# National Register of Historic Places Inventory -- Nomination Form

## 1. Name
- **Historic:** St. Philomena's Cathedral and Rectory
- **And/or Common:** St. Frances Cabrini Roman Catholic Church and Rectory

## 2. Location
- **Street & Number:** 1335 South 10th Street
- **City/Town:** Omaha
  - **State:** Nebraska
- **Code:** 031
- **Congressional District:** Second
- **County:** Douglas
  - **Code:** 055

## 3. Classification
- **Category:**
  - **District:**
  - **Building(s):** 
  - **Structure:**
  - **Site:**
- **Ownership:** 
  - **Public:**
  - **Private:**
  - **Both:**
- **Status:**
  - **Occupied:**
  - **Unoccupied:**
  - **Work in Progress:**
  - **Public Acquisition:**
  - **Accessible:**
  - **In Process:**
  - **Being Considered:**
  - **Yes: Restricted:**
  - **Yes: Unrestricted:**
  - **No:**

## 4. Owner of Property
- **Name:** Archdiocese of Omaha, c/o The Most Rev. Daniel Sheehan, Archbishop
- **Street & Number:** 100 North 62nd Street
- **City/Town:** Omaha
  - **State:** Nebraska

## 5. Location of Legal Description
- **Courthouse, Registry of Deeds, etc.:** Register of Deeds, Omaha/Douglas County Civic Center
- **Street & Number:** 18th and Farnam
- **City/Town:** Omaha
  - **State:** Nebraska

## 6. Representation in Existing Surveys
- **Title:** Omaha City Architecture
- **Date:** 1977
  - **Federal:**
  - **State:**
  - **County:**
  - **Local:**

## Depository for Survey Records
- **Name:** Mrs. Cynthia Schneider, 314 South 67th Street
- **City/Town:** Omaha
  - **State:** Nebraska
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CONDITION</th>
<th>CHECK ONE</th>
<th>CHECK ONE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>EXCELLENT</em></td>
<td><em>UNALTERED</em></td>
<td><em>ORIGINAl SITE</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X.GOOD</td>
<td>XALTERED</td>
<td><em>MOVED</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>FAIR</em></td>
<td><em>RUINS</em></td>
<td>DATE_______</td>
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<tr>
<td><em>UNEXPOSED</em></td>
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**DESCRIPTION**

St. Philomena's Cathedral (now St. Frances Cabrini Roman Catholic Church) is a 1908 Spanish Renaissance Revival building on the northeast corner of Tenth and William Streets, one mile south of downtown Omaha. Designed by Thomas Rogers Kimball and built at an approximate cost of $40,000 by contractor Thomas Herd, St. Philomena's is a 45' x 123' stuccoed and limestone-clad brick structure whose roof apex rises to a height of 30 feet.

The ornate, low-relief limestone sculpture which highlights the round-arched portal, central window surround, and parapet of the main facade is also employed in the 60-foot, octagonal, copper-domed bell tower (see photo 1). The low one-story side walls, defined by the projecting eaves of the sanctuary's red-tiled gabled roof, are punctuated by segmental-headed, double-hung windows filled with stained glass. Side bays are also established by stuccoed brick piers which project through the roof's surface and are capped by red-tiled pyramidal roofs that tie into the main roof surface.

The exterior rhythm established by piers is repeated within the austere nave's interior by rafters and beams set against a dark-stained, tongue-and-groove ceiling (see photo 3). The chancel arch is a classical element which breaks the unadorned plaster walls and frames an altar of Carrara marble (see photo 4). An 1869 Johnson and Son pipe organ--the first such musical instrument in Omaha, if not in Nebraska--is located in a loft at the nave's rear.

