United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in the National Register Bulletin, How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions.

1. Name of Property
Historic name: Notre Dame Roman Catholic Church
Other names/site number:
Notre Dame des Canadiens
Name of related multiple property listing: N/A
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

2. Location
Street & number: 5 Salem Square
City or town: Worcester State: Massachusetts County: Worcester
Not For Publication:__ Vicinity:__

3. State/Federal Agency Certification
As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,
I hereby certify that this nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.
In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:
___national ___statewide ___local
Applicable National Register Criteria:
___A ___B ___C ___D

____________________________________________
Signature of certifying official/Title: Date
____________________________________________
State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government
Notre Dame des Canadiens

Name of Property

Worcester Co., MA

County and State

In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register criteria.

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Title:

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4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

___ entered in the National Register
___ determined eligible for the National Register
___ determined not eligible for the National Register
___ removed from the National Register
___ other (explain:) __________________________

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5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply.)

Private: 

Public – Local

Public – State

Public – Federal

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Notre Dame des Canadiens
Worcester Co., MA

Category of Property

(Click only one box.)

- Building(s) [x]
- District [ ]
- Site [ ]
- Structure [ ]
- Object [ ]

Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

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buildings
sites
structures
objects

Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register ______

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions.)

Religion

____________________
____________________
____________________
____________________
____________________
Notre Dame des Canadiens
Name of Property

Worcester Co., MA
County and State

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions.)

Not currently in use

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions.)

Exotic Revival

Materials: (enter categories from instructions.)
Principal exterior materials of the property: See attached

Narrative Description
(Describe the historic and current physical appearance and condition of the property. Describe contributing and noncontributing resources if applicable. Begin with a summary paragraph that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, type, style, method of construction, setting, size, and significant features. Indicate whether the property has historic integrity.)

Summary Paragraph

Notre Dame des Canadiens is located in downtown Worcester, Massachusetts, directly across from the Worcester Common. The church, built in 1929 by Donat R. Baribault is a tall one story, west facing, Exotic-Style building. It is constructed of Weymouth granite with cast stone decorative features throughout the building. An archivolt entrance dominates the main façade of the building. The entrance is flanked by two spired towers and the building has three stained glass oculus windows located on the west, north, and south elevations. The apse contains stained glass windows and the cruciform roofline is slim in appearance. The construction of the building is similar to the Rayonnant Gothic Style in that its vertical, slender, top contrast with a denser appearance at the bottom of the building.
Notre Dame des Canadiens

Narrative Description

Architectural Classification

Exotic Revival

Notre Dame exhibits elements from the Gothic Revival style and the Byzantine Revival Style, with its archway entrance flanked by two spired towers. The vertical emphasis of this structure and its layout call upon Gothic architecture from Europe, specifically churches like Saint Chapelle in Paris, built in the Rayonnant Gothic style. Rayonnant Gothic buildings stressed a structural “lightness” in the vertical, slender nature of the upper story, which contrasted with comparably spacious lower story. Decorative elements were given great importance. This building style is unique in the city of Worcester and compares to no other within the city limits. Thus, it not only stands out amongst the urban landscape of Downtown Worcester, as it was built to be, but is a key monument in the city’s history. It stands as the last religious architectural vestige on the city Common.

Materials

Foundation: Stone; Weymouth Granite
Walls: Stone; Weymouth Granite
Roof: Metal - Tin

Association

This building is associated with the French-Canadian history and culture, which are still prevalent today in Worcester, Massachusetts. This building was the “Mother” church of the French-Canadian churches in the area and the first parish to be established for the French-speaking community. The church also signified a physical presence on the landscape for French-Canadians, who for decades were seen as outsiders with no parish to worship in until Notre Dame was founded. The construction of this church and its style, which elicits a feeling of a church that one would see in France, was a tribute to their French architectural heritage, ancestry, and language. For Franco-Americans, it physically marked their space in the community by being a part of the landscape, justifying their existence and legitimizing their occupation and cultural contribution to the city of Worcester.

Historic and Current Physical Appearance

Constructed in 1929, Notre Dame des Canadiens is a slender rectangular building that is built in a cruciform shape. The building has not undergone any major alterations and sits on its original site in downtown Worcester, Massachusetts. The building is a tall single story with a
basement that has partial window access on the east elevation. The roofing material is tin that has been painted red and laid down to look like clay tile. The west (front) elevation provides the primary access to the church under a narrow archway with an archivolt made of cast stone. The archway draws the eye to the stained glass rose window above the doorway.

The decorative elements surrounding the doorway are made of cast stone with a cast stone angel above the entrance. The exterior wall on the west elevation is made of stone and the archway is flanked by two towers with spires at their tops. The towers are also made of stone with cast stone decorative elements throughout and curved lancet windows leading up the spires. The cast stone found throughout the building is an architectural concrete created to simulate natural cut stone.

The east elevation of the building contains the apse and a view of the basement level, with its windows. The rear exits of the building in the basement are at street level but, due to a slight slope in the landscape and the design of the building, they are only visible at this end of the building. The exterior walls are made of stone and the decorative trim around the windows are made of cast stone, both around the apse and at the basement level.

The north elevation walls are made of stone with cast stone decorative elements and cast stone tracery above the windows. The transept appears on this elevation and transects the building almost equally with the nave to the west and apse and altar to the east. This transept is comprised of the same stone and cast stone decorative elements. It also contains an oculus window similar to the one above the west entrance and the two entranceways to the building, located above the basement level.

The south elevation is a mirror image of the north elevation. Its walls are also made of stone with cast stone decorative elements and windows trimmed with cast stone. There are two entranceways on this elevation above the basement at church level. A steeple made of wood with red, painted, tin roofing is located at the intersection of the transept and the nave.

The foundation of this church was laid by late May, 1928. The church measures one hundred ninety eight feet long from the west elevation to the east elevation, ninety one feet wide and sixty four feet high. The estimated final cost for the church was three hundred thousand dollars.¹

Current Condition

The stone walls along every elevation are in good condition with no visible significant damage, other than some minor mortar erosion found along grade level on the west elevation. Throughout the building, there is some staining around the cast stone at the bottom of every window. The steeple is painted white but shows extensive staining from the tin roofing material

Notre Dame des Canadiens

Notre Dame has occupied the same lot in downtown Worcester, Massachusetts, since its construction in 1929. The city of Worcester spreads over many hills that surround the downtown area and its skyline. Since 1929, Notre Dame’s steeple has been a notable presence in the Worcester skyline. It is the only building to the east of the Worcester Common to pre-date 1968. Due to these reasons, Notre Dame stands out as a visual marker and landmark.

Notre Dame has been surrounded by continual development for almost fifty years. Properties to its north, across Trumbull Street to its east, and across Franklin Street to its south, have been particularly affected. Notre Dame has survived the Worcester Center development, the building of a new Worcester Public library, the construction of the Galleria, the development of the Worcester Common Fashion Outlets, the redesign of the Public Library and the new City Square Development, all of which surround this structure. It stands as a testament to and landmark of Worcester’s architectural heritage amidst the changing development of each generation.

Notre Dame itself has also survived threats of demolition, beginning in 1968. The nearby Worcester Center was redeveloped as the Worcester Galleria in the late 1970s, and then the Galleria was redeveloped as the Worcester Common Fashion Outlets in the early 1990s. During the construction of the Worcester Center in the late 1960’s, the Worcester Redevelopment Authority almost acquired and demolished Notre Dame to make way for a twenty-five hundred seat civic theater. Fortunately, funding for the theater fell through and the church was saved. In 2007, Worcester Officials announced the new City Square redevelopment and soon after, Notre Dame closed. By 2008, City Square’s developers purchased Notre Dame with the intention of including it in the City Square development. But, in early April, 2016, City Square LLC developers stated they would seek to demolish Notre Dame. At present, Notre Dame’s future is unsure.

Significant Features

Notre Dame has two extremely significant physical features. Its apse houses stained glass windows, which are uncommon in Catholic churches in Worcester. And, the transepts create a roofline that is more slender in appearance than its counterparts within the city. The slender nature of both Saint Chappelle and Notre Dame, along with the numerous windows in both buildings, makes for an abundance of natural light that fills the space inside. The narrow, arched entrance and the archivolt leading to the oculus window is also a significant feature, as it draws the eye up from the slender, vertical entranceway to the towers. The massing of the building adds to this specific slender, vertical nature and produces a sense of lightness that is contrasted by the stone construction and larger bottom of the building.
This church serves as a homage to the “motherland” of the French-speaking congregants, who made up the congregation of this “mother church”. The Franco-Americans who wanted to leave their mark on the landscape, borrowed from architectural examples from France for their new home church. The construction of this building is similar to that of Sainte Chapelle in its vertical, slender nature with its arched entryway and oculus window flanked by two towers with spired tops. The two churches also have numerous stained glass windows to provide ample natural light inside and a steeple at the intersection of the transept and nave. Thus, Notre Dame is even more unique to the architectural landscape of Worcester.

