

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

FOR NPS USE ONLY
RECEIVED MAY 30 1979
AUG 3 1979
DATE ENTERED

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

Blessed Trinity Roman Catholic Church *Buildings* ~~Complex~~

AND/OR COMMON

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

317 LeRoy Avenue

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

Buffalo

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

VICINITY OF

2nd

STATE

New York

CODE
036

COUNTY
Erie

CODE
029

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 type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S) | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE | <input type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED | <input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL <input type="checkbox"/> PARK |
| <input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE | <input type="checkbox"/> BOTH | <input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS | <input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL <input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE |
| <input type="checkbox"/> SITE | PUBLIC ACQUISITION | ACCESSIBLE | <input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS |
| <input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT | <input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED | <input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT <input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED | <input type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED | <input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL <input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION |
| | | <input type="checkbox"/> NO | <input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER: |

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

Blessed Trinity Roman Catholic Church Society, Inc.

STREET & NUMBER

315 LeRoy Avenue

CITY, TOWN

Buffalo

STATE

New York

VICINITY OF

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Erie County Clerk's Office

STREET & NUMBER

25 Delaware Avenue

CITY, TOWN

Buffalo

STATE

New York

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

Buffalo Landmark and Preservation Board

DATE

1/14/77

FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

Division of Planning

CITY, TOWN

Buffalo

STATE

New York

7 DESCRIPTION

| CONDITION | | CHECK ONE | CHECK ONE |
|---|---------------------------------------|---|---|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT | <input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE |
| <input type="checkbox"/> GOOD | <input type="checkbox"/> RUINS | <input 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

Blessed Trinity Roman Catholic Church Complex is located in the northeast quadrant of the city of Buffalo and is a few miles from the downtown area. The church complex of three buildings and cloister fronting on LeRoy Avenue is situated in the heart of a seven block residential neighborhood between Filmore Avenue to the east and Kensington Avenue to the southwest.

The church is one of the purest examples of twelfth-century Lombard-Romanesque style architecture found in the United States. The church is 164 feet long, 116½ feet wide, and 123 feet high to the top of the cross. The structure is constructed of medieval, handmade, Harvard (unmolded) brick set in herringbone patterns. The church and cloister rest on a limestone foundation. It is covered with a handmade terra-cotta tile roof. The central mass of the church is covered with a typical octagonal Lombard clerestory surmounted by a lantern and then again by a cupola with a cross. The porch, windows, brick cornice and corbels are also detailed in the Lombard-Romanesque style. The three original amber cathedral glass rose windows and the sanctuary skylight were replaced with Tiffany glass in the early 1950's.

The Lombard-Romanesque style employed in this ecclesiastical structure has several characteristics: a single gable spanning the entire front (a descendent of the classical Greek and Roman temple pediment); projecting porch; ribbed vaulting used throughout the interior, with coffered barrel vaulting employed especially in the transepts and choir; clustered piers supporting the vaulting; octagonal-shaped clerestory, semi-circular apse; roundheaded, paired windows; simplified buttresses; and rich ornamentation in the Byzantine tradition. The common building material used on the windows, doorways, floors, columns and arches of the interior is terra cotta, which is employed for decorative as well as structural purposes. In the main sanctuary area, a new altar facing the nave was fashioned out of the columns and table supports from the side altar. This alteration was completed in 1968.

The cloister, built as part of the church and in the same style, connects to the parish house. The twenty-two foot long arched cloister is one-story high and contains two sets of round-headed, paired windows and two central arched doorways on either side.

The south exit of the cloister is blocked by the rear wall of a garage which is connected to the church, cloister, and parish house. The two-bay garage, fifty-three feet long by eighteen feet wide, was constructed in the early 1960's and does not contribute to the significance of the nominated property.

