

**NORTH CAROLINA STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICE**  
**Office of Archives and History**  
**Department of Natural and Cultural Resources**

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES**

**Saint Catherine of Siena Catholic Church**

Oxford, Granville County GV0299 Listed 12/18/2023

Nomination by Heather M. Slane, hmwPreservation

Photographs by Cheri L. Szcodronski and Heather M. Slane, March 2018 and October 2021



Exterior, facing northeast.



Sanctuary, facing northeast.

# 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 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: Saint Catherine of Siena Catholic Church

Other names/site number: \_\_\_\_\_

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: 305 Williamsboro Street

City or town: Oxford State: NC County: Granville

Not For Publication:  Vicinity:

## 3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,

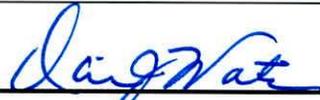
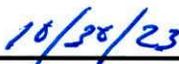
I hereby certify that this X nomination \_\_\_ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.

In my opinion, the property X 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        X   local

Applicable National Register Criteria:

    A          B        X   C          D

	
Signature of certifying official/Title: <u>State Historic Preservation Officer</u> Date	
State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government	

In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register criteria.	
Signature of commenting official:	Date
Title :	State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

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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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Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

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#### 5. Classification

##### Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply.)

- Private:
- Public – Local
- Public – State
- Public – Federal

##### Category of Property

(Check only **one** box.)

- Building(s)
- District
- Site
- Structure
- Object

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**Number of Resources within Property**

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	buildings
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	sites
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	structures
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	objects
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

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**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

RELIGION- religious facility  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Current Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

VACANT  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

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## 7. Description

### Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

MISSION/SPANISH COLONIAL REVIVAL

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**Materials:** (enter categories from instructions.)

Principal exterior materials of the property:

FOUNDATION - brick

WALLS – brick

ROOF – fiberglass

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### Narrative Description

Saint Catherine of Siena Catholic Church is located at the northeast corner of Williamsboro and Lanier streets, at the east edge of downtown Oxford, North Carolina. The 1955 front-gabled, Spanish Eclectic-style, brick church is the only church of the style in Granville County or the adjacent counties of Person and Vance. It stands on a 0.52-acre parcel, with the building located on a slight rise above Williamsboro Street, accessed by concrete steps. The main façade of the cream-colored brick church features a curvilinear parapeted front gable and a central bay recessed within a full-height round arch. Within the arch are paired doors sheltered by a colonnade and a rose window above. Round-arch stained-glass windows are located on the east and west elevations, and one-story, side-gabled wings extend from the northeast and northwest corners of the building, forming a T-plan.<sup>1</sup>

### Site and Setting

Saint Catherine of Siena Catholic Church is in Oxford, North Carolina, the county seat of Granville County. The church stands at the northeast corner of Williamsboro and Lanier streets, just nine hundred feet northeast of the Granville County Courthouse in downtown Oxford. Commercial development extends east from the courthouse to Lanier Street. East of Lanier Street, opposite the church, is the former Oxford High School, which has been converted to City offices. North and east of the church and school buildings is residential development.

The church is roughly centered on a 0.52-acre parcel. The south two-thirds of the land surrounding the church is a grassy lawn while the north one-third is paved asphalt parking accessed from Lanier Street. Mature trees at the northeast corner of the property and along the east property line screen the church from the adjacent residential development. The church

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<sup>1</sup> The church is oriented with the façade facing approximately 30 degrees east of true south, though for the simplicity of the description is written as though the building has a true north-south orientation.

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stands approximately forty-five feet back from Williamsboro Street. The setback is considerably deeper than the commercial development to the west, which either abuts the sidewalk or has paved parking in front of the buildings and is more consistent with the residential setbacks to the east. Most of the houses in the 300 block of Williamsboro Street are set back roughly sixty feet from the street with grassy lawns and paved walkways accessing the buildings.

The front entrance of the church is accessed by a wide concrete sidewalk that splits to wrap around a planting bed edged with scalloped concrete blocks. The split walk leads to two parallel concrete stairs, each with a concrete curb on the outside and a tall concrete knee wall on the inside that forms the side wall of the rear portion of the planted area. The center of the concrete wall at the back of the planting bed extends north and south to create a pedestal for a statue of Saint Catherine. The statue was removed when the church was closed in 1993. Beyond the pedestal, the concrete sidewalk extends the width of the façade and wraps around the east and west elevations to entrances on the south elevations of the side wings. Shrubs planted along the east and west elevations of the church, between the sidewalk and the building, are edged in the same scalloped concrete blocks as those edging the planting bed in front of the church.

### **Building Exterior**

Saint Catherine of Siena Catholic Church is illustrative of the Spanish Eclectic style, featuring elements of the Mission and Spanish Revival styles. The building displays a tall, front-gabled form with shorter one-story, side-gabled wings at its north end, forming a T-plan. It has a cream-colored brick foundation, cream-colored exterior brick walls laid in a running bond, and a fiberglass-shingled roof. The front gable is concealed by a multi-curved parapet with cast-stone coping—characteristic of the Mission Revival style—and a cast-stone keystone at the apex. The keystone features an inset panel with shield motif and rests on a console. A projecting rod atop the keystone historically held a cast-stone cross, also removed after the closure of the church in 1993.

The center of the façade is inset within a near-full-width round arch. The arch is formed by a double rowlock course that rests on a cast-stone springer course that extends around the parapet as a cast-stone beltcourse. Flanking the arch, above the springer course, are inset cast-stone panels with shield motifs in relief. Within the arch is a stained-glass rose window framed with rowlock brick. Paired one-light, wood-framed doors, that replaced original batten doors, are centered beneath the rose window. The entrance is sheltered by a shed roof covered with round, pan-shaped terra cotta tile, called American Spanish tile. The shed roof, which extends the full width of the inset bay, is supported by cast-stone columns and pilasters with incised lines in a spiral pattern, often identified as Solomonic. The columns and pilasters, topped by stylized Corinthian capitals, support round-arch brick spandrels with a partial brick wall above. Two cast-stone rosettes in relief are located between the three arches.

The east and west elevations each have five round-arch, stained-glass windows set in rowlock arches and resting on rowlock sills. The east elevation also has a small, rectangular window on its south end. Modern aluminum gutters partially conceal the wood cornice on these elevations.

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The north gable end of the main portion of the building contains three vinyl one-over-one, double-hung windows. The gable has flush eaves and a round louvered metal vent. An interior brick chimney rises at the northwest corner.

The two one-story wings extending east and west at the north end of the building are equal in size, each two bays wide and two bays deep, but fenestration varies. Exterior doors are hollow-core wood and windows are vinyl one-over-one double-hung sash, identical in size to those on the north gable-end of the building's main section with one exception. The east wing has a door and a small one-over-one window on its south elevation, two windows on its east elevation, and two windows on its north elevation. The west wing has a door and a window on its south elevation, two windows on its west elevation that are more widely spaced than those on the outer elevation of the east wing, and a single door on the north elevation. Each wing has flush eaves and a round louvered metal vent in the side gable.