**Interior**

When Notre Dame was being constructed, Professor Gonippo Raggi of Rome was commissioned to paint the interior of the building in what was called the “Roman Byzantine Style”. The stained glass windows were created with two goals in mind: to allow an ample amount of light to enter the church and to teach a story to parishioners. The sixteen stained glass windows within the sanctuary were located along the lower sides of the nave and behind the organ loft. They illustrated scenes from the lives of Jesus (primarily right side) and Mary (primarily left side). The stained glass windows in the center of the back wall of the church and above the sanctuary showed a young St. John the Apostle giving the Eucharist to the Blessed Virgin Mary at Patmos. On the opposite (west) wall and behind the organ loft, the stained glass windows showed the Assumption of Mary with the Apostles at her feet.²

Currently, the majority of the interior paintings either no longer exist or, if they were movable, have been removed. One exception lies under the south elevation transept, in a small area off to the side of the pews. Here, the last of Raggi’s work, a Byzantine-style mural depicting the Last Supper, still remains. Some of the stained glass windows still exist and could potentially resurface for future use in the building.

The majority of the pews were located in the nave as well as under the crossing at the transept. The ceiling at the crossing is Gothic rib vault that connects to a barrel vaulted ceiling in the apse above the altar. Currently, the plaster walls throughout the church have been painted over in a light blue or white paint. Due to improper usage of the steam heat, there is moisture damage to some parts of the plaster near the altar and apse and paint deterioration throughout the interior. However, most of this damage appears to be cosmetic. The columns leading up to the ceilings show minor paint damage but still provide a grand, eye catching view that leads to the Gothic ribbed vaulting.

**Changes Over Time**

There have been no major alterations or structural changes to Notre Dame since its construction in 1929. Restoration work completed in 1972 repaired mortar joints, painted the

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steeple white and re-leaded the stained glass windows. Interior renovations were also done at this time and included updating the electrical systems within the church. In early 1989, a “pile of stones” fell from the building. According to news reports, an engineer was hired to check the building and no other loose stones were found.\(^3\) The stones supposedly fell from the tower on the right side of the west elevation. By 1990, restoration work had begun and included repointing stone-to-stone mortar joints, replacing and adding anchors, rebuilding deteriorated colonnades to their original profiles, and replacing column capitals and arched radius stones. The roofing on the two tower spires was weatherproofed and the crosses on top of the spires were re-gilded.\(^4\) It is unknown when the majority of the Byzantine murals inside the building were covered over, taken out or destroyed, but the design of the interior has remained intact with no major alterations or changes. Besides this restoration work, the church has not undergone any changes in exterior design scheme or in color pattern throughout its architectural history, maintaining its architectural integrity for eighty-seven years. Restoration work could easily return the impressive and imposing sense of space to Notre Dame’s interior.

\(^3\) Kathleen Shaw, “Falling stones spark repair work”, The Telegram & Gazette, March 14\(^{th}\), 1989.
\(^4\) Gagnon, A Parish Grows Around the Common, Pgs. 119-120.
8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria
(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A. Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.

- B. Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.

- C. Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.

- D. Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations
(Mark “x” in all the boxes that apply.)

- A. Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes

- B. Removed from its original location

- C. A birthplace or grave

- D. A cemetery

- E. A reconstructed building, object, or structure

- F. A commemorative property

- G. Less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years

Areas of Significance
(Enter categories from instructions.)

Religion

___________________

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___________________

Section 8 page 10
Notre Dame des Canadiens

Name of Property

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Notre Dame des Canadiens is significant under Criteria A and C of the National Register criteria for significance. Significance under Criteria A is demonstrated by the role that Notre Dame played in the history of French Canadians in Worcester, Massachusetts. This building is an architectural manifestation of immigrant sub-culture looking to make its mark in Worcester. French Canadians, at one point, made up one-third of the population of Worcester, yet did not have their own place of worship until Notre Dame was founded. Significance under Criteria C is demonstrated by the Exotic style architecture and the importance of this structure on the urban landscape. Since 1929, this building has served as a landmark not only on the landscape but has also served as an important icon on the skyline of downtown Worcester. For almost one hundred
years, the steeple of Notre Dame has marked the city with its presence amidst the changing development surrounding it.

**Narrative Statement of Significance** (Provide at least one paragraph for each area of significance.)

The immigration of Canadians to Worcester began as early as 1756, when Acadians left Nova Scotia. It wasn’t until the mid-1800s that large numbers began to arrive in the city. By 1846, there was a small Canadian mission in the city and by 1852, forty families lived in Worcester and wanted their own church where French could be spoken. The first attempt to establish a French-speaking church in Worcester was in 1846 by Father Zephen Levesque. Unfortunately, it failed and another attempt also failed in 1852.

In 1853, the Societe St. Jean Baptiste was formed. The Society was initially created in Quebec in 1834 to promote French-Canadian interests in Canada. Many similar organizations were created in the United States to preserve the French language and to be active in social, political, cultural, educational, economic spheres. The Society tried to unite Worcester’s French-speaking community in an effort to establish a church, but again the attempt failed.