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

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Blessed Trinity Roman Catholic Church Complex
Erie County

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 7 PAGE 2

The parish house is constructed of brick and is two and one-half stories. The hip-roofed structure is eighty-four feet long by thirty-four feet wide and it is connected to the church by the cloister. Set back about 120 feet from LeRoy Avenue, the parish house consists of a large entrance room, two offices, a sitting room across the entire front of the house, dining room, kitchen, pantry, utility room, and housekeeper's room on the first floor. On the second floor, there are two bedroom suites, two guest rooms, a workroom and three baths. The third floor also has two bedroom suites, a small guest room and a utility room. The basement has two meeting rooms, a boiler room and a utility room.

The Blessed Trinity School is about thirty feet from the parish house and is a three-story rectangular brick building with a mansard roof. The facade has a central, projecting, four-story tower with hipped roof. The first floor of the school was originally the church. It was later converted to classrooms to match the second-story floor plan. There are enclosed stairways on either end of the building. The first and second floors have three classrooms on either side of a central hallway. The third floor is a social hall/gym with a stage at one end. The basement still has its two original bowling lanes, meeting room, and kitchen area.

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

SPECIFIC DATES

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Blessed Trinity Roman Catholic Church Complex is situated in the heart of a seven block residential neighborhood, a few miles from downtown Buffalo. Designed by Chester Oakley and Albert Schallmo of Buffalo and one of the purest replications of Lombard-Romanesque style architecture found in the United States; it is unusually rich in detail and Christian iconography. There are no other pure Lombard-Romanesque churches in Buffalo. It was constructed between 1923-1928, using unmolded medieval style brick. It may well have the largest use of colored terra-cotta decoration in an ecclesiastical structure in this country. The combination church-school building was constructed in 1907 and the parish house in 1914.

From the Civil War until about the turn of the century, the northeast quadrant of Buffalo was thinly populated. By 1897, the Pan-American Exposition Company chose Buffalo for the location of the 1901 exposition. A portion of Delaware Park and the Rumsey property just north of the park was selected as the site. Many people came through the north Kensington area by the Main Street trollies to attend the exposition. The area had not been developed earlier because of the large number of stone quarries, but since some of them had been landfilled, the potential for good building sites existed.

During the latter half of the nineteenth century, the railroads became the most important means of transportation in New York and Buffalo became a major railroad center. The New York Central, Erie, Delaware, Lackawanna and Western, and Pennsylvania Railroads, are only a few of the ten railroads which went in and out of Buffalo. The railroads were the major factor in the continued growth and manufacturing development of the city. A large population of workers, including entire communities of Polish, Italian, German and other immigrant groups, were attracted to this region. Many of the people worked in manufacturing facilities as well as in the heavy industrial areas around Buffalo. The Kensington area was largely made up of working-class families, with a small percentage of professional, management, and business families. The national origin in this area was largely German-American, but there was also a sizable group of Irish families.

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Kern, Walter. Lombard Romanesque: Guidebook to Blessed Trinity Roman Catholic Church. Buffalo: Calspan Graphics, 1976.

Albany, New York. New York State Office of Parks and Recreation, Division for Historic Preservation. Research Files.

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 1.25

UTM REFERENCES

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|------|---------|----------|----|----|----|---|---|------|---------|----------|--|--|--|--|
| A | 17 | 67,6 | 740 | 47 | 55 | 39 | 0 | B | | | | | | | |
| | ZONE | EASTING | NORTHING | | | | | | ZONE | EASTING | NORTHING | | | | |
| C | | | | | | | | D | | | | | | | |

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The Blessed Trinity Roman Catholic Church Complex is centrally located on a 1.25 acre plot of land bounded on the north by LeRoy Avenue, on the west and east by the property lines of the complex and on the south by a line drawn behind the church parallel to LeRoy Avenue and 225 feet distant from LeRoy Avenue. See attached site plan.

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

| STATE | CODE | COUNTY | CODE |
|-------|------|--------|------|
| | | | |
| | | | |

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Claire L. Ross

May 9, 1979

ORGANIZATION

Division for Historic Preservation

DATE

STREET & NUMBER

Agency Building #1, Empire State Plaza

TELEPHONE

518-474-0479

CITY OR TOWN

Albany

STATE

New York

12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL

STATE

LOCAL xx

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

Stephen White

TITLE Director, Historic Preservation Field Services Bureau

DATE

5/21/79

FOR NPS USE ONLY

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

Carol Skell

DATE

8-3-79

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

ATTEST: *William A. ...*

8-3-79

DATE

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

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Blessed Trinity Roman Catholic Church Complex
Erie County

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 8 PAGE 2

In 1906, Blessed Trinity Roman Catholic parish was founded by the Reverend John Pfluger, pastor, in the north Kensington area of Buffalo. One year later, he built the combination church-school building. It was designed by architects Schmill and Gould in the late Victorian style with a mansard roof. The building is rather typical of those built for Roman Catholic parishes in the last quarter of the nineteenth century and on into the first quarter of the twentieth century, but many of the them were demolished in Buffalo when larger schools were needed. In 1928, the first floor of the building was converted from a large open space to classrooms using the second floor plan. This work was done when the new church was completed. The school continued to operate in its original function until the 1970's when the building became the home of the Fillmore-LeRoy Community Center.

The parish house, designed by architects Lansing, Bley and Lyman of Buffalo, was constructed in 1914 while Reverend John Pflugar was still pastor.

Reverend Albert Fritton, second pastor of Blessed Trinity wanted to build a new church for the parish, like those found in northern Italy. Oakley and Schallmo were chosen to design the structure. Chester Oakley also designed buildings on the St. Bonaventure University Campus in Olean, New York, and for Holy Name College in Washington, D.C. in the same Lombard-Romanesque style. Construction began in 1923 and was substantially completed in 1927. However, delays in the production of the ceramic ornamentation held off opening of the church until 1928. The Reverend Thomas Plassman, President of St. Bonaventure, was asked to design the medieval iconography - a comprehensive plan of Christian symbolism for the church. There are over two thousand symbols and pictures which portray a "suma" of Christianity in terra-cotta tiles, paintings and sculpture. Joseph Mazur painted the dome, transept and choir loft. Vincent Monda of New Haven, Connecticut painted the sanctuary and stations of the cross; P. Kuhnle sculptured the ceramic reliefs over each doorway; Michael Hoffman designed the altar and baldachin; and Albert and Richard Lippich of Bowmansville did the wood carvings.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
HERITAGE CONSERVATION AND RECREATION SERVICE

FOR HCRS USE ONLY

RECEIVED

MAY 30 1979

DATE ENTERED

AUG 3 1979

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

Blessed Trinity Roman Catholic Church Complex
Erie County

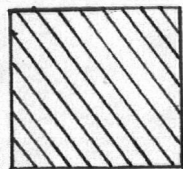
CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 8 PAGE 3

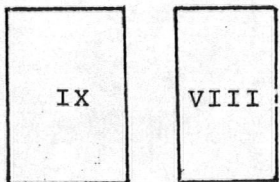
A unique feature of the Lombard-Romanesque style of Blessed Trinity is the use of medieval (unmolded) brick, which is not found in other churches in Buffalo. The handmade bricks were made by descendants of French brickmakers in Exeter, New Hampshire, who used medieval methods and tools in producing the brick for the church. Because of the many odd shapes and sizes, the modern bricklayers were unfamiliar with a method for laying these bricks. Chester Oakley, the architect, personally laid the first few courses of brick with the bricklayers. After they learned the technique, which was a remarkable display of craftsmanship, they were allowed to work their own designs into the two foot thick walls.

Blessed Trinity is very rich in style and symbolism in a way far beyond what would be found in a similar working-class parish. The facade and the interior are especially colorful and the spectacular expansion of the enclosed space with the magnificent barrel vaulting and terra-cotta relief has a profound effect upon the visitor.

