

March 21, 2019

Anna Mosser  
Friends of Warrendale  
and Save Historic St. Andrew's, LLC

Re: St. Andrew's Catholic Church, St. Paul, Ramsey County

Dear Ms. Mosser:

The State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) has completed review of the property evaluation for St. Andrew's Catholic Church near Lake Como in St. Paul. The property evaluation explains that the church is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion C for both its architecture and its association with Charles A. Hausler, a prominent architect operating in Minnesota in the early twentieth century. Additionally, the property evaluation notes that the church is eligible for the National Register under Criterion A "as an important institution in the Lake Como area that became a community center for the working-class congregation that it served."

The SHPO agrees that the church is eligible for listing in the National Register for its architecture. Its Romanesque Revival design is locally distinctive when contrasted with other churches employing the style. The complexity of the design is revealed in its many architectural embellishments, several of which make for an unusual design vocabulary. For example, the walls exhibit several brick bonds, including American, Flemish, running, basket weave, and herringbone. The multi-sided towers feature shallow-roofed turrets with blind openings rather than the domes that often crown the towers of Romanesque Revival churches. A unique aesthetic is created by the numerous circular windows punctuating the principal facade, in contrast to many Romanesque Revival churches which feature arched windows at this elevation. The rose window itself is composed of many circular windows framing a cross. The octagonal belfry of the bell tower rising along the east elevation features stone panels pierced with circular windows as well. Light-colored elements like the stone columns parceling paired windows, the rose window framing, entrance and window surrounds, and several areas of banding deeply contrasts with the brown brick forming the walls. The entire architectural ensemble is capped with a colorful polychromatic tile roof. As the author of the property evaluation notes: "St. Andrew's draws its inspiration from a variation of the Romanesque style that developed in southern France and northern Italy, which is characterized by complex designs and colorful ornament." Again, this is unlike the somewhat restrained appearance of many Romanesque Revival churches.

While the SHPO believes the church is eligible under Criterion C for its architecture, at present, we are not convinced that the church is eligible for its association with Charles A. Hausler. Hausler was indeed a prominent architect based in St. Paul, and he authored numerous designs for a wide array of property types. However, when making an eligibility case for "the work of a master" association alone is not enough. Instead, we need to demonstrate that the property under National Register consideration is one of the architect's highly influential works. For this reason, we need comparison/contrast with other commissions the architect received. The current property evaluation does not offer that particular analysis. With additional research and analysis it is possible that St. Andrew's Catholic Church may be eligible for the National Register for its association with Hausler.

St. Andrew's Catholic Church may be eligible for listing in the National Register under Criterion A as an important institution in the Como area. Serving as a social and liturgical center for 500 families when the present church building was constructed implies as much, and the church's tie to the Hungarian community in the Como area seems strong. However, the narrative highlighting this part of the history of St. Andrew's Catholic Church, although interesting, is somewhat truncated. This part of the church's story could prove intriguing, but at present the information available to us to make a determination under Criterion A is limited.

In 2013-2014 an addition was built from the rear of the church, reaching northward and connecting with the 1957 St. Andrew's School, which also is on the site. If a National Register listing was sought for St. Andrew's Catholic Church, we would expect additional elaboration on the 1957 school building and the 2013-2014 addition, as they connect to the church; information on these two built components is brief in the current study.

While the church, the 2013-2014 addition, and the 1957 school are physically linked, the linkage extends from the north rear wall of the church, a wall historically less embellished than the primary elevations of the facade and sides. The subservient location of these components in relation to the church continues to provide the church with a substantial visual presence; the Romanesque Revival architecture of St. Andrew's Catholic Church continues to read very well.

In conclusion, if a National Register nomination for St. Andrew's Catholic Church was presented to the State Historic Preservation Review Board the SHPO believes that body would approve listing of the building in the National Register and vote to forward the nomination to the Keeper of the National Register in Washington, D.C. The Keeper makes final determinations, and it is the SHPO's view that the Keeper's Office would conclude that the church, at a minimum, is eligible for National Register listing for its architecture.

If you have questions, please let me know.

Sincerely,



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