By 1869, with the Industrial Revolution in full swing, even more French Canadians began immigrating to Worcester as numerous businesses drew in both skilled and unskilled labor. For example, the Worcester-based Washburn and Moen Co., which had produced wire since 1812, employed three thousand French Canadian immigrants. A study of French Canadian immigrants living in Worcester in 1870 showed that many of them worked in fields such as transportation, textile production, metal working, boot and shoe industries, domestic service, and labor. French Canadian immigrants were not looked upon well by their native counterparts (or other immigrants who spoke English) and were labeled in derogatory ways because they worked for lower wages and stuck to themselves speaking their native tongue.

After several more attempts to create a church, in late 1869 Notre Dame des Canadiens was finally established as the first French Canadian parish in the city. The Notre Dame des Canadiens parish was successfully formed by Reverend J.B. Primeau with the first mass celebrated on June 1, 1870, in a preexisting church, located on Park Street (Now Franklin Street), the congregation had purchased. This moment marked the first time French Canadians worshipped together as a congregation in their own place of worship. As early as the mid-1800s, French Canadians had

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feared cultural eradication by living in America, but the creation of this parish eased those concerns, and decades later a dual identity was established by this group of immigrants.\textsuperscript{9}

Reverend Jean-Baptiste Primeau was born in Chateauguay, Quebec, on April 26, 1836, and was ordained as a priest in Montreal in 1860. By 1869, Rev. Primeau had heard, from a fellow priest, of the French Canadian community in Worcester, and of their attempts to set up a church in which to worship as one united ethnic community. Rev. Primeau was interested in helping to establish a parish and headed to Boston after meeting with the Bishop of Montreal, who contacted the Bishop of Boston. Rev. Primeau was given a double assignment by the Bishops: to be an assistant to the pastor of St. Ann’s parish (where many French Canadians were worshipping) and to establish a separate parish in Worcester for the French Canadian community.\textsuperscript{10}

On September 10, 1869, Rev. Primeau arrived in Worcester with his assignments, greeted parishioners, and started a parish council of five members. On September 26, 1869, four hundred and fifty French Canadians celebrated their first mass as a community on the second floor of the local Horticultural Hall in Worcester. On June 1, 1870 Rev. Primeau himself bought land and a pre-existing building on Park Street for $22,700. This building would be rededicated as Notre Dame des Canadiens.

Notre Dame was among one of the first dozen Canadian parishes established in New England. Six had already been established in Vermont, three in Maine, and three in Massachusetts (Holyoke, Lowell and Pittsfield). At the time of the founding of the Worcester parish, there were no French Canadian parishes in New Hampshire, Rhode Island or Connecticut.\textsuperscript{11} Notre Dame was only the fourth Catholic parish to be established in Worcester and was the first non-English speaking parish in the city, followed twenty-five years later by a Lithuanian parish. Notre Dame was also the last parish established by the Bishop of Boston before the diocese of Springfield was established on June 14, 1870, by Pope Pius IX.\textsuperscript{12}

Culturally the formation of this parish impacted the French Canadian community significantly. No sooner had Rev. Primeau and the parishioners celebrated their first mass when numerous baptisms and marriages were performed. Within weeks contributions were being bestowed upon Rev. Primeau for the purchase of a church building so that parishioners could have these rights performed in their own building. With the choice of the Park street location, Rev. Primeau and his parishioners heightened the visibility of the French Canadian community of Worcester. The location of this first church was on the Common and the French Canadian Community would now be practicing their faith alongside the Baptists and Congregationalists who made their way to the other four churches that were on the Common. Many parishioners cried when the church was purchased, recalling the struggle, frustration and sacrifice of being

\textsuperscript{9} MacDonald, Pg. 247-249.  
\textsuperscript{10} Richard L. Gagnon, \textit{A Parish Grows Around the Common}, pgs 5-13.  
\textsuperscript{11} Richard L. Gagnon, \textit{A Parish Grows Around the Common}, pgs 5-13.  
\textsuperscript{12} Gagnon, \textit{A Parish Grows Around the Common}, Pgs 14-15.
Catholics among strangers. Having no place to celebrate their milestones and cultural festivities or practicing their faith in their native tongue.¹³

In 1902, due to a growing number of parishioners in the parish, Reverend Joseph Brouillet, purchased the former First Baptist church on Salem Street so that the congregation could move from its Park Street location. Rev. Brouillet was born in L’Assomption, Quebec, and ordained in 1876. He taught at the College of Montreal for a short while until becoming a “missionary pastor”. In this role, he set up new missionaries in Albany and Syracuse. In 1883, Rev. Brouillet moved to the Springfield diocese and was shortly after assigned to become pastor of Notre Dame.