- I. Blessed Trinity Roman Catholic Church
1923-1928
- II. Cloister, 1923-1928
- III. Parish House, 1914
- IV. Blessed Trinity School, 1907
- V. Garage, 1960's
- VI. St. Charles Community, 1958
Center, 1958
- VII. Residence
- VIII. Residence
- IX. Residence

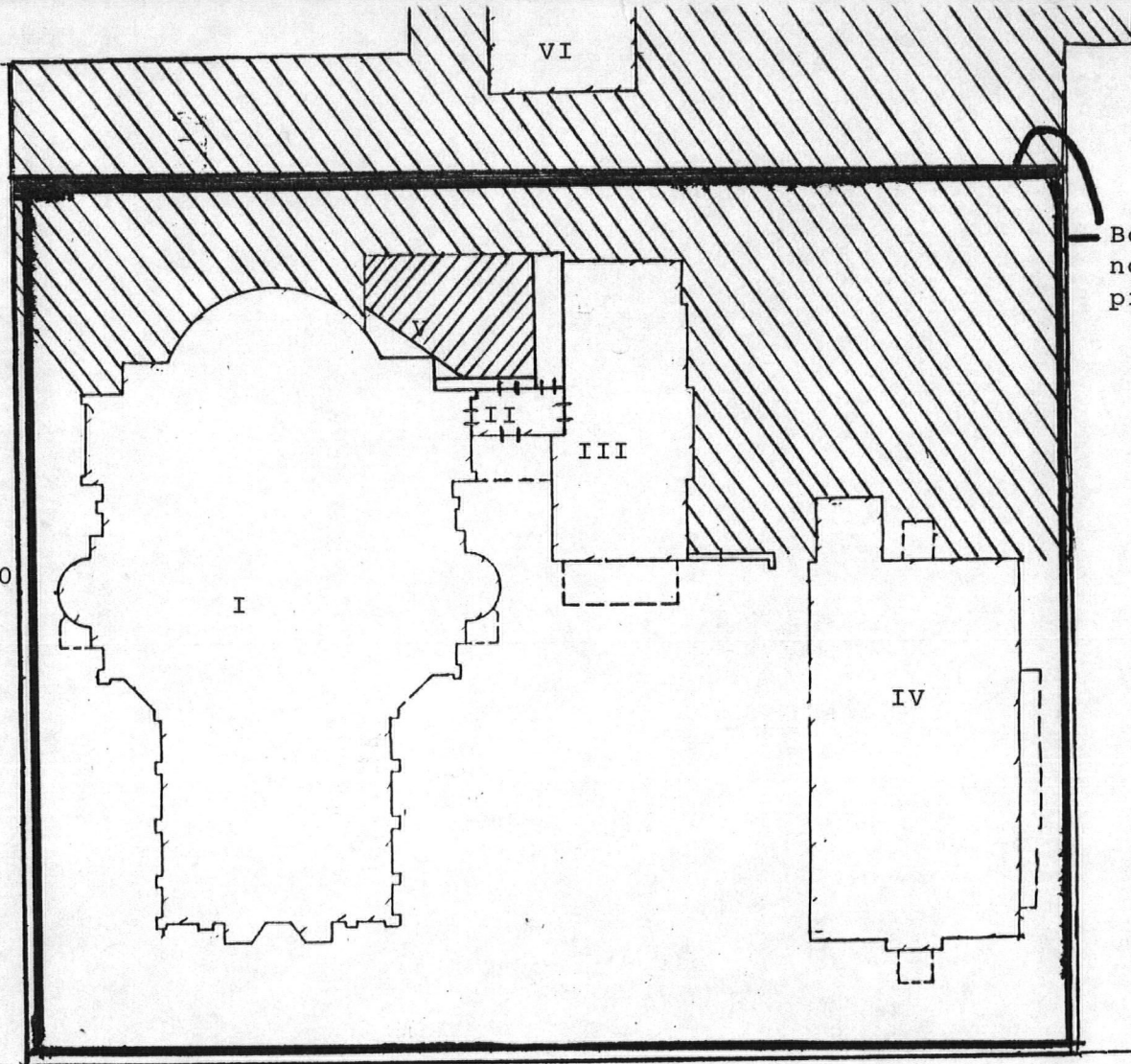


=Parking Lot 225'.00

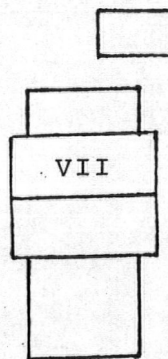


IX

VIII

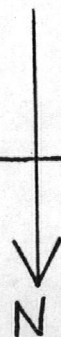
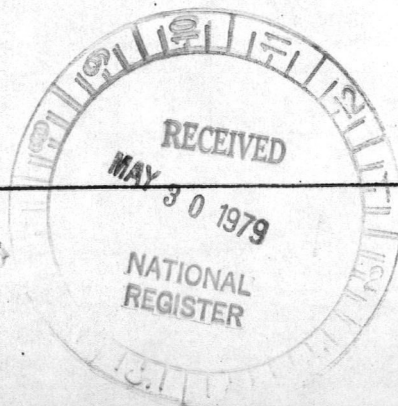


Boundary of nominated property



VII

275'.50



Blessed Trinity Roman Catholic
Church Complex
Buffalo
Erie County



AUG 3 1979

Property Blessed Trinity Roman Catholic Church

Buildings
Complete

State N.Y. (Eric)

Working Number 5.30.79.1274

79001579

TECHNICAL

Photos 9

Maps 1

CONTROL

OK 5.30.79
pl

HISTORIAN

*a very fine church/execution in
Romanesque style. Handmade brick high degree
of craftsmanship in detailing. - Unique to Buffalo +
vicinity to state.*

ARCHITECTURAL HISTORIAN

Accept
Brayham
8.3.79

ARCHEOLOGIST

OTHER

HAER

Inventory _____

Review _____

REVIEW UNIT CHIEF

Accept
Brayham
8-3-78

BRANCH CHIEF

KEEPER

National Register Write-up _____

Send-back _____

