

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional certification comments, entries, and narrative items on continuation sheets if needed (NPS Form 10-900a).

1. Name of Property

Historic name St. Francis Xavier Parish Church & Rectory
Other names/site number The Fish Church
Name of related Multiple Property Listing N/A

2. Location

Street & number 1001 East 52nd Street

N/A	not for publication
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City or town Kansas City

N/A	vicinity
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State Missouri Code MO County Jackson Code 095 Zip code 64110

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,

I hereby certify that this 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 meets does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

national statewide local

Applicable National Register Criteria: A B C D

Burk De Deroy SHPO 2-9-22
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

Missouri Department of Natural Resources
State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

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

Signature of commenting official Date

Title State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

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: _____)

Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

St. Francis Xavier Parish Church & Rectory
Name of Property

Jackson County, Missouri
County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply.)

Category of Property
(Check only **one** box.)

Number of Resources within Property
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	private
<input type="checkbox"/>	public - Local
<input type="checkbox"/>	public - State
<input type="checkbox"/>	public - Federal

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	building(s)
<input type="checkbox"/>	district
<input type="checkbox"/>	site
<input type="checkbox"/>	structure
<input type="checkbox"/>	object

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1		buildings
		sites
1		structures
		objects
2	0	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

N/A

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

RELIGIOUS/Religious Facility

RELIGIOUS/Church-related Residence

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

RELIGIOUS/Religious Facility

RELIGIOUS/Religious Facility (Offices)

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

MODERN MOVEMENT

LATE 19TH AND EARLY 20TH CENTURY

AMERICAN MOVEMENTS/Prairie School

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions.)

foundation: Concrete

walls: Stone: Limestone

Concrete

roof: EPDM

other: Metal

NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION ON CONTINUATION PAGES

St. Francis Xavier Parish Church & Rectory
Name of Property

Jackson County, Missouri
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8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- 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.
- 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

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

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

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE ON CONTINUATION PAGES

Areas of Significance

ARCHITECTURE

ART

Period of Significance

1948-1951

Significant Dates

1950, 1951

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Byrne, Francis Barry (design architect)

Iannelli, Alfonso (primary artist)

Byrne, Annette Cremin (artist)

Shaughnessy, Joseph B. (architect of record)

Kelly, C.A. (general contractor)

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography (Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form.)

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 # _____
- recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # _____

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository: Diocese of Kansas City-St. Joseph

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): _____ N/A

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10. Geographical Data

Acreege of Property 3.02

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates

Datum if other than WGS84: _____
(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

1 39.032170 -94.574239 3
Latitude: Longitude: Latitude: Longitude:

2 _____ 4
Latitude: Longitude: Latitude: Longitude:

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

_____ NAD 1927 or _____ NAD 1983

1 _____ 3
Zone Easting Northing

2 _____ 4
Zone Easting Northing

Verbal Boundary Description (On continuation sheet)

Boundary Justification (On continuation sheet)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Amanda K. Loughlin/National Register Section Head

organization Rosin Preservation LLC date Sept. 2021, rev. Nov. 2021 & Jan. 2022

street & number 1712 Holmes St. telephone 816-472-4950

city or town Kansas City state MO zip code 64108

e-mail amanda@rosinpreservation.com

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:**
 - A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
 - A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Continuation Sheets**
- **Photographs**
- **Owner Name and Contact Information**
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items.)

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Office of Planning and Performance Management. U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.

St. Francis Xavier Parish Church & Rectory
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Photographs

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels (minimum), 3000x2000 preferred, at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map. Each photograph must be numbered and that number must correspond to the photograph number on the photo log. For simplicity, the name of the photographer, photo date, etc. may be listed once on the photograph log and doesn't need to be labeled on every photograph.

Photo Log:

Name of Property: **St. Francis Xavier Parish Church & Rectory**

City or Vicinity: **Kansas City**

County: **Jackson County** State: **Missouri**

Photographer: **Brad Finch, f-stop Photography**

Date
Photographed: **June 2021**

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera:

See Photo Key Maps 1 through 4.

- 01 of 30:** View of Church from above, looking east
- 02 of 30:** Driveway leading to porte cochere, looking northwest
- 03 of 30:** Looking southwest at bell tower and St. Francis Xavier statue
- 04 of 30:** View south from East 52nd Street
- 05 of 30:** View northwest of east side of Church
- 06 of 30:** View southeast, showing west side of Church and north elevation of Rectory
- 07 of 30:** Entry from covered drive, looking southwest
- 08 of 30:** East entry into narthex, looking northwest
- 09 of 30:** West entry into narthex, looking southeast
- 10 of 30:** North elevation of Rectory, looking southwest
- 11 of 30:** South elevation of Rectory, looking northeast
- 12 of 30:** Main entrance into Rectory on north elevation, looking southwest
- 13 of 30:** Detail of west porch, second floor of Rectory, looking northeast (photo by Amanda Loughlin, June 2021)
- 14 of 30:** Entrance corridor from covered drive, looking northeast
- 15 of 30:** Narthex, looking north
- 16 of 30:** Narthex, looking south-southwest
- 17 of 30:** Interior of church, looking southwest from choir loft
- 18 of 30:** Looking northeast from sanctuary toward choir loft
- 19 of 30:** Ceiling detail, looking northeast
- 20 of 30:** View looking southwest of communion rail, sanctuary, and altars (photo by Amanda Loughlin, June 2021)
- 21 of 30:** East side chapel (Mary Chapel), looking south
- 22 of 30:** West side chapel (Joseph with baby Jesus Chapel), looking southwest
- 23 of 30:** Detail of one of the confessionals along west side aisle, looking southwest
- 24 of 30:** Mother's Room/Crying Room, at northwest corner of nave, looking west
- 25 of 30:** Former Priest's Sacristy/Current chapel, looking east
- 26 of 30:** Transition vestibule between Church and Rectory; boys' sacristy (not extant) extended to column; view SW
- 27 of 30:** First floor of Rectory, east meeting room, looking east
- 28 of 30:** First floor of Rectory, main stair hall, view west-northwest
- 29 of 30:** Second floor of Rectory, hearth room, looking north-northeast
- 30 of 30:** Second floor of Rectory, east corridor, looking west-northwest and showing lighted penthouse

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Figure Log:

Include figures on continuation pages at the end of the nomination.

Figure 1. Contextual map, showing location of St. Francis Xavier Parish Church & Rectory within Kansas City. Base map from Google.

Figure 2. Diocesan map of the St. Francis Xavier Parish, roughly bound by East 47th Street (north), The Paseo (east), East 59th Street (south), and Oak Street (west). Star indicates location of the church and rectory building. Source: St. Francis Xavier Parish Collection, Box 5, Property & Parish Boundaries File, Chancery Archives, Diocese of Kansas City-St. Joseph.

Figure 3. Snippet of Sheet 902, May 1950 Sanborn map, showing the new church and rectory. Dashed line indicates nominated parcel.

Figure 4. Current site plan and boundary map with contours. Boundary depicted by bold dashed line. Base map from the City of Kansas City, Missouri parcel viewer (maps.kcmo.org/apps/parcelviewer).

Figure 5. Site plan, from promotional booklet, showing church building with covered driveway (A), sacristy (B), rectory (C), and parking lot (D). Source: "The New Saint Francis Xavier Church," 1946, St. Francis Xavier Vertical File, Missouri Valley Special Collections, Kansas City Public Library.

Figure 6. View looking south of the steel structural frame, February 1949. Source: St. Francis Xavier Parish Collection, Miscellaneous Photographs, Chancery Archives, Diocese of Kansas City-St. Joseph.

Figure 7. Annotated plan of St. Francis Xavier. Source: "Two Catholic Churches," *Architectural Record* 109, no. 2 (February 1951): 93.

Figure 8. The Statue of St. Francis Xavier. Source: Brad Finch, June 2021.

Figure 9. Cornerstone at the east corner of the east entry porch. Source: Amanda Loughlin, June 2021.

Figure 10. View looking southwest into church from Narthex, 1951. Source: "Two Catholic Churches," *Architectural Record* 109, no. 2 (February 1951): 94.

Figure 11. Detail of one of the station reliefs by Iannelli. Source: Felicity Rich, photographer in Vincent L. Michael, *The Architecture of Barry Byrne: Taking the Prairie School to Europe* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2013), Plate 6.

Figure 12. Baptistry designed by Iannelli; exterior (left) and interior (right). Photos by Brad Finch, June 2021.

Figure 13. Baptismal font designed by Iannelli, with sliding lid. Moved from Baptistry to east side aisle. Left photo: Brad Finch; right photo: Amanda Loughlin, both taken June 2021.

Figure 14. Annotated photo of the sanctuary. Photo by Brad Finch, June 2021.

Figure 15. Detail of the High Altar (C in Figure 14) and Tabernacle (B in Figure 14). Photo by Brad Finch, June 2021.

Figure 16. South elevations of Rectory, Connector, and part of Church. Not to scale. Base plans: Barry Byrne, 1947, Sheets 6 & R2 Elevations

Figure 17. North (true northeast) Elevation of Rectory and Connector. Not to scale. Base plan: Barry Byrne, 1947, Sheet R2 Elevations.

Figure 18. Partial view of the south elevation, showing the locations of the two former garage door bays (arrows). Source: Amanda Loughlin, June 2021.

Figure 19. Father's bathroom, second floor of Rectory, showing historic finishes and fixtures. Source: Brad Finch, June 2021.

St. Francis Xavier Parish Church & Rectory
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Figure 20. Annette Cremin Byrne and Barry Byrne circa 1926. Source: Sally Kitt Chappell & Ann Van Zanten, *Barry Byrne, John Lloyd Wright: Architecture & Design* (Chicago: Chicago Historical Society, 1982), 12.

Figure 21. The 1908 Unity Temple (top) and the 1906 Peter Beachy House (bottom), both in Oak Park, Illinois Sources: Felicity Rich, photographer (top) and Vince Michael (bottom) both in Vincent L. Michael, *The Architecture of Barry Byrne: Taking the Prairie School to Europe* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2013), 12 & 13.

Figure 22. The Matzen House (top) and Handschy House (bottom). Both constructed in 1910 in Seattle. Source: Felicity Rich, photographer in Vincent L. Michael, *The Architecture of Barry Byrne: Taking the Prairie School to Europe* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2013), 18 & 19.

Figure 23. The First Church of Christ, Scientist, San Diego (1909-1910) designed by Irving Gill. Source: Sarah J. Schaffer, "Irving J. Gill, Progressive Architect Part II: Creating a Sense of Place," *The Journal of San Diego History* 44, no. 1 (Winter 1998): n.p. digitized online by the San Diego History Center <https://sandiegohistory.org/journal/1998/january/significant-sentence-upon-earth-part-ii-images/>

Figure 24. The progression of Catholic church plans by Barry Byrne. Key below. Source: Sally Kitt Chappell & Ann Van Zanten, *Barry Byrne, John Lloyd Wright: Architecture & Design* (Chicago: Chicago Historical Society, 1982), 27.

Figure 25. St. Thomas the Apostle. (Top) looking toward the sanctuary and altar; (bottom) exterior. Sources: Felicity Rich, photographer in Vincent L. Michael, *The Architecture of Barry Byrne: Taking the Prairie School to Europe* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2013), 47 (top) and in Vincent L. Michael, "Expressing the Modern: Barry Byrne in 1920s Europe." *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 69, no. 4 (December 2010): 537 (bottom).

Figure 26. Church of Christ the King, Cork, Ireland. View toward the altar (top); exterior (bottom left); detail of entry (bottom right). Sources: Church of Christ the King website (top, bottom left); Felicity Rich, photographer in Vincent L. Michael, *The Architecture of Barry Byrne: Taking the Prairie School to Europe* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2013), 96.

Figure 27. St. Columba, St. Paul. (Top) Exterior view; (bottom) interior shortly after opening. Sources: Paul Nelson, photographer, MNopedia, Minnesota Historical Society, 2017 (top); "Two Catholic Churches." *Architectural Record* 109, no. 2 (February 1951): 91 (bottom).

Figure 28. St. Benedict Abbey, Atchison, Kansas. View toward the altar (top), exterior shortly after opening (bottom). Sources: Robert McLaughlin, Kansas Historic Resources Inventory (kshs.org/khri), 2021 (top); Sally Kitt Chappell & Ann Van Zanten, *Barry Byrne, John Lloyd Wright: Architecture & Design* (Chicago: Chicago Historical Society, 1982), 33 (bottom).

Figure 29. Notre Dame du Raincy, Auguste Perret, 1922-23. View of church interior. Source: William J.R. Curtis, *Modern Architecture Since 1900* (New York: Phaidon Press, 1996), 300.

Figure 30. The 1939 St. Austin Catholic Church in 1959 (now demolished), one of the first modern Catholic churches in the Midwest. Source: Larry Millett, "St. Austin Roman Catholic Church, Minneapolis," *Minnesota History* 60, no. 8 (Winter 2007): 303.

Figure 31. Alfonso Iannelli inspecting the aluminum Our Lady of Peace statue, circa 1950. Source: David Jameson, *Alfonso Iannelli: Modern by Design* (Oak Park, Illinois: Top Five Books, 2013), 288.

Figure 32. Three Sprites designed and sculpted by Iannelli in 1914 for Midway Gardens. Source: David Jameson, *Alfonso Iannelli: Modern by Design* (Oak Park, Illinois: Top Five Books, 2013), 79.

Figure 33. Josef Hoffmann with Emilie Simandl, Palais Stoclet (1908-1911), Brussels, Belgium (left); Bruno Schmitz & Clemens Thieme with Franz Metzner, Völkerschlachtdenkmal (1898-1913), Leipzig, Germany (right), Sources: Friends of San Diego Architecture <https://friendsofsdarch.photoshelter.com/gallery-image/Josef-Hoffmann/G0000p3J6z9gCjm0/I0000qDvsL9aQACc/C0000RKtGn0sEOxQ> (left) and BACU, 29 May 2015 <https://tumblr.co/ZuLP3u1lzQjtT>

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Figure 34. The 1882 Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception (left) and the 1907-1912 Our Lady of Perpetual Help Redemptorist Church (right), both in Kansas City, Missouri. Source: *American Institute of Architects Guide to Kansas City Architecture & Public Art* (Kansas City, MO: American Institute of Architects/Kansas City, 2000), 11 & 95.

Figure 35. Proposed design of the church, 1946. Annette Cremin Byrne, rendering. Source: St. Francis Xavier Vertical File, Missouri Valley Special Collections, Kansas City Public Library.

Figure 36. The proposed design in 1947. The figure of St. Francis Xavier has been relocated from the surface of the bell tower to the “prow” but the roof remains arched. Photos of a scale model created by Byrne’s office. Source: Barry Byrne, “Toward a New Architecture of Worship.” *Architectural Record* (September 1947): 94.

Figure 37. Proposed design for the Rectory, 1946. Annette Cremin Byrne, rendering. Source: St. Francis Xavier Vertical File, Missouri Valley Special Collections, Kansas City Public Library.

Figure 38. Section through the tower showing the entry from the porte cochere and the narthex. Not to scale. Base plan: Barry Byrne, 1947, Sheet 10, Section.

Figure 39. View of the completed church, looking south toward the altar. Note that Iannelli’s Stations of the Cross are not yet installed. Source: “Two Catholic Churches,” *Architectural Record* 109, no. 2 (February 1951): 93.

Figure 40. Mother’s Day Mass, May 1951. Note the Stations of the Cross are installed and the priests are facing away from the people. Source: Chancery Archives, Diocese of Kansas City-St. Joseph.

Figure 41. View of high altar (left) and Joseph (west) side chapel (right). Note the candlesticks on both altar tables and the communion rail chain. Source: “Two Catholic Churches.” *Architectural Record* 109, no. 2 (February 1951): 94.

Figure 42. First Presbyterian Church of Stamford, Connecticut. Exterior (top) and interior (bottom). Sources: First Presbyterian Church website <https://www.fishchurch.org/> (top) and John9474 - Own work, CC BY-SA 4.0, July 2015 <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=73018116>.

Figure 43. The first parish church and house that was relocated (above) and the second church building (below). Source: Rev. Michael Coleman, *This Far By Faith: A Popular History of the Catholic People of West and Northwest Missouri*, Vol. II (Kansas City, MO: Diocese of Kansas City-St. Joseph, 1992), 223.

Figure 44. Snippet of Sheet 902 of the 1939 Sanborn Fire Insurance map, showing the parish property. The dashed line indicates the boundary of the nominated property.

Figure 45. View of the Church wing under construction during the June 26, 1949 cornerstone ceremony. Source: St. Francis Xavier Parish Collection, Miscellaneous Photographs, Chancery Archives, Diocese of Kansas City-St. Joseph.

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St. Francis Xavier Parish Church & Rectory
Name of Property
Jackson County, Missouri
County and State
N/A
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION SUMMARY

St. Francis Xavier Parish Church & Rectory is located at 1001 East 52nd Street in Kansas City, Jackson County, Missouri. Construction began on the modern church building in 1948, and the official dedication took place in July 1950. The V-shaped footprint of the building includes the three-story elliptical Church at the east and the two-story rectangular Rectory to the west. The one-story Sacristy connects the two wings. A parking lot (contributing structure) covers the property to the west of the building. St. Francis Xavier Church & Rectory is the result of the collaboration of architect Francis Barry Byrne and sculptor Alfonso Iannelli. Byrne's wife, artist Annette Cremin Byrne, also contributed to the interior design. Kansas City-based Joseph Shaughnessy assisted on the project as the architect of record. The modern architectural design of the Church, based on the Christian symbol of the Ichthus, inspired the nickname "The Fish Church;" however, the form and massing also resemble a ship, with Iannelli's larger-than-life statue of St. Francis Xavier as figurehead. Besides its elliptical form and prominent statue, exterior character-defining features of the Church include the belltower with integrated cross, porte-cochere, and narrow rectangular windows on the east and west elevations. The three-story elliptical volume of the nave and sanctuary dominates the church interior. The following are interior character-defining features. A flat, floating ceiling cloud covers the entire space, pointing toward the altar at the south end. Side chapels flank the sanctuary, and confessionals line the side aisles of the nave. The simple interior provides a canvas for Iannelli's artwork, which includes the fourteen Stations of the Cross (installed in 1951), altar tables, the aluminum Christ the King statue above the main altar, baptistry and font, as well as votives and crucifixes. Cremin Byrne selected the primary color scheme of the space: alternating cobalt and opaline blue windows, red and yellow altar wall, red, yellow, and blue frescos above the altar and side chapels. The Rectory features the massing, form, and character of the Prairie Style: simple overlapping rectangular boxes, bands of windows separated by prominent mullions, flat roofs with large overhanging eaves, and an exterior porch at the second floor, all of which are character-defining features. Square panels of smooth limestone cover the entirety of the steel and concrete structure, tying together the two wings. Nominated under Criterion C for its architectural and artistic significance, St. Francis Xavier Parish Church & Rectory retains its historic integrity from its period of significance, 1948 to 1951, from when construction of the church began to the installation of Iannelli's Stations of the Cross.

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St. Francis Xavier Parish Church & Rectory

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N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

ELABORATION

SETTING AND SITE

St. Francis Xavier Parish Church & Rectory, 1001 East 52nd Street, is located just over one mile southeast of Kansas City's Country Club Plaza (*Figure 1*). The nominated property developed out of the Parish's connection to Rockhurst University, a private Jesuit liberal arts college that sits due east across Troost.¹ The University of Missouri-Kansas City campus is located less than one block to the west (*Figure 2*). A free-standing midcentury commercial building occupies the property to the north of St. Francis Xavier. The nominated three acres sits within the city block bound by East 52nd Street (north), Troost Avenue (east), East 53rd Street (south), and Rockhill Road (west) (*Figure 3*). Midsize, early twentieth century dwellings fill the west portion of the block along Rockhill Road.² The 1962 St. Francis Xavier School property fills the southeast corner of the block directly south of the church. This school was listed in the National Register in 2017 (NRIS #100001760) for its International Style; it opened twelve years after the nominated church and rectory. The nominated church property occupies the southwest corner of East 52nd Street and Troost Avenue (*Figure 4*). The building generally is sited at the highest point at the center of its parcel; the site slopes down nearly twenty-five feet from the southwest to northeast. Although historically associated with the parcel to the south and to Rockhurst University, the development of the parcels was organic rather than part of a parish master plan.

An asphalt **parking lot** (contributing structure) fills the western third of the site. Nine rows of marked stalls provide approximately eighty parking spots. The parking lot was part of the original plan for the property and was constructed concurrently with the building (*Figure 5*).³ An asphalt driveway at the south end of the property leads from Troost Avenue (visible in *Photos 1 & 5*) to the parking lot and connects to a driveway exiting onto East 52nd Street at the north end of the property. This driveway configuration was part of the parking and traffic plan.⁴ A historic

¹ Rockhurst College 1909-1999; Rockhurst University 1999-current.

² These two-story dwellings first appear on the 1939 Sanborn Fire Insurance map as flats; they remained flats in the 1950 map (see *Figure 4*). Today these buildings house organizations such as cultural centers, offices, and sororities affiliated with the University of Missouri-Kansas City. There is no historic association between these buildings and St. Francis Xavier.

³ *Kansas City Times* (14 December 1949): 6; "Approves a Church Lot," *Kansas City Times* (1 February 1950): 4.

⁴ "Approves a Church Lot," 4.

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N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

concrete driveway with concrete curbs arcs from Troost Avenue to East 52nd Street, providing access to the porte cochere and entry at the front of the church (*Photo 2*).

Narrow concrete sidewalks provide pedestrian access from the parking lot to the Church and Rectory. Additionally, narrow sidewalks—outside the boundary and within the public right-of-way—line the north and east sides of the site. Wide, splayed concrete walks flank the bell tower, connecting East 52nd Street and Troost Avenue to entry porches at the church (seen in *Photo 2*, *Photo 9*). The terraced east walkway follows the slope of the site. Wide sets of granite steps lead up from the walkways to the stone-paved porches; limestone wingwalls flank the steps, and historic splayed concrete planters top these walls. Historic concrete benches provide seating at the porches (visible in *Photo 8*).

The landscape around the building primarily consists of manicured lawn and ornamental trees. A non-historic concrete sign within a planting bed sits to the northeast of the church and faces east. The sign reads “ST FRANCIS XAVIER / CATHOLIC CHURCH.” The date of the sign’s installation is unknown, but it post-dates the period of significance; the planting bed dates to circa 2000. A small non-historic metal sign denoting the parish office location flanks the east side of the driveway. Non-historic Callery pear trees, planted circa 2000, now line the walkways to the church building. A grid of raised planters, associated with a community garden established circa 2016, fills the southeast corner of the property (visible in *Photo 5*).

The property boundaries are defined by the sidewalks along East 52nd Street and Troost Avenue to the north and east respectively. A non-historic metal fence with swinging gate lines the north sidewalk at the parking lot. This short fence has minimal ornamentation.⁵ The south driveway and south edge of the parking lot define the south boundary. A short retaining wall along the west property line defines the boundary at the west edge of the parking lot; overgrowth visually separates the property from adjacent properties to the south and west.

ST. FRANCIS XAVIER CHURCH & RECTORY BUILDING

The nominated building consists of two wings that form a V-shaped footprint that is oriented north toward East 52nd Street. The dominant east wing is the three-story Church, organized on a northeast-southwest axis. The two-story Rectory is oriented on a northwest-southeast axis. The one-story Sacristy extends southeast of the Rectory, connecting the two wings (*Photo 1*; *Figure*

⁵ The non-historic fence is not included in the resource count due to its small size.

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St. Francis Xavier Parish Church & Rectory

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N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

4). Flat, built-up roofs cover each mass of the building behind short parapets. The building has a poured concrete foundation. A steel and concrete structural system supports the Church (*Figure 6*) while the Rectory has a concrete structure. Sawed limestone panels (4' by 4') cover the walls of the entire building.⁶

CHURCH

St. Francis Xavier Parish Church (Church) is a three-story, elliptical mass atop a hill at the southwest corner of East 52nd Street and Troost Avenue. Nicknamed the Fish Church, the plan of the building recalls the ancient Christian symbol of the Ichthus (*Figure 7*), further discussed in Section 8.⁷ The massing also recalls a ship, with the belltower as mast, chimneys as stern, and the large statue of St. Francis Xavier as figurehead (*Photos 3 & 4*).⁸

The Church has a symmetrical plan organized on the 225-foot spine created by the statue, belltower, centerline of nave, and chimneys and is oriented toward the northeast.⁹ The prominent three-story elliptical mass of the nave rises above flanking one-story splayed masses containing side aisles, altars, and other ancillary spaces. The four-story belltower extends north of and rises from the north end of the ellipse, its beveled north side “knifing the sky,” as described by Barry Byrne biographer, Vincent Michael.¹⁰ An aluminum-clad steel cross, integrated into the substructure, attaches to the front (north) of the belltower and rises above it (*Photos 3 & 4; Figure 6*).¹¹ With the cross, the tower rises to a height of 120 feet.¹² An inset pair of historic glazed wood doors pierces the ground level of the tower; a stone-paved ramp leads up to the

⁶ “Dual Fete at Church,” *The Kansas City Star* (13 June 1949): 3.

⁷ Rev. J.B. Gerst, S.J., “The New Saint Francis Xavier Church,” Promotional fundraising booklet, 1946, St. Francis Xavier Vertical File, Missouri Valley Special Collections, Kansas City Public Library; “Two Catholic Churches,” *Architectural Record* 109, no. 2 (February 1951): 88, 91; Vincent L. Michael, *The Architecture of Barry Byrne: Taking the Prairie School to Europe* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2013), 133.

⁸ Michael, *The Architecture of Barry Byrne*, 134.

⁹ See Figure 7 for an annotated plan of the parts of the church.

For clarity in this description, Plan North is True Northeast. The east and west elevations are true southeast and northwest elevations, respectively, and the south elevation faces true southwest.

¹⁰ Michael, *The Architecture of Barry Byrne*, 135.

¹¹ Byrne’s plans call for a stone cross, but this changed at some point prior to construction (see Figure 6). Barry Byrne, Architect, “St. Francis Xavier Parish Church & Rectory,” Architectural plans (1947): Sheet 6 – Rear and Front Elevations. On file with owner.

¹² “Dual Fete at Church,” *The Kansas City Star*, 3. Without the cross, the belltower is 95’ tall.

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doors from the driveway (*Photo 7*). Four narrow rectangular openings pierce the top of the east and west elevations of the belltower (visible in *Photos 5 & 6*). The two-story tall openings emphasize the verticality of the tower.

The elliptical canopy of the one-story porte cochere shelters the belltower entry. Aluminum fascia covers the sides of the flat-roofed canopy. The north end of the canopy integrates into the rear wall supporting the St. Francis Xavier sculpture; square integrated planter boxes flank the wall (*Photos 3 & 4*).

The sculpture of St. Francis Xavier forms the north end of the Church. Designed and sculpted by Alfonso Iannelli, this larger-than-life limestone statue weighs 21,000 pounds and rises to a height of 18 feet.¹³ Iannelli carved the figure from stacked limestone blocks, with the sculpture emerging from the structure of the building and resting atop a granite base. St. Francis Xavier overlooks the intersection of East 52nd Street and Troost Avenue. The brooding figure upholds a crucifix in his right hand and clutches a bell and rosary to his body with his left hand. The rosary descends into the folds of his tunic (*Figure 8*).

Due to the symmetry of the Church, the east and west elevations are nearly identical. Stone-paved porches flank the belltower, accessed by granite steps from the sidewalks (*Photos 8 & 9*). These porches lead to one-story glazed walls with paired center doors that lead directly into the narthex (*Photos 15 & 16*). These walls have minimal aluminum framing. Flat roofed reinforced concrete canopies with aluminum fascia shelter these historic entries. The cornerstone of the building occupies the east end of the south wall of the east porch (*Figure 9*). Laid in a ceremony in June 1949, the stone reads “AMDG / Church of Saint / Francis Xavier / Year of / Our Lord / 1949 / BVMH.” The acronym AMDG stands for *Ad Majorem Dei Gloriam* (To the Greater Glory of God), the Latin motto of the Society of Jesus (Jesuits). BVMH stands for *Beatae Mariae Virgine Honore* (To the Honor of the Blessed Virgin Mary).

Two sets of nine narrow, vertical windows adorn the upper level of the east and west elevations of the elliptical mass (*Photos 5 & 6*). These windows fit within inset stone panels. The alternating cobalt and opaline blue windows have five fixed panes. One-story masses cover the first story of the ellipse on both sides of the Church. The south fifth of these masses extends six feet from the elevation to accommodate inset entrances. A historic band of narrow, horizontal windows spans both the east and west elevations of the first story mass, and a single, narrow

¹³ David Jameson, *Alfonso Iannelli: Modern by Design* (Oak Park, Illinois: Top Five Books, 2013), 286.

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vertical window pierces the north ends of each elevation. A rectangular chimney extends from the south end of the ellipse (*Photos 5 & 11*). Small square windows pierce the south elevation of the one-story masses of the Church (visible in *Photos 1 & 11*).

Church Interior

The double doors of the porte cochere lead into a vestibule in the base of the belltower. An enclosed stair to the basement and choir loft occupies the east side of this space. A historic incline at the west side leads up to the narthex (*Photo 14*). The limestone panels of the exterior line the walls of this ramp; terrazzo covers the floor, and the ceiling is plaster. Historic aluminum handrails line the sides of the ramp.

The generally triangular narthex occupies the north end of the ellipse (*Photos 15 & 16*). The glazed entries fill the side walls, and elliptical plaster soffits with recessed lighting span the entry walls. Limestone veneer surrounds the incline entry of the north wall. The segmented south wall, painted red, features three pairs of historic Herculite glass pivot doors that lead into the nave.¹⁴ Historic marble Holy Water basins extend from the walls flanking the center doors; aluminum fish panels adorn the ends of these walls but were added at an unknown date after the construction of the building (*Figure 10*). Marble base lines the south wall. Openings at the east and west ends of the south wall lead into ancillary spaces, including the Mothers' Room and Baptistry in the northwest and northeast corners of the nave. Historic acoustical ceiling tiles cover the ceiling of the narthex. The terrazzo floor of the entry ramp extends into the narthex; two rust-colored stripes lead from the ramp to the center doors into the main church, and the same color borders the narthex floor.

The 8'-6" ceiling height of the narthex opens into the three-story volume of the nave (*Photo 17*). The elliptical mass of the building is further expressed in the shape of this space and focuses attention on the altar at the south end. Truncated chevron piers line the curved sides of the nave, their bases intentionally painted gray, allowing them to disappear into the one-story side aisles. The engaged piers of the upper nave cant inward to support the plaster ceiling; the piers, walls, and ceiling are painted a crisp white. Iannelli's fourteen Stations of the Cross line the nave walls between the piers. Installed in 1951, these square panels feature incised sheet marble reliefs with the Christ figure in red marble, other figures in a gray-brown, and the crosses in black; small

¹⁴ Herculite is an early safety glass.

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wood block crosses adorn the upper corners of the reliefs (*Figure 11*). The cobalt and opaline blue windows pierce the upper nave walls at the sanctuary and choir loft (*Photos 17 & 18*).¹⁵ A floating elliptical ceiling cloud covers the nave, merging into a plaster fresco above the sanctuary (*Photos 17 & 19*). A narrow cove pierces the center of the cloud; its yellow frescoed surface reflects the indirect lighting around the edges. Acoustical ceiling tiles, laid in a diagonal pattern, cover the rest of the cloud surface. Four columns of historic white oak pews fill the nave.¹⁶ The terrazzo floor design of the narthex extends into the nave; rust-colored stripes separate the columns of pews and cover the side aisles.

The choir loft sits above the narthex at the north end of the nave (*Photo 18*). The red wall extends to the east and west at the north end of the side aisles. The Mothers' Room/Crying Room occupies the north end of the west aisle (*Photo 24*). A horizontal, soundproof glass window allows for parents to continue to participate in mass. The Baptistry, designed by Iannelli, occupies the north end of the east aisle (*Figure 12*). The curved wall of the Baptistry features an aluminum grille atop a plaster kneewall; translucent panels fill the spaces between the grillwork. The Font formerly occupied the Baptistry but was moved into the side aisle. Also designed by Iannelli, the marble font features a light-colored, cross-shaped base with black marble basin. An aluminum lid slides to reveal the interior of the basin (*Figure 13*).

The sanctuary fills the south end of the nave (*Photos 17 & 20*). A communion railing, designed by Iannelli, separates the sanctuary from the nave. The marble railing sits atop a seven-inch-tall platform, its black top the same height as the base of the sanctuary area behind it. Five centered marble steps lead up to the sanctuary from the communion railing (*Photo 20*). Centered within this platform is a high altar table, designed by Frank Grimaldi, in the late 1960s (*Figure 14*). The original high altar fills the south end of the sanctuary; three marble steps lead up to the altar area from the sanctuary. The marble high altar, also designed by Iannelli, has an elliptical plan and a centered mosaic featuring a basket and a fish (*Figure 15*). The Iannelli-designed aluminum tabernacle with crucifix rests atop the altar.¹⁷ Towering over the altar table is the aluminum statue of Christ the King. Iannelli designed and sculpted this piece with outstretched arms and burnished black Sacred Heart. The arms of the Christ statue point to the gold cross set within a

¹⁵ The Pittsburgh Glass Company, Kokomo, Indiana manufactured the windows.

¹⁶ "Ready on New Edifice," *The Kansas City Star* (1 July 1950): 4.

¹⁷ The tabernacle is a locked box fixed to the altar that holds the consecrated bread and wine used in the celebration of communion.

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tapered red fresco within the yellow wall of the sanctuary. Marble credence tables flank the altar and statue. The ceiling (baldachin) above the sanctuary features a lowered frescoed cloud with a stylized trefoil flanked by the Greek letters Alpha (Α) and Omega (Ω), all liturgical symbols. A narrow corridor behind the altar leads to small closets at the rear of the church.

Side chapels flank the sanctuary at the south ends of the side aisles. The Our Lady of Peace (the Virgin Mary) chapel is to the east, and the St. Joseph altar to the west. Each chapel features a marble altar with aluminum icon above and a marble credence table in a side wall, all designed by Iannelli. The Mary altar features a centered mosaic with the Latin word *Pax* (Peace). The statue of Mary faces west toward the sanctuary, her hands raised in prayer and a halo adorning her head. The tapered blue fresco with silver aura merges into a blue inset ceiling above the chapel area (*Photo 21*). The Joseph altar features a mosaic with stylized church and the Latin phrase *Ora et Labora* (Pray and Work). The aluminum statue of Joseph holds the Christ child. A tapered red fresco, trimmed in gold, merges into an inset gold fresco ceiling above the chapel area (*Photo 22*).

The side aisles themselves feature clerestory windows. Four confessional booths line the side aisles below the windows, two in each aisle, set between the structural piers (*Photo 23*). These white oak pieces have a centered door with glass cross in center. A light above the door indicated whether the confessional was in use. Flanking the centered door were built-in radiators.

The basement level of the Church is mostly unexcavated mechanical space. The stair in the belltower leads down to a small room that opens into a narrow corridor running the length of the building and ending at the boiler room at the south end. The boiler connected to the chimney that forms the “tail” of the church building.

SACRISTY (CONNECTOR)

The one-story Sacristy extends approximately sixteen feet northwest from the south end of the west side of the Church. This connector abuts the southeast end of the two-story Rectory (*Photo 1, Figures 4, 7, 15, & 16*). Ornamental plantings hide the north and south elevations; however, limestone veneer covers most of the exterior. The north wall integrates into the north elevation of the Rectory (described below). Two windows pierce the rear (south) elevation. The non-historic

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aluminum units replaced deteriorated historic windows but match the configuration and materials of the historic units.¹⁸

Connector Interior

Historically, the connector contained the sacristies for both the priests and altar boys (*Figure 7*). The two spaces were combined at an unknown date after the period of significance to create a small chapel (*Photo 25; Photo Map 2*); the west wall was moved about six feet to the east at that time. Doors within the east wall lead into the Church. A door at the west end of the north wall leads into the historic hallway to the Rectory that lines the north wall of the connector. This hallway opens into an entry vestibule; a square column in this space notes where the connector stops and the Rectory begins (*Photo 26*). Formerly, the west wall of the boys' sacristy extended to this column. Today, an ADA ramp fills the space between the column and sacristy wall. A historic stair with aluminum railing lines the east wall of the vestibule and leads to the basement. This area under the connector formerly served as a "rumpus room" for young people assisting in services. A door in its north wall leads into the mechanical space beneath the Church. Finishes throughout the connector include a mixture of plaster and gypsum board walls, gypsum board ceiling, and carpeted floors.

RECTORY

The two-story Rectory extends northwest from the Sacristy connector and is thus oriented on a northwest-southeast axis.¹⁹ The building exhibits stylistic references common to the Prairie School, including large overhanging eaves, ganged windows that produce a ribbon effect, simple rectilinear massing, and integrated outdoor space. A small rectangular penthouse rises from the south end of the building (partially visible in *Photo 1*); glass block in its west wall lights the second story corridor. A full basement extends below the building. The historic windows throughout the Rectory were replaced in the early 2000s with new aluminum units that match the historic configuration and materials (*Photo 10; Figures 16 & 17*).²⁰ All masonry window

¹⁸ Vincent Gauthier, architect and church member. Gauthier is the former historic architect for the Illinois SHPO.

¹⁹ As with the Church, the following description uses cardinal directions to describe the building for clarity. Thus, the true northeast elevation is plan north, the southeast is east, southwest is south, and northwest is west.

²⁰ Vincent Gauthier; confirmed on original plans on file with owner.

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openings have stone sills. Aluminum fascia covers the overhanging eaves; stone coping lines the parapet walls.

North Elevation

The massing of the Rectory organizes its asymmetrical north elevation. The primary portion of the wall is an L-shaped plane that integrates with the north elevation of the Connector (*Figure 17*). The east quarter of the Rectory's second story steps back approximately six feet to create the L-shaped primary plane. To the west of this primary plane, a rectangular entry mass/chimney steps back four feet and rises one half story above the roof line. The west quarter of the elevation steps back an additional one foot.

The grade significantly slopes from west to east from the entry tower, partially exposing the basement level (*Photo 10*) of the primary plane of the elevation. Three hopper windows pierce the ground level at the east end of the L-shaped wall; two windows are technically within the wall of the Connector (*Figure 17*). Vegetation obscures these windows from the exterior. At the first story, a horizontal rectangle of glass block (historic) pierces the east end of the Rectory wall (visible at right of *Photo 26*); the east edge of the masonry opening aligns with the east edge of the westernmost basement hopper window. Three casement windows pierce the west end of the exposed basement level (*Photo 10; Figure 17*). A rectangular masonry opening in the first story aligns with the center and west casement windows. Historically, four ganged casement windows filled this first story opening; today, three casements flank a centered fixed pane (*Photo 10; Figure 17*). A row of six identical windows lines the second story under a deep overhanging eave. These replacement units, matching the historic configuration, feature a centered set of casement windows with a fixed upper and lower pane (typical). Narrow rectangular pendants separate each window unit, typical of the second story windows. Three windows pierce the set back east quarter of the second story. A pair of typical windows with stone pendants fills the east end of the wall; a smaller casement window pierces the west end of this wall.

The entry tower steps back to accommodate a historic set of four granite steps leading up to the historic entrance (*Photos 10 & 12*). Red granite panels surround the inset historic glazed wood door. A red granite cross frames the west side of the inset entry. No other openings pierce this wall.

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The west quarter of the north elevation sits back from the entry tower and is an L-shaped plane. The west half of the second story is a void corresponding to a second story covered porch. A six-foot-tall limestone flower box extends from the west side of the entry tower under the first story window; this window unit features a center fixed pane flanked by casements. A pair of typical windows with stone pendants fills the wall at the second story. The roof continues to the west to shelter the porch (*Photos 10 & 11*).

West Elevation

Vegetation hides most of the west elevation today. At the first story, two rectangular masonry openings fill the wall; each contains two pairs of casement windows. The second story steps back to accommodate the outdoor porch. A historic pair of glazed wood doors pierces the center of the wall to provide access to the porch (*Photo 13*). Non-historic tile covers the floor of this porch. Limestone clads the walls, and plastered concrete covers the ceiling. Historically, the porch was screened (as shown on *Photo Map 4*); the screen was removed at an unknown date.

The building extends approximately eight feet to the south of the porch. The west elevation of this part of the building steps back approximately twenty-five feet from the porch. A single, typical, window pierces the second story of this wall; stone pendants frame the opening.

South Elevation

Similar to the north elevation, the massing of the Rectory organizes the south elevation into three planes. Vegetation hides portions of this wall (*Photo 11*). The west quarter of the building corresponds to the porch, creating an L-shaped wall plane. A rectangular masonry opening at the first story contains two pairs of casement windows. A pair of typical windows with stone pendants fills the wall at the second story; the roof continues to the west to shelter the porch (*Photo 11*).

To the west of this portion of the elevation, the building extends eight feet to the south. A one-story, flat-roofed exterior entry vestibule is centered at the first story (*Photo 11; Figure 16*). The centered masonry opening of this vestibule formerly contained a screen; today a sign for the church fills the void (*Photo 11*). The east end of the vestibule is open to allow access to the entry door into the Rectory. Two pairs of windows pierce the first story, flanking the vestibule mass;

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these window units contain a pair of casements over a hopper sash. Six windows pierce the second story of this portion of the south elevation. The west and two east windows are typical units without the stone pendants. Three pairs of square casements pierce the wall above the entry vestibule.

Finally, the east portion of the south elevation steps back approximately two feet from the center wall. Historically, two overhead garage doors pierced the center of the wall at the first story (*Figure 16*). When the garage was converted into additional interior meeting space (“Romero Room”), the garage doors were replaced with four-light windows over a concrete kneewall (*Figure 18*), filling the historic masonry openings. A pair of casement windows fill a historic masonry opening to the west of the center bays, and an entry into the Rectory/Connection pierces the wall to the east of the center bays. A glazed aluminum door and sidelights fills the historic opening. At the second story, a square casement window pierces the west end of the wall; two typical windows (without stone pendants) pierce the center of the wall above the former garage bays.

East Elevation

The second story of the east elevation is visible above the one-story connector. A square casement window pierces the center of the south end of the wall, while a typical window unit with stone pendants fills the north end of the wall. A similar window fills the second story of the east wall to the north that sits back approximately twenty-eight feet from the main portion of the east elevation. Three windows pierce the east elevation of the protruding center section of the south side of the building (*Figure 18*). The basement and first story windows are single casements; the second story window is similar to the typical windows of this level with a single casement unit between a fixed upper and lower sash.

Interior

Three full floors, including the basement, comprise the Rectory. Communal spaces such as offices, kitchen, and dining room occupy the first floor. The upper floor formerly contained dormitories for the priests serving both St. Francis Xavier Parish and Rockhurst College, as well as a meeting room. The living spaces have been reused as offices. The basement contains mechanical and storage rooms, as well as the church vault. A switchback stair to the immediate

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east of the north entry provides access between all three floors (*Photo 28; Photo Maps 3 & 4*). An additional stair to the basement is located off the kitchen at the rear entrance (*Photo Map 3*). Simple historic finishes remain throughout the building, including painted plaster walls and ceilings and wood trim/casing; carpet covers most floors. The interior contains details that embellish the otherwise simple building. These features include curved corners in narrow spaces, use of glass block to allow light into interior spaces, aluminum handrails, wooden built-ins, and a Roman brick fireplace surround.

A corridor along the north side of the first floor, connects the Sacristy to the Rectory (*Photo 26*). Two sets of steps lead up from the Connector to the Rectory. Historic aluminum handrails line the south wall. A door in the south wall of the first landing leads into the former garage (now Romero Room).

A door at the top of the stepped corridor leads into the former dining room of the Rectory (*Photo 27; Photo Map 3*). A ganged group of windows along the north wall lights the space; built-in radiators line the wall below the windows. A plaster cove lines the perimeter of the ceiling, and two historic inset light fixtures pierce the center of the ceiling. A door in the south wall of the dining room leads into the kitchen. Wooden cabinets line the perimeter walls, and vinyl tile covers the floor. A door in the west wall of the dining room leads into the main stair hall of the first floor (*Photo 28*), followed by the north entry vestibule with vinyl tile floor. Administrative offices fill the north end of the building (*Photo Map 3*).

The main stair leads up to a small landing at the second floor (*Photo Map 4*). A pair of wooden doors in the west wall leads into the Hearth Room, a meeting space. The Roman brick fireplace on the north wall is the focal point of the room (*Photo 29*). A pair of historic doors in the center of the west wall of the Hearth Room leads out onto the second story porch. A pair of doors in the south wall of the second-floor landing leads into an office. An opening at the southeast corner of the landing leads to a single-loaded corridor that organizes the four former dormitories (now offices) of the second floor (*Photo 30*). Historic built-in cabinets occupy the center of the south wall of this corridor, and the glass block of the penthouse lights the corridor. A door in the east wall of the landing leads into the Father's office and quarters. The historic bathrooms on this floor retain historic tile floor and wainscot and historic fixtures such as sink, tub, toilet, and light fixtures (*Figure 19*).

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A single-loaded corridor along the north side of the basement organizes the storage and mechanical rooms, as well as the church vault. A door at the east end of the corridor leads into the basement of the Connector.

INTEGRITY

St. Francis Xavier Parish Church & Rectory retains historic integrity. The building remains in its historic location on land historically associated with the parish. The former parish church occupied the land adjacent to the south of the nominated building. Both Rockhurst College and St. Francis Xavier School developed around the parish church property and continue to remain within proximity of the nominated property. The site itself retains its historic setting with the building overlooking the intersection of East 52nd Street and Troost Avenue and the parking lot filling the west portion of the site.

The design of St. Francis Xavier represents the culmination of architect Barry Byrne's design philosophies. This is the first church he was able to use his fish-shaped plan to focus participants on the altar while also visually merging the sanctuary and nave. The modern building remains highly intact from its initial construction. The only alterations to the Church occurred after Vatican II in the 1960s, and these were minor changes to bring the altar into the sanctuary. The original, minimal artwork by Alfonso Iannelli remains intact as well, including altars, sculpture, and his Stations of the Cross. The modern materials used in this building—glass, polished steel, aluminum, cut limestone, steel—combine with the original design to form a holistic modern building. Historic materials remain throughout the building and include terrazzo floors, marble furnishings in the church, wood built-ins, doors, and furniture. Some windows have been replaced, primarily within the Rectory, but the designs and materials generally match the historic configurations and fill historic openings. The new units do not impact the historic Prairie School design of the Rectory. Additional alterations to the building adapted existing spaces into new uses. In the Connector, the two sacristies on the first floor were combined into one large chapel, and the former garage in the Rectory became a meeting room. The minimal alterations of these spaces do not detract from the historic integrity because the spaces are tertiary to the overall significance of the building. The retention of the materials and the original spatial relationships help to uphold the feeling and association of this sacred place.

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STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE SUMMARY

Built between 1948 and 1950, St. Francis Xavier Parish Church & Rectory in Kansas City, Jackson County, Missouri, is nationally significant under Criterion C in the area of ARCHITECTURE as the best representative example of the architecture of Francis Barry Byrne (1883-1967) and in the area of ART for the integral pieces by sculptor Alfonso Iannelli (1888-1965) and color scheme by Annette Cremin Byrne (1900-1990). Barry Byrne's portfolio includes both secular and ecclesiastical works. However, his Catholic churches best evince the evolution of his design ideals; his focus on church architecture may be a contributing factor as to why Byrne has not received the same level of scholarly attention as some of his more well-known contemporaries. A devout Catholic, Byrne championed the Liturgical Reform Movement, a turn-of-the-twentieth-century ideology that promoted full and active participation of non-clergy, and his ecclesiastical architecture sought to physically manifest this participation, decades before the Second Vatican Council of the 1960s. The progressive design of St. Francis Xavier represents the culmination of Byrne's ideas for a modern Catholic church. This Kansas City church became the first building where he employed his elliptical plan, which he compared to a fish, that was meant to transform congregants into participants rather than merely spectators. St. Francis Xavier received the moniker "the Fish Church" early in its life due to the design and continues to be warmly referred to by this name. Part of Byrne's modern design philosophy included allowing the building itself to be art. Additional artwork needed to support the design of the building and the function of the spaces. Byrne found an empathetic collaborator in sculptor Alfonso Iannelli. Like Byrne, Iannelli believed in the integration of art and architecture, that the art in buildings was more than simply applied ornamentation but actually part of the architecture. At St. Francis Xavier, Iannelli created functional art from altar candlesticks to the integral statue of the church's namesake. Because the building was built and currently owned by the Catholic Diocese of Kansas City-St. Joseph, Criterion Consideration A applies to St. Francis Xavier Church & Rectory. The building continues to be eligible for listing because its significance derives from its architecture and art rather than an association with religious doctrine. The period of significance of the building spans 1948 to 1951, the year construction began to the year Iannelli's final artwork was installed in the church.

ELABORATION

St. Francis Xavier Parish Church & Rectory in Kansas City, Missouri's, (1948-1951) stands out, not only as the best representative example of his ecclesiastical architecture, but the best example

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of the architecture of Barry Byrne. Rather than employ traditional forms or styles, Byrne sought to produce a dynamic expression of the liturgy through a new architectural form.²¹ The realization of “the Fish Church” (St. Francis Xavier) was as much influenced by Byrne’s ecumenical philosophies as it was architectural trends of the era, and perhaps more so. St. Francis Xavier is arguably the apex of a career spent developing a “new logical plan having its inception in the purposes of worship,” as Byrne wrote in 1947 while in the midst of designing the church in Kansas City.²² The success of the design is in large part due to the collaboration of Alfonso Iannelli and Annette Cremin Byrne.

The following narrative begins with a discussion of the primary designers of St. Francis Xavier: architect Barry Byrne and artist Alfonso Iannelli. This discussion centers on the design philosophies and examples of the works of Byrne and Iannelli. This is followed by a discussion of the design of St. Francis Xavier Parish Church & Rectory. The narrative concludes with a brief history of the parish of St. Francis Xavier from its founding in 1909 until 1951, the end of the period of significance.

The Designers of St. Francis Xavier

Barry Byrne is the principal designer behind St. Francis Xavier Parish Church & Rectory in Kansas City, Missouri. However, the completeness of the design could not have been accomplished without the collaboration of artist Alfonso Iannelli, and to a smaller degree, of artist Annette Cremin Byrne, wife of the architect. Byrne received his Missouri architecture license in late 1946, but because he was based in Chicago, the parish hired Joseph Shaughnessy, Sr. to be the local architect of record.²³

BARRY BYRNE (1883-1967)

²¹ Michael, *The Architecture of Barry Byrne*, 132.

²² Barry Byrne, “Toward a New Architecture of Worship,” *Architectural Record* (September 1947): 96.

²³ Francis Barry Byrne, Architectural License 689, issued 18 December 1946. Missouri Division of Professional Registration, Online Licensee Search.

Because of their local knowledge, architects of record often are selected when out-of-town architects are hired to design a building. Their roles can vary, but they generally assist in construction documents and the day-to-day overseeing of construction. Joseph A. Demkin, *The Architect’s Handbook of Professional Practice*, 13th ed. (New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 2001), 712.