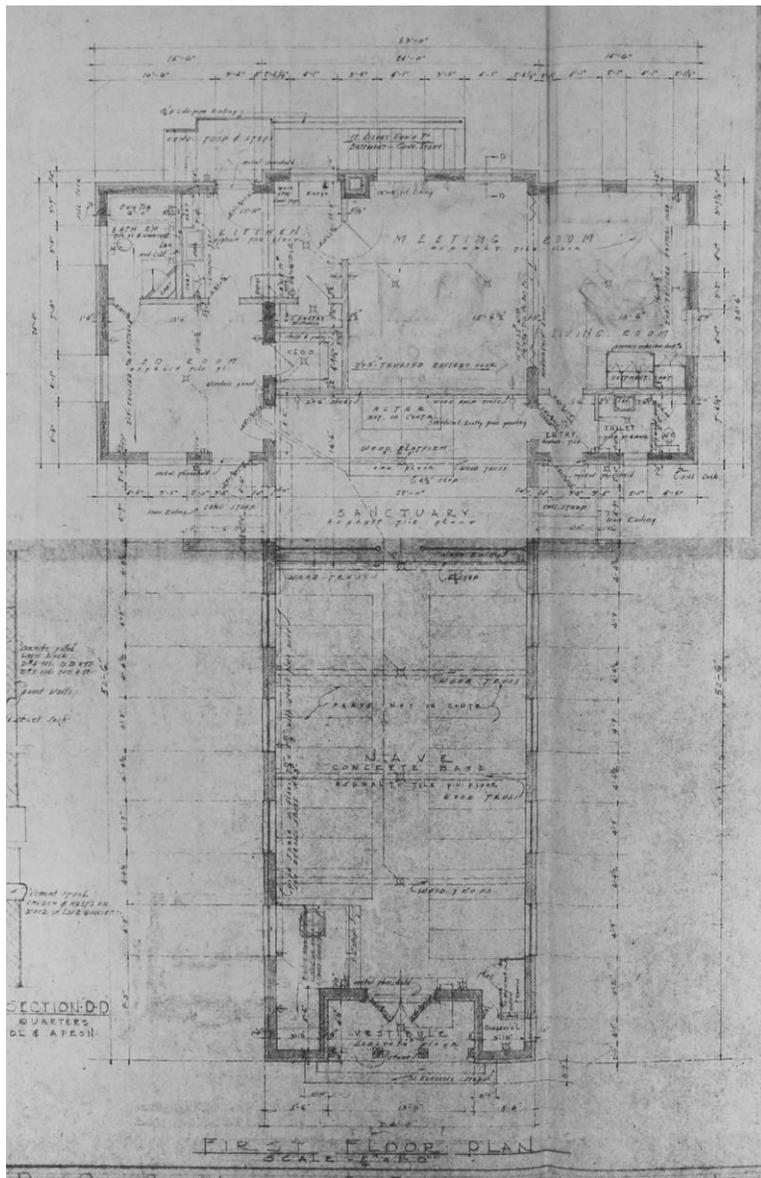


Exhibit 1: 1955 Floor Plan of Saint Catherine of Siena Catholic Church. Scan of original plans located within the building.

### Interior

The interior of Saint Catherine of Siena Catholic Church largely retains its historic configuration, with alterations to the original floor plan limited to the subdivision of the east half of the rear meeting room into two offices. The front doors open directly into the sanctuary, which extends roughly three-quarters of the depth of the front-gabled part of the building. The north end consists mostly of the meeting room that has been subdivided. At the north end of the sanctuary, single doors access the east and west wings. The door to the east wing leads to a short hallway with an entrance from the exterior, a

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bathroom, and a meeting room. The door to the west leads to living quarters for the priest, including a bedroom, bathroom, closet, and kitchen.



Exhibit 2: Archival photo of the interior of Saint Catherine of Siena Catholic Church, c.1956. Provided by Archives and Special Collections, St. Catherine University, St. Paul, Minnesota.

The sanctuary remains a single, open space with its height emphasized by exposed king post roof trusses with sawn brackets at their bases that extend over the top two courses of concrete block. Above the trusses is exposed wood sheathing. Later ceiling fans and chandeliers suspended from the trusses replaced original cylindrical metal and glass lights. The east, south, and west walls are exposed concrete block that is painted white. The north wall of the sanctuary is sheathed in vertical knotty pine paneling that is original to the church. It was pierced with five HVAC vents (four at the top of the wall and one at the bottom) at an unknown later date. A raised platform remains at the north end of the sanctuary, although a railing with molded handrail and turned balusters at the front edge has been removed, presumably when the building ceased serving as a Catholic church in 1993.

At that time, church furnishings including the pews, pulpit, baptismