

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

STATE: North Carolina	
COUNTY: Craven	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE

1. NAME

COMMON:
St. Paul's Roman Catholic Church

AND/OR HISTORIC:

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER:
510 Middle Street

CITY OR TOWN:
New Bern (First Congressional District, The Hon. Walter B. Jones)

STATE North Carolina	CODE 37	COUNTY: Craven	CODE 049
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3. CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
<input type="checkbox"/> District <input type="checkbox"/> Site <input type="checkbox"/> Object <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Building <input type="checkbox"/> Structure	<input type="checkbox"/> Public <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Private <input type="checkbox"/> Both	Public Acquisition: <input type="checkbox"/> In Process <input type="checkbox"/> Being Considered <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Occupied <input type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress	Yes: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Restricted <input type="checkbox"/> Unrestricted <input type="checkbox"/> No

PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

<input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural	<input type="checkbox"/> Government	<input type="checkbox"/> Park	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation	<input type="checkbox"/> Comments
<input type="checkbox"/> Commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> Industrial	<input type="checkbox"/> Private Residence	<input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify)	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Educational	<input type="checkbox"/> Military	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Religious	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> Museum	<input type="checkbox"/> Scientific	_____	_____

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY

OWNER'S NAME:
St. Paul's Roman Catholic Church

STREET AND NUMBER:
502 Middle Street

CITY OR TOWN: New Bern	STATE: North Carolina	CODE 37
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5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.:
Craven County Courthouse

STREET AND NUMBER:
302 Broad Street

CITY OR TOWN: New Bern	STATE: North Carolina	CODE 37
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6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE OF SURVEY:

DATE OF SURVEY: Federal State County Local

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN:	STATE:	CODE

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

STATE: North Carolina

COUNTY: Craven

ENTRY NUMBER

DATE

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NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Continuation Sheet)

STATE	
North Carolina	
COUNTY	
Craven	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE

(Number all entries)

7.

and carried on balusters square in section. In order to accommodate more people at the communion rail at one time, the original rail was removed and replaced by an arcaded rail which runs across the entire width of the church.

Twin quarter-turn stairways with winders flank the entrance to the nave and lead to the gallery which is supported on slender columns and runs across the back and down each side of the church. Along the outside of the flat-paneled gallery balustrade, obscured by paint but still discernible, is the motto, "Sancti Paule, Apostole Praedicator, Veritates et Doctor, Gentium Intercede, Pro Nobis ad Dominum" (St. Paul, Apostle, Preacher of Truth and Teacher of the Nations, intercede for us to the Lord!). The walls at the gallery level are covered with horizontal flush sheathing. The ceiling beneath the galleries is outlined with a cornice of dentils above which has recently been added a course of block modillions. A molded wooden cornice accentuates the main church ceiling, and parallel to that runs a tiny molded plaster border, the corners of which are indented. Traditionally, a chandelier hung from the plaster roundel centered over the nave; the fixture currently hanging there is a twentieth century one.

Late nineteenth and early twentieth century photographs of the interior of the church show various types of trompe l'oeil painting on the altar wall. These included painted draperies, niches, and tabernacles which created quite a dramatic illusionary effect. Unfortunately, none of these survived the most recent renovation.

7. DESCRIPTION

CONDITION	(Check One)					
	<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Good	<input type="checkbox"/> Fair	<input type="checkbox"/> Deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> Ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> Unexposed
	(Check One)			(Check One)		
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Altered	<input type="checkbox"/> Unaltered	<input type="checkbox"/> Moved	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Original Site		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Saint Paul's Roman Catholic Church, built 1840-1841, is a rectangular frame structure three bays wide and four bays deep covered by a gable roof. The west end of the building, which faces the street, is pedimented. A central square projecting entrance tower, an addition of 1896, breaks through and rises above the pediment.

The church is essentially two stories in height with the bays at the first level marked by windows containing twelve-over-twelve sash. The bays at the second level, corresponding to the gallery within, are marked on the main facade by oval oculus windows set in rectangular frames. On the sides, however, these have been replaced by twentieth century single twelve-light sash set in frames like those of the oculi.

The corners of the church and the first stage of the tower are delineated with corner posts treated as pilasters with simple molded caps. A cornice of undercut modillions augmented by a dentil course runs along the sides of the church, around the pediment, and between the first and second stages of the tower. A gently splayed shingle pent above the cornice forms a base for the second stage of the tower which also rests partially on the gable. Pilaster corner posts with somewhat more elaborate caps recur on the tower's second stage and carry a plain frieze surmounted by a cornice identical to that below. Triple lattice windows appear on the west face of the tower just above the pent. Above them, on each of the four faces of the tower, is a pair of rectangular louvered vents. A conical octagonal spire, adapted to the square tower by means of broaches, is crowned with a Latin cross.

A door cut into the third bay of the south side is a recent alteration done to make the church comply with fire safety standards. Original to the building, however, are the six-panel rear door with four-light transom and the double doors which form the front entrance in the tower. The front door, each leaf of which is composed of six raised panels, retains its original box lock and is surmounted by a glazed transom overlaid with delicate wooden members in imitation of leading, a device employed in fanlights and transoms throughout New Bern.

The plan of the church remains much as designed in 1839 by Bishop England (who was bishop of the Diocese of Charleston and instrumental in the establishment of St. Paul's in New Bern), even though the interior has been remodeled frequently, most recently in the last decade. The nave is composed of three aisles and two sections of pews. The walls of the nave below the half-round chair rail are covered with narrow vertical sheathing. Two preparation rooms located on either side of the altar platform are arranged according to Bishop England's design, each with a door facing the altar. Some alterations of that plan have been made. The confessional has been transferred from its original place at the front of the northeast preparation room to an area on the same side, but at the rear. Also the chancel area has been altered. It was formerly square in plan, projecting along the line of the preparation rooms and enclosed by a rounded handrail set into posts

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

8. SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- | | | | |
|--|---------------------------------------|--|---------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pre-Columbian | <input type="checkbox"/> 16th Century | <input type="checkbox"/> 18th Century | <input type="checkbox"/> 20th Century |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 15th Century | <input type="checkbox"/> 17th Century | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 19th Century | |

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known)

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- | | | | |
|--|---|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal | <input type="checkbox"/> Education | <input type="checkbox"/> Political | <input type="checkbox"/> Urban Planning |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Prehistoric | <input type="checkbox"/> Engineering | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Religion/Philosophy | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Historic | <input type="checkbox"/> Industry | <input type="checkbox"/> Science | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture | <input type="checkbox"/> Invention | <input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture | _____ |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Landscape Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Social/Humanitarian | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Art | <input type="checkbox"/> Literature | <input type="checkbox"/> Theater | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Commerce | <input type="checkbox"/> Military | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Communications | <input type="checkbox"/> Music | | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Conservation | | | _____ |

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

According to the surviving records of St. Paul's Catholic Church, Margaret Sharpe, who married Dr. Alexander Gaston in May, 1775, was the first Catholic in New Bern. Catholicism was at that time not a major force in North Carolina, and later, on the eve of the Civil War, in 1860, there still just seven Roman Catholic churches in the state, with a total membership of only 350. Catholic historian J. J. O'Connell believes that the first Catholic church built in the state was probably at New Bern, and that the first Catholic clergyman permanently stationed in North Carolina took up his work there.

Among the outstanding members of the New Bern church was Margaret and Alexander Gaston's son, William, who wrote the words for the North Carolina state song, and was a member of Congress and later served as a member of the North Carolina Supreme Court. He was also instrumental in the establishment of St. Paul's Church. According to church records,

The Right Rev. John England visited this town for the first time in 1821, remained eight days, preached each night in the Court House and celebrated mass at Mr. Gaston's house every morning. He organized the little congregation; got the small number of Catholics to practice the duties of their religion, which for many years was neglected; erected New Bern into an ecclesiastical district under St. Paul the Apostle; and promised to send them a priest as soon as he could.

Although a church building for the new parish was not constructed for several years, a painting hanging in the church is said to date from about the time of the bishop's visit. The painting, entitled "Jesus on the Cross," by William Joseph Williams, was a recent gift from the Williams family who noted in presenting it,

We believe that the artist did his work in Newbern about the time that he became a convert to the Catholic faith in May 1821. It was about this time that John England, 1786-1842, Bishop of Charleston, S.C., visited Newbern and designated the artist as a lay-reader in what was the beginning of your church.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Continuation Sheet)

STATE	North Carolina	
COUNTY	Craven	
FOR NPS USE ONLY		
ENTRY NUMBER		DATE

(Number all entries)

8. A

When the vestry was organized in 1824, William Gaston and Benjamin Good became church wardens, with Peter Broughman, treasurer, and Francis Lamotte, secretary. The vestry met on June 24 of that year to discuss buying a lot for the church, and \$2,000 was contributed for that purpose, with William Gaston contributing the largest amount, \$700. At a cost of \$1,500, lot 306 at the corner of Middle and New streets was purchased from Richard and Mary Mason. Apparently the congregation was unable to build on the lot for several years, for when Bishop England visited New Bern in 1839, he

was encouraged by the congregation to commence the building immediately. He then summoned the vestry, . . . and submitted to them a plan of a wooden building, fifty two feet long thirty six feet wide and twenty four feet in height, which was unani- mously approved. It was then resolved that the church wardens be authorized to have the building erected as soon as possible, provided the expense did not exceed \$4,000.

The church was finished in 1841, but because of the death of Bishop England, it was not blessed until the first visit of his successor in 1844.

Bishop England's floor plan and directions for finishing the interior of the church still exist. He gave minute instructions for finishing the confessional and explained that the areas above the preparation rooms flank- ing the altar were to be "plainly finished so as to serve for sleeping." His plans for placing the altar were also precise, but he noted that "I leave the gallery altogether to the Vestry and the Contractor." The physical evidence gives every indication that Bishop England's plans were essentially those used for the church.

About 1847 a four-room rectory was constructed just to the north of the church. This structure, which appeared in both the "White Pine Series" and Waterman's Early Architecture of North Carolina, was torn down in the 1950s and a new school constructed in its place. The building which currently serves as the rectory, built in 1896-1897, was designed by Herbert W. Simpson, a local architect and funeral director. It is thought to be the earliest example of his work in the city. He was responsible for several of the most outstanding early twentieth century buildings in New Bern.

The church has been in continuous use since its erection, though it met with difficulties during the Civil War. One notation in the record books, on June 12, 1866, states that

During the War the Church of Newberne could not be visited by any of the priests of the diocese as Newberne was occupied by the Union Forces. The Archbishop of Baltimore authorized a Jesuit, Father Willett, and after he left, other priests, Redemptorist Fathers, to

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Continuation Sheet)

STATE	
North Carolina	
COUNTY	
Craven	
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ENTRY NUMBER	DATE

(Number all entries)

8. B

attend the Church here. This register was taken into the country by a Catholic for safekeeping. The priests who attended this church during the War kept, as usual, a register of baptisms, marriage, & c, which I found when I came here in June A.D. 1865. It is now before me. In order that all the entries may be made in one Register, I transcribe faithfully into this, the Register kept by the Fathers, above mentioned, using their own words & c. Thomas Quigley. . . .

The records that Father Quigley transcribed into the regular record book document fully the ministration of the church to the local population and to Catholics in the Union forces stationed in New Bern between 1862 and 1865.

The church is one of the cornerstones of the religious complex at Middle and New Streets that included the First Presbyterian Church, Centenary Methodist Church, Chester B'nai Sholem Synagogue, and St. Paul's. All are architecturally and historically important, and together they assume an even greater value. St. Paul's is the oldest Catholic congregation and the oldest Catholic church structure in North Carolina. It is in addition a fine example of the adaptation of the prevailing Greek Revival style to Roman ecclesiastical use.

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Craven County Records, Craven County Courthouse, New Bern, North Carolina, Office of the Register of Deeds. (Subgroups: Deeds, Wills).

Craven County Records, State Department of Archives and History, Raleigh, North Carolina. (Subgroups: Deeds, Wills).

Hannigan, Charles Francis. "The Athens of North Carolina," White Pine Series. New York: Russell F. Whitehead, 1927, Volume: XIII, Number 1.

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY				O R	LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES				
CORNER	LATITUDE		LONGITUDE		LATITUDE		LONGITUDE		
	Degrees	Minutes	Seconds	Degrees	Minutes	Seconds	Degrees	Minutes	Seconds
NW	°	'	"	°	'	"	35°	06'	48"
NE	°	'	"	°	'	"	77°	02'	23"
SE	°	'	"	°	'	"			
SW	°	'	"	°	'	"			

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: $\frac{1}{2}$ Acre

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

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE

11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE:
Survey and Planning Unit Staff, John B. Wells, III, Supervisor

ORGANIZATION: State Department of Archives and History DATE: 7 November 1971

STREET AND NUMBER:
109 East Jones Street

CITY OR TOWN: Raleigh STATE: North Carolina CODE: 37

12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION

As the designated State Liaison Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:

National State Local

Name H. G. Jones
Title Director, State Department of Archives and History
Date 7 November 1971

NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register.

Chief, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

Date _____

ATTEST:

Keeper of The National Register

Date _____

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Continuation Sheet)

STATE	
North Carolina	
COUNTY	
Craven	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE

(Number all entries)

9.

Johnson, Guion Griffis. Ante-Bellum North Carolina. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1937.

"North Carolina. Records of St. Paul's Church, New Bern, Craven County," manuscript volume, 1847-1896, including an 1847 manuscript history of the church, all in the collection of the local church.

"Register of the Roman Catholic in New Bern, State of North Carolina, 1821, St. Paul's Church," manuscript volume, collection of the Raleigh Diocese, Chancery, Raleigh, North Carolina.

"St. Paul's Catholic Church," Leaflet published by the church, n. d.

Waterman, Thomas Tileston, and Johnston, Francis Benjamin. Early Architecture of North Carolina. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1947.