Entered AUG 3 1979

Federal Register Entry _____

9-4-79

Re-submit _____



Blessed Trinity Roman
Catholic Church Complex *Bldg*
Buffalo, Erie County
Photo: Fr. W. Kern 9/76
Neg: Blessed Trinity

Parish

AUG 3 1979

View: looking southwest-
1/79 facade and side

MAY 30 1979

R.V. WALTER KERN
BLESSED TRINITY PARISH
323 LEROY AVENUE
BUFFALO, N. Y. 14214
Phone 833-0301



BLESSED TRINITY CHURCH
317 LEROY AVENUE
BUFFALO, NEW YORK 14214

EXTERIOR APSE & AMBULARY

Blessed Trinity Roman
Catholic Church Complex *Bldg.*
Buffalo, Erie County
Photo: Fr. W. Kern 9/76
Neg.: Blessed Trinity

AUG ~~DOE~~ 3 1979

Parish
View: looking north -
249 exterior apse

MAY 30 1979



BLESSED TRINITY CHURCH
317 LEROY AVENUE
BUFFALO, NEW YORK 14214

Blessed Trinity Roman
Catholic Church Complex *Bldgs*
Buffalo, Erie County *ANCE*
Photo: Fr. W. Kern 9/76
Neg.: Blessed Trinity

Parish
View: nave---facing
3 of 9 entrance *DOE* MAY 30 1979
AUG 3 1979



BLESSED TRINITY CHURCH
317 LEROY AVENUE
BUFFALO, NEW YORK 14214

CERAMIC DETAIL
9/76

Blessed Trinity Roman
Catholic Church Complex *Bldg.*
Buffalo, Erie County
Photo: Fr. W. Kern 9/76
Neg.: Blessed Trinity

