

MAY 21 1979

JUN 18 1979



St. Gertrude's convent and chapel
Cottonwood, Idaho

Photographer: Duane Garrett

1978

Idaho Co.

Negative on file at Idaho State
Historical Society
Boise, Idaho

View from southeast

#2072

MAY 21 1979

JUN 18 1979