Rev. Brouillet served as pastor of Notre Dame from 1883 to 1904. During this time, he was responsible not only for leading the congregation at the church but also for other projects that were considered greatly important to the French Canadian community as a whole. In his twenty years as pastor, every year was filled with one project or another that he believed would meet the growing educational, worshipping, social, and charitable needs of the parish. In 1883, shortly after arriving at Notre Dame, Rev. Brouillet proceeded to take a census of the French-Catholic population of Worcester and found it to be eight thousand. In 1884, he purchased twenty-two acres of land off of Webster Street in Worcester to establish the Notre Dame cemetery, which is still in use today. By 1888, under Rev. Brouillet’s estimate and second census, the French-Catholic population had grown to nine thousand, with four thousand communicants.

Rev. Brouillet also successfully established missions in Worcester that later became independent French Canadian parishes. One of these missions was St. Anne’s (different from St. Ann’s where Rev. J.B. Primeau first worked in Worcester). It was established in South Worcester in 1886 in a house purchased by Rev. Brouillet to serve as its temporary location. On January 9, 1887, he established another mission, St. Joseph’s, which was located on the corner of Wall Street and Norfolk Street. He built a chapel for the mission for $6500. In 1898, Rev. Brouillet also helped the Sisters of St. Anne build their first residence in Worcester.¹⁴

One Rev. Brouillet’s most significant achievements involved the founding of a new order of nuns. Against the wishes of the Bishop, he helped to establish the Oblate Sisters of St. Francis of Assisi. The Oblate Sisters of St. Francis of Assisi, who are currently known as the Little Franciscans of Mary (PFM), are the oldest of three Catholic orders that French Canadian migrants founded in the United States. Although they are now headquartered in Baie St. Paul, Quebec, this order began in 1889 at Notre Dame under Rev. Brouillet, when he decided that he needed someone to care for the many orphans in the parish. He began to recruit young women from his parish for this order, starting with Mary Louise Rondeau. Rondeau was born in Worcester to French Canadian immigrant parents, who lived on nearby Wall Street. While information is scarce on the founding members of the order, it appears that Rondeau was the only woman in the

¹³ Gagnon A Parish Grows Around the Common, Pgs. 10-12.
¹⁴ Gagnon, Pgs 35-37.
order who was not born in Canada. Among many other notable tasks, the Oblate Sisters helped create an orphanage for children in the city of Worcester.\textsuperscript{15}

In 1895, Notre Dame and its parishioners celebrated the church’s twenty-fifth anniversary with a Sacred Concert that was performed by three French Canadian choirs and a pontifical mass. This celebration was attended by parishioners, the bishop, the mayor of Worcester, and notable citizens from the area.\textsuperscript{16} This celebration was one of many such revelries that would be celebrated by parishioners every time the church would reach a milestone anniversary. But not only church milestones were celebrated at Notre Dame. Marriages, births/baptisms, and other 
parishioner milestones were celebrated by the French Canadian community, who were a tight knit group who treated each other as an extended church-family.\textsuperscript{17}

In July, 1902, Rev. Brouillet decided to move Notre Dame to, what he deemed, a more “hygienic” location. With his help, the parish moved into the nearby First Baptist Church on Salem Street. This building offered more space for the growing parish and more space for parochial classes. At this time, he also purchased a five thousand square foot house behind the church at 25 Trumbull Street, a four thousand square foot house at 19 Trumbull Street, and a six thousand square foot house at 5 Salem Square, effectively buying out almost the entire block. In one of his final acts as pastor, Rev. Brouillet served as host, advisor, and benefactor to the Assumptionist Fathers to Worcester, who would soon found Assumption College.

Meanwhile, the parish of Notre Dame was growing substantially. During the summer of 1925, the current pastor of Notre Dame, Fr. Louis D. Grenier, informed parishioners that Bishop Thomas M. O’Leary had granted permission for the replacement of the current church, due to the high cost of rehabilitation work that was sorely needed. During the following year, the parish planned to purchase another church nearby until Fr. Grenier had a dream in which the Blessed Virgin Mary appeared to him and asked him to build a church in her honor on the current Salem Square site.\textsuperscript{18} Bishop O’Leary appointed architect Donat R. Baribault of Springfield, Massachusetts to create the design. The general contractor chosen was Joseph J. Robert of Worcester, Massachusetts.