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Born Francis Barry Byrne (*Figure 20*) in Chicago in 1883, Byrne frequently dropped his first name in favor of Barry. A ten-year-old Byrne visited the World's Columbian Exposition in 1893 and concluded that he must become an architect. His plans derailed in 1897 when the death of his father forced him to leave school in order to help support his family. In 1902, after seeing an exhibition of Frank Lloyd Wright's work at the Art Institute of Chicago, Byrne decided to ask Wright for a job in his Oak Park Studio; Wright obliged, unbothered by Byrne's lack of diplomas and having faith in the apprenticeship system. At the age of nineteen, Byrne began the training that would enable him to fulfill his career dreams.²⁴

Byrne spent approximately seven years with Wright, five as draftsman apprentice and two as a full member of the architectural staff. His collaborations included such Prairie School examples as Unity Temple (1905-1908) in Oak Park, Illinois, and residences for the Bechey (1906), Coonley (1908-1912), Sutton (1908), and Tomek (1904) families (*Figure 21*).²⁵ His time at Oak Park was both formative and enjoyable. From Wright and his principal associates William Drummond and Walter Griffin, Byrne learned the process of designing and the importance of the relationship between plan and elevation. As he wrote in 1963, "The value inherent in this sense of relationship was a basic one and related not only to the forms Mr. Wright initiated, but to any forms one might feel impelled to use on independent ventures."²⁶ Byrne also learned the importance of whole design, that is, the importance of designing fixtures and features that complement the architecture, as is evidenced in his completed works. Byrne left Wright's studio in 1909 to join fellow former apprentice Andrew Willatzen in Seattle, Washington.

The Willatzen & Byrne firm designed twenty-five buildings in the three years of their partnership. Residences such as the 1910 Matzen and Handschy houses, both in Seattle, recall the Prairie School style within which the two architects trained: overhanging eaves, ganged windows, horizontal massing, and deep porches (*Figure 22*).²⁷ These elements continued to present in Byrne's residential architecture even in later decades. The firm also designed a handful of Catholic churches that showed little departure from the historical revivalist styles prevalent at

²⁴ Sally Kitt Chappell & Ann Van Zanten, *Barry Byrne, John Lloyd Wright: Architecture & Design* (Chicago: Chicago Historical Society, 1982), 10.

²⁵ Chappell, *Barry Byrne*, 11; Barry Byrne, "On Frank Lloyd Wright and His Atelier," *Journal of Architectural Education* 18, no. 1 (June 1963): 4. P.A. Bechy House, Oak Park, Illinois; Avery Coonley House, Riverside, Illinois; Sutton House, McCook, Nebraska; and F.F. Tomek House, Riverside, Illinois.

²⁶ Barry Byrne, "On Frank Lloyd Wright and His Atelier," 4.

²⁷ Chappell, *Barry Byrne*, 11; Michael, *The Architecture of Barry Byrne*, 19-20.

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the time. The partnership dissolved in 1913. Byrne moved to Los Angeles, rooming with brothers John and Lloyd Wright (and sons of Frank Lloyd Wright) and sculptor Alfonso Iannelli. Byrne also became acquainted with architect Irving Gill during his brief time in Los Angeles. Gill impressed Byrne by his use of stark wall planes with unornamented punched window openings, like at the 1909 Christian Science Church in San Diego (*Figure 23*).²⁸

Byrne returned to Chicago in early 1914 to head Walter Griffin's firm while Griffin was in Australia. The three years he spent in Chicago as head of Griffin's office helped Byrne establish himself. Commissions during this time ranged from houses to institutional buildings to city plans. After serving for a brief time in the army during World War I, Byrne established his own firm in Chicago in 1917.²⁹ His first commissions for Catholic dioceses came in the early 1920s, thus beginning his striving to create "a new logical plan" for a Catholic church.

The years between 1917 and 1932 were the most prolific of his career. Of the fifty commissions during this time period, only ten went unbuilt. His work included small structures such as a family tomb, alterations and additions to existing buildings, and numerous residences. He also designed at least four Catholic churches: St. Thomas the Apostle Church, Chicago (1922-1924) (*Figures 24 & 25*), St. Patrick's Church & Rectory, Racine (1923-1924), the Church of Christ the King, Tulsa (1926), and the Church of Christ the King, Ireland (1927-1931) (*Figure 24 & 26*), discussed in more detail below. His projects primarily concentrated in the Midwest, with outliers as far away as Oklahoma, Florida, and Ireland.³⁰

In 1920, Byrne met artist **Annette Cremin** (1900-1990) (*Figure 20*). Like Byrne, she was born and raised in Chicago. She decided at a young age to be a portrait artist, eventually studying at the Academy of Fine Arts in Chicago. Cremin worked as an independent illustrator for advertisements, election posters, and children's books. The two finally married in 1926, after she turned Byrne down twice, valuing her independence. Cremin produced renderings for Byrne's architectural proposals and, with an eye for color, often collaborated on interior color schemes for his projects, including at St. Francis Xavier. The couple had three children.³¹

²⁸ Michael, *The Architecture of Barry Byrne*, 21.

²⁹ Chappell, *Barry Byrne*, 11; Michael, *The Architecture of Barry Byrne*, 21.

³⁰ Chappell, *Barry Byrne*, 12; Michael, *The Architecture of Barry Byrne*, 178-179.

³¹ Chappell, *Barry Byrne*, 12; Michael, *The Architecture of Barry Byrne*, 69.

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The start of the Great Depression in 1929 hurt Byrne's business. Following the advice of friends, Byrne moved his family to New York in 1932, staying until 1945. He realized only six complete projects while in New York, half of which were alterations to existing buildings.³² To supplement income, Byrne became a building inspector and began contributing articles about art and architecture to various publications. The family returned to Chicago immediately following the war.³³

Between 1946 and his semi-retirement in 1953, Byrne designed nearly thirty projects, most of which were churches or works for Catholic schools. Among the churches were three of the most significant commissions of his career: St. Francis Xavier Parish Church & Rectory, Kansas City (1946-1950), St. Columba Church, St. Paul (1948-1951) (*Figure 27*), and the abbey church at St. Benedict, Atchison (completed 1961) (*Figure 28*). In these later commissions, discussed below, the evolution of his design ideals became realized. Of the three, St. Francis Xavier was the first and most complete example. Byrne continued working in partial retirement until 1967.³⁴

Modernism and Catholicism

Modernism and Catholicism share equal weight in their influence on Barry Byrne. As a devout Catholic, Byrne saw the prevailing ideas of church design in the early twentieth century as being too rooted in the past. The American Catholic Church seemed to use the Gothic and Italian Renaissance revival styles and Roman basilica plan as if they were *the* holy design standards, traditional yet dead. Byrne believed the church building should express the living organism of the Church itself.³⁵

Catholic churches of the early twentieth century overwhelmingly followed their historic precedents. The styles applied to the buildings were as much about ornamentation as they were about plan arrangement. The traditional plans were based on the Roman basilica with hierarchical spaces ("a" in *Figure 24*); these heavy boxes often required internal columns.³⁶ The

³² Michael, *The Architecture of Barry Byrne*, 179-180.

³³ Chappell, *Barry Byrne*, 12; Michael, *The Architecture of Barry Byrne*, 121.

³⁴ Chappell, *Barry Byrne*, 12; Michael, *The Architecture of Barry Byrne*, 180.

³⁵ Barry Byrne, "Plan for a Church," *Liturgical Arts* 10 (May 1942): 58. He described the Italian Renaissance-style church in which he was raised "as almost unique in its garish shoddiness."

³⁶ Michael, *The Architecture of Barry Byrne*, 46.

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narthex contained the entry into the building and into the primary space of the church, the nave which contained the pews. Side aisles, with confessionals and chapels, flanked the nave; columns demarcated the side aisles. The sanctuary filled the opposite end of the building from the narthex, a raised portion of the church containing the high altar table holding the sacred elements within a small tabernacle. A railing or even full screen separated the sanctuary from the people, and only priests were allowed within the sanctuary. During mass, the congregation were spectators not participants. Byrne wanted to integrate the nave and sanctuary to allow for the active communication between the people and the altar, an idea championed by liturgical reformers and finally codified during the Second Vatican Council in the 1960s, as discussed below. The ecclesiastical architecture of Barry Byrne is a tangible evolution of his ideas of creating a new living and logical plan for the Catholic church before mandated (and encouraged) by the Catholic church itself.

It was while attending Sunday mass that a nineteen-year-old Byrne first began to develop a new plan. As he recalled years later, he envisioned “a better identity of church architecture with its religious purpose, with its contemporary use, and with modern structural systems. If this identity were achieved, the road would be opened toward a living, contemporary architecture.”³⁷ Church architecture should invest the structure with a living quality, the blending of function, structure, materials.

The first opportunity to experiment with the plan of a Catholic church came in 1922 when the Chicago parish of St. Thomas the Apostle hired Byrne, with Alfonso Iannelli. Byrne developed a plan that contrasted with the traditional rectangular basilica in two innovative ways (“b” in *Figure 24*). First, the main space of the church is one volume. The load-bearing brick exterior walls and steel roof trusses eliminated the need for interior columns that obstructed views of the sanctuary (*Figure 25*). This design also eliminated the traditional side aisles, which allowed pews to extend the full width of the space without visual obstruction. Perhaps the most tradition-breaking aspect of the plan, however, was the redesign of the sanctuary. Byrne projected the polygonal structure into the nave, wrapping pews around it to bring participants closer to the heart of the mass.³⁸ His initial design thrust the sanctuary into the nave forty feet (as shown in *Figure 24*); the design changed at the insistence of the building committee to reduce the

³⁷ Byrne, “Plan for a Church,” *Liturgical Arts*, 58; Byrne, “Toward a New Architecture of Worship,” *Architectural Record*, 93-94.

³⁸ St Thomas the Apostle Church & Convent were listed in the National Register in 1978 (NRIS #78001132).

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projection of the sanctuary to twenty feet (as can be seen in *Figure 25*). The exterior form of the brick church is a squat rectangle with a projecting narthex. Iannelli designed the terra cotta window surrounds and parapet.³⁹

Byrne historians Vincent Michael and Sally Chappell argue that the innovative sanctuary plan feature marks Byrne's St. Thomas the Apostle as the first modern Catholic church. Auguste Perret's Notre Dame du Raincy (1922-1923), near Paris, France, often receives this accolade due to its form and innovative use of concrete, but its plan retains the historic precedent of separated nave and sanctuary (*Figure 29*). Architectural historian William Curtis notes that Notre Dame du Raincy "suggested how modern materials like reinforced concrete might be used to reinterpret traditional church typologies, but without abandoning a recognizable connection to traditional imagery. In this instance nave, aisles, columns, vaults were all present, but recast according to the logic and dimensions of an uncustomary structural system."⁴⁰ Byrne modernized the traditional plan of a Catholic church; Perret modernized the materials used. Historian Jay Price acknowledges that St. Thomas the Apostle is one of the first major modern Catholic churches in the Midwest. Byrne's church pre-dates the 1939 St. Austin Church (demolished) in Minneapolis, Minnesota, by seventeen years (*Figure 30*).⁴¹ Byrne continued to employ the open nave and projecting sanctuary in his next two churches in Racine, Wisconsin, and Tulsa, Oklahoma, in 1924 and 1925, respectively ("c" and "d" in *Figure 24*).

In 1929, Byrne continued to evolve away from the traditional Catholic church plan with his commission of the Church of Christ the King in Cork, Ireland (*Figure 26*). The octagonal plan of the building prefigures the ellipse he first employed at St. Francis Xavier ("e" in *Figure 24*). The serrated perimeter walls grow out of plan into a dynamic, rhythmic exterior that rises into a soaring entrance tower (*Figure 26*). Narrow windows pierce the serrated walls to light the open interior nave. As with his other churches, the sanctuary moves into the nave with pews wrapping the sides. The altar wall and ceiling repeat the serrated motif. A narrow light along the apex of the slanted ceiling helps lead the focus toward the altar (*Figure 26*). The use of concrete as the primary building material was rather unconventional, if economical, at the time; in fact, this was

³⁹ Chappell, *Barry Byrne*, 22-23; Michael, *The Architecture of Barry Byrne*, 45-57.

⁴⁰ William J.R. Curtis, *Modern Architecture Since 1900* 3rd ed (New York: Phaidon Press, 1996), 300.

⁴¹ Chappell, *Barry Byrne*, 22; Michael, *The Architecture of Barry Byrne*, 46-52; Jay Price, *Temples for a Modern God: Religious Architecture in Postwar America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013), 140-141; Larry Millett, "St. Austin Roman Catholic Church, Minneapolis," *Minnesota History* 60, no. 8 (Winter 2007): 303.

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the first use of the material in a church in the British Isles. Instead of Iannelli, Byrne collaborated with another Chicago sculptor, John Storrs, who designed the statue of Christ the King that adorns and becomes the main entrance into the building (*Figure 26*); this is the primary artwork in the church, with the form and massing of the building itself becoming the artwork.⁴²

Byrne spent his career designing ecclesiastical architecture that eschewed the historicism he abhorred while simultaneously decrying American modernism. To Byrne, American church architects either oversimplified historic forms or reduced architecture to functional boxes, and to him, neither instance produced real churches.⁴³ In a February 1951 article in *Liturgical Arts*, he accused American modernism of lacking content and being superficial:

The cry for many years, moreover, has been for a ‘modern architecture,’ and if I have, in desperate moments of trying to convey my idea, used such a combination of words, I now publicly state my contrition. That thing which abounds and which is known as architectural modernism has more the character of disease than of a style.⁴⁴

Modernism, to Byrne, meant the shedding of historical precedent in order to celebrate new forms and materials, much in the vein of his early twentieth century European counterparts. Byrne defied labeling his own architectural style, instead choosing to use the word “clarity” to describe it, clarity being the integration of structure, materials, and form into one object. Nevertheless, Byrne was a dedicated modernist but one who sought an honesty and humility he failed to recognize in much of the contemporaneous modern American architecture.⁴⁵

His progressive views of architectural modernism coincided with his views on the Catholic church itself. Byrne was part of a small but vocal group who advocated for liturgical reform decades before the Second Vatican Council reforms in the 1960s. The Liturgical Reform Movement sought to promote social justice but also to include the congregation in the participation of mass, whether through the use of English (instead of Latin), or removal of physical barriers between the sanctuary, altar, and nave. In the 1920s, American Catholic

⁴² Chappell, *Barry Byrne*, 24-25; Michael, *The Architecture of Barry Byrne*, 91-97.

⁴³ Byrne, “Toward a New Architecture of Worship,” *Architectural Record*, 94.

⁴⁴ Byrne, “This Modernism,” *Liturgical Arts*, 34.

⁴⁵ Michael, *The Architecture of Barry Byrne*, 2, 6.

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organizations like the Liturgical Arts Society became outlets for communicating thoughts about how church construction, art, and worship itself could evolve to promote reform. The *Liturgical Arts* journal emerged as a prime vehicle for disseminating this information.⁴⁶ Byrne contributed numerous articles over the years, especially when living in New York.

The monastic orders, especially the Benedictines, promoted innovation in Church architecture during the twentieth century. The first Benedictine Liturgical Week occurred in Chicago in October 1940. Over twelve thousand people attended the conference to discuss liturgical issues and how those issues became manifest in church architecture. In 1944, the now annual conference opened to all Catholics, not just Benedictines, and became the Liturgical Conference.⁴⁷ Barry Byrne attended these conferences, writing a review of the 1947 event for *Liturgical Arts*. Pleased with the proceedings and discussions, Byrne took time to note that “the ministers celebrated mass facing across the altar toward the congregation. As this arrangement has excited interest and discussion, a demonstration of this kind has concrete usefulness.”⁴⁸ The simple turning of the priest toward the people during the mass seemed revelatory to the Catholics—and Catholic architects like Byrne—used to seeing the backs of the officiants. These conferences proved useful to Byrne’s evolution of ideas of architecture, and his writings increased his recognition among clergy. Toward the end of his career, especially, Byrne was recognized as a leader in the field of ecclesiastical architecture. This is evidenced by his participation in the 1960 Lercaro Medal as a juror alongside other modern-era architects Felix Candela, Oscar Niemeyer, and Rudolf Schwarz. The Lercaro Medal was awarded to the winning design for a Catholic mission church.⁴⁹

ALFONSO IANNELLI (1888-1965)

Alfonso Iannelli (*Figure 31*) excelled in multiple artistic media, including sculpture, metalwork, illustration, painting, and even furniture and industrial design. He was born Alfonso Iannelli in Andretta, Italy in 1888; from 1906 onward he used the spelling Iannelli. The family immigrated to Newark, New Jersey in 1898. Iannelli showed artistic promise from a young age. His first

⁴⁶ Price, *Temples for a Modern God*, 40.

⁴⁷ Price, *Temples for a Modern God*, 95.

⁴⁸ Barry Byrne, “The Portland Conference.” *Liturgical Arts* 16 (November 1947): 19.

⁴⁹ Father Patrick O’Donnell, *Oculus* XXXI, no. 7 (April 1960): 2. *Oculus* was the newsletter of the New York Chapter of the AIA. Father O’Donnell was Chairman of the Committee on Awards for the chapter.

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apprenticeship occurred in a decorator's studio when he was eight years old. At age thirteen, and living in America, Iannelli left school to apprentice with a jeweler; his artistic skills quickly earned him a scholarship to Newark Technical School. Iannelli received another scholarship in 1906 to attend the New York Art Students League. He studied drawing under George B. Bridgman and sculpture under Gutzon Borglum.⁵⁰ Borglum was so impressed with Iannelli that two months into his studies he invited him to join the Borglum Studio; Iannelli was eighteen at the time. He stayed in New York until 1910 when he moved to Los Angeles and opened his own studio; Iannelli Studios remained active for over fifty years. While in Los Angeles, Iannelli befriended the younger Wrights and Barry Byrne, sharing an apartment with all of them. Through this connection, Iannelli began a collaboration with Frank Lloyd Wright. Wright's sons persuaded their father to hire Iannelli as sculptor for Chicago's Midway Garden in 1914. The commission included creating interior details, roof line ornamentation, figurative spindles, and Sprite sculptures (*Figure 32*), which became some of his best-known works.⁵¹ Iannelli followed his friends, the Wrights and Byrne, back to Chicago in 1915 where he settled until his death in 1965. Among his acquaintances, friends, and collaborators were artists Wassily Kandinsky and Laszlo Moholy-Nagy and architects Mies van der Rohe, Frank Lloyd Wright and sons John and Lloyd, Louis Sullivan, Erich Mendelsohn, Bruce Goff, and Barry Byrne. His residence in Chicago and the friendships with architects of that city resulted in a concentration of Iannelli's work in the Midwest, ranging from individual sculpted figures to architectural elements on churches and courthouses.⁵²

Integrating Art and Architecture

Iannelli considered himself a commercial artist, one who excelled in various media and design roles to meet the needs of clients. Iannelli eschewed the concept of "art for art's sake," believing such an elitist approach produced work only fit for private collections or art museums.⁵³ In some ways this recalls Byrne's philosophy that historical architectural styles failed to represent the living, contemporary user. Iannelli intended his works to be functional as well as beautiful. Although he never mentioned the Arts & Crafts Movement of the late nineteenth century, his philosophy shared the ideal of the Movement, that design should express the structural integrity

⁵⁰ Borglum designed and over saw the carving of Mt. Rushmore.

⁵¹ Midway Gardens was demolished in 1929, but some of his sculpture was relocated elsewhere.

⁵² Jameson, *Alfonso Iannelli*, xv-xvi, 1-5, 63, 97.

⁵³ Jameson, *Alfonso Iannelli*, xviii.

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of the object, that structure itself could be art.⁵⁴ Iannelli intrinsically understood the “primary importance of the integration of the arts with architecture,” as noted by architect Joseph Griggs, and his artistic propensities and training endowed him with “a sensitivity to the inherent nature of materials.”⁵⁵ While Iannelli could work with any medium, he is best known for his skill as a sculptor.

At Midway Gardens in 1914, the twenty-six-year-old Iannelli first experimented with the integration of art and architecture that would eventually culminate at St. Francis Xavier nearly forty years later. Early 1900s architects such as Josef Hoffmann and Bruno Schmitz collaborated with sculptors Emilie Simandl and Franz Metzner, respectively, to integrate sculpture within the fabric of the building (*Figure 33*).⁵⁶ Iannelli craved this collaborative effort. As Frank Lloyd Wright’s collaborator, Iannelli felt the freedom to, as he recalled, “see the logical working out of a piece of sculpture connected with a building—the essential form of a building, which is geometric, following throughout the sculpture, thereby making a unit of the whole thing...”⁵⁷ Iannelli considered Midway Gardens a great breakthrough, and continually reflected on the experience in later writings and lectures, including the following poetic summation:

For a piece of sculpture to attain this unity with the building, its form must be determined at the same time the building is designed. Sculpture still may be described as the “flower” of architecture, as long as we realize that the flower is one with its roots and stem.⁵⁸

Although he did not contribute to the art at Christ the King in Cork, the integrated statue of Christ at the entry into the church exemplifies this sentiment.

BYRNE AND IANNELLI

⁵⁴ Jameson, *Alfonso Iannelli*, 97; Joseph Griggs, “Alfonso Iannelli: The Prairie Spirit in Sculpture,” *The Prairie School Review* 2, no. 4 (Fourth Quarter 1965): 5.

⁵⁵ Griggs, “Alfonso Iannelli...,” 5.

⁵⁶ Jameson, *Alfonso Iannelli*, 63.

⁵⁷ Alfonso Iannelli, personal correspondence catalogued and transcribed by David Jameson in *Alfonso Iannelli*, 69.

⁵⁸ Alfonso Iannelli, unpublished notes transcribed by Jameson in *Alfonso Iannelli*, 74, 77. Iannelli never collaborated with Wright again. According to Jameson, this stems, at least in part, from Iannelli’s incredulity that Wright claimed credit for the work designed and executed by Iannelli in publications, a stance Wright unapologetically disregarded.

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Iannelli biographer David Jameson notes, “In Chicago, there became no professional partnership as long lasting and artistically satisfying as Iannelli’s series of design collaborations with Barry Byrne.”⁵⁹ The decades of mutual respect led to their successful collaboration at St. Francis Xavier in Kansas City.

Barry Byrne and Alfonso Iannelli shared many similarities. Both were young when their fathers died; neither completed high school; both were devout Catholics and shared similar feelings about social justice and politics. Their affinity and respect for each other created a collaborative, non-hierarchical relationship. Byrne described their process like a dance, where the lead shifted depending on need. Unlike his work with Wright, Iannelli’s partnership with Byrne afforded him the greatest amount of autonomy of any collaborative relationship of his career.⁶⁰

The pair collaborated on over fifteen commissions. Their first projects were while Byrne took over for Griffin: the Franke House, Fort Wayne, Indiana (1915) and the Clarke House in Fairfield, Iowa (1915).⁶¹ Their first church collaboration began in 1922 at St. Thomas the Apostle Church in Chicago, previously discussed (*Figure 25*).⁶² The Great Depression and Byrne’s relocation to New York halted their professional association for nearly twenty years. When Byrne received the commission for St. Francis Xavier Parish in Kansas City, he recruited Iannelli in one of their last collaborations.⁶³

JOSEPH B. SHAUGHNESSY, SR. (1898-1992)

Joseph B. Shaughnessy, Sr. was born in Kansas City, Kansas in 1898. He received a Bachelor of Architecture from the University of Notre Dame in 1922 and returned to Kansas City upon graduation. His first professional position was as a draftsman for the Kansas City, Kansas architectural firm of Rose & Peterson then for Carroll & Dean, who were based in Kansas City, Missouri. Carroll & Dean received numerous commissions from the Diocese of Kansas City, including buildings at Rockhurst College while Shaughnessy worked with them. Shaughnessy

⁵⁹ Jameson, *Alfonso Iannelli*, 98.

⁶⁰ Jameson, *Alfonso Iannelli*, 107.

⁶¹ Jameson, *Alfonso Iannelli*, 100; Michael, *The Architecture of Barry Byrne*, 177-181.

⁶² Michael, *The Architecture of Barry Byrne*, 178.

⁶³ Jameson, *Alfonso Iannelli*, 197; Michael, *The Architecture of Barry Byrne*, 180.

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formed an architecture firm with Edwin Bower in 1928; the firm expanded in 1950 to include Frank Grimaldi. Shaughnessy, and his firm, was a prolific architect in the Kansas City area, designing several churches and schools for the Catholic diocese. His works include additions to the campus of St. John Seminary & High School (1942, 1946-48, 1958) and the Benedictine Sanctuary of Perpetual Adoration (1947-1949), both in Kansas City, Missouri. Shaughnessy served as president of the Kansas City Chapter of the AIA between 1950-1952, and from 1952 to 1955, as AIA national director. He retired in 1967.⁶⁴

The Design of St. Francis Xavier Church & Rectory

Architectural biographer, Vincent Michael, asserts that St. Francis Xavier Parish Church & Rectory “is arguably the masterwork of Byrne, Cremin Byrne, and Iannelli.”⁶⁵ Iannelli even acknowledged to one of his closest friends that this was the work of which he was proudest.⁶⁶ St. Francis Xavier is a substantial departure from traditional Catholic church architecture and the culmination of the ideas Byrne and Iannelli strove to achieve during their careers. The progressive design contrasts with that of the traditional Catholic church accustomed to historical revival styles such as Gothic Revival and Italian Renaissance.

Revivalist styles and traditional plans predominated Catholic architecture across the United States, and Kansas City was no exception. The 1882 Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception, the seat of the Kansas City bishopric located at 416 West 12th Street (extant), is a brick basilica plan designed by T. R. Tinsley in an English Rococo/Romanesque style (*Figure 34*). Two-story rounded arch windows pierce the elevations between classical pilasters; an ornate broken pediment adorns the entrance. Wilder & Wight designed the Our Lady of Perpetual Help Redemptorist Church between 1907-1912. The stone Gothic Revival building features the capped flying buttresses, pointed arch windows, and rosette window seen in high-style revival churches (*Figure 34*). St. Francis Xavier departed from the traditional Catholic architecture of Kansas City.

⁶⁴ Lenhausen & Loughlin, “St. John’s Seminary [Kansas City, Missouri],” National Register nomination (2021): 8:16-8:17; George S. Koyl, ed., *American Architects Directory* (New York: R.R. Bowker Company, 1955), 500; “Joseph B Shaughnessy,” Obituary *The Kansas City Star* (23 April 1992): C-4.

⁶⁵ Michael, *The Architecture of Barry Byrne*, 134.

⁶⁶ Michael, *The Architecture of Barry Byrne*, 134, 206 fn.19.

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Stylistically, St. Francis Xavier Parish Church is part of the vast Modern Movement, with its clean lines, expansive wall planes with windows puncturing the shell, and its rejection of historicism. Architectural historian Charles Jenks warns that this moniker tends to elicit the reaction of some catchall theory of architectural development that defines the twentieth century. The tendency is to see the “Modern Movement” style through a series of heroes and villains that inevitably forgets designers significant to their time. The result of the forgetfulness is that a singular ideology emerges that defines the Modern Movement.⁶⁷ Building upon Jenks, historian Sarah Williams Goldhagen argues that architectural modernism is more than a style-based paradigm, that the Modern Movement should be viewed as encompassing the vast manifestations of individual discourse among those practicing architecture at the time.⁶⁸ Barry Byrne and his contributions to architecture have arguably ended up in the forgetfulness of the architectural history of the style-based Modern Movement. St. Francis Xavier is a Modern Movement church set squarely within a postwar ecclesiastical, specifically Catholic, architectural context and is the manifestation of Byrne’s ideas about what modernism actually means.

The Design of the Building

The parish of St. Francis Xavier in Kansas City, Missouri, hired Barry Byrne in 1946 to design a new church and rectory. Byrne then recruited his friend and colleague, Alfonso Iannelli, in their first collaboration since the early 1930s.⁶⁹ The pair, along with Cremin Byrne, designed the complete building, from “structure and massing to every detail of furnishings and statuary,” creating a complete package—a rare freedom.⁷⁰ Byrne developed the plan, structure, and massing, and designed all of the exterior; Iannelli had free-rein of the interior artwork and furnishings, as well as the design of the statue of St. Francis Xavier. Cremin Byrne assisted Iannelli by selecting the colors.⁷¹ The exact role of Kansas City-based Joseph B. Shaughnessy, Sr., is unknown, but as the architect of record, his name also appears on the title block of the construction drawings. As a local architect, it is also likely he oversaw the construction.

⁶⁷ Charles Jenks, *Modern Movements in Architecture* (Garden City, New York: Anchor Press, 1973), 11.

⁶⁸ Sarah Williams Goldhagen, “Something to Talk About: Modernism, Discourse, Style,” *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 64, no. 2 (June 2005): 145. See also Vincent L. Michael, “Expressing the Modern: Barry Byrne in 1920s Europe,” *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 69, no. 4 (December 2010): 534.

⁶⁹ The two last worked together in circa 1931 on alterations at St. Patrick Church in Momence, Illinois. Michael, *The Architecture of Barry Byrne*, 179-180; Jameson, *Alfonso Iannelli*, 197.

⁷⁰ Michael, *The Architecture of Barry Byrne*, 134.

⁷¹ Jameson, *Alfonso Iannelli*, 286; Michael, *The Architecture of Barry Byrne*, 136.

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At St. Francis Xavier, Byrne first employed what he considered an ideal plan for a Catholic church that he had been developing for decades. He solidified his ideas in writing as early as 1943:

The general shape—that of a fish—gives the plan something of a symbolic character. It has the further advantage of being a superior acoustical form and of solving the aesthetic problem of relating the comparatively small size of the rubrical altar to the great width of the church nave. The convergence of the plan, as it approaches the sanctuary, brings the altar, and the parts of the church interior close to it, into relationship in scale. It is also the idea to have the level of the floor of the narthex and encircling aisles the same as that of the tops of the pews. Steps lead down from the narthex and aisles into the seating part of the church. This arrangement of raising the level of the entrance would give the spectator a feeling of clear, unobstructed space.⁷²

The elliptical shape is the natural next step from the squat rectangle of St. Thomas the Apostle and octagon of Christ the King. The parish priest, Fr. John Gerst, supported the use of the symbolic fish, arguing it was as equal to the use of the more common cruciform in church planning. Both the cross and fish were ancient liturgical symbols of Christ. The fish represented the ancient Greek acrostic, *ICTHUS*: Iesos (Jesus), Christos (Christ, the Anointed One), THEou (Of God), Uios (The Son), Soter (Savior), as well as the miracle of the loaves and fishes. Even the secular trade journal *Architectural Record* explained the symbolic associations of the shape in its 1951 article about the building.⁷³

At the dedication of the building in 1950, visiting speaker Fr. Daniel A. Lord, S.J. extolled the use of modern architecture and the symbol of the fish (*Photo 1*). He further compared the church to a shimmering white ship “plowing into the sea of the future” with the statue of St. Francis Xavier acting as figurehead, integrated into the prow of the church building (*Photos 3 & 4*).⁷⁴ Fr. Gerst instructed Iannelli to create a statue that communicated the pioneering spirit of the saint. At eighteen feet tall, the statue weighs 21,000 pounds (*Figure 8*). Iannelli carved the limestone

⁷² Barry Byrne, in Maurice Lavanoux, “Post-War Planning,” *Liturgical Arts* 11 (May 1943): 55.

⁷³ “Two Catholic Churches,” *Architectural Record*, 91; Michael, *The Architecture of Barry Byrne*, 133-134.

⁷⁴ Michael, *The Architecture of Barry Byrne*, 134.

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statue in his Chicago studio then transported it to Kansas City in pieces.⁷⁵ The broad sweeping lines of the sculpture keeps with the modernism of the building and focuses the attention on the face and icons of the saint.⁷⁶ Lord proclaimed that the piece architecturally paralleled the “onrushing” church with St. Francis Xavier at its head, literally and figuratively.⁷⁷ In this statue, Iannelli realized the merging of sculpture and architecture.

The initial 1946 design of the church wing differed slightly from the realized building. The elliptical volume featured an arched roof, almost like a spine and dorsal fin (*Figure 35*).⁷⁸ The statue of St. Francis Xavier was carved into the face of the entry tower. The windows along the east and west elevations were deep inset vertical slits within unornamented wall planes, recalling the Irving Gill motif that so impressed Byrne in the 1910s (*Figure 23*). By 1947, as plans developed, the statue of St. Francis Xavier was given a more prominent location at the head of the church (*Figure 36*). The windows retained their narrowness but were framed by limestone reliefs. The deep vertical slits remained on the entry tower. The final, 1949, design eliminated the arched roof in favor of a flat one, hidden by a slight parapet, which emphasizes the elliptical form of the building. Besides the use of the elliptical plan, the exterior of the church wing also includes other design features not seen on Byrne’s previous churches, namely the belltower. Byrne saw towers as superfluous. At St. Francis Xavier, however, the tower becomes integrated with the structure of the building, becoming essential to the overall form (*Photo 4*). Even the cross is literally part of the structure (*Figure 6*).

The rectory wing saw the greatest amount of design change between 1946 and 1949. Byrne’s first proposed design featured splayed walls, simple massing, and vast wall planes with punched windows, giving the building the feeling of the International Style (*Figure 37*). The realized design, however, references more of the Prairie School tradition in which Byrne apprenticed (*Photos 10 & 11*). The reason for the design change is unknown. The splayed masses of the original design became orthogonal, and the footprint a narrow box that nestles into the topography. Overhanging eaves shelter ganged windows and a second-story balcony. Polished aluminum cornices, flat roofs, and limestone veneer tie the rectory to the church wing. The rectory wing attaches to the church wing through a one-story connector. The overall wing-shaped

⁷⁵ Jameson, *Alfonso Iannelli*, 286.

⁷⁶ “Statue of St. Francis Xavier,” *The Kansas City Star* (4 May 1950): 3.

⁷⁷ Michael, *The Architecture of Barry Byrne*, 134.

⁷⁸ Michael, *The Architecture of Barry Byrne*, 135.

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plan comfortably fits the site. The massing and placement of the more private rectory wing defers to the prominent church, which unabashedly towers over the intersection of 52nd and Troost. Although the rectory is a more private wing of the building, it is not without integrated decorative features. For instance, a red marble cross on the north elevation demarcates the entrance (*Photo 12*) and a glass block penthouse filters light into the second story corridor (*Photo 30*).

Despite its modern design, the church wing also displays subtle design motifs of the Prairie School. Michael calls the influence haptic rather than formal, “a sensory procession of light and volume.”⁷⁹ The primary entrance is deeply inset in the south wall of the porte cochere (*Photos 7 & 14 through 16*). The low ceiling height, inclining floor, and stone walls compress this dark entry corridor as it leads up to the light-filled narthex with its glass walls that finally releases into the three-story volume of the nave (*Photo 17; Figures 10 & 38*). The play of light is dramatized by the select use of color, especially of the blue glass of the nave windows. Michael observes that in this way, Byrne reverses Wright’s light logic; the visitor transitions from compressed, bright light into a “dark blue vastness” (*Photos 17 & 18*)⁸⁰

The elliptical interior of the church focuses on the altar and its large aluminum Christ the King statue (*Photos 17 & 20; Figures 10, 39 through 41*). The view is emphasized by alternating cobalt and opalene clerestory windows that pierce the pristine white walls of the nave, the orange pinstripe in the center of the ceiling (*Photos 17 through 19*), and the terrazzo striping (*Photo 17*), both of which point toward the altar. Chevron-shaped columns mimic the design of the belltower and support the curving walls; their gray bases tend to disappear into the side aisles (*Photo 17*).

Byrne employed almost all of the idealism of his 1943 article at St. Francis Xavier. The fish-shaped plan both focused attention on the sanctuary and altar. The shape also promoted unobstructed views of the altar and, paired with the ceiling tiles, helped the acoustical quality of the space.⁸¹ The floor of the seating area, however, remains level with the narthex and side aisles. Adapting Byrne’s ideal plan, Iannelli designed the marble communion rail to be installed at

⁷⁹ Michael, *The Architecture of Barry Byrne*, 139.

⁸⁰ Michael, *The Architecture of Barry Byrne*, 140.

⁸¹ Speakers were also integrated into some of the side piers.

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ground level and to rise no more than three feet, the height of the sanctuary.⁸² The height of the rail and its imperial black marble top allow an unobstructed view from the congregation to the sanctuary, thereby achieving the same effect. In his previous churches, Byrne physically merged the sanctuary with nave. At St. Francis Xavier, the spaces remain physically separated, but that separation is mitigated through subtle design decisions that visually connect the two areas. The visual connection is arguably more streamlined than the previous, overt physical connections.

Along with the Christ the King statue above the altar, Iannelli created additional pieces, all of which were as functional as they were artistic (*Table 1*). Aluminum statues of Our Lady of Peace (east) and Joseph adorn side altars (*Photos 21 & 22; Figures 29 & 39*). The marble high altar and side altars have elliptical plans like the space itself. The altar mosaics, executed by the Ravenna Company of St. Louis, correspond with the function of the altar. For instance, the mosaic of basket and fish adorns the high altar with the tabernacle holding the communion elements. Cremin Byrne's use of color accentuates each side altar without saturating the space. Fr. Gerst commissioned the fourteen Stations of the Cross that line the sides of the nave during construction of the church.⁸⁴ Each contains etched marble figures set against a brushed yellow background, and a wooden block cross adorns the upper corner of each Station (*Figure 11*). The Stations of the Cross were installed in early 1951 (*Figures 39 & 40*).

Table 1. Artwork designed by Alfonso Iannelli⁸³

- Exterior stone statue of St. Francis Xavier
- Baptismal font
- Baptistry grille
- Christ the King statue behind high altar
- Lectern
- Communion railing and chain
- Votive stands
- Credence tables
- Side altars (tables, mosaics, Mary, Joseph)
- High altar (table and mosaic)
- High altar crucifix
- High altar tabernacle
- Side altar candlesticks
- High altar candlesticks
- Side altar tabernacles and crucifixes
- Stations of the Cross

⁸² Michael Coleman, *This Far By Faith: A Popular History of the Catholic People of West and Northwest Missouri*, Vol. II "The Facts" (Kansas City, MO: Diocese of Kansas City-St. Joseph, 1992), 225.

⁸³ Jameson, *Alfonso Iannelli*, 286; construction drawings, 1949. The Ranghal Company, Chicago, produced the candlesticks, crucifixes, and font designed by Iannelli.

⁸⁴ Jameson, *Alfonso Iannelli*, 286.

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Byrne promoted the ideals of quality over quantity when it came to church art. In contrast to the tradition of Catholic churches to house a “destructive quantity” of statuary to the detriment of the architecture, the design in St. Francis Xavier consciously limited the quantity of art in favor of quality.⁸⁵ The sculptural form of the architecture showcases the art. Both St. Francis Xavier and the Christ the King statues are heroic, dominating the scene; the colorful baldachin with its A, Ω, and trinitarian symbol, further emphasizes the focus on the altar (*Photo 20*).⁸⁶ *Kansas City Star* reporter, John Alexander, commended the art as being modern but conveying the ancient religious symbology.⁸⁷

The parish asked Byrne to contribute an article to the dedication of the new church. In his conclusion, Byrne writes the following:

The results of my thinking are embodied in this church. If it proves a happy place for the celebration of Mass, and for lay participation in this exalted and exalting mystery, I am content. In addition, I hope the architecture expresses the spirit and continuity of the Faith we cherish and the American environment, which we glory in and help to create.⁸⁸

St. Francis Xavier Church received local and national attention upon its completion. In 1950, the local chapter of the American Institute of Architects awarded the building a medal for its design. The July 9, 1951, issue of *Newsweek* showcased St. Francis Xavier along with four other new churches; the February 1951 issue of *Architectural Record* contained a nine-page article about St. Francis Xavier and St. Columba.⁸⁹

Vatican II Impact on St. Francis Xavier

⁸⁵ Byrne writes about the quantity versus quality conundrum “Pleasing the Parishioners,” 7.

⁸⁶ No known documents specifically call-out the designer of the fresco, but it most likely was Ianelli with Cremin Byrne.

⁸⁷ John Alexander, “Fish-Shaped Church at Fifty-Second and Troost Provides New View for Thousands,” *The Kansas City Star* (30 July 1950): 66.

⁸⁸ Barry Byrne, “The Design of This Church,” in St. Francis Xavier Vertical File, Missouri Valley Special Collections, Kansas City Public Library.

⁸⁹ Michael, *The Architecture of Barry Byrne*, 140.

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By the 1960s, over a decade after the construction of St. Francis Xavier, the Liturgical Reform Movement became more mainstream within the Catholic church. For instance, parishioners across the country increasingly wanted to move the altar from the end of the sanctuary to allow the ministering priest to face the congregation. Although the Second Vatican Council (Vatican II) receives much of the credit for introducing modernism into church arrangement and design, Vatican II (1962-1965) was in reality the culmination of decades-long discussions among Catholics liturgists and architects.

The 1967 Post Conciliar document “Instruction on the Worship of the Eucharistic Mystery,” was interpreted as “requiring freestanding altars and for the removal of traditional elements from worship spaces such as altar rails.” Many of the more progressive churches immediately put this into effect.⁹⁰ Historian Jay Price observes that the new edicts from the Vatican often negatively impacted older churches built on traditional forms and designs. Often these churches “had small sanctuaries, spaces too small to adapt to the new liturgical approaches.”⁹¹ Other physical changes included removal of communion rails and other separations between the priests and people; covering, painting over, or removing historic murals and artwork in favor of more modern interiors.⁹²

St. Francis Xavier proved to be easily adapted to the Vatican II changes. The low visibility of the communion rail allowed the element to remain in place; although, a chain, designed by Iannelli, that formerly spanned the opening in the railing was removed (visible in *Figure 41*). The high altar remained in place, but the church leadership commissioned a new altar to be installed in the center of the sanctuary, as the area had ample room. The architect Frank Grimaldi, a St. Francis Xavier parishioner and business partner to Joseph Shaughnessy, designed the new altar in circa 1967; it is still in use today.⁹³ The qualitative selection of the art inside the church, as well as the design of the space, meant most of the artwork designed by Iannelli remained intact, uncovered, even elevated. For example, his baptismal font moved from the baptistry into the side aisle of the church. The ease with which the liturgical reforms were implemented in St. Francis Xavier highlights the success of Byrne’s progressive design.

⁹⁰ Price, *Temples for a Modern God*, 153.

⁹¹ Price, *Temples for a Modern God*, 155.

⁹² Liturgical changes included the use of vernacular languages instead of Latin and the inclusion of laity into the functions of the Mass.

⁹³ He also designed a lectern and seating for the sanctuary and a new font.

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After St. Francis Xavier

Byrne first realized his ideal plan for a Catholic church at St. Francis Xavier. However, two succeeding commissions further allowed him to employ his design principles to varying success. St. Columba in St. Paul and St. Benedict Abbey in Atchison presented design challenges not seen in Kansas City. In neither commission was Byrne able to collaborate with Iannelli.

St. Columba, St. Paul, Minnesota

The parish of St. Columba in St. Paul, Minnesota, hired Byrne in 1948 because of the design he developed in Kansas City. As with St. Francis Xavier, Byrne utilized the elliptical fish-shaped plan (*Figure 27*). However, the execution of his ideal plan was hindered by both the site and the parish leadership. Unlike at St. Francis Xavier, the smallness of the available parcel constricted the design of the church, producing a somewhat cramped result. The parish priest also wanted the new building to incorporate a traditional Irish tower, even though the priest had hired Byrne for his innovative ideas. The insistence on this historical form sparked heated discussions. Ultimately, Byrne streamlined the tower into a cylindrical mass adorning the entrance.⁹⁴ The fortress-like entrance contrasts with the fluid procession of the entry to St. Francis Xavier. Similarities between the two churches extend to the treatment of the elliptical mass, which rises above flanking one-story wings. A series of vertical slits allows light into the church (*Figure 27*). Rounded columns, mimicking the entry tower, support the interior of the ellipse. The coved ceiling, lacking a central lighted spine, works with the elliptical volume to draw attention to the sanctuary and altar. As at St. Francis Xavier, the communion rail tends to disappear, allowing the nave and sanctuary to visually merge into one volume.⁹⁵

St. Benedict, Atchison, Kansas

⁹⁴ Byrne apparently detested the tower so much that when asked about it, he claimed that he “planned to remove the Tower after the death of the Irish Pastor and make it like the front end of St. F.X...or similar.” According to Thomas S. Bowdern, S.J., letter dated September 1, 1978, in St. Francis Xavier Vertical File. Missouri Valley Special Collections, Kansas City Public Library.

⁹⁵ Chappell, Barry Byrne, 29-30; Michael, *The Architecture of Barry Byrne*, 141-143; “Two Catholic Churches,” *Architectural Record*, 87-91.

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The monastic church for the Benedictine Abbey in Atchison, Kansas, is Byrne's last major commission (*Figure 28*). The Benedictine order had hired Byrne in 1946 to develop a masterplan for their campus. Over the next six years, Byrne submitted multiple designs the church. Two major design challenges faced Byrne at Atchison. The first was the requirement that the monk's choir be hidden, thus preventing the plan of the church from being a fully open volume as seen in Kansas City and St. Paul. The second challenge was the requirement that Byrne utilize the existing foundation that had been built in the late 1920s before the Great Depression halted further construction. The realized stone church recalls the staggered wall planes seen in Cork. Narrow, full-height windows pierce the wall at each staggered plane. A square tower rises from the east end of the south elevation; although, the main entrance is at the west end of the south elevation. Due to the physical constraints of the site, the plan form of the church is more triangular, widening from west to east toward the altar. On the interior, the ceiling steps down toward the east with colorful ribbons emphasizing the focus. As at St. Francis Xavier and St. Columba, the nave and sanctuary visually blend. Unlike at either previous church, however, the baldachin floats above the center of the sanctuary, anticipating the changes to come in the next few years. St. Benedict abbey church was completed in 1961.⁹⁶

The Legacy of the Fish

St. Francis Xavier became known as the Fish Church from its earliest design iterations. Upon its completion, the most prolific adjective used in describing the building was the mention of its fish-like shape; both lay people and media used this terminology first employed by the architect himself. Historian Vincent Michael points out that the now "mass-produced and mass-consumed" Christian fish signifier was new when developed and employed by Byrne in the 1940s.⁹⁷ The fish became a more commonly utilized symbol into the late 1950s and 1960s. One such example earned Byrne's ire. Wallace K. Harrison designed the First Presbyterian Church of Stamford, Connecticut in 1958 (*Figure 42*). Byrne called it a "vulgar literalization" of his ideal plan.⁹⁸ Where the plan of St. Francis Xavier is a stylized fish, the massing of Harrison's church overtly resembles one. The reinforced thin-shell concrete structure has gray slate shingles (scales)

⁹⁶ Chappell, Barry Byrne, 30, 32; Michael, *The Architecture of Barry Byrne*, 164-167.

⁹⁷ Michael, *The Architecture of Barry Byrne*, 139.

⁹⁸ Michael, *The Architecture of Barry Byrne*, 171.

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surrounding multi-colored glass. Although this is also called The Fish Church, it post-dates St. Francis Xavier by a decade.⁹⁹

Brief History of St. Francis Xavier Parish, 1908 - 1951

St. Francis Xavier Parish is a Catholic Jesuit parish in Kansas City, Missouri, established in 1909 to support the first Jesuit university in the city. The Jesuits had been active in Kansas City's St. Aloysius parish since 1886. Formed six years after the establishment of the Diocese of Kansas City, the St. Aloysius Parish centered around its church property at 11th Street and Prospect Avenue in the northeast part of the city.¹⁰⁰ The Jesuits had long intended to establish a college in Kansas City, and by 1908, they were ready to proceed.

In November 1908, the Jesuit pastor of St. Aloysius Parish and the Jesuit Provincial met with Bishop John Hogan to begin planning the school that would become Rockhurst College.¹⁰¹ The following January, the Jesuits secured twenty-five acres along Troost Avenue approximately one-half mile south of Brush Creek. Due to its location six miles southwest of St. Aloysius Parish, the college committee requested Bishop Hogan form a new Jesuit parish. The bishop concurred and established the parish of St. Francis Xavier on July 1, 1909. The new parish boundaries initially included twelve families residing between East 47th Street (north) to East 59th Street (south), and McGee Street (west) to Woodland Avenue (east), with Rockhurst College centered within the parish (*Figure 2*).¹⁰²

Bishop Hogan chose St. Francis Xavier as namesake of the new parish, as he was one of the seven founders of the Society of Jesus (S.J.), commonly known as the Jesuits.¹⁰³ Established in

⁹⁹ Wesley Haynes, "First Presbyterian Church," National Historic Landmark Nomination form (2016): 5. The church became an NHL in February 2021 for its architecture.

¹⁰⁰ Rachel Nugent [Consolloy], "St. Francis Xavier School," National Register nomination (April 2017): 8:18; Coleman, *This Far By Faith*, 222. The diocese was formerly part of the Diocese of St. Louis. The Vatican formed the Kansas City diocese in 1880. In 1956, a state-wide diocesan reorganization occurred, which combined the St. Joseph and Kansas City dioceses. Thus, from 1956 to today, it is the Diocese of Kansas City-St. Joseph [The Catholic Diocese of Kansas City-St. Joseph, "Our History," accessed 10 September 2021. <http://www.diocese-kcsj.org/content/diocese/history/>].

¹⁰¹ The college officially changed its name to Rockhurst University in 1999. All historic references to the university will use its historic name.

¹⁰² Coleman, *This Far By Faith*, 222-223. The boundaries expanded slightly in 1959 (see *Figure 2*).

¹⁰³ The initials SJ after a priest's name indicates he is of the Jesuit order. The proponents of the new parish had requested it be named for St. Ignatius of Loyola, one of the co-founders of the order.

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the sixteenth century, the Jesuits quickly emerged “as the most vibrant, most provocative religious order the Catholic Church had yet produced,” according to historian Johnathan Wright.¹⁰⁴ Besides their evangelism, over the next five centuries the Jesuits became a potent force in education, science, the arts, and social justice.¹⁰⁵ As a Jesuit parish, the leaders of St. Francis Xavier Parish were certainly dedicated to education, overseeing both Rockhurst College and Rockhurst High School, as well as a parochial primary school for the parish.

The newly established parish needed a church, parochial school, and rectory. To meet the first need, a house and barn located on the site of Rockhurst College were relocated to East 53rd Street at Forest Avenue (*Figure 43*). The first mass occurred here on August 1, 1909. Within one year, the parish constructed a two-story frame building to the west of the house to serve as both church and school (*Figure 43*). The parish was without a resident priest during its first year. The parish priest lived at the St. Aloysius rectory and traveled to St. Francis Xavier for weekend masses. Beginning in the summer of 1910, Bishop Hogan assigned a priest to live in the farmhouse to better serve the parish. In 1914, living quarters opened at Rockhurst College for the Jesuit faculty and parish priest. The farmhouse became additional space for the parochial school but was demolished in the early 1920s after a new school was completed across the street.¹⁰⁶

As the parish grew, they acquired additional property directly west across Troost Avenue from the college and church (*Figure 42*). Between 1922 and 1927, the parish constructed three new buildings on the property to the west of Rockhurst (*Figures 43 & 44*): a new parochial school (1922), a convent for teaching sisters (1925), and a church (1927). The original St. Francis Xavier church burned down the Friday before Easter, 1925, necessitating the new building (*Figure 43*). In 1934, the parish served 643 families, comprising 2,592 individuals.¹⁰⁷

Parish leadership foresaw the need for a larger church as its population continued to increase throughout the 1930s. A building fund began in 1937 and within three years contained approximately \$65,000.¹⁰⁸ Between 1941 and 1944, the parish purchased the property due north

¹⁰⁴ Jonathan Wright, *God's Soldiers: Adventure, Politics, Intrigue, and Power: A History of the Jesuits* (New York: Doubleday, 2004), 3.

¹⁰⁵ Wright, *God's Soldiers*, 3, 8-9.

¹⁰⁶ Coleman, *This Far By Faith*, 223.

¹⁰⁷ Coleman, *This Far By Faith*, 223-224.

¹⁰⁸ Approximately equal to \$1.14 million in 2021.

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of its school and church. World War II halted progress on the new building, so the parish invested the money in government bonds. By the beginning of 1946, the building fund contained \$135,000, and Bishop Edwin O'Hara granted pastor Fr. John Gerst permission to construct a new church and incur the debt needed to accomplish the task.¹⁰⁹

Fr. John Gerst, S.J. joined the faculty of Rockhurst High School in 1926, remaining a teacher there until 1935. That year, he transferred to Rockhurst College to teach religion and direct the athletic program until 1940 when Bishop O'Hara assigned him to serve in St. Aloysius parish. Fr. Gerst returned to St. Francis Xavier parish in 1942 to serve as assistant in the church then as pastor beginning in 1943. He led the parish until 1957.¹¹⁰

THE NEW ST. FRANCIS XAVIER CHURCH (1946-1951)

The building committee hired Chicago architect Francis Barry Byrne to design a new church in 1946. They also asked Joseph Shaughnessy to be the local architect of record. Not only did Shaughnessy have a close working relationship with the Diocese but he was also a St. Francis Xavier parishioner. The decision to employ Byrne may be attributed to Bishop O'Hara, as he pushed Fr. Gerst to advocate for a modern design.¹¹¹ Like Byrne, O'Hara supported the Liturgical Reform Movement.¹¹²

¹⁰⁹ Coleman, *This Far By Faith*, 3, 224; information in "St. Francis Xavier: KCMO: History" folder, Box 4, St. Francis Xavier Parish Collection, Chancery Archives, Diocese of Kansas City-St. Joseph.

¹¹⁰ "Dual Fete at Church," *The Kansas City Star*, 3.

¹¹¹ Michael, *The Architecture of Barry Byrne*, f.n. 15, 206.

¹¹² Edwin Vincent O'Hara (1880-1956) was ordained in 1905 and assigned to Portland, Oregon. He became bishop of the Diocese of Kansas City in 1939, remaining in office until his death in 1956. Upon his installment in Kansas City, Bishop O'Hara already carried a national reputation as a progressive clergyman, advocating for education and social justice. For instance, in 1917, Fr. O'Hara, as he was then, acted as defendant in the U.S. Supreme Court case *Stettler v O'Hara* (243 US 629, 1917), which upheld the constitutionality of minimum wages for women laborers. As a liturgical reformer, Bishop O'Hara increased the role of laity within the diocese and believed parishioners should be active participants in church services. Where the tradition at the time was to say mass in Latin, O'Hara obtained permission to conduct parts of the mass in English. For more on O'Hara, see Timothy Dolan, *Some Seed Fell on Good Ground: The Life of Edwin O'Hara* (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 1992); Barbara Magerl, "Edwin O'Hara, Clergyman, 1881-1956," Biography (2009): 1-3 Missouri Valley Special Collections, Kansas City Public Library; "Minimum Wage," *Monthly Labor Review* 37, no. 6 (December 1933): 1344-1345.

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Byrne produced the initial plans for the church in 1946 to aid in fundraising efforts.¹¹³ Part of the effort included a booklet for the parishioners to explain the design of the new church. Renderings of the church and rectory by Annette Cremin Byrne adorned the front and back covers of the booklet (*Figures 35 & 37*). In his introduction, Fr. Gerst almost immediately notes the warm approval of Bishop O'Hara for the proposed design. In a glimmer of his own hesitation or perhaps a preemption of his parishioners' reactions, he then states, "The beauty and nobility of the edifice will grow on you, I know. The reality, when it shall have been achieved will transcend all your dreams. It is that kind of church. It grows on you."¹¹⁴ The promotion apparently worked, as funds for the new facility increased to a point that construction began in early 1948.

The parish held a groundbreaking ceremony on March 14, 1948. Two thousand people attended. Bishop Edwin O'Hara turned the ceremonial first spadeful of dirt.¹¹⁵ Site excavation and construction was underway by the following month.¹¹⁶ The steel superstructure of the church wing commenced in early 1949 and was well underway by February (*Figure 6*).¹¹⁷ The building itself was half completed by June 26, 1949. On that day, St. Francis Xavier Parish held a dual celebration to honor Fr. Gerst's twenty-fifth ordination anniversary and the laying of the cornerstone for the "new fish-shaped church" (*Figure 45*). Celebrants formed a parade line at the old church building on East 53rd Street and marched around the new site. Participating groups included charter members of the parish, church building committee, and the St. Francis Xavier school PTA, among others. Bishop O'Hara led the cornerstone laying ceremony, and a reception was held in the unfinished Rectory.¹¹⁸

The superstructure of the building neared completion by mid-August. The contractor, C.A. Kelly, expected the stonework on the belltower and remainder of exterior would be finished by late August, along with the roof. Once the shells were finished, the interior was to be finished within

¹¹³ Michael, *The Architecture of Barry Byrne*, 132.

¹¹⁴ Fr. John Gerst, "The New Saint Francis Xavier Church," booklet, circa 1946 St. Francis Xavier Vertical File, Missouri Valley Special Collections, Kansas City Public Library.

¹¹⁵ *The Kansas City Times* (15 March 1948): 3.

¹¹⁶ "New Home for Saint Francis Xavier Church," *Town* (2 April 1949): np clipping in St. Francis Xavier Vertical File, Missouri Valley Special Collections, Kansas City Public Library.

¹¹⁷ Michael, *The Architecture of Barry Byrne*, 135.

¹¹⁸ "Dual Fete at Church," *The Kansas City Star*, 3.

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six months.¹¹⁹ With the exterior work completed, the finishing of the site began. Contractors applied for a permit to construct the west parking lot in December 1949. The zoning adjustment board approved the permit on January 31, 1950.¹²⁰

The New Year's Day 1950 issue of *The Kansas City Star* noted the construction progress up to that point:

Resembling a huge fish, the St. Francis Xavier Catholic church enters the final stages of construction at Fifty-second street and Troost avenue. A 2-year, \$500,000 project, it is expected to be completed in early spring and may be ready for dedication in May, according to Bishop Edwin V. O'Hara of the Kansas City Catholic diocese.¹²¹

Work continued in earnest over the next six months. Iannelli installed his statue of St. Francis Xavier late April-early May 1950.¹²²

Dedication of the new St. Francis Xavier Parish Church & Rectory took place on July 4, 1950. Bishop O'Hara led the service with Fr. Gerst assisting. The noted playwright and producer Fr. Daniel Lord, S.J., of St. Louis gave the sermon. Over fourteen hundred parishioners attended the initial ceremonial mass, which began with a processional from the new rectory wing to the church along the sidewalks. The mass attendees met or exceeded the occupancy of the church, which was 970 excluding the choir loft. After mass, the building was opened to the general public. Including the celebrants and parishioners, over six thousand people visited the new building on July 4.¹²³

¹¹⁹ Caption to photograph in *The Kansas City Star* (12 August 1949): 10.

¹²⁰ *Kansas City Times* (14 December 1949): 6; "Approves a Church Lot," 4.

¹²¹ "Greater Kansas City Builds for the Future," *The Kansas City Star* (1 January 1950): D-3. St. Francis Xavier was part of a full-page spread in the paper, highlighting significant construction projects in the Kansas City area. Other noted projects: Convent of Perpetual Adoration, Menorah Hospital addition, Southwest Trafficway.

¹²² "Statue of St. Francis Xavier," *The Kansas City Star* (4 May 1950): 3.

¹²³ "Fete at a New Church," *The Kansas City Star* (4 July 1950): 8; "Benediction at New Church," *The Kansas City Times* (5 July 1950): 6; "Ready on New Edifice," *The Kansas City Star*, 4.

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Construction cost approximately \$600,000 with an additional \$100,000 for furnishings and equipment.¹²⁴ Iannelli received over \$35,000 for the work he contributed to the building, \$6,500 of which went toward the fourteen Stations of the Cross. These pieces were contracted during construction and installed in January 1951 (*Figures 39 & 40*).¹²⁵ In a letter to the artist after the installation, Fr. Gerst wrote, “Your Stations are a ‘knock-out.’ I think they’re one of the swellest works of art possible.”¹²⁶ The design of the church, and its art, certainly grew on Fr. Gerst.

Contemporary articles in the *Kansas City Star* celebrated the modern features of the building. According to reporter, the intense colors of the interior contrasted nicely with the surrounding white walls and cut limestone exterior.¹²⁷ The mothers’ room at the rear of the nave, a relatively new feature in Catholic churches, had a public address system to allow for continued participation in the mass, the four confessionals featured flashing lights to signal when in use, and their oak finish, along with the pews, softened the blue vastness of the interior.¹²⁸

Upon completion of the new church at the southwest corner of East 52nd Street and Troost Avenue, the 1927 church to its south became a parish hall, and the old rectory became parish offices.¹²⁹ The new church served over 630 families and 3,250 individuals in the parish, an exponential increase from the initial 12 families in 1909.¹³⁰

Conclusion

St. Francis Xavier Parish Church & Rectory in Kansas City, Missouri, is the result of a career spent developing and evolving a church plan. Byrne acknowledged in 1942 that the design of churches dominated his thinking since he apprenticed with Wright.¹³¹ He began his

¹²⁴ “Ready on New Edifice,” *The Kansas City Star*, 4. \$6.8 million and \$1.13 million in 2021.

¹²⁵ Jameson, *Alfonso Iannelli*, 286; dated photo of one of the Stations in St. Francis Xavier Parish Collection, Miscellaneous Photographs, Chancery Archives, Diocese of Kansas City-St. Joseph.

¹²⁶ Jameson, *Alfonso Iannelli*, 286.

¹²⁷ “Ready on New Edifice,” *The Kansas City Star*, 4.

¹²⁸ “Ready on New Edifice,” *The Kansas City Star*, 4; Alexander, “Fish-Shaped Church...” *Kansas City Star*, 66.

¹²⁹ “Ready on New Edifice,” *The Kansas City Star*, 4. All existing buildings on the parcel to the south, including the 1927 church and the rectory, were demolished in 1962 for the new St. Francis Xavier parish school.

¹³⁰ “St. Francis Xavier: KCMO: History” folder, Chancery Archives.

¹³¹ Barry Byrne, “Plan for a Church,” *Liturgical Arts*, 58.

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experimentation with the brick church of St. Thomas the Apostle (1922), removing interior columns and side aisles and projecting the sanctuary into the nave. By the end of the decade, his theoretical plan morphed into an octagon, with concrete instead of brick as the building material, as exemplified at the Church of Christ the King in Ireland (1929). By the early-1940s, Byrne settled on the shape of a fish as the best form for a Catholic church, as it naturally focused the attention on the altar, increased the acoustical qualities, and allowed for one vast open volume to visually connect the hierarchical spaces. His first chance to implement his ideal plan came with the Kansas City commission.

St. Francis Xavier is a modern church by a modern architect. The building utilizes modern materials such as cut limestone, steel, and concrete, but it is the physical manifestation of the individual (Byrne) discourse for which Goldhagen argues. For Byrne, the use of new forms and materials was not enough to label architecture modern. It had to be of its era, and it had to integrate structure, materials, form—and ideology—into a complete object. Lewis Mumford, the noted architectural critic, praised the architectural approach of his friend Barry Byrne in 1927 when he wrote that in him is “an architect who has reconciled tradition and innovation...who has faced sincerely the problems of his own day.”¹³² In Byrne’s approach to church design, he did not neglect the hierarchy of spaces within the buildings nor their importance but rather sought to enable participants to better interact with them. The freedom given to the designers enabled St. Francis Xavier to become a complete object.

For Iannelli, St. Francis Xavier gave him the ability to fully collaborate with the architect to achieve the living quality of a building expressed through the relationship of architecture and art. His statue of the saint integrates into the structure of the building both as the symbolic and literal figurehead of the building and as a structural item connected to the canopy of the porte cochere. On the interior, Iannelli’s artwork becomes part of the interior. The sanctuary and altar, to which the architecture point, is punctuated by the aluminum statue of Christ the King and the colorful baldachin above it. The Stations of the Cross mesh with the upper walls of the nave. The celebration of mass is aided by the functional objects created by Iannelli. Cremin Byrne’s strategic use of color ties together and humanizes the art and architecture of the space.

¹³² Lewis Mumford, “A Modern Catholic Architect,” as quoted in Michael, *The Architecture of Barry Byrne*, 91.

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Byrne rarely received credit for influencing the modern architecture; Vincent Michael believes this is due to his focus on church design.¹³³ However the significance of St. Francis Xavier Parish Church & Rectory lies in its location within the niche of pre-Vatican II, twentieth century Catholic architecture and in its association with the architect, Barry Byrne. The building is nationally significant under Criterion C in the ARCHITECTURE as the best representative example of architect Francis Barry Byrne and in the area of ART for the integral pieces by sculptor Alfonso Iannelli and color scheme of Annette Cremin Byrne. Criteria Consideration A applies to this property due to its overt religious associations. However, the building remains eligible for listing in the National Register because its significance is directly tied to its design, which sought to change the way in which people functioned within and interacted with the space.

¹³³ Michael, *The Architecture of Barry Byrne*, 90.

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GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

Verbal Boundary Description

The nominated 3.02 acres sits at the southwest corner of East 52nd Street and Troost Avenue. The public rights-of-way of East 52nd Street and Troost Avenue form the north and east boundaries. Property lines between adjacent parcels form the south and west boundaries. The Jackson County, Missouri Assessor describes the property as follows:

Mulkey Park Res: Part of E 449.5' of N 1/2 of Lot 8 (A/K/A Block 8). DAF: BEG AT PT ON ELY LI SD LOT 8 WHICH IS N 02 DEG 43 MIN 11 SEC E 326.34' FROM SELY COR SD LOT 8 TH N 87 DEG 29 MIN 55 SEC W 290.20' TH S 02 DEG 46 MIN 23 SEC W 20.29' TH N 87 DEG 36 MIN 45 SEC W 157.86' TH N 02 DEG 49 MIN 02 SEC E 306.18' TH S 87 DEG 39 MIN 53 SEC E 447.56' TH S 02 DEG 43 MIN 11 SEC W 286.87' TO POB (KNOWN AS TRACT 1 PER CERT SURV BK 15 PG 3)

Boundary Justification

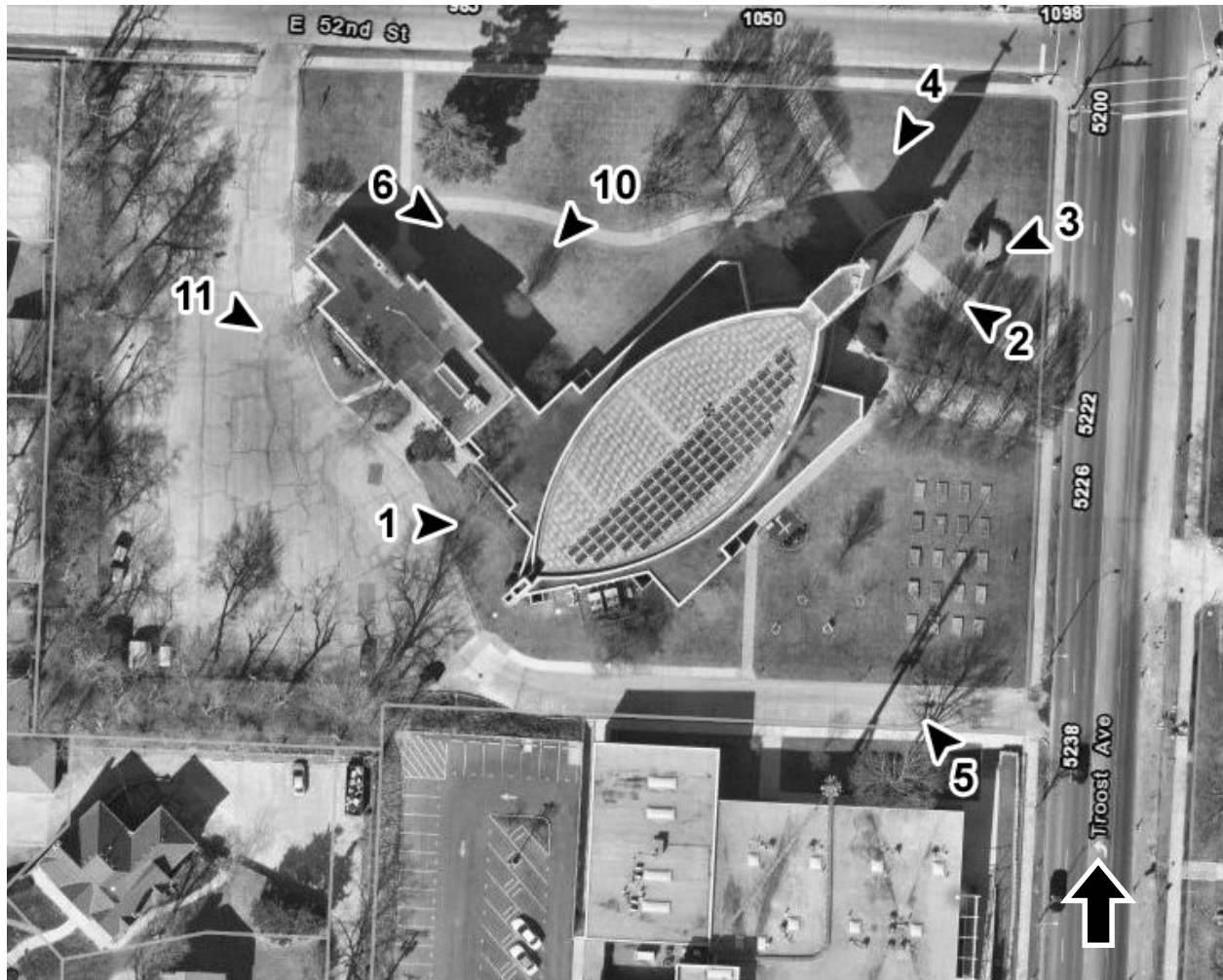
The nominated boundary includes the land historically associated with the areas and period of significance of the St. Francis Parish Church & Rectory, 1948-1951. The 1962 St. Francis Xavier School adjacent to the south is excluded from this nomination even though the two properties share historic parish associations. From 1945 when the diocese purchased the Church parcel until the construction of the School, the School property contained an older school building and the former St. Francis Xavier parish church; both resources were removed to make way for the 1962 school. Despite the historic associations of the two parcels, the school property does not contribute to the architectural or artistic significance of the nominated church. St. Francis Xavier School, listed in the National Register in 2017, is architecturally significant under Criterion C for its International Style; it opened twelve years after the nominated church and rectory.

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Photo Map 1. Exterior overall photos. Base map from Jackson County, Missouri GIS.

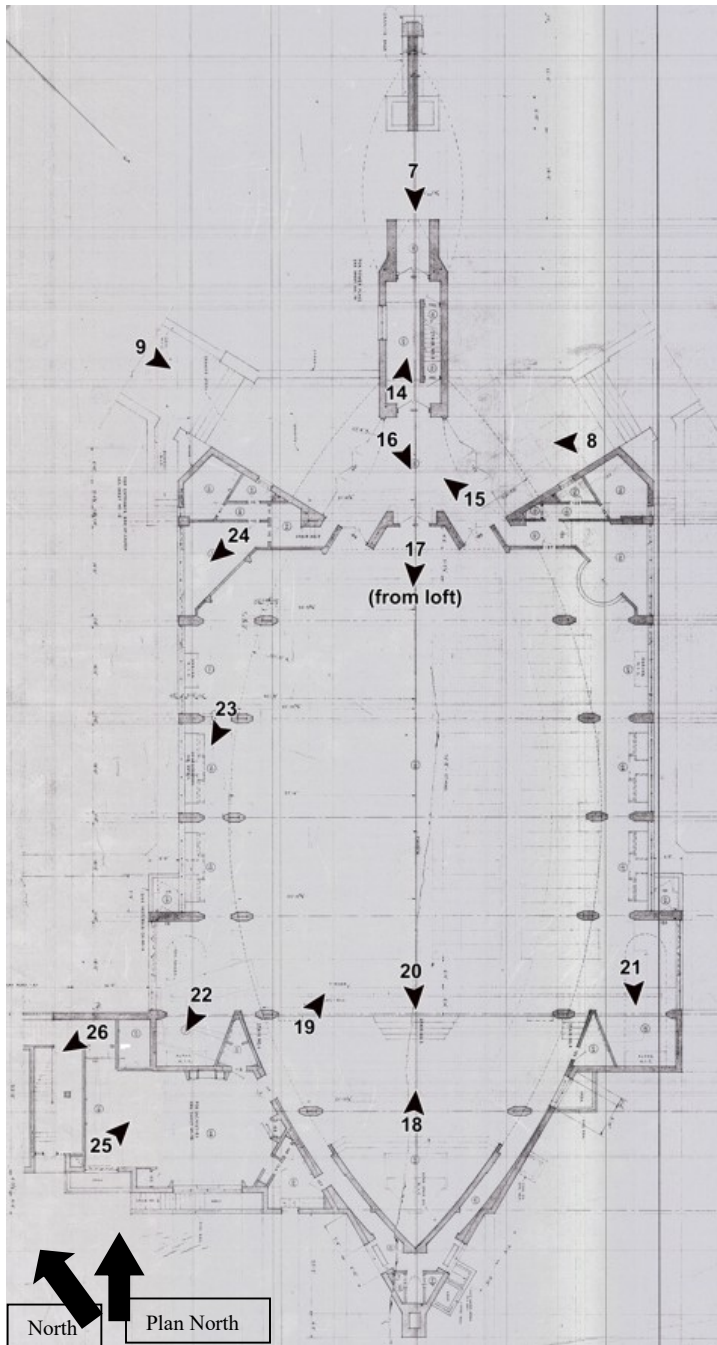


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Photo Map 2. Current first floor plans of Church and Sacristy with keyed photos. Sacristy area modified to represent current conditions. Not to scale. Base plan: Barry Byrne, 1947, Sheet 3 First Floor Plan.



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Photo Map 3. Current and historic first floor plan of the Rectory with keyed photos. Not to scale. Base plan: Barry Byrne, 1947, Sheet R1 Floor Plans.

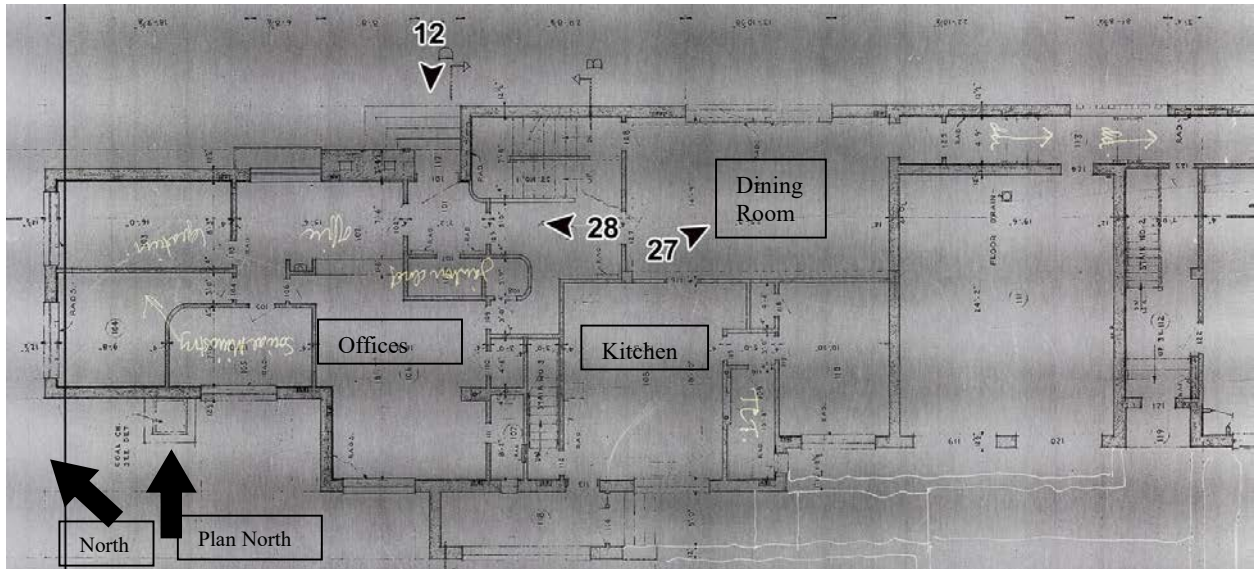
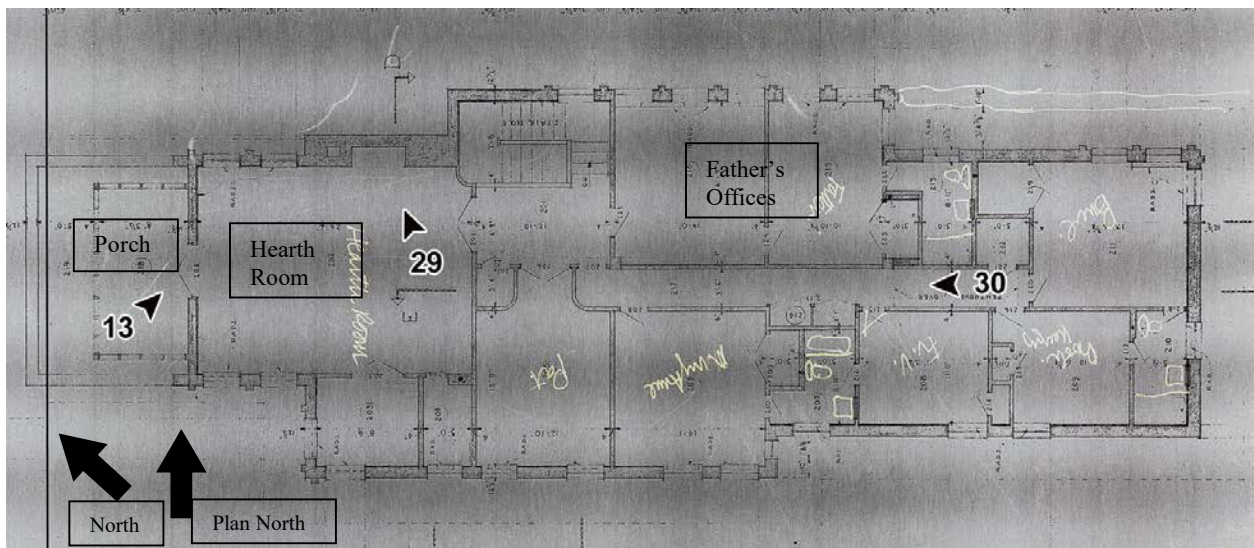


Photo Map 4. Current and historic second floor plan of the Rectory with keyed photos. Not to scale. Base plan: Barry Byrne, 1947, Sheet R1 Floor Plans.

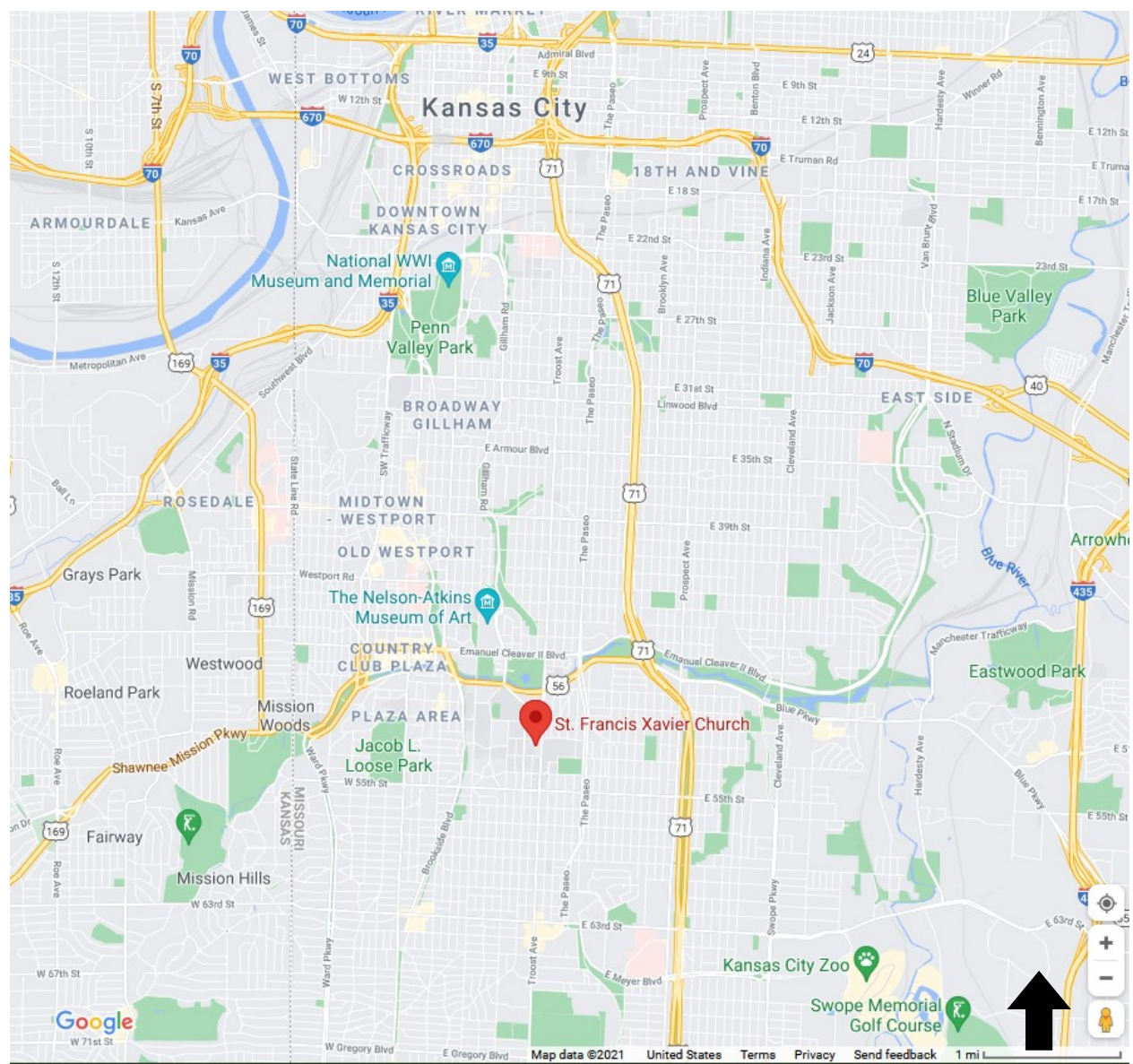


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Figure 1. Contextual map, showing location of St. Francis Xavier Parish Church & Rectory within Kansas City. Base map from Google.

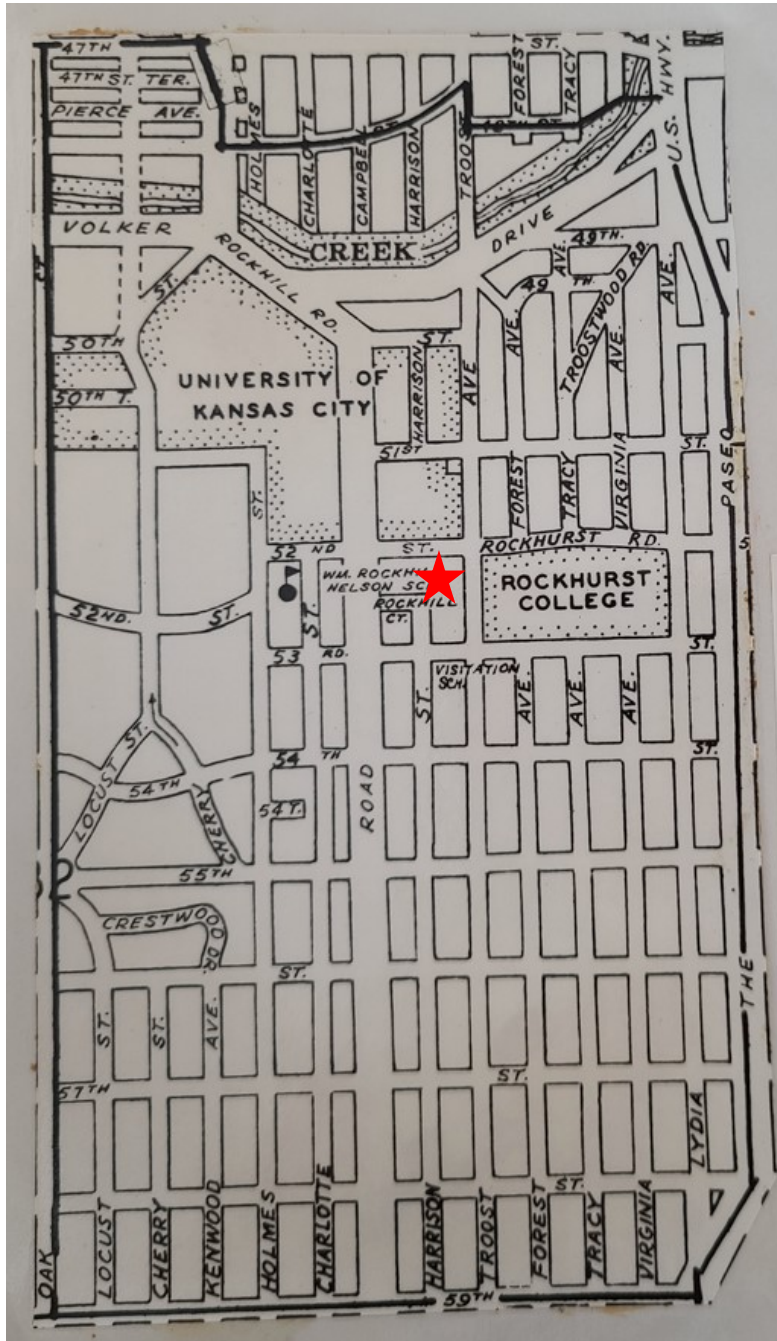


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Figure 2. Diocesan map of the St. Francis Xavier Parish, roughly bound by East 47th Street (north), The Paseo (east), East 59th Street (south), and Oak Street (west). Star indicates location of the church and rectory building. Source: St. Francis Xavier Parish Collection, Box 5, Property & Parish Boundaries File, Chancery Archives, Diocese of Kansas City-St. Joseph.

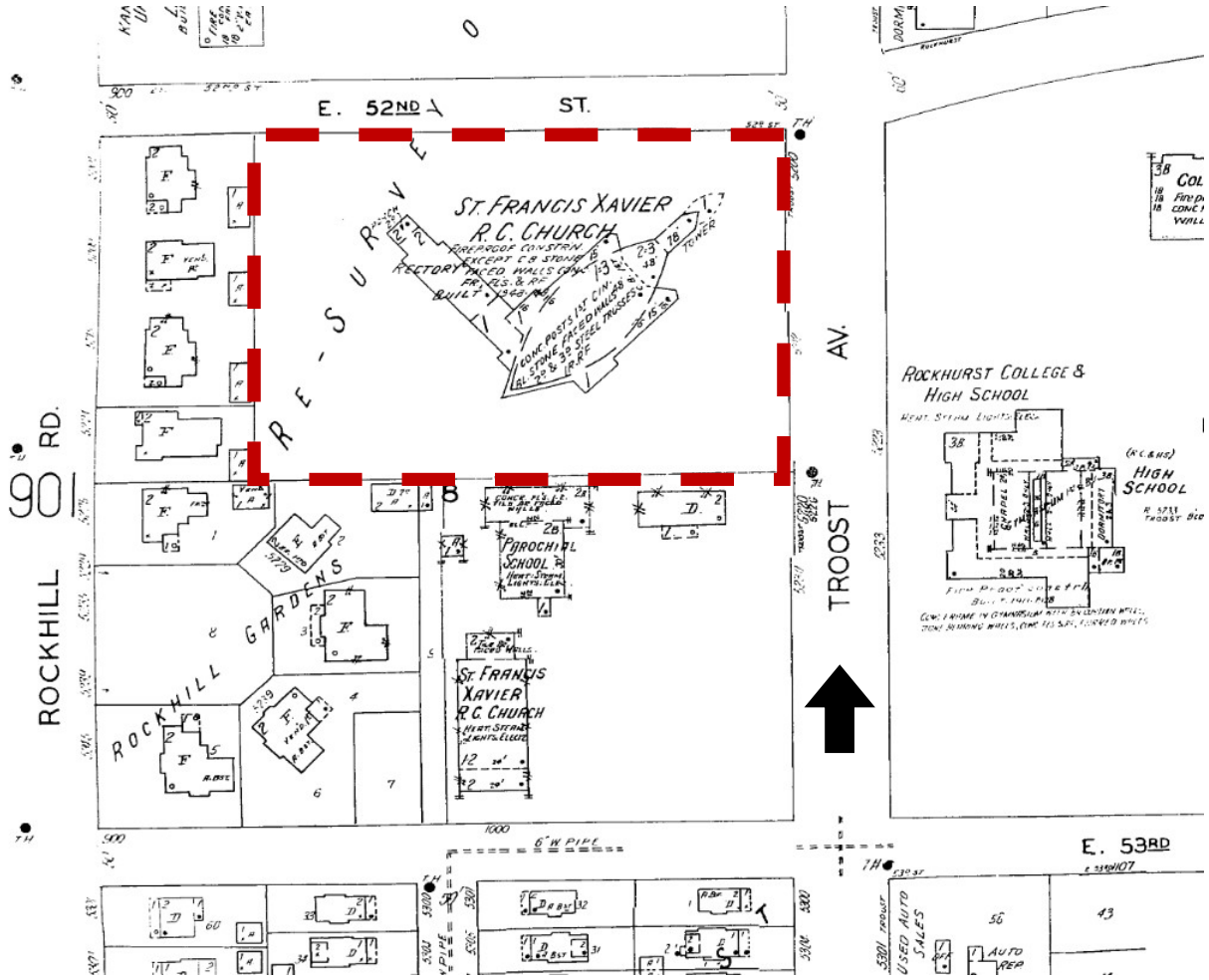


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Figure 3. Snippet of Sheet 902, May 1950 Sanborn map, showing the new church and rectory. Dashed line indicates nominated parcel.

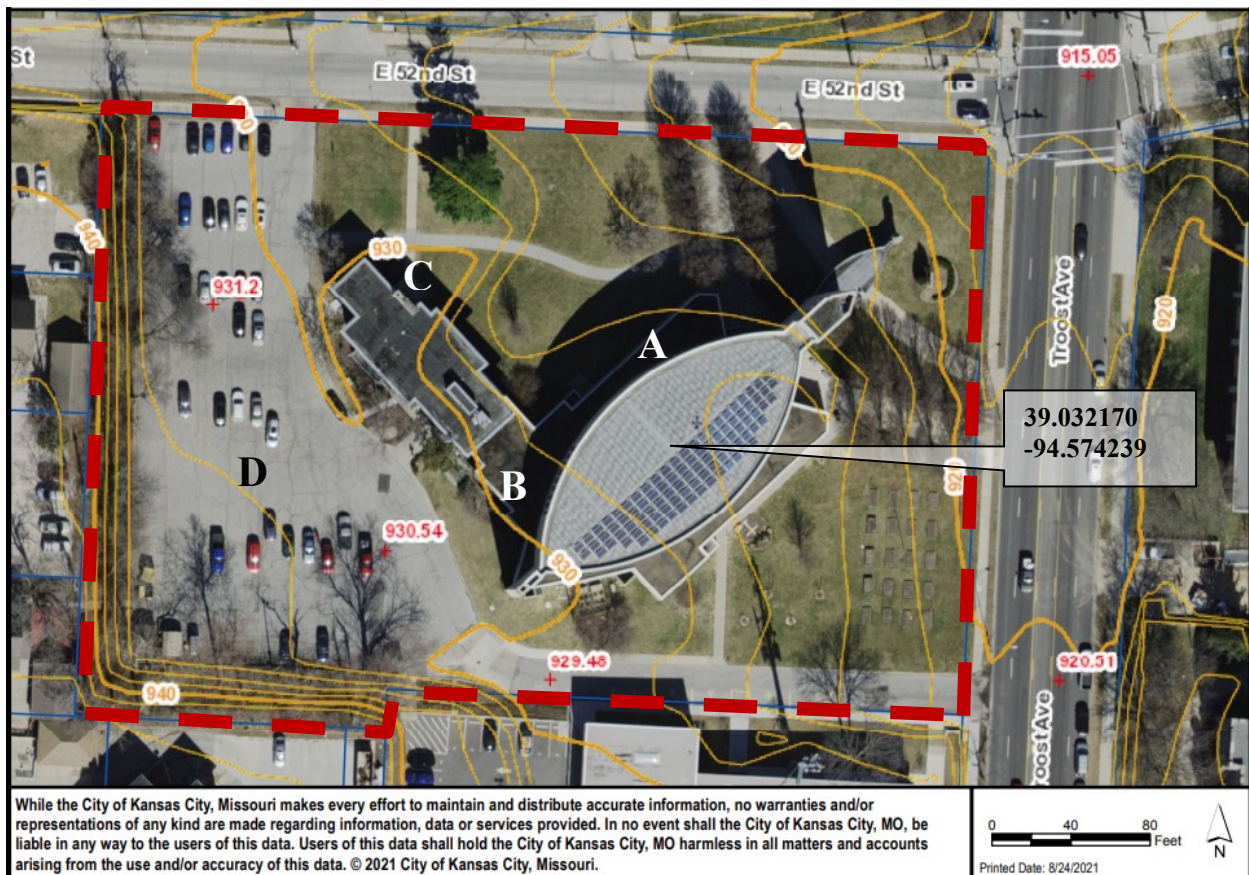


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Figure 4. Current site plan and boundary map with contours. Boundary depicted by bold dashed line. Base map from the City of Kansas City, Missouri parcel viewer (maps.kcmo.org/apps/parcelviewer).



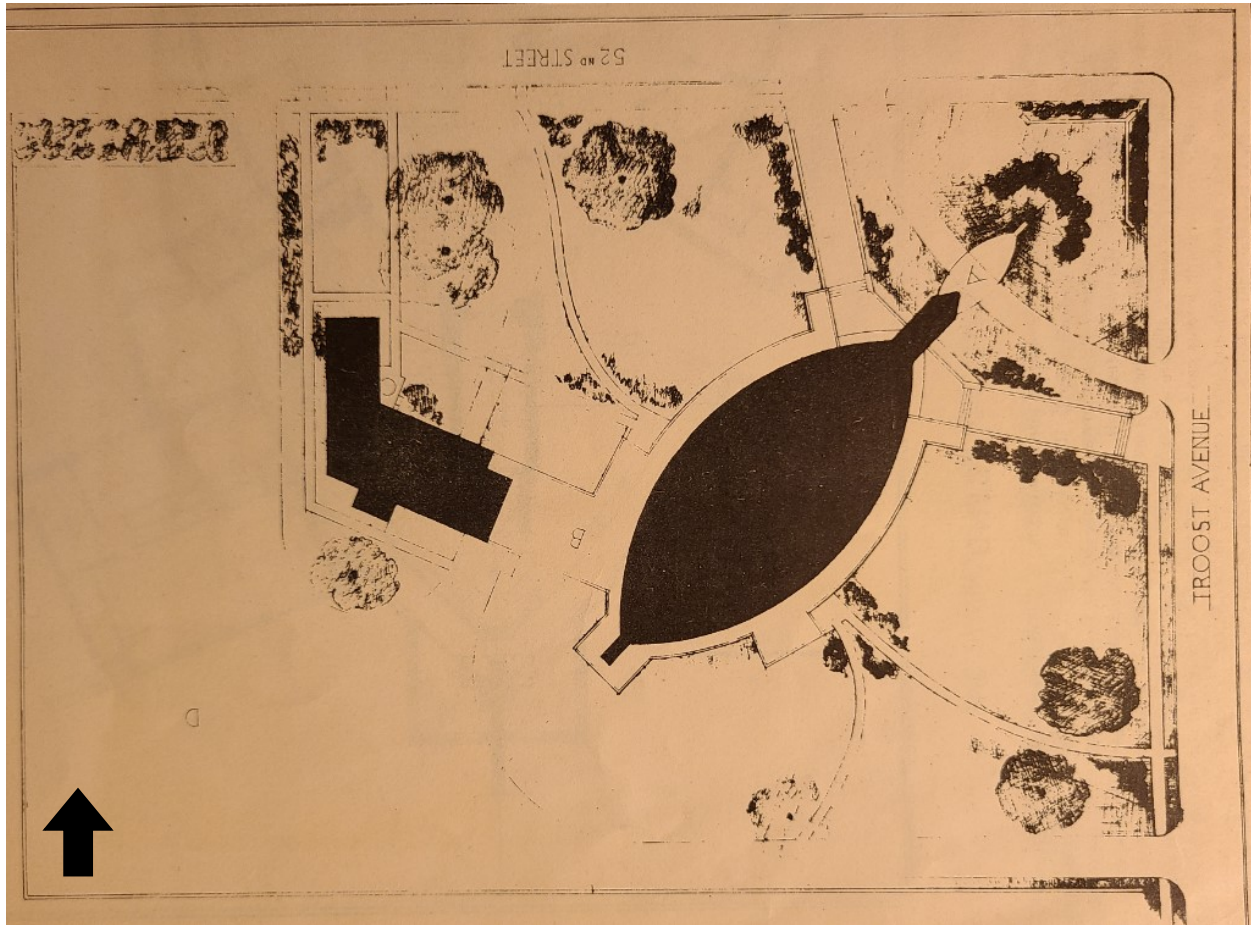
- KEY
- A: Church
 - B: Sacristy/Connector
 - C: Rectory
 - D: Parking Lot (contributing Structure)

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Figure 5. Site plan, from promotional booklet, showing church building with covered driveway (A), sacristy (B), rectory (C), and parking lot (D). Source: "The New Saint Francis Xavier Church," 1946, St. Francis Xavier Vertical File, Missouri Valley Special Collections, Kansas City Public Library.



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Figure 6. View looking south of the steel structural frame, February 1949. Source: St. Francis Xavier Parish Collection, Miscellaneous Photographs, Chancery Archives, Diocese of Kansas City-St. Joseph.

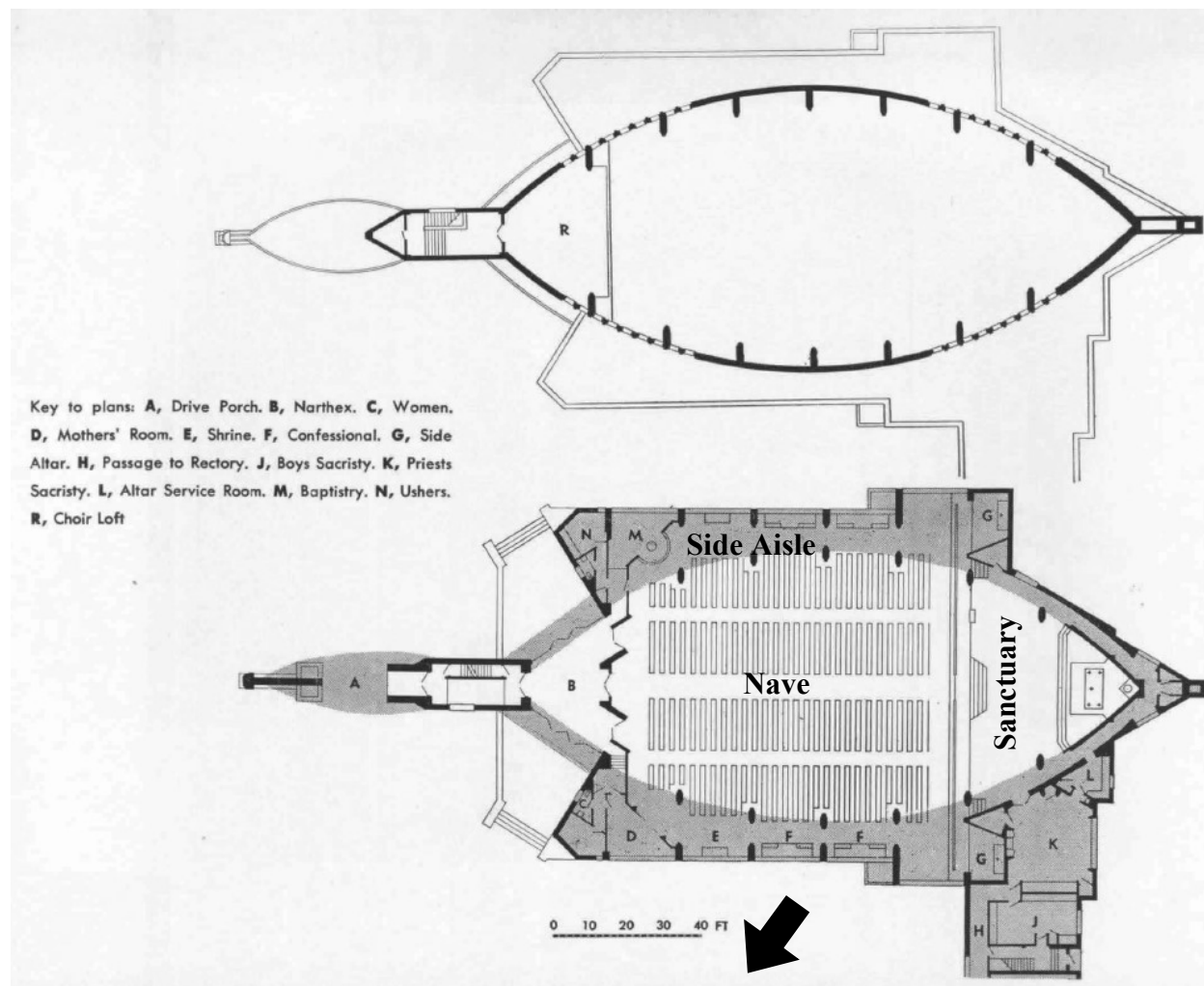


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Figure 7. Annotated plan of St. Francis Xavier. Source: "Two Catholic Churches," *Architectural Record* 109, no. 2 (February 1951): 93.



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Figure 8. The Statue of St. Francis Xavier. Source: Brad Finch, June 2021.



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Figure 9. Cornerstone at the east corner of the east entry porch. Source: Amanda Loughlin, June 2021.



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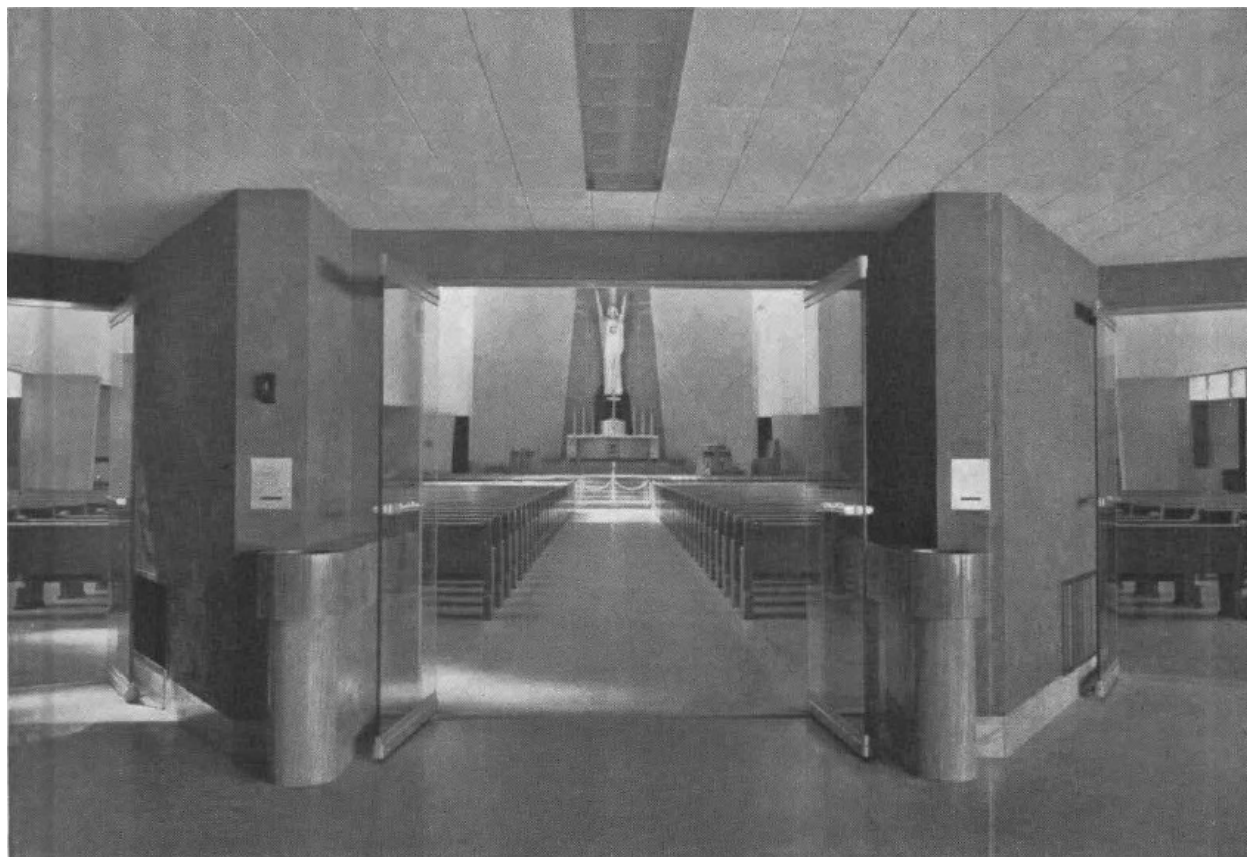
Jackson County, Missouri

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N/A

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Figure 10. View looking southwest into church from Narthex, 1951. Source: "Two Catholic Churches," *Architectural Record*, 94.



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Figure 11. Detail of one of the station reliefs by Iannelli. Source: Felicity Rich, photographer, in Michael, *The Architecture of Barry Byrne*, Plate 6.



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Figure 12. Baptistry designed by Iannelli; exterior (left) and interior (right). Photos by Brad Finch, June 2021.



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Figure 13. Baptismal font designed by Iannelli, with sliding lid. Moved from Baptistry to east side aisle. Left photo: Brad Finch; right photo: Amanda Loughlin, both taken June 2021.



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Figure 14. Annotated photo of the Sanctuary. Photo by Brad Finch, June 2021.



A = Christ the King statue

B = High Altar Tabernacle and crucifix

C = Original High Altar

D = Credence Tables

E = High Altar table designed by Frank Grimaldi in the late 1960s, following Vatican II

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Figure 15. Detail of the High Altar (C in Figure 14) and Tabernacle (B in Figure 14). Photo by Brad Finch, June 2021.



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Figure 16. South elevations of Rectory, Connector, and part of Church. Not to scale. Base plans: Barry Byrne, 1947, Sheets 6 & R2 Elevations.

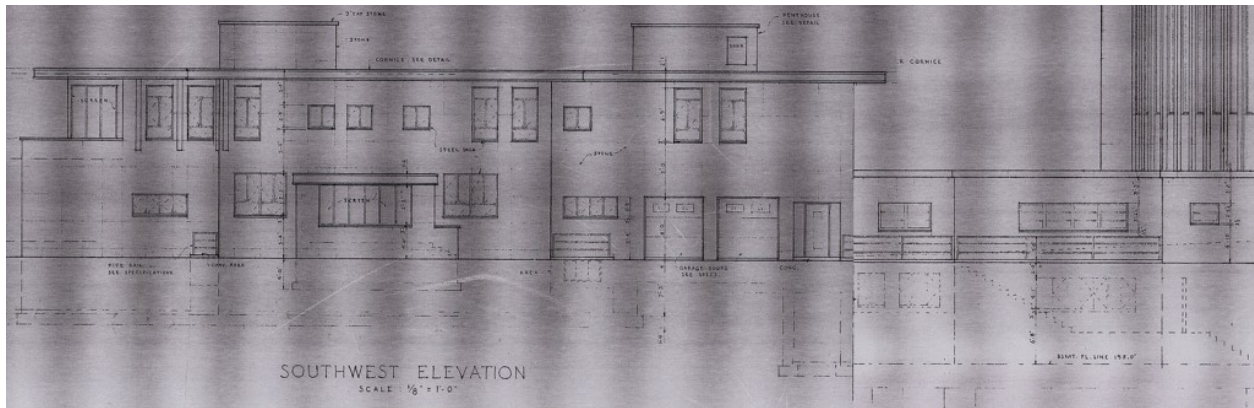
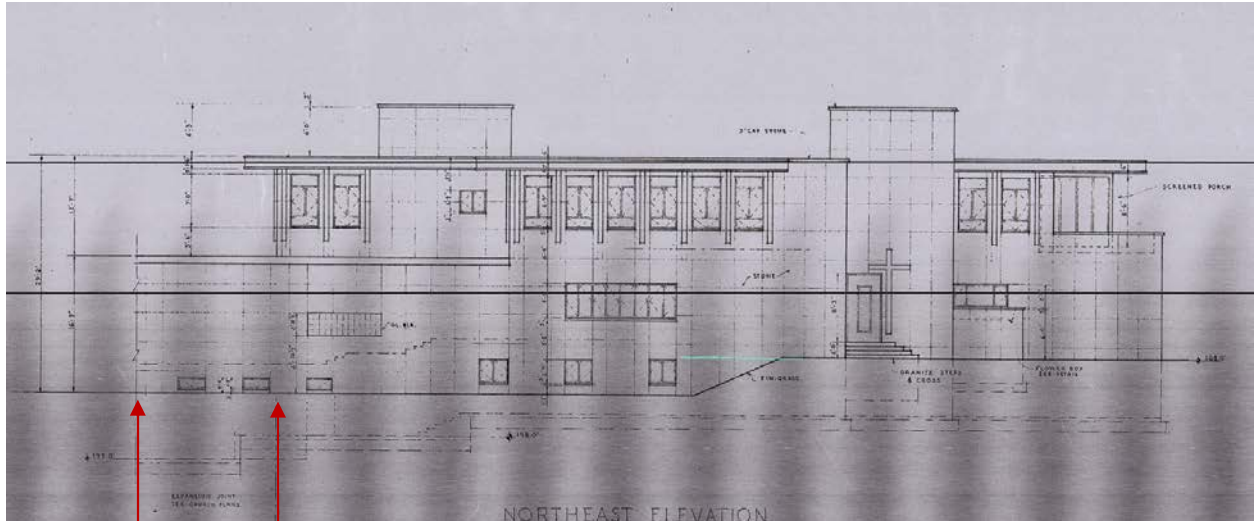


Figure 17. North (true northeast) Elevation of Rectory and Connector. Not to scale. Base plan: Barry Byrne, 1947, Sheet R2 Elevations.



Location where Connector and Rectory meet.

Location where Church and Connector meet.

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Figure 18. Partial view of the south elevation, showing the locations of the two former garage door bays (arrows). Source: Amanda Loughlin, June 2021.



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Figure 19. Father's bathroom, second floor of Rectory, showing historic finishes and fixtures. Source: Brad Finch, June 2021.



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Figure 20. Annette Cremin Byrne and Barry Byrne circa 1926. Source: Chappell, *Barry Byrne*, 12.



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Figure 21. The 1908 Unity Temple (top) and the 1906 Peter Beachy House (bottom), both in Oak Park, Illinois Sources: Felicity Rich, photographer (top) and Vince Michael (bottom) both in Michael, *The Architecture of Barry Byrne*, 12 & 13.



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Figure 22. The Matzen House (top) and Handschy House (bottom). Both constructed in 1910 in Seattle.
Source: Felicity Rich, photographer in Michael, *The Architecture of Barry Byrne*, 18 & 19.



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Figure 23. The First Church of Christ, Scientist, San Diego (1909-1910) designed by Irving Gill. Source: Sarah J. Schaffer, "Irving J. Gill, Progressive Architect Part II: Creating a Sense of Place," *The Journal of San Diego History* 44, no. 1 (Winter 1998): n.p. digitized online by the San Diego History Center <https://sandiegohistory.org/journal/1998/january/significant-sentence-upon-earth-part-ii-images/>

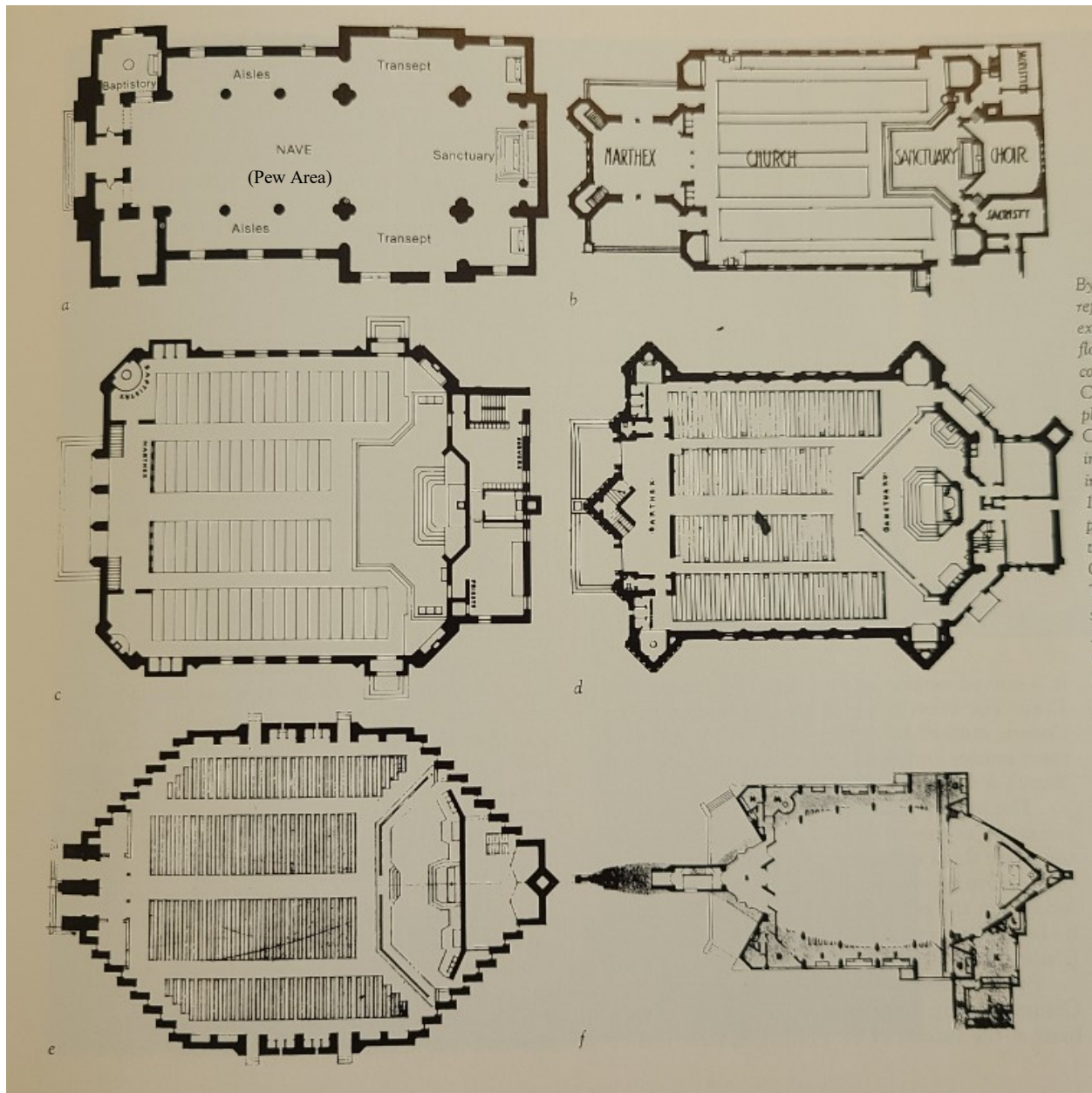


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Figure 24. The progression of Catholic church plans by Barry Byrne. Key below. Source: Chappell, Barry Byrne, 27.



- a: Traditional church plan (non-Byrne)
- c: St. Patrick (Racine), 1923-24
- e: Church of Christ the King (Cork, Ire.), 1929

- b: St. Thomas the Apostle (Chicago), 1922
- d: Church of Christ the King (Tulsa), 1925
- f: St. Francis Xavier (Kansas City), 1947

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Figure 25. St. Thomas the Apostle. (Top) looking toward the sanctuary and altar; (bottom) exterior. Sources: Felicity Rich, photographer in Michael, *The Architecture of Barry Byrne*, 47 (top) and in Michael, "Expressing the Modern," *JSAH*, 537 (bottom).



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Figure 26. Church of Christ the King, Cork, Ireland. View toward the altar (top); exterior (bottom left); detail of entry (bottom right). Sources: Church of Christ the King website (top, bot left); Felicity Rich, photographer in Michael, *The Architecture of Barry Byrne*, 96.



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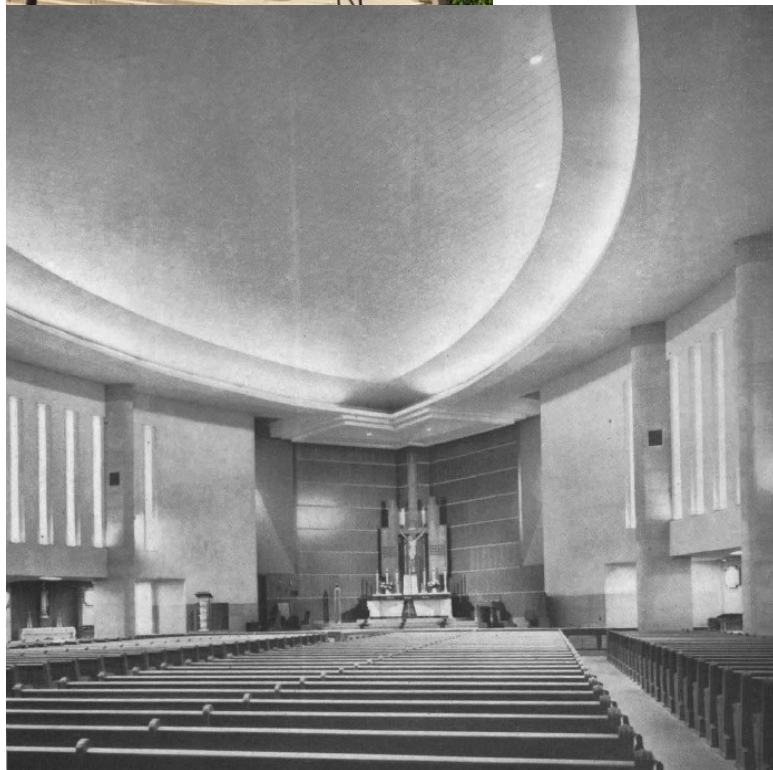
Jackson County, Missouri

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N/A

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Figure 27. St. Columba, St. Paul. (Top) Exterior view; (bottom) interior shortly after opening. Sources: Paul Nelson, photographer, MNopedia, Minnesota Historical Society, 2017 (top); "Two Catholic Churches," *Architectural Record*, 91 (bottom).



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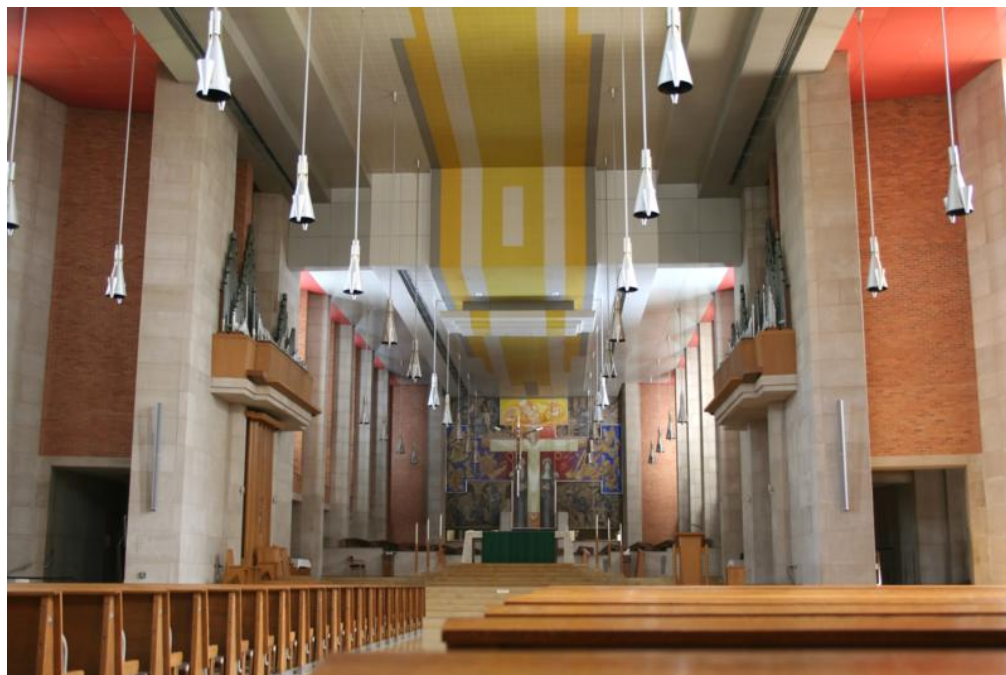
Jackson County, Missouri

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N/A

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Figure 28. St. Benedict Abbey, Atchison, Kansas. (Top) View toward the altar (bottom) exterior shortly after opening. Sources: Robert McLaughlin, Kansas Historic Resources Inventory, 2021 (top); Chappell &, Barry Byrne, 33 (bottom).



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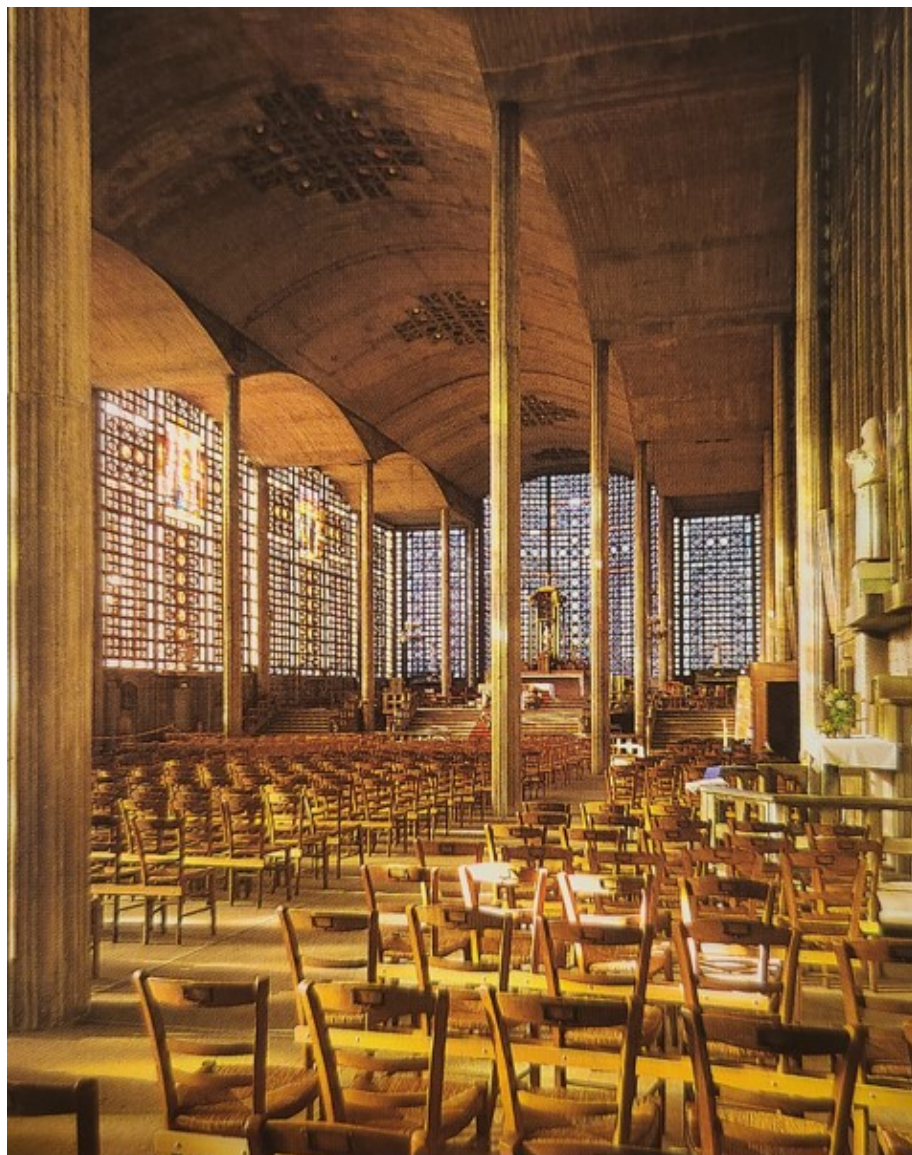
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N/A

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Figure 29. Notre Dame du Raincy, Auguste Perret, 1922-23. View of church interior. Source: William J.R. Curtis, *Modern Architecture Since 1900* (New York: Phaidon Press, 1996), 300.



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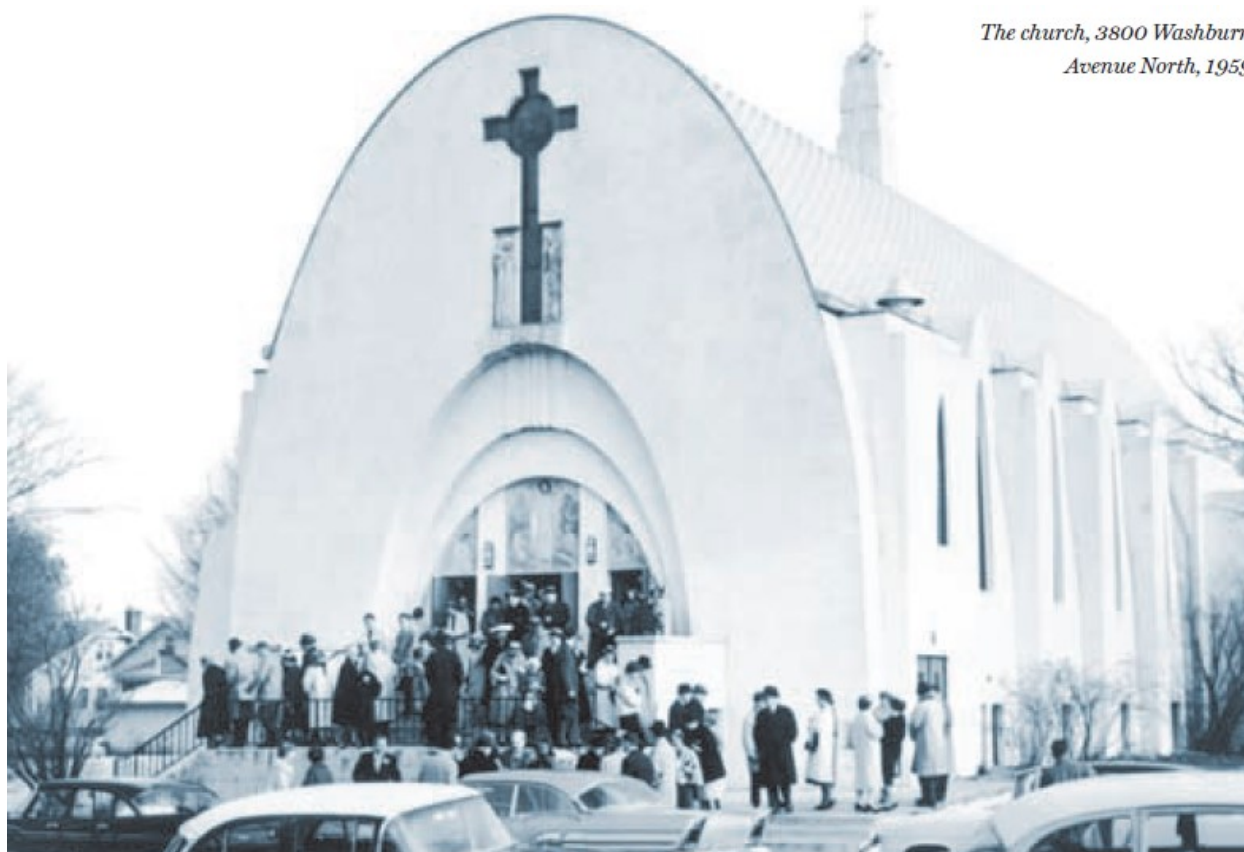
Jackson County, Missouri

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N/A

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Figure 30. The 1939 St. Austin Catholic Church in 1959 (now demolished), one of the first modern Catholic churches in the Midwest. Source: Larry Millett, "St. Austin Roman Catholic Church, Minneapolis," *Minnesota History* 60, no. 8 (Winter 2007): 303.



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Figure 31. Alfonso Iannelli inspecting the aluminum Out Lady of Peace statue that adorns the east altar in St. Francis Xavier, circa 1950. Source: Jameson, *Alfonso Iannelli*, 288.



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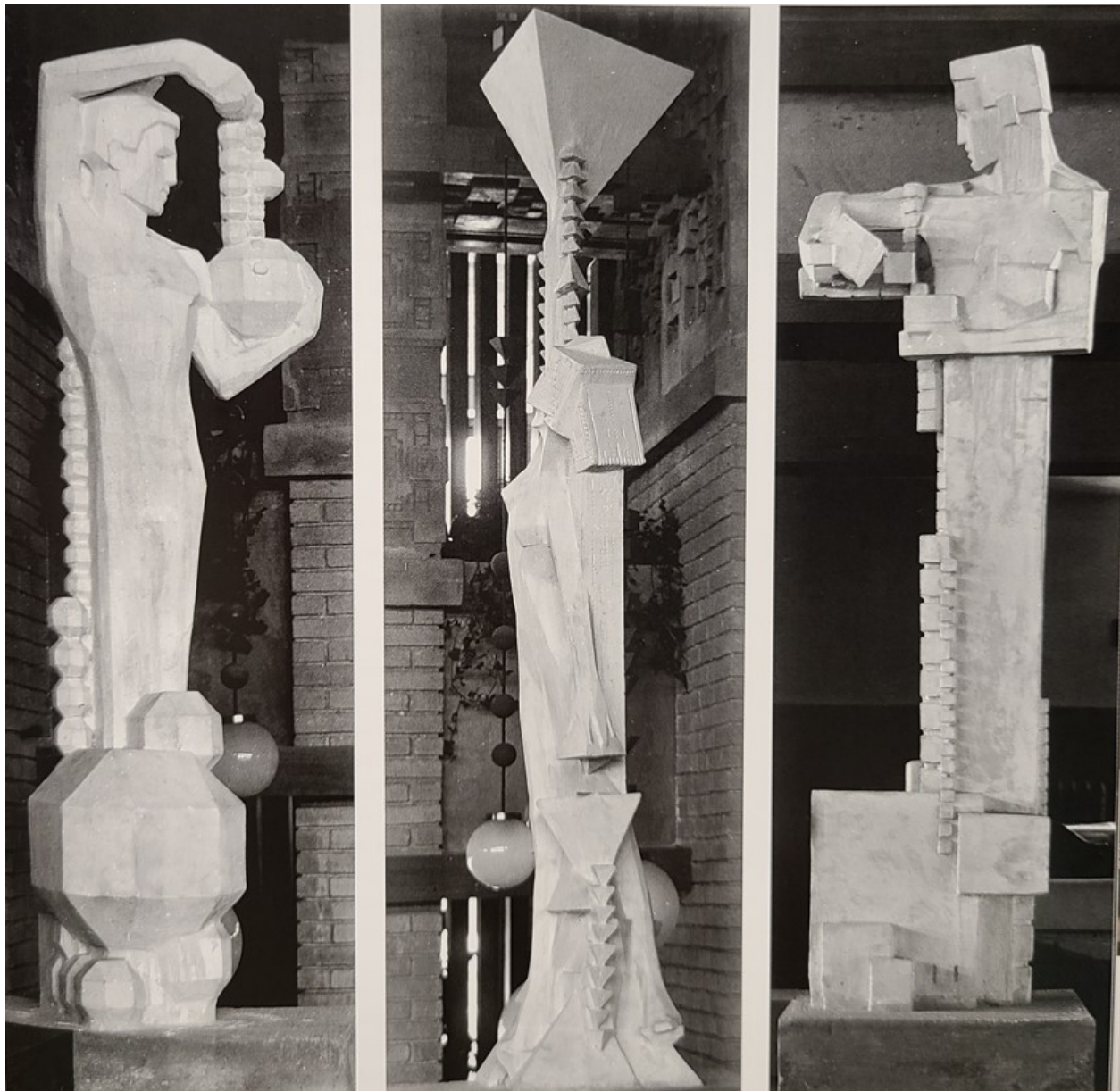
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Figure 32. Three Sprites designed and sculpted by Iannelli in 1914 for Midway Gardens. Source: Jameson, *Alfonso Iannelli*, 79.



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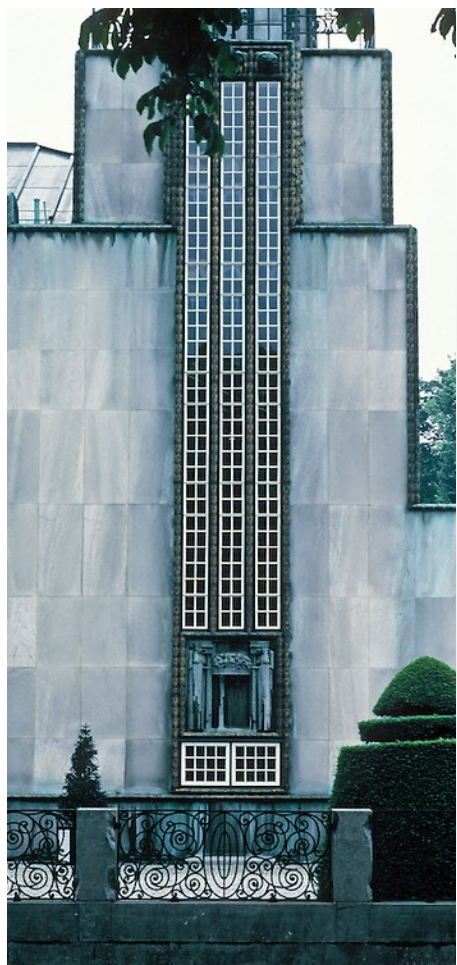
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Figure 33. Josef Hoffmann with Emilie Simandl, Palais Stoclet (1908-1911), Brussels, Belgium (left); Bruno Schmitz & Clemens Thieme with Franz Metzner, Völkerschlachtdenkmal (1898-1913), Leipzig, Germany (right), Sources: Friends of San Diego Architecture

<https://friendsofsdarch.photoshelter.com/gallery-image/Josef-Hoffmann/G0000p3J6z9gCjm0/I0000qDvsL9aQACc/C0000RKtGn0sEOxQ> (left) and BACU, 29 May 2015 <https://tumblr.co/ZuLP3u1lzQjtT>



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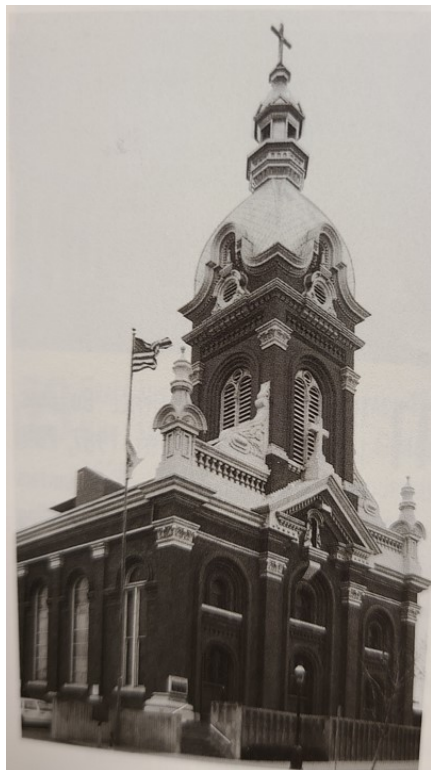
Jackson County, Missouri

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Figure 34. The 1882 Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception (left) and the 1907-1912 Our Lady of Perpetual Help Redemptorist Church (right), both in Kansas City, Missouri. Source: *American Institute of Architects Guide to Kansas City Architecture & Public Art* (Kansas City, MO: American Institute of Architects/Kansas City, 2000), 11 & 95.



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Figure 35. Proposed design of the church, 1946. Annette Cremin Byrne, rendering. Source: St. Francis Xavier Vertical File, Missouri Valley Special Collections, Kansas City Public Library.



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Figure 36. The proposed design in 1947. The figure of St. Francis Xavier has been relocated from the surface of the bell tower to the “prow” but the roof remains arched. Photos of a scale model created by Byrne’s office. Source: Barry Byrne, “Toward a New Church Architecture,” *Architectural Record*, 94.



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Figure 37. Proposed design for the Rectory, 1946. Annette Cremin Byrne, rendering. Source: St. Francis Xavier Vertical File, Missouri Valley Special Collections, Kansas City Public Library.

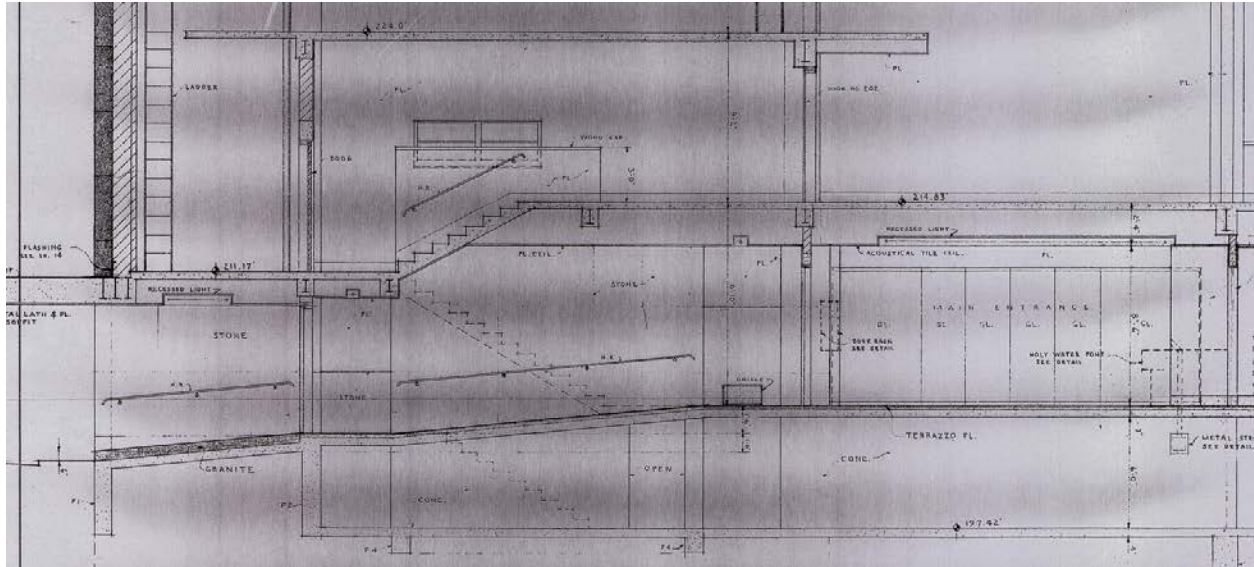


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Figure 38. Section through the tower showing the entry from the porte cochere and the narthex. Not to scale. Base plan: Barry Byrne, 1947, Sheet 10, Section.



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Figure 39. View of the completed church, looking south toward the altar. Note that Iannelli's Stations of the Cross are not yet installed. Source: "Two Catholic Churches," *Architectural Record*, 93.



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Figure 40. Mother's Day Mass, May 1951. Note the Stations of the Cross are installed and the priests are facing away from the people. Source: Chancery Archives, Diocese of Kansas City-St. Joseph.



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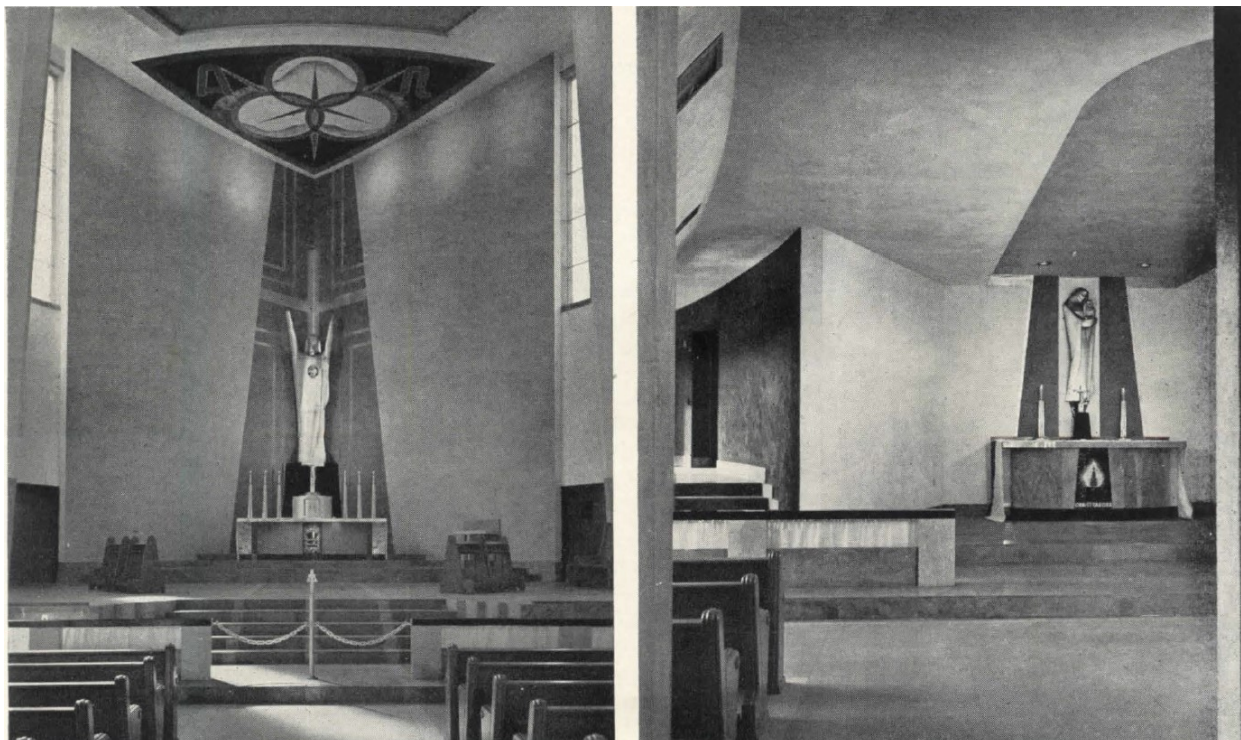
Jackson County, Missouri

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N/A

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Figure 41. View of high altar (left) and Joseph (west) side chapel (right). Note the candlesticks on both altar tables and the communion rail chain. Source: "Two Catholic Churches," *Architectural Record*, 94.



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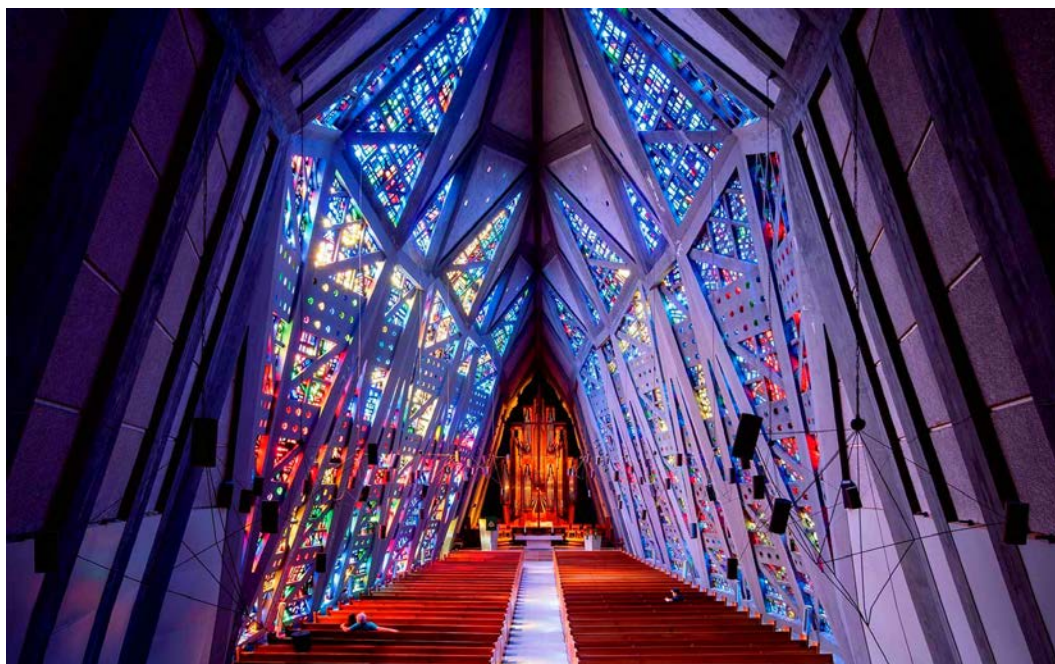
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Figure 42. First Presbyterian Church of Stamford, Connecticut. Exterior (top) and interior (bottom).
Sources: First Presbyterian Church website <https://www.fishchurch.org/> (top) and John9474 - Own work, CC BY-SA 4.0, July 2015 <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=73018116>

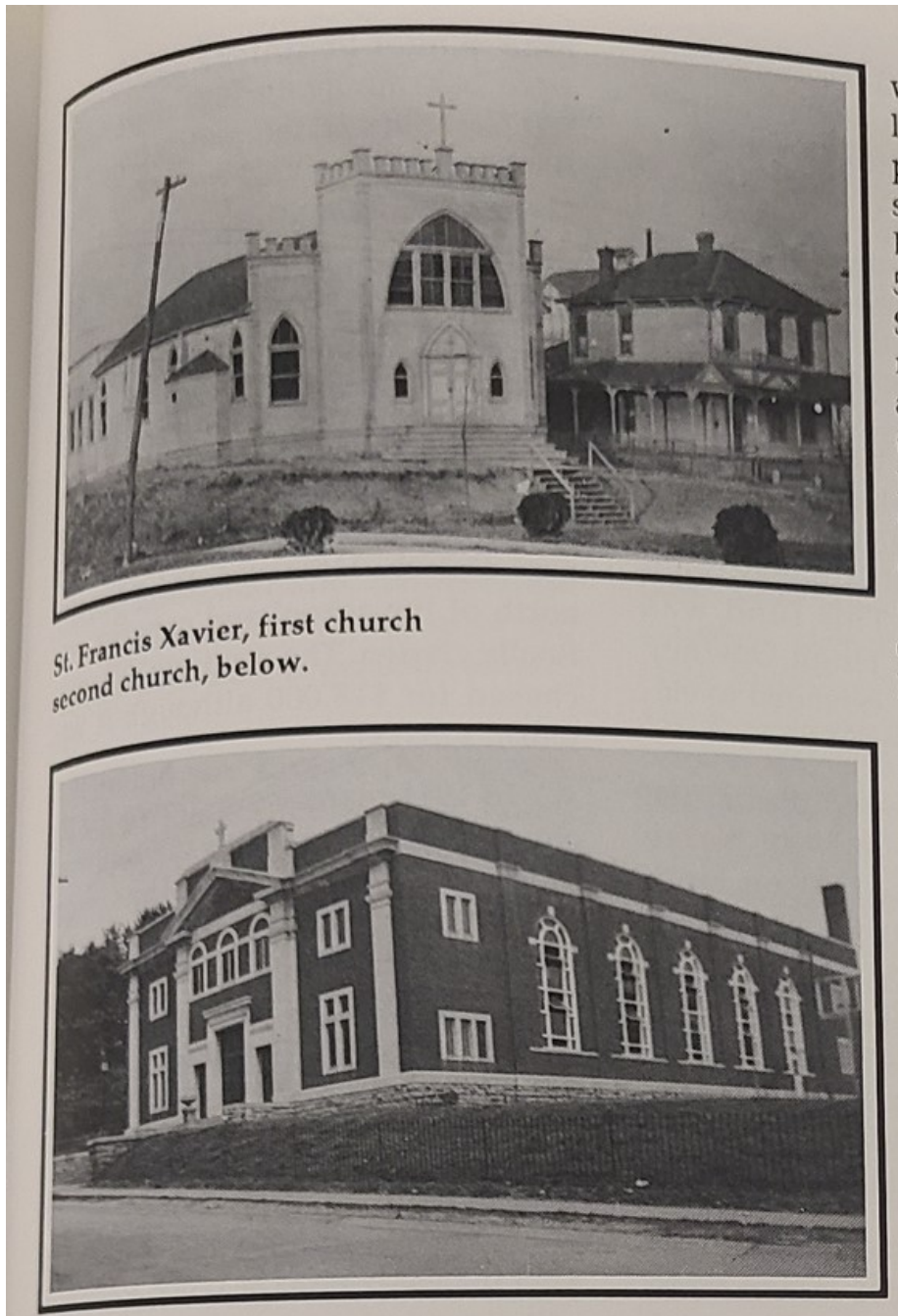


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Figure 43. The first parish church and house that was relocated (above) and the second church building (below). Source: Coleman, *This Far By Faith*, 223.

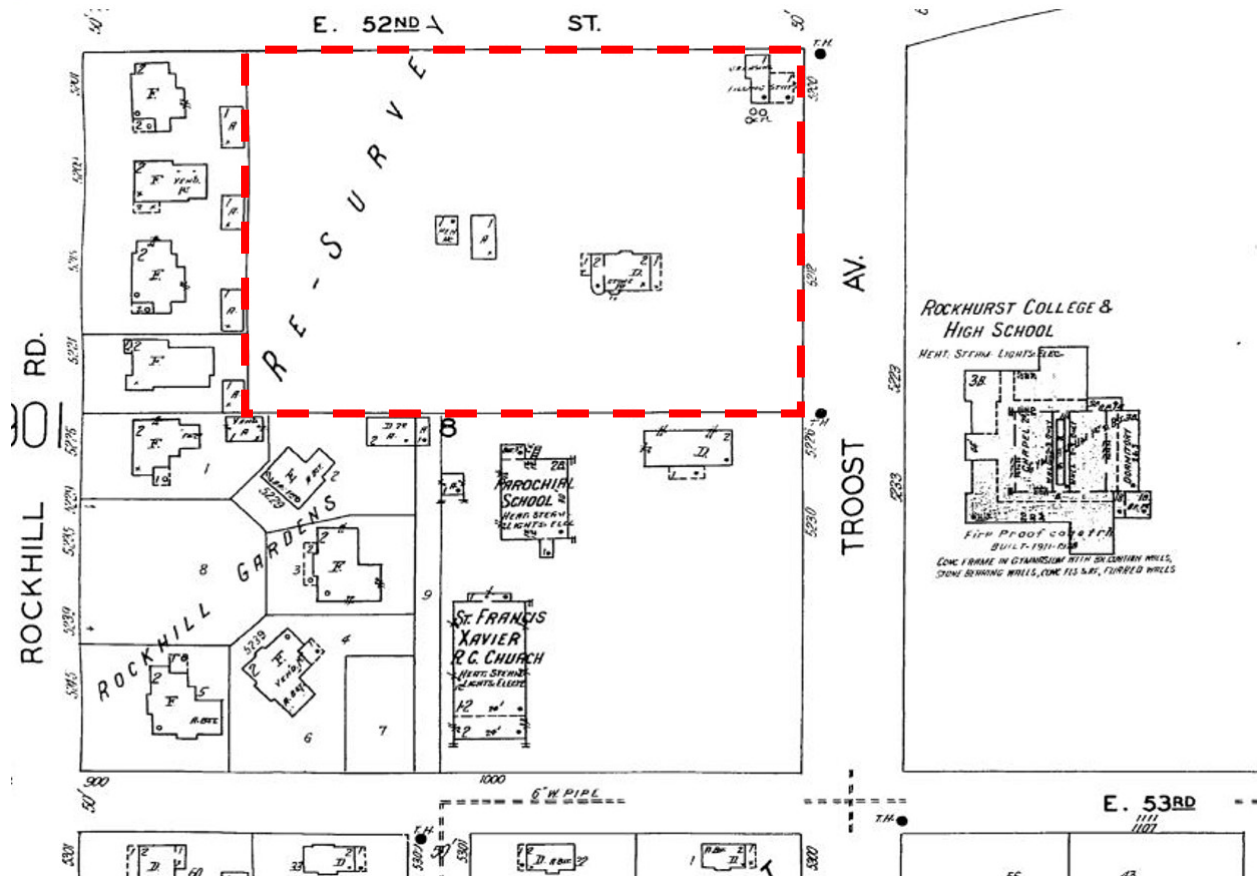


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Figure 44. Snippet of Sheet 902 of the 1939 Sanborn Fire Insurance map, showing the parish property. The dashed line indicates the boundary of the nominated property.



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Figure 45. View of the Church wing under construction during the June 26, 1949 cornerstone ceremony. Source: St. Francis Xavier Parish Collection, Miscellaneous Photographs, Chancery Archives, Diocese of Kansas City-St. Joseph.





1





ST. FRANCIS XAVIER
CATHOLIC CHURCH

















St. Francis Catholic Church
Our Lord's Chapel





































