

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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DATE ENTERED

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

1 NAME

HISTORIC St. Mary's Church

AND/OR COMMON

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER 232 chapel Street

CITY, TOWN

Norfolk

VICINITY OF

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT
2nd (G. William Whitehurst)

STATE

Virginia

CODE
51

COUNTY
(in city)

CODE
710

3 CLASSIFICATION

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

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME Diocese of Richmond c/o The Most Reverend Walter F. Sullivan,
Bishop of Richmond

STREET & NUMBER 807 Cathedral Place

CITY, TOWN

Richmond

VICINITY OF

STATE
Virginia 23220

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC Norfolk City Hall

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

Norfolk

STATE
Virginia

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS (2) (see continuation sheet #1)

TITLE (1) Historic American Buildings Survey Inventory

DATE

1958

FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS Library of Congress

CITY, TOWN

Washington,

STATE
D. C.

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION

EXCELLENT
 GOOD
 FAIR

DETERIORATED
 RUINS
 UNEXPOSED

CHECK ONE

UNALTERED
 ALTERED

CHECK ONE

ORIGINAL SITE
 MOVED DATE _____

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Situated on the corner of Chapel and Virgin Streets, St. Mary's Church is a stuccoed-brick, rectangular building erected from 1857-1858. The plan of the church is that of a traditional, gable-roof basilica. The main facade, at 232 Chapel Street, is dominated by a centrally located, three-stage tower with spire and its adjoining side entrances. The first stage of the tower incorporates the main (west) entrance of the church. The main entrance consists of a double doorway, each paneled door surmounted by a twin pointed arch, contained within a central arch with the jambs formed by three continuous recessed arches.

Above the entrance, in the tower's second stage, is an eight-part rose window. The third stage of the tower is pierced by pairs of louvered lancets with hood moldings; above each pair is a clock. The top of the tower is elaborately delineated by gables and corner pinnacles with crockets and finials. Topping the tower is an elaborate, five-tier, pointed spire, the base of which is covered with imbricated slate shingles. The spire is broken by a paneled band, inspired by French Gothic architecture. The edge of each tier of the spire is lined with crockets, the whole topped by a cross.

The sides of the building are nine bays long with buttresses separating lancet windows topped by hood moldings. The apse of the church is semicircular, consists of five lancet windows separated by buttresses, and is covered by an apsidal, faceted roof crowned by a cross. A sacristy and a storage room project from the northwest and southwest corners of the apse, respectively.

Although cosmetically changed through numerous 20th-century renovations, the interior of the church remains in an excellent state of preservation. The focal point of the 62' high ceiling is the rib vaulting, of French Gothic inspiration. The vaulting is especially noteworthy within the sanctuary, elaborately decorated in the Gothic style. The focal point of the sanctuary is the main altar, constructed of highly polished white Italian marble, inlaid with Brazilian onyx. The 13-foot-long altar contains a carved figure of a lamb in the center panel and rises 19 feet to the tip of its central spire. The altar is flanked by two smaller altars, also of polished marble, dedicated to the Blessed Virgin and St. Joseph. The stained-glass windows over the sanctuary and on the sides of the church were installed in 1918 and enhance the 19th-century Gothic flavor of the interior. The side aisles are decorated by fourteen stations of the cross, painted in oil on copper by L. Chevot of Paris.

In the rear of the church, situated in the southwest corner, is the baptismal font of Carrara marble and brass. In the northwest corner, on the opposite end from the baptistry, is a wooden carved crucifix, 11 feet high by 5 feet wide, originally in St. Patrick's Church, St. Mary's predecessor. Dominating the rear of the church is the organ, made in 1851 and installed in the church in 1857. The organ was extensively overhauled in 1954 and restored in 1976.

When originally constructed, the interior sat 1,200 persons, although the seating plan has been since modified to accommodate the new liturgy. The pews are original, although painted within the 20th century. The electrical lighting also dates to 20th-century renovations.