Parish
View: interior ceramic
detail

4 of 9

AUG 3 1979
MAY 30 1979



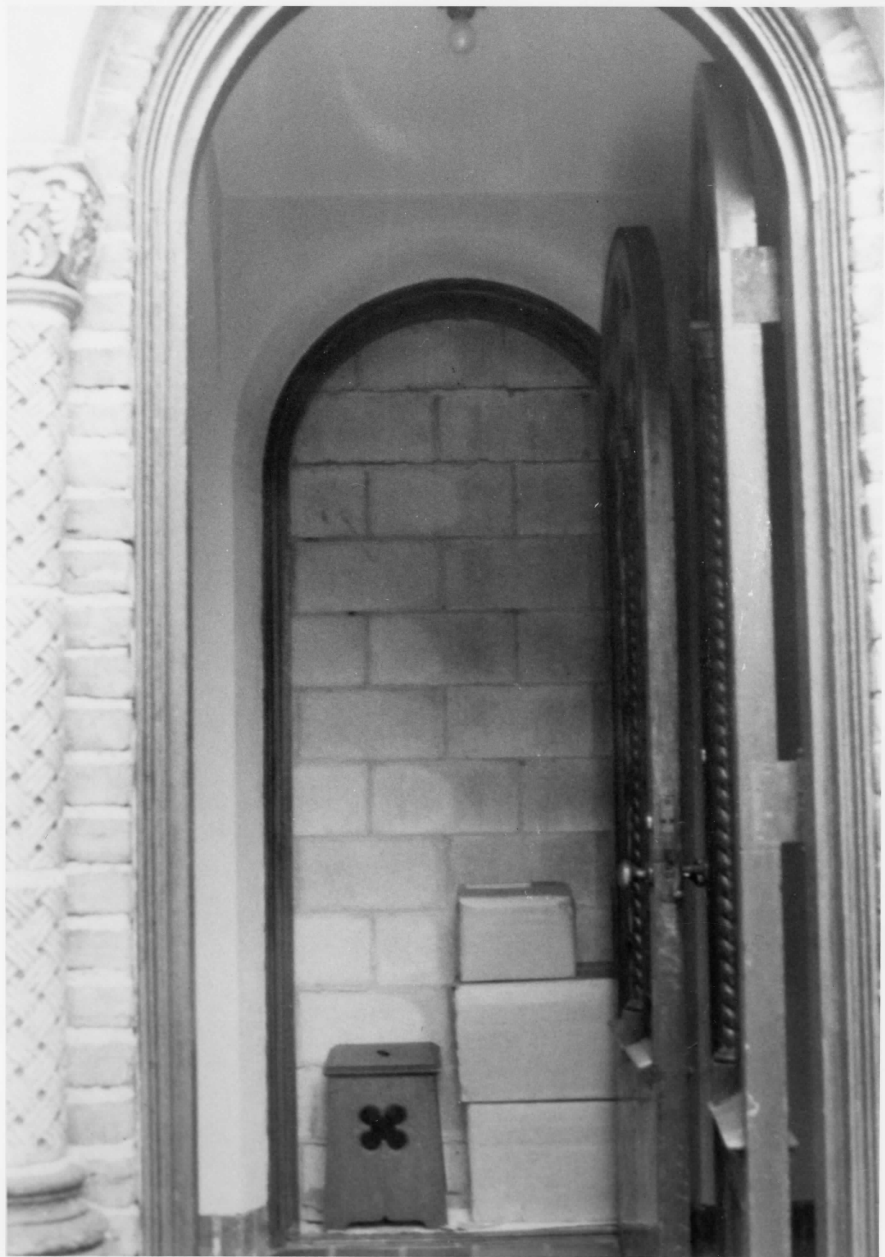
Blessed Trinity Roman
Catholic Church Complex *Blldg!*
Buffalo, Erie County
Photo: C. Ross 8/78
Neg. at: Division for

AUG 3 1979
DOE

MAY 30 1979

Historic Preservation

View: looking southeast -
5 of 9 parish house



Blessed Trinity Roman
Catholic Church Complex
Buffalo, Erie County
Photo: C. Ross 8/78
Neg.: Division for

Historic Preservation
View: looking south
through cloister door
showing black wall of
attached garage