Donat R. Baribault (1885 – 1970) was an American architect who designed plans for numerous churches, schools, rectories and convents for Catholic dioceses in New Hampshire and Massachusetts. A native of New Haven, Connecticut, Baribault studied architecture at the École Polytechnique de Montréal. After graduation, he practiced as an architect in Winnipeg, Canada, until moving to Springfield, Massachusetts, in 1917. Baribault worked for two years as a designer for the architectural firm of S.M. Green until he opened his own practice in Springfield, where he lived and worked until his death in 1970. Some of his works include Sacred Heart Church in Concord, New Hampshire, Assumption Church in Dover, New Hampshire, Notre

\textsuperscript{15} Gagnon, Pgs. 35-39.
\textsuperscript{16} Gagnon, Pg. 47.
\textsuperscript{18} Gagnon, Pg. 64.
Dame Rectory in Southbridge, Massachusetts, Immaculate Conception Church in Holyoke, Massachusetts, and Our Lady of Czestochowa Church in Turners Falls, Massachusetts.\textsuperscript{19}

For Notre Dame, Baribault worked with Professor Gonippo Raggi of Rome, who was brought in to direct the interior decorations of the new church. Raggi (1875-1959) came to the United States from Rome in 1904 and settled in New Jersey, where he supervised the decoration of St. Catherine’s Church in Spring Lake. He later supervised the interior decoration of numerous churches in New Jersey, such as Cathedral Basilica of the Sacred Heart and Our Lady of Good Counsel Church in Newark, as well as church interiors as far south as Maryland and as far west as Kansas. He worked on other churches in Massachusetts, including St. Joseph’s in Worcester, Notre Dame in Southbridge, and Mary Immaculate of Lourdes Church in Newton.\textsuperscript{20} Many of the buildings he worked on are listed on the National Register of Historic Places. All of his work pre-1915 was cataloged by the Smithsonian Institution, while other works were cataloged by the Boston Public Library, Department of Fine Arts.\textsuperscript{21}

Raggi was commissioned in 1928 to paint the interior of Notre Dame in what was called the “Roman Byzantine Style”. Byzantine art began with mosaics decorating the walls and domes of churches as well as al-fresco wall paintings. There was dense use of symbolic imagery that was ceremonial in nature.\textsuperscript{22} He also completed two 12’ by 15’ oil paintings that hung on the walls of the sanctuary, facing the altar. The one on the left portrayed the Blessed Virgin Mary appearing at Lourdes to Bernadette Soubirous and the one on the right portrayed the Sacred Heart of Jesus appearing to St. Margaret Mary Alacoque.\textsuperscript{23}

For the next forty years, the parish continued its mission to serve the French Canadian community in Worcester. Culturally, the French Canadians that lived in Worcester and celebrated mass at Notre Dame began to thrive as they saw their status in society increase. As charitable organizations like the Societe St. Jean Baptiste grew other Franco-American cultural groups were founded with the goal of retaining use of the French language and celebrating ethnic heritage. At the center of these cultural events and adorations was Notre Dame. For example, during the spring of 1949, thousands of Franco-Americans descended upon Notre Dame to celebrate the one-hundredth anniversary of the first French Canadian immigrants to the area.\textsuperscript{24} Seven hundred Franco-American Societies in New England took part in the two-day celebration, with the main address given, in fluent French, by U.S. Senator Henry Cabot-Lodge Jr., at Mechanics Hall. Numerous festivities took place, and a manifesto embodying the aspirations they all represented was created by a commission of delegates from the Franco-American

\textsuperscript{20} \textit{Worcester Gazette}, “Celebrated Artist Paints Church Here”, July 13th 1929
\textsuperscript{22} http://www.visual-arts-cork.com/history-of-art/byzantine.htm#characteristics
\textsuperscript{23} Gagnon, pgs. 67-68.
societies. The festivities came to an end with mass being celebrated at Notre Dame, thereby bridging the cultural and spiritual devotion of the attendees.

Currently, the available documentation of church history does not yield ample information about the time period between the church’s construction and when it was threatened with demolition in the late 1960s. There are church records showing baptisms, first communions, marriages, funerals and mass celebrations, and these documents tell of the importance of church life to its parishioners. Often times, great importance is placed upon notable historic events, but in the case of Notre Dame, its records note the acts of its parishioners and, tell the history of the everyday lives of thousands or millions of individuals. These people may not be singled out in history books, but their lives and their culture, were manifested in their church, Notre Dame des Canadiens.

Notre Dame was first threatened with demolition in the late 1960s, as developers eyed the property with the intention of creating a theater. The Worcester Redevelopment Authority (WRA) considered taking the property under eminent domain to further the process of developing that area under the “Worcester Center” plan. The church sat right in the middle of these urban renewal efforts. The process started with the WRA sending three different “proposals” to Notre Dame Pastor, Reverend Charles E. Belanger. The church was experiencing declining membership at the time and the fact that the church sat in the middle of urban renewal efforts made repurposing the site desirable. The first proposal came on March 30, 1967, and suggested Notre Dame be used as an “Ecumenical Center” that could serve various religious groups at different times. Parishioners of the church did not support this idea and the Bishop of Worcester did not fully back this idea either.

