

**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

For HCRS use only

received

date entered

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic Saint Matthias' Episcopal Church (D009:18-10)

and/or common Dietz Memorial United Methodist Church

2. Location

street & number 1423 South 10th Street not for publication

city, town Omaha vicinity of congressional district Second

state Nebraska code 31 county Douglas code 55

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
<u> </u> district	<u> </u> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<u> </u> agriculture	<u> </u> museum
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<u> </u> unoccupied	<u> </u> commercial	<u> </u> park
<u> </u> structure	<u> </u> both	<u> </u> work in progress	<u> </u> educational	<u> </u> private residence
<u> </u> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<u> </u> entertainment	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> religious
<u> </u> object	<u> </u> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<u> </u> government	<u> </u> scientific
	<u> </u> being considered	<u> </u> yes: unrestricted	<u> </u> industrial	<u> </u> transportation
		<u> </u> no	<u> </u> military	<u> </u> other:

4. Owner of Property

name Board of Trustees, Dietz Memorial United Methodist Church

street & number 1423 South 10th Street

city, town Omaha vicinity of state Nebraska

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Register of Deeds, Omaha/Douglas County Civic Center

street & number 1819 Farnam Street

city, town Omaha state Nebraska

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Omaha City Architecture has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date 1977 federal state county local

depository for survey records Landmarks, Inc.

city, town 1058 Howard Street, Omaha state Nebraska

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

Saint Matthias' Episcopal Church (presently the Dietz Memorial United Methodist Church), 1423 South 10th Street, consecrated in 1889, J.H.W. Hawkins, architect. Rock-faced Oketo limestone walls laid in random ashlar, cruciform shape with appurtenances, 62 x 111 feet, 1½ stories over raised basement, intersecting gable roof, 2-story square tower with corbel table and rectangular and round-arched openings, 1-story gabled entrance porch with Romanesque opening on southwest corner, shed-roofed sections, triple round-arched window arrangement on north, west, and south; sections of dentil molding under eaves, botonee cross at apex of four salient gables; interior stained-oak hammerbeam ceiling and wainscoting, notable stained glass manufactured by Cox & Sons of Buckley, England; original organ with stenciled pipes retained; Romanesque and Gothic Revival elements; gabled entrance appended on south during 20th century.

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 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 checked="" 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 checked="" 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 1888-89 **Builder/Architect** John H.W. Hawkins

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The 1888-89 Saint Matthias' Episcopal Church (Dietz Memorial United Methodist Church) in Omaha, Nebraska, is architecturally significant as a record of a brief period in American Episcopal Church building history during which Romanesque Revival elements won acceptance -- in opposition to church edifices both before and after that tend to be virtually total products of English Gothicism. In this position, Saint Matthias' can be regarded as a rare Midwestern member of the limited progeny of H.H Richardson's renowned 1872-77 Trinity Church, Boston.

Gifts to the Episcopal Diocese of Nebraska from philanthropic persons made possible the construction of a house of worship intended to serve as a chapel for the neighboring Brownell Hall, a female seminary operated by the Diocese, and as a parish church for Episcopalians in the locality: a gift of \$15,000 from Mr. G.B. Sheldon of Chicago, and the donation of a lot in the Forest Hills Addition of Omaha by brothers Herman and Augustus Kountz, successful Omaha financiers.

The commission for the church's design went to architect J.H.W. Hawkins, a native of New York and a graduate of Cornell. Bishop George Worthington undoubtedly selected Hawkins due to the heralding approval given to his 1888 Holy Trinity Episcopal Church in Lincoln (recorded by HABS in 1934; destroyed by fire in 1959). The Lincoln church was a cruciform structure of Colorado sandstone with a square corner tower crowned by a tall broached spire. A Victorian Gothic edifice, Holy Trinity made exclusive use of pointed-arch openings.

Hawkins handled Gothic forms fluently, but he also had a penchant for the Romanesque Revival espoused by Henry H. Richardson; the 1889-90 R.O. Phillips House in Lincoln (listed in the National Register, 11-29-79), one of the few mature Richardsonian residences in the state, is a testimony to the architect's facility with this style.

Until the 1870s, when the parish of Trinity Church in Boston consented to a Romanesque building by Richardson, American Episcopal Church architecture existed under the tenets of ecclesiology. Even the first proposal for the chapel to serve Brownell Hall was a Gothic-cum-Stick Style adaptation of the "Design for a Wooden Church" in Upjohn's Rural Architecture (New York: John Putnam, 1852). However, the acclaim for the Romanesque Trinity Church, Boston, was so great that it was rated as fourth among the ten best American buildings in an 1885 poll (Burchard and Bush-Brown, p. 185). Eventually, the Romanesque won assent so strong among Episcopal Church leaders that the design selected in 1889 for the Episcopal Cathedral of Saint John the Divine in New York City was a decidedly Romanesque mass by Heins and Lafarge. But the Romanesque phase did not last long; despite Saint John's advanced state of construction, plans were arranged to convert the cathedral into a Gothic structure in 1911, the Romanesque having lost favor by that time (Pierson, p. 264).

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Saint Matthias' Episcopal Church
Continuation sheet

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Architecturally, Saint Matthias' Church in Omaha is an astute combination of Gothic and Romanesque forms: adequately Gothic -- cruciform shape, gabled roof sections, and arrangement of windows in a manner reminiscent of triple lancets -- to satisfy the traditionalist; and convincingly Romanesque -- predominant use of round-arched openings with emphatic voussoir surrounds, a corbel table near the tower's apex, and squat Byzantine columns flanking the principal entrance -- to speak of Richardson's influence.

