

The City of Seattle

Landmarks Preservation Board

400 Yesler Building Seattle, Washington 98104 • (206) 625-4501

REPORT OF DESIGNATION

LPB-152/80

NAME OF PROPERTY AND ADDRESS: ST. JAMES CATHEDRAL, RECTORY AND SITE
NINTH AVENUE AND MARION STREETS

LEGAL DESCRIPTION: TERRY'S SECOND ADDITION, BLOCK 78,
LOTS 1, 4, 5, 8,
McNAUGHT'S SECOND ADDITION, BLOCK 78,
LOTS 2, 3, 6
VACATED ALLEY BETWEEN ADDITIONS

OWNER: CORPORATION OF THE CATHOLIC ARCHBISHOP OF SEATTLE

SUMMARY:

On March 19, 1980 the Landmarks Preservation Board voted to approve the designation of the above property as a Seattle Landmark.

Specific features to be preserved are: the exteriors only of both structures; and, the site.

Designation is based upon satisfaction of the following criteria of Ordinance 106348:

Section 3.01 (3) It is associated in a significant way with a significant aspect of the cultural, political, or economic heritage of the community, city, state or nation.

As the cathedral of the Roman Catholic Archdiocese the church, the clergy and the parishioners have played a strong and positive influence in the growth of the city.

Section 3.01 (4) It embodies the distinctive visible characteristics of an architectural style, or period, or of a method of construction.

...more...

The traditional form of the church, incorporating a Latin cross in plan, with its flanking towers at the entrance facade of the building, together with short transepts and apsidial termination, is well done in a eclectic version of Italian Renaissance architecture. The rectory contributes to the ensemble stylistically and through the use of similar building materials.

Section 3.01 (6) Because of its prominence of spatial location, contrasts of siting, age, or scale, it is an easily identifiable visual feature of its neighborhood or the city and contributes to the distinctive quality or identity of such neighborhood or the city.

The church because of its size, form and height, and its location well up on the western slope of First Hill, has been, since its erection, an important visual, urban landmark.

Issued March 31, 1980.

Earl D. Layman
City Historic Preservation Officer

by:

Roberta Deering
Roberta Deering
Board Coordinator



City of Seattle
Department of Community Development/Office of Urban Conservation

Landmark Nomination Form

LPB-322/79

Name St. James Cathedral Year Built 1905-1907
(Common, present or historic)

Street and Number Ninth Avenue & Marion Street

Assessor's File No. 85909 - 0085 (605 W-03)

Legal Description Plat Name Terry's 2nd Add Block 78 Lot 1,4,5,8
Mc Naughts 2nd Add. 78 2,3,6,7

Vacated alley between additions

Present Owner Corporation of the Catholic Present Use Religious
Archbishop of Seattle

Address 907 Terry Avenue

Original Owner Same as above Original Use Religious

Architect Heins & La Farge of New York Builder Beattle & Cannon

* (Assisted in Seattle by Somervell & Côté)

St. James Cathedral: Architectural Description

LPB-322/79

Description: Present and original (if known) physical appearance and characteristics

St. James Cathedral, designed in 1904 by Heins & La Farge, and constructed between 1905 and 1907 is one of the more imposing and advantageously sited religious monuments in Seattle. Commanding a prominent position above the central business district, the Cathedral and its ancillary school and rectory occupy the full block east of Ninth Avenue and south of Marion Street, at the brink of First Hill's steep west slope. Although the 1912 Cathedral School is of no particular architectural or historical significance, the classically-modified Italianate rectory built immediately south of the Cathedral, and the various stairs, walls and plantings within the block, contribute significantly to the landmark character of the total site.

A Beaux Arts interpretation of the Italian Renaissance, St. James was originally designed with a combination cruciform and centric plan, flanking facade towers, and an ambitious central dome rising 120 feet above an exceptionally wide crossing. A barrel vaulted nave, sanctuary and two abbreviated transpt chapels contributed to this central space, extending from the four sides of the crossing. In 1916, the dome dollapsed under heavy snow drifts, but inflicted practically no damage to the remainder of the interior. Subsequent reconstruction efforts left St. James without a dome and significantly altered the nature of the external composition and the interior by continuing the side aisle arcades directly through the crossing to their termination in the apse. The resulting modifications strongly enforced a linear organization of the previous centric space. The interior now consists of an approximately 180 foot long nave extending five bays west of the crossing, and three bays to its east. The bays are defined by a combination of round columns and compound piers supporting round arches and by ribs beneath the barrel vault. Composite entablatures terminate the two arcades vertically, serving as springing points for the ribs, and focussing attention toward the sanctuary. Round-arched clerestory windows penetrate the vaults within each bay and provide the majority of light entering the interior.