In 1910, a brick and stucco "Priest's Home" was erected to the east of the church at a cost of $10,000 (see photo 2). Also designed by Thomas Rogers Kimball in the Spanish mode, and constructed by B. J. Bock, this 27' x 39', two-story structure is void of major ornamentation. The smooth walls are regularly punctuated by rectangular windows and red-tiled awnings. Tile-covered hipped roof sections with exposed rafters extend beyond the walls, the only exception being the south wall which ends in a split curvilinear gable.
SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD  AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW

PREHISTORIC  ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC  COMMUNITY PLANNING  LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE  X RELIGION

1400-1499  ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC  CONSERVATION  LAW  SCIENCE

1500-1599  AGRICULTURE  ECONOMICS  LITERATURE  SCULPTURE

1600-1699  X ARCHITECTURE  EDUCATION  MILITARY  SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN

1700-1799  ART  ENGINEERING  MUSIC  THEATER

1800-1899  COMMERCE  EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT  PHILOSOPHY  TRANSPORTATION

X 1900-  COMMUNICATIONS  INDUSTRY  POLITICS/GOVERNMENT  OTHER (SPECIFY)

SPECIFIC DATES  1908; 1910

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Designed by the nationally recognized Omaha architect Thomas Rogers Kimball and erected in 1908, St. Philomena's Cathedral is significant as an early work in the Spanish Renaissance Revival, a style which reached its zenith in American architecture between 1915-1940. Although the massing is similar to many Mission Style structures that preceded it in the West, surface ornamentation and the asymmetrical composition of the main facade categorize the church as belonging to the later revival period. Significance in the area of religion is attained through the vital role the building and its parish have served for Roman Catholicism in Omaha.

If legend holds true, the first clergyman in what is now Nebraska was the Franciscan friar, Juan de Padilla, who accompanied Coronado in 1541 during his search for the fabled Kingdom of Quivira. The first Roman Catholic church in Omaha was constructed in 1856, at which time the Omaha Nebraskan reported: "It is somewhat significant that the first public house of worship now in progress of building in Omaha City, and perhaps in the Territory, is a Catholic church, a nice fine brick building on park place." This church, St. Mary's, was a structure 24 by 40 feet, its outer brick facade and inner decor indicative of the severity of the life of the day.

St. Mary's was elevated to the rank of cathedral in 1859, shortly before the Catholic community in Omaha began rapid growth. In 1868, a larger cathedral was dedicated, but Omaha's population expanded so greatly that an even larger building was needed shortly afterward. A new cathedral, St. Philomena's, was built in 1908 at a cost of $41,500, with furnishings taken from the old church. Cathedral status was maintained for an interim period until St. Cecilia's Cathedral (listed in the National Register January 25, 1979) was substantially completed.

In 1958 the name of the church was changed to St. Frances Cabrini, since data substantiating Philomena's history had not been authenticated. The new name honored Mother Cabrini, the first American citizen canonized.
MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

See continuation sheet

GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY less than one

QUADRANGLE NAME Omaha South

UTM REFERENCES

ZONE EASTING NORTHING
A 115 511451910 415691970
C

ZONE EASTING NORTHING
D

E

F

G

H

QUADRANGLE SCALE 1:24000

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION
lots 11, 12, 13, and 14, Forest Hill Park, Omaha

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

STATE CODE COUNTY CODE

STATE CODE COUNTY CODE

FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE
Robert Peters, Planner

ORGANIZATION Omaha City Planning Department

STREET & NUMBER 18th & Farnam

CITY OR TOWN Omaha

DATE November, 1979

TELEPHONE 402/444-5208

STATE Nebraska

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL ___ STATE X 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

DATE 11/8/79

TITLE Director, Nebraska State Historical Society

FOR NPS USE ONLY

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

DATE

ATTEST:

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

CHIEF OF REGISTRATION

GPO 921-803

"Catholics made modest Omaha 1855 start." *Sun Newspapers*, September 2, 1976, page 4-B.

"Diamond Jubilee of an Organ", *Sunday World Herald Magazine*, date unknown, page 9-C.


_Sacred Concert at St. Philomena's Church_, 1950, pp. 15-19.

Photo 1—west façade, looking east-northeast
Photo by Lynn Meyer, 1978, Omaha City Planning Department
Photo 2—rectory at right; tower of church at left
Photo by D. Murphy, Lincoln, 1976 (DM 7604d:24)