The building continues in use as a church, although it has been the property of a Methodist congregation since 1920. Saint Matthias' parishioners began moving out of the area in 1902 due to undesirable conditions created by railroad yards on South Tenth Street (Robbins thesis, pp 121 and 122). Also, Brownell Hall, the Episcopal girls' school which utilized Saint Matthias' as a chapel, has relocated to another campus.

9. Major Bibliographical References

See continuation sheet.

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property less than one

Quadrangle name Omaha South

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UMT References

A

1	5	2	5	4	5	8	10	4	15	6	19	8	17	10
Zone			Easting				Northing							

B

Zone		Easting				Northing								

C

Zone		Easting				Northing								

D

Zone		Easting				Northing								

E

Zone		Easting				Northing								

F

Zone		Easting				Northing								

G

Zone		Easting				Northing								

H

Zone		Easting				Northing								

Verbal boundary description and justification

Forest Hills Addition, City of Omaha, Block 7, Lot 9;
72.5' x 130'

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 Daniel Kidd, Architectural Historian

organization Nebraska State Historical Society date September, 1980

street & number 1500 "R" Street telephone 402/471-3270

city or town Lincoln state Nebraska

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 Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature *Martin W. Knott* 9/26/80

title date

For HCRS use only
I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

date

Keeper of the National Register

Attest: date

Chief of Registration

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Saint Matthias' Episcopal Church

Continuation sheet

Item number 9

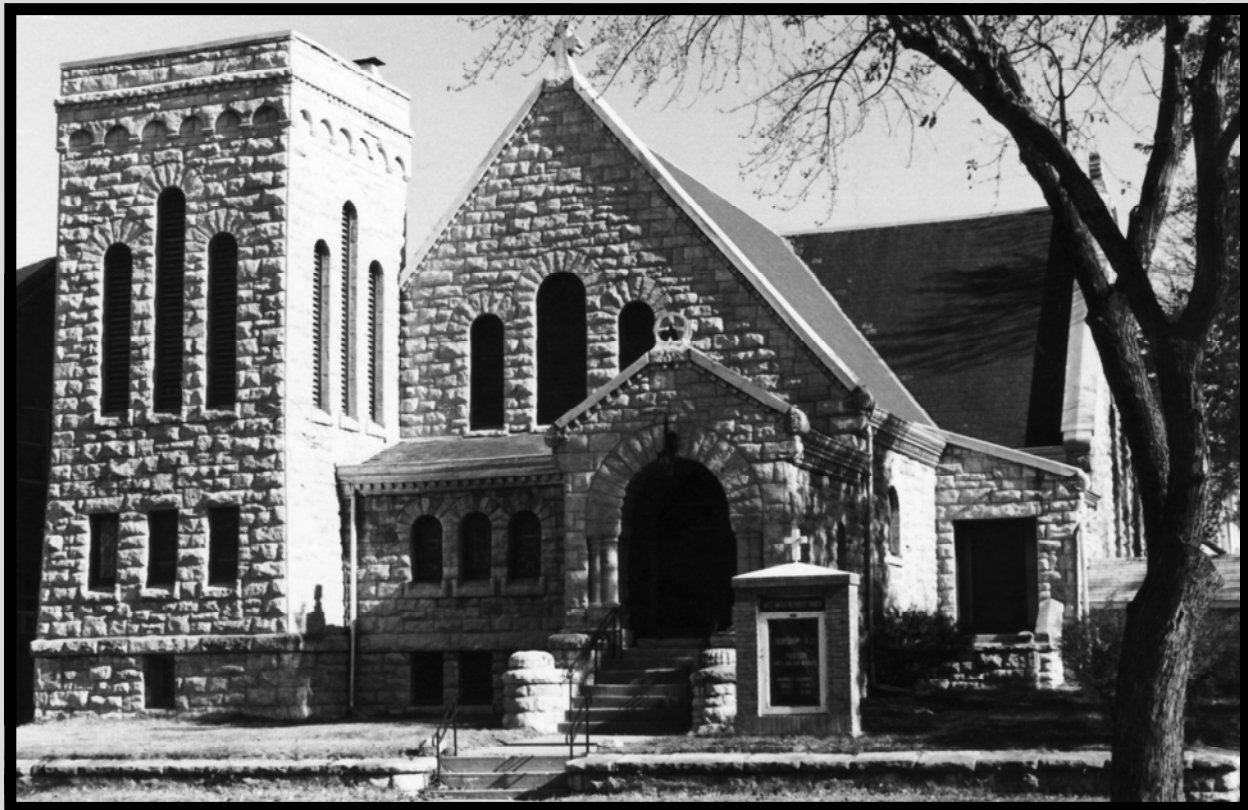
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- Burchard, John, and Bush-Brown, Albert. The Architecture of America -- A Social and Cultural History. Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1961.
- Pierson, William H., Jr. American Buildings and Their Architects: Technology and the Picturesque, The Corporate and the Early Gothic Styles. Garden City, New York: Doubleday & Co., 1961.
- Robbins, James M., Jr. "A History of the Episcopal Church in Omaha from 1856 to 1964." Unpublished master's thesis, University of Omaha, 1965.
- Stanton, Phoebe B. The Gothic Revival and American Church Architecture: An Episode in Taste, 1840-1856. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1968.
- Whitmarsh, Rev. Canon. A Brief Sketch of the Celebration of the Quarter-Centennial Anniversary of the Organization of the Diocese of Nebraska. Omaha: Diocese of Nebraska, 1893.



View of main, west façade, looking east
Photo by Linda Johnson, Omaha, 1980