The interior features exceptionally well detailed classical embellishments, many of which are executed in off-white painted cast plaster and terra cotta. Columns and adjoining pilasters have been marbleized in a reddish brown color, and and column and pilaster capitals, brackets and madillions are highlighted in gold leaf. Opalescent stained glass of an appropriate design has been executed in all windows. Polychromed vaults and wall surfaces are also a significant feature of the interior, although most of this work is the result of the 1950 renovation of the Cathedral. Other significant features include a baroque-styled altarpiece and a large pipe organ mounted above the narthex in the choir.

Faced in a buff colored brick veneer, with terra cotta embellishments, the Cathedral relies heavily on structural concrete and steel for internal support. Two identical square-based towers with octagonal belfries and cupolas rise 165 feet on each side of the west facade. The facade's organization resembles that of a triumphal arch, calling attention to the formal entrance and symbolizing the theme of "Christ Triumphant". Its 60 foot high central

St. James Cathedral: Architectural Description, cont'd.

Description: Present and original (if known) physical appearance and characteristics

arch corresponds with the dimensions of the nave. Two flanking side bays indicate the presence of side aisles. The central arch encompasses three portals and three opaque glass panels directly above them. The panels are decorated with a Christ figure and various other religious and regional symbols painted in gold against a black background. The side bays include rectangular portals and triple blind arcades above them. Two wide piers separate the three bays and are embellished with pedimented statuary niches just beneath the entablature. A pedimented parapet rises above the entablature and cornice, and features a third niche at the center, surmounted by a large, gold-painted cross. The side elevations clearly express side aisle and clerestory walls, and are highlighted by the projecting and semi-circular transepts. Massive buttresses rise at the corners of the original crossing, functioning originally to oppose the outward thrust of the dome. Each is capped by a baroque-styled terra cotta console. The Cathedral is covered by a low-pitched tile roof, with a sheet metal covering above the apse, and flat composition roofing over the crossing, the transepts and side aisles. Concrete stairways and walls provide access to the west facade and the north transept, with the western stairs also including a wide, curved, vine-covered belvedere.

Statement of significance

Designed in 1904 by the nationally prominent partnership, Heins & La Farge, best known for their work at St. John the Divine, in New York, St. James Cathedral is a most impressive product of Beaux Art classicism. Advantageously sited on First Hill, directly above the central business district, the Cathedral achieves a monumental presence equalled by few other religious structures in Seattle.

The exterior of the Cathedral is characterized by twin towers 165 feet in height, which are anchored by deep concrete footings. Austerely detailed for the first 100 feet of their ascent, each projects a monolithic image strongly emphasizing height. Elevated twenty feet above the street level at the top of a series of concrete stairs and a belvedere, the facade contributes to the Cathedral's monumentality, and reflects the organization of interior spaces directly behind it. Immediately south, the three story rectory forms a particularly harmonious relationship with the Cathedral due to its consistent use of building materials and a similar vocabulary of classical detailing. Together with pleasant landscaping elements including simple, grass-covered berms, ornamental shrubery and rows of street trees, it contributes to the overall unity and character of the cathedral block.

The barrel-vaulted interior is also of strong architectural significance. Its full extent is only partially revealed upon entrance, the transept chapels being screened from view by continuous but open nave arcades. The entire spatial structure can only be understood within the crossing. Although the interior encloses large volumes of space, a pervasive feeling of warmth is achieved through appropriately scaled detailing and the subtle use of color. Handsome stained glass windows diffuse natural light into soft pastels, further enhancing the interior's warmth.