(See Continuation Sheet #1)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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

St. Mary's Church, Norfolk, Virginia

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CONTINUATION SHEET #1

ITEM NUMBER 6 & 7 PAGE 1

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

- (2) Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission Survey
1967, 1978 State
Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission
221 Governor Street
Richmond, Virginia 23219

7. DESCRIPTION

Adjacent to the church is the rectory, erected in 1894. The rectory is a three-story, rectangular, brick building in the late Gothic Revival style. The two buildings are enclosed by an elaborate Gothic cast-iron fence, dating to the 19th century. Behind the two buildings is the parish school, built in the 20th century with no stylistic consideration to the older structures.

RCC

8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> RELIGION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES 1857-58

BUILDER/ARCHITECT Unknown

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

St. Mary's Catholic Church is significant as an outstanding example of early Gothic Revival architecture and as the founding parish church of Catholicism in the Tidewater region of Virginia. When constructed in 1857, St. Mary's was the third house of worship built for the fast-expanding Catholic population of Norfolk.

The history of Catholicism in Norfolk dates from August of 1791 when the Abbe Jean Dubois, accompanied by several priests and refugees, arrived in Norfolk from Revolution-torn France. Three years later, the "Roman Catholic Society of Norfolk Borough" purchased the property on which St. Mary's now stands. On this site a wooden chapel, Norfolk's first Catholic church, was built, and a cemetery was established. This building gave the name Chapel Street to the then newly created thoroughfare that it faced. The chapel was replaced in 1842 by St. Patrick's Church, a Greek Revival structure which burned in 1856. At the time of the fire, the Rev. Matthew O'Keefe was pastor of the Norfolk Catholic congregation. Father O'Keefe had aided in the yellow fever epidemic that struck the city in 1855 and had endeared himself to the citizens of the city. Both Catholics and Protestants responded readily to the pastor's building campaign. The new church, when completed, cost \$65,000. With only \$12,000 on hand to pay for the building, O'Keefe lectured widely in both the North and the South to pay the debt incurred by the new church.

Although at the time of the church's building the expense was considered high, the subsequent growth of the parish readily filled the church's pews and choir loft. Architecturally, St. Mary's ranks as one of the finest examples of antebellum Gothic Revival architecture in the Commonwealth and as a significant landmark in the city of Norfolk. Although the church records do not contain the name of the architect, James Renwick, Jr. has been suggested in consideration of the use of numerous French Gothic forms.

RCC

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Centennial History, St. Mary's Parish, Norfolk, Virginia, 1958.

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY Two acres

UTM REFERENCES

A	1,8	3,8,5,6,7,0	4,0,7,8,4,5,0
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
C			

B			
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
D			

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The boundaries of the St. Mary's Church property being nominated are defined by the city block bounded by Holt Street on the NE, Reilly Street on the SE, Virgin Street on the SW, and Chapel Street on the NW. All three buildings in the block, the church, a rectory, and a parish school, are therefore included within these boundaries.

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

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME/TITLE

Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission Staff

ORGANIZATION

Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission

DATE

January 1978

STREET & NUMBER

221 Governor Street

TELEPHONE

(804) 786-3144

CITY OR TOWN

Richmond

STATE

Virginia 23219

12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL

STATE

LOCAL

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

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

TITLE

Tucker Hill, Executive Director
Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission

DATE

FEB 21 1978

FOR NPS USE ONLY

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

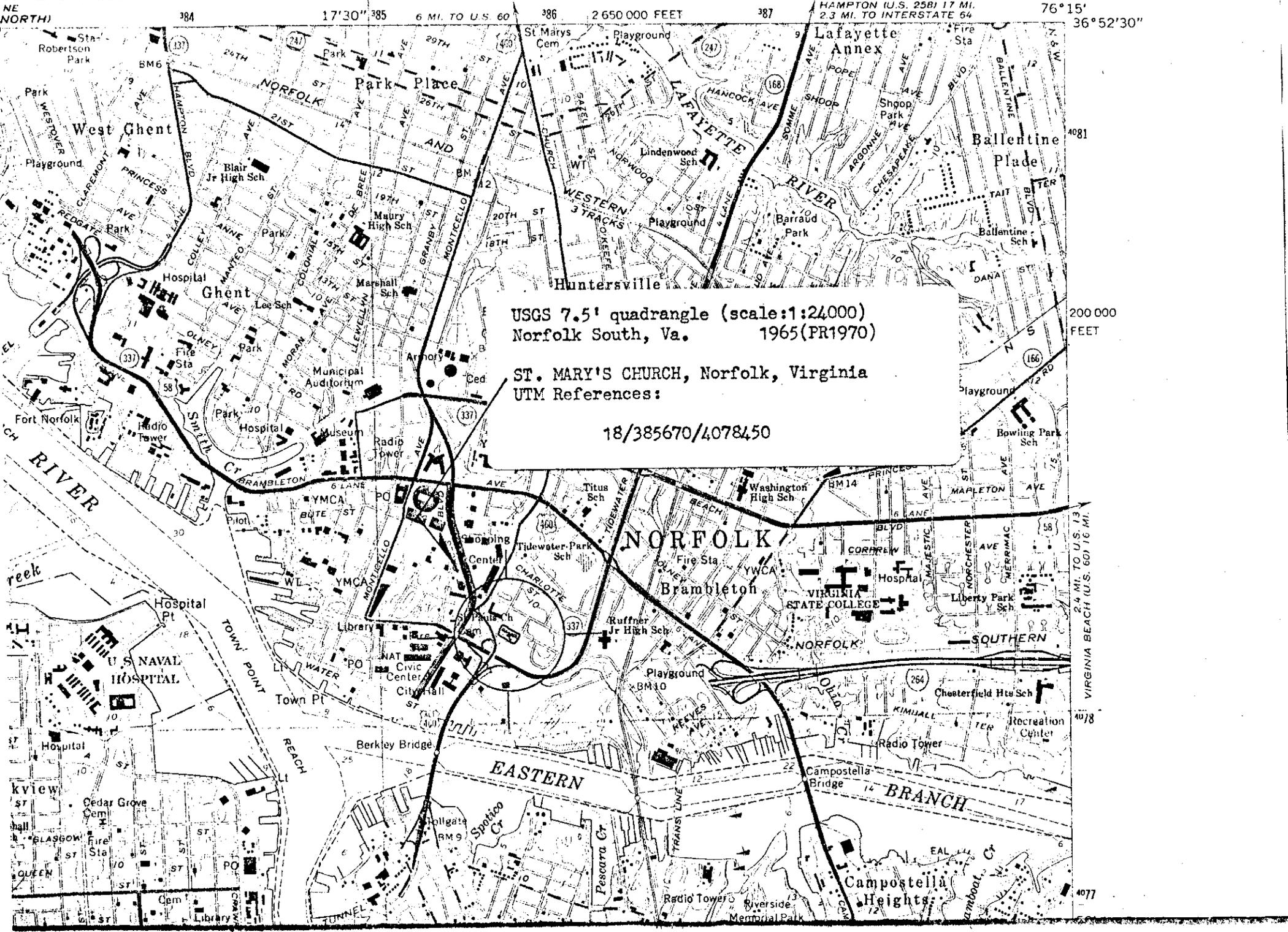
DATE

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

ATTEST:

DATE

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER



USGS 7.5' quadrangle (scale:1:24000) Norfolk South, Va. 1965(PR1970)

ST. MARY'S CHURCH, Norfolk, Virginia UTM References:

18/385670/4078450

200 000 FEET

2.4 MI. TO U.S. 60 1.6 MI. VIRGINIA BEACH (U.S. 60) 1.6 MI.