On February 20, 1968, an anonymous letter was mailed to the Bishop of Worcester with copies sent to prominent members of Notre Dame, other Worcester organizations, and local businesses. This letter was found to be hostile, threatening that Notre Dame will be demolished and that parishioners will be assigned to other churches in the city. After the news broke out about this letter, public opinion grew in favor of Notre Dame. A few months later, the second proposal came from the WRA on May 2, 1968, offering to acquire Notre Dame and on its site put in a five million dollar civic theater with a two thousand five hundred seating capacity. In this proposal, the WRA suggested that a chapel could be built (but did not state where) for the parish in lieu of the church being demolished.

On June 3, 1968, angry parishioners met in the parish hall with the WRA and diocesan officials over the status of the church. Parishioners were first given two options, lose the rectory and most of the adjoining land (effectively making their church an island overshadowed by new development) or lose both the rectory and the church. Parishioners found both options

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26 Ibid.
27 Ibid, Pgs. 89-90.
28 Ibid, Pg. 92.
 unacceptable and presented their own demands as an alternative. They asked for a new church in the downtown center that included living quarters for their priests (who should be bilingual in French and English). They also wanted the new church erected before the current one was demolished.

All parties remained at a standstill for the next three weeks, until June 21, when the chairman of the WRA called a special meeting to “reconsider completely” the proposed acquisition of Notre Dame. In the interim, the Worcester Arts Council (who was going to run the civic theater) had encountered difficulty in getting financial support for their proposed theater. Since the church was still in the area of development, there were thoughts of taking the property by eminent domain to lessen costs and negate parishioner demands. But in July, 1969, the WRA announced that any plans to take Notre Dame had been dropped, as the church had come to be recognized as a healthy addition to the Worcester Center development and as an example of religious and historic meaning, and architectural beauty to the community.

In March, 1972, the diocese obtained funding to update the exterior and interior of the altar of Notre Dame. The interior electrical work was completely rewired, some of the interior walls were repainted and a new ceramic-like floor was installed. Three new offices and a lavatory were built in the sacristy area, and a Reconciliation room and Vesting Room were built in the rear of the church. Also, an eight-foot wrought iron sanctuary screen with gates opening ten to twelve feet now separated the sanctuary area. A new Eucharistic Shrine with an ark-shaped Tabernacle enhanced the right side of the sanctuary. The focal point of the new sanctuary was a six-and-a half-foot-wide circular red and white marble altar from Italy, and the focal point in the Lady Chapel was the large statue of Notre Dame des Canadiens presenting the Christ child to the faithful. The painting of the Crucifixion was restored, reframed, and repositioned from its former position as the main focus of the old altar to the left rear section of the church.

Exterior repair work included sandblasting the entire exterior stone edifice, repointing the granite stonework, waterproofing the granite stone, removing the ornamental cast-stone capitals, and replacing them with new Indiana limestone capitals. Other work involved glazing, caulking, and cleaning all windows, replacing all missing and broken tiles on the roof and towers, renewing all roofing and flashing, and replacing all damaged cornices, gutters and downspouts. Lastly, the crosses on the towers were repainted and re-gilded.

In February, 1989, pre-cast stones became loose when flashing along the church roof separated and allowed water (which then became ice) to damage the mortar. The stones fell in front of the entrance to the church. Engineers were brought in to determine what needed to be done to the church. By 1990, restoration work had begun and included repointing stone-to-stone mortar joints, replacing and adding anchors, rebuilding deteriorated colonnades to their original profiles, and replacing column capitals and arched radius stones. The roofing on the two tower

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29 Ibid, Pg. 93.
30 Ibid, Pg. 94.
31 Ibid, Pg. 101.
32 Ibid, Pg. 100.
spires was weatherproofed and the crosses on top of the spires were re-gilded for a second time.\footnote{Ibid, Pg. 119.}

In 2007, with both attendance and funding falling, the Diocese of Worcester made the decision to close the church and merge the parish with two other parishes. On July 1, 2008, the church celebrated its last mass. The church building was closed until 2010, when City Square Development, LLC, purchased it from the Worcester Diocese. At the time, CitySquare Developers made comments to local newspapers that the church would be included in the “City Square” redevelopment plan. But by April 1, 2016, City Square Developers had determined that restoration work and updates to the church would be too costly and that the church would not fit into the development plan. At present, with the application for a demolition permit underway, Notre Dame’s future remains uncertain and it is hoped that a new use can be found for this outstanding monument to Worcester’s French Canadian heritage.
9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography (Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form.)

- Florence Mae Waldron, *Re-evaluating the Role of “National” Identities in the American Catholic Church at the Turn of the Twentieth Century: The Case of Les Petites Franciscaines de Marie*, The Catholic Historical Review, Vol. 95, No. 3 (July 2009)
- (Author Unknown), “Celebrated Artist Paints Church Here”, *Worcester Gazette*, July 13th 1929
- [http://www.visual-arts-cork.com/history-of-art/byzantine.htm#characteristics](http://www.visual-arts-cork.com/history-of-art/byzantine.htm#characteristics)
- Massachusetts Cultural Resource Information System, Inventory No. : WOR.1000 (Notre Dame Roman Catholic Church)

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey #
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record #
- recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey #
Notre Dame des Canadiens
Worcester Co., MA
Name of Property
County and State

Primary location of additional data:
_X_ State Historic Preservation Office
___ Other State agency
___ Federal agency
___ Local government
___ University
___ Other
Name of repository: _______________________________________

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): MACRIS WOR.1000___________

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property _59242 Square feet_____

Use either the UTM system or latitude/longitude coordinates

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates (decimal degrees)
Datum if other than WGS84:___________
(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)
1. Latitude: 42.261185 Longitude: 71.799265
2. Latitude: Longitude:
3. Latitude: Longitude:
4. Latitude: Longitude:

Or

UTM References
Datum (indicated on USGS map):

☐ NAD 1927 or ☐ NAD 1983

1. Zone: Easting: Northing:
2. Zone: Easting: Northing:
Notre Dame des Canadiens

3. Zone: Easting: Northing:

4. Zone: Easting: Northing:

**Verbal Boundary Description** (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

The nominated property encompasses 59,242 square feet and is comprised of the Worcester Tax Assessor’s Map M25.

**Boundary Justification** (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The verbal boundary description describes the outline of the property that has been associated with Notre Dame since 1969 after the Worcester Center development plan.

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**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title: ___Amy M. Skrzek______________________________________________
organization: ___Roger Williams University__________________________________
street & number: ___1 Old Ferry Road_____________________________________
city or town: ___Bristol________________________ state: ___RI______ zip code: ___02809____
e-mail ___askrzek814@g.rwu.edu________________________
telephone: ___508-272-3972____________
date: ___5/13/2016________________________

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**Additional Documentation**

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A USGS map or equivalent (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

- **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.

- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO, TPO, or FPO for any additional items.)

**Photographs**

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels (minimum), 3000x2000 preferred, at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs
to the sketch map. Each photograph must be numbered and that number must correspond to the photograph number on the photo log. For simplicity, the name of the photographer, photo date, etc. may be listed once on the photograph log and doesn’t need to be labeled on every photograph.

**Photo Log**

Name of Property: Notre Dame des Canadiens

City or Vicinity: Worcester

County: Worcester  State: Massachusetts

Photographer: Amy M. Skrzek; Susan Ceccacci

Date Photographed: 04/22/2013 (Susan Ceccacci), 03/22/2016 (Susan Ceccacci), 04/19/2016 (Amy M. Skrzek)

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera:

1 of 6. West elevation, View from Salem Square, (MA_Worcester County_Notre Dame_001), (04/22/2013_Ceccacci)
2 of 6. West elevation, Southwest view of building from Franklin Street, (MA_Worcester County_Notre Dame_002), (04/22/2013_Ceccacci)
3 of 6. South elevation, View from inside Worcester Public Library, (MA_Worcester County_Notre Dame_003) (04/19/2016, Skrzek)
4 of 6. North elevation, View from Front Street, (MA_Worcester County_Notre Dame_004) (04/19/2016, Skrzek)
5 of 6. Nave looking towards Altar, (MA_Worcester County_Notre Dame_005) (03/22/2016, Ceccacci)
6 of 6. Raggi Roman Byzantine Mural, (MA_Worcester County_Notre Dame_006) (03/22/2016, Ceccacci)

**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.).

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 100 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.
Notre Dame des Canadiens
County and State

(Notre Dame des Canadiens, Worcester, MA, #1)
Notre Dame des Canadiens
Name of Property

Worcester Co., MA
County and State

(Notre Dame des Canadiens, Worcester, MA #2)

(Notre Dame des Canadiens, Worcester, MA #3)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of Property</th>
<th>County and State</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Notre Dame des Canadiens</td>
<td>Worcester Co., MA</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Notre Dame des Canadiens, Worcester, MA #4)

(Notre Dame des Canadiens, Worcester, MA #5)
Notre Dame des Canadiens
Name of Property

Worcester Co., MA
County and State

(Notre Dame des Canadiens, Worcester, MA #6)