



New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation

Division for Historic Preservation

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Andrew M. Cuomo
Governor

Rose Harvey
Commissioner

19 October 2016

Frank F. Gilmore, RA
Partner
Stracher-Roth-Gilmore, Architects
143 Jay Street
Schenectady, NY 12305

Re: Former Church of the Sacred Heart
City of Cohoes, Albany County
Request for Determination of National Register of Historic Places eligibility
16PR06618

Dear Mr. Gilmore,

Thank you for requesting the comments of the Division for Historic Preservation of the Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation (OPRHP), and for showing me the former Church of the Sacred Heart in Cohoes a few weeks ago. It is the opinion of the Division for Historic Preservation that the church, located in the City of Cohoes, Albany County, satisfies the criteria for listing on the State and National Registers of Historic Places; our office's determination of eligibility is attached as part of this correspondence. If you have any further questions, please feel free to contact me at (518) 268-2167.

Sincerely,

William E. Krattinger
Historic Preservation Program Analyst
e-mail: william.krattinger@parks.ny.gov

enc: Determination of Eligibility

via e-mail only

Eligibility Determination/New York State and National Registers of Historic Places

Church of the Sacred Heart, City of Cohoes, Albany County, New York

William Krattinger, Historic Preservation Program Analyst

19 October 2016

Statement of Significance

The former Church of the Sacred Heart, located in Cohoes, Albany County, satisfies S/NRHP Criteria C, in the area of Architecture, as an intact and representative example of late nineteenth century ecclesiastical architecture largely executed in a Gothic Revival idiom. Built above a rectangular plan with a finished basement, its design included short transepts, a prominent bell tower, and a rounded apse. This load-bearing brick building is distinguished on the exterior by both Gothic and round-arched fenestration, extensive brick corbelling, and a prominent slate-clad clerestory level, which is punctuated by paired Gothic lancets which correspond with internal bay divisions. The engaged, multi-stage bell tower with an open belfry terminated by a conical roof is centered on the principal, west-facing elevation. Inside, the worship space is remarkably intact and continues to reflect the building's use as a historic house of worship, save for the removal of the pews; it is an impressive and soaring space with a clearly articulated nave and side aisles, the liturgical center being situated in the eastern apse, the rear wall of which is punctuated by a series of stained-glass Gothic windows with cusped heads. Handsome stained glass windows also bring filtered natural light into the worship space along the side walls. The church formed the architectural centerpiece of a historically related complex inclusive of an adjacent parochial school building and rectory, both of which are extant; these collectively chronicle the history of this parish.

The Church of the Sacred Heart of Jesus in Cohoes, originally a mission of St. Joseph's, was organized in June 1887, led by Father Eugene Rey. The fifth Catholic Church erected there, it was of a parish of distinctly French Canadian character. The group worshipped for a time in a recreation hall on Jackson Avenue prior to the construction of a frame chapel, which was later used as a school after a new church was erected. The brick church largely assumed its present appearance in 1899, during the pastorate of Father L.A. Lavigne, though work continued on the interior in subsequent years; in 1903 an organ was installed, the following year stained glass windows were purchased and in 1907 the pews and altar were remodeled. As the parish grew it became necessary to replace the existing school with a newer, purpose-built edifice; this was meant in part as a means to ensure the continuation of French language and cultural traditions. The cornerstone for the present school building, built to the plans of architect Arthur Granger, was laid in 1910, and the building was dedicated the following year; in its earliest years educational responsibilities were administered by sisters of the Holy Name of Jesus and Mary of Montreal, Canada. In 1975 the Sacred Heart parish came under the pastoral care of the priests of St. Rita's, one of Cohoes other Catholic parishes. In 1979 the former school building was sold and the proceeds were used in part to renovate the front porch and stairs, pay down debt, and remodel the parish hall. The last mass there was conducted in June 2009.