AUG 3 1978
Bldg.
DOE
MAY 30 1978
6 of 9



Blessed Trinity Roman
Catholic Church Complex *Bldgs*
Buffalo, Erie County
Photo: C. Ross 8/78
Neg. at: Division for

AUG 3 1979

DOE
Historic Preservation

View: looking southeast -
parish house

Def 9

MAY 30 1979



Blessed Trinity Roman *Bluffs*
Catholic Church Complex
Buffalo, Erie County
Photo: C. Ross 8/78

AUG *DOE* 3 1979

Neg: Division for
Historic Preservation
View: looking southwest-
849 school

MAY 3 0 1979



Blessed Trinity Roman
Catholic Church Complex *Bldg.*
Buffalo, Erie County
Photo C. Ross 8/78
Neg.: Division for

AUG

DOE
3 1979

MAY 30 1979

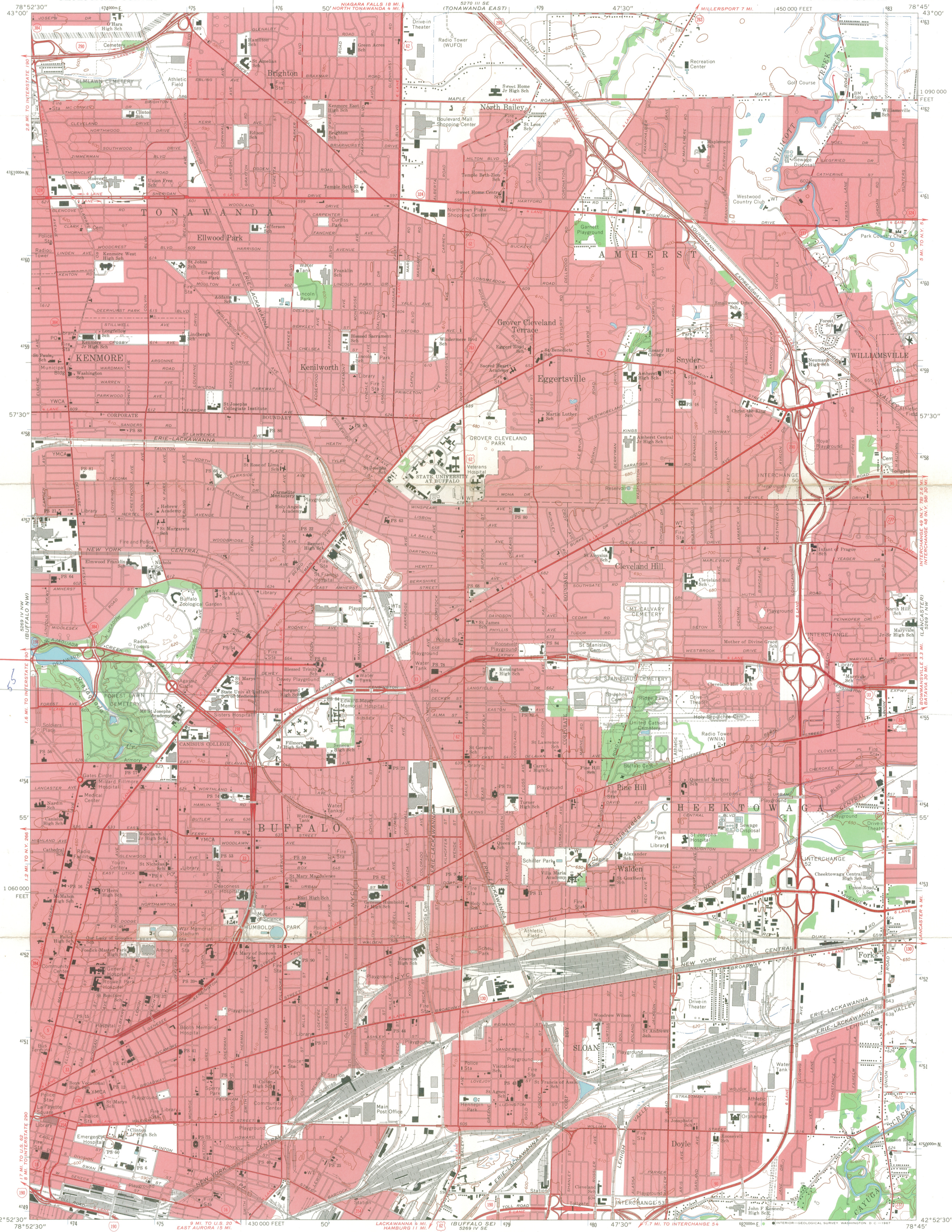
Historic Pres-
ervation

View: looking northeast,
parish house,
garage and church

7 of 9

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
GEOLOGICAL SURVEY

BUFFALO NE QUADRANGLE
NEW YORK-ERIE CO.
7.5 MINUTE SERIES (TOPOGRAPHIC)
NE 1/4 BUFFALO 15' QUADRANGLE



Blessed Trinity Roman Catholic
Church Complex, Buffalo
Erie County
UTM References (zone 17)
Easting northing
A. 676940 4754390
140 4755

Buffalo NE Quad

Mapped, edited, and published by the Geological Survey in cooperation with New York Department of Public Works

Control by USGS, USC&GS, USCE, and U.S. Lake Survey
Planimetry compiled by U.S. Corps of Engineers from aerial photographs taken 1942. Topography by planetable surveys 1948. Revised 1965

Polyconic projection. 1927 North American datum
10,000-foot grid based on New York coordinate system, west zone
1000-meter Universal Transverse Mercator grid ticks, zone 17, shown in blue
Red tint indicates areas in which only landmark buildings are shown



ROAD CLASSIFICATION

| | |
|------------------|-----------------|
| Heavy-duty | Light-duty |
| Medium-duty | Unimproved dirt |
| Interstate Route | U.S. Route |
| | State Route |

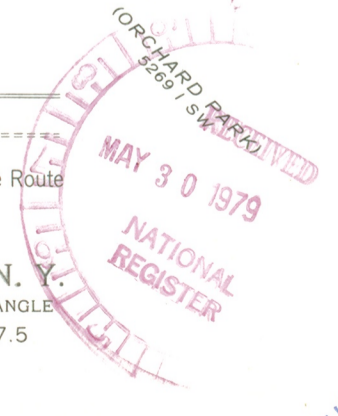


BUFFALO NE, N.
NE 1/4 BUFFALO 15' QUADRANGLE
N4252.5-W7845.7.5

1965

AMS 5269 IV NE-SERIES V821

THIS MAP COMPLIES WITH NATIONAL MAP ACCURACY STANDARDS
FOR SALE BY U.S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, WASHINGTON, D.C. 20242
A FOLDER DESCRIBING TOPOGRAPHIC MAPS AND SYMBOLS IS AVAILABLE ON REQUEST



AUG 3 1979

ENTRIES IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

STATE NEW YORK

Date Entered AUG 3 1979

| <u>Name</u> | <u>Location</u> |
|--|---------------------------------|
| Beverwyck Manor (St. Anthony-on-Hudson Seminary) | Rensselaer Rensselaer County |
| Patroon Agent's House and Office | Rensselaer Rensselaer County |
| Aldred, John E., Estate (Ormston) | Lattingtown Nassau County |
| Blessed Trinity Roman Catholic Church Buildings | Buffalo Erie County |

Also Notified

Honorable Daniel P. Moynihan

Honorable Jacob K. Javits
Honorable Gerald B. Solomon
Honorable Jerome A. Ambro
Honorable Henry J. Nowak

State Historic Preservation Officer
Mr. Orin Lehman
Commissioner
Parks and Recreation
Agency Building #1
Empire State Plaza
Albany, New York 12238

NR Byers/bjr 8/7/79

For further information, please call the National Register at (202)343-6401.