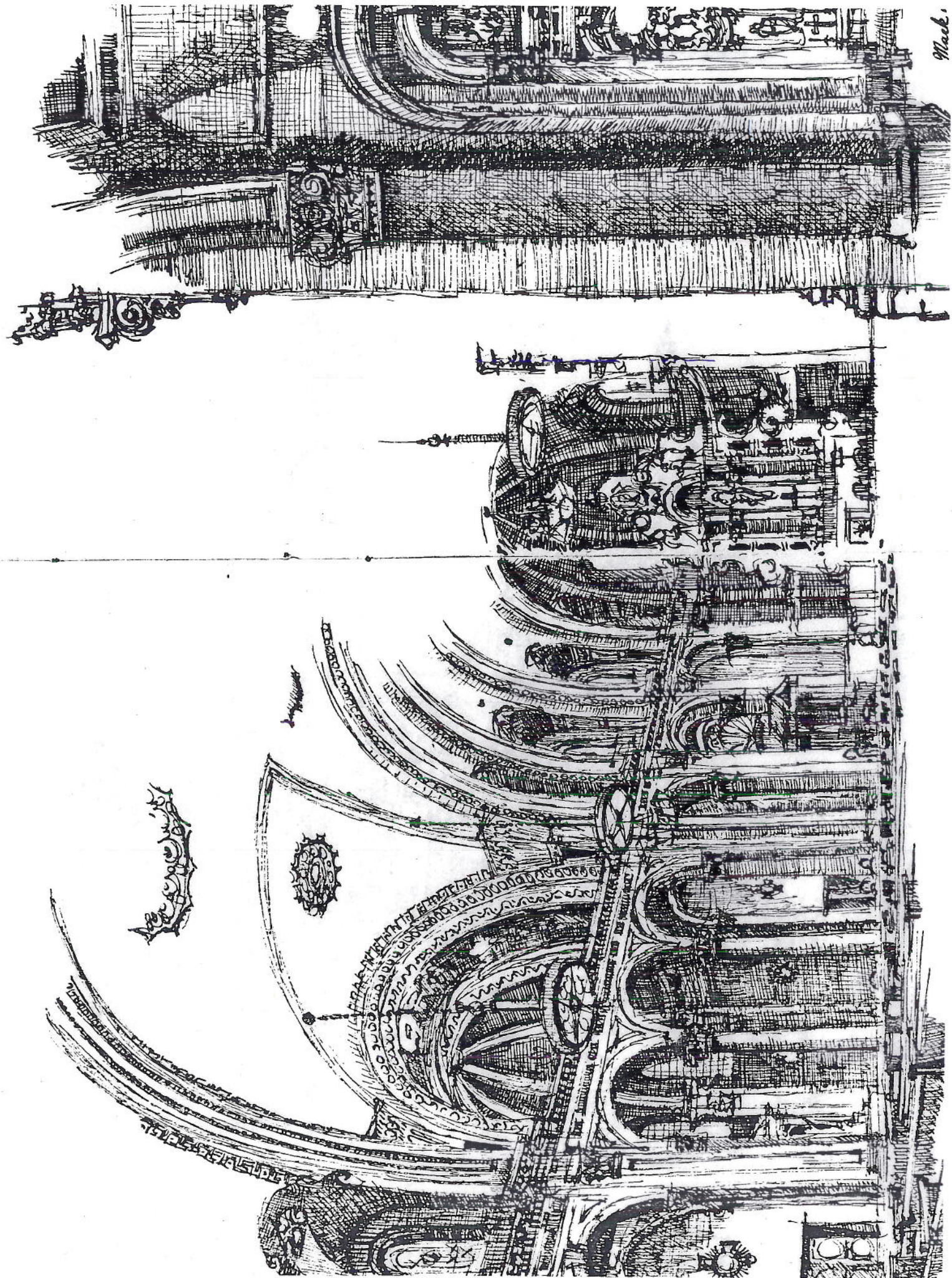
Being the Cathedral, St. James is the single, most significant Roman Catholic religious edifice within Seattle, and the wider area encompassed by the Archdiocese. Of important religious and historical significance, it represents the physical manifestation of the Archdiocese decision to move its seat to Seattle from Vancouver in response to a dramatic shift in Washington's population growth. The construction of such a large and costly edifice can only be interpreted as a strong expression of confidence by the Catholic Church in Seattle's continued growth and prosperity.

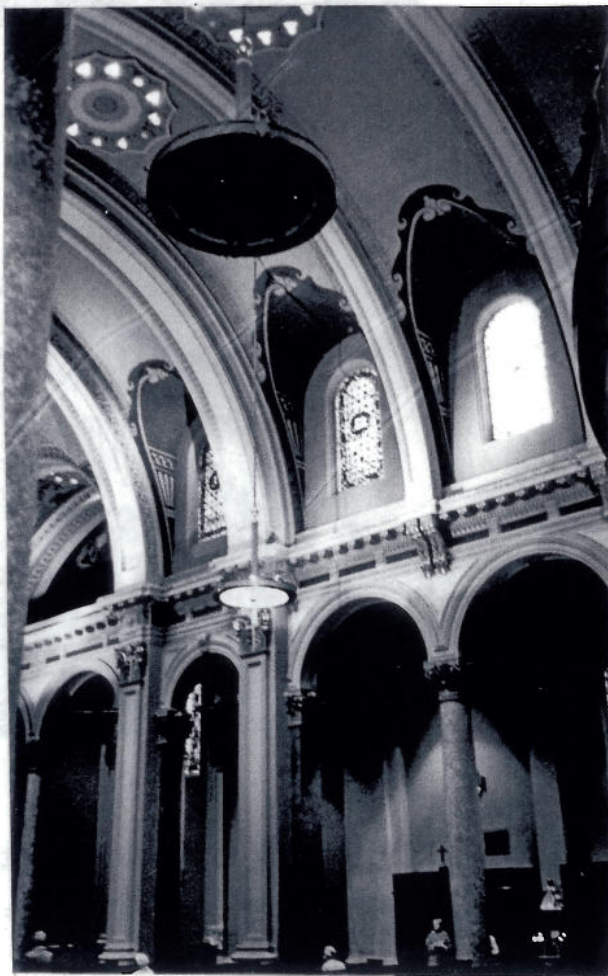
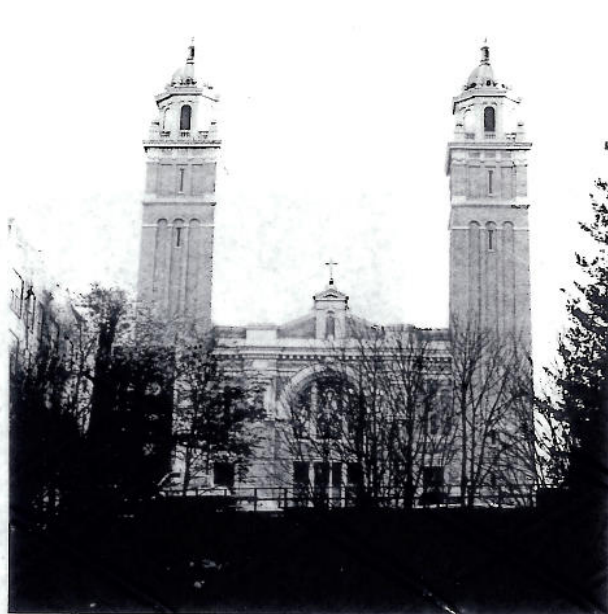


ST. JAMES CATHEDRAL

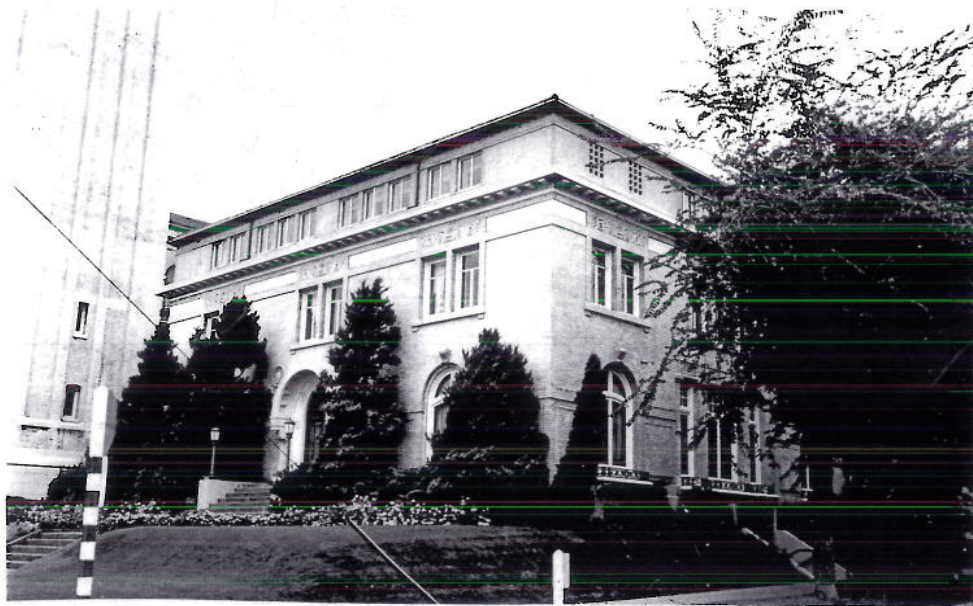
1905 - 1907

Mack.





Photographs:



Submitted by: Office of Urban Conservation
Address 400 Yesler Building Seattle, Washington 98104 Phone 625-4501

Date _____

Reviewed [Signature] Date 14 Dec 79
Historic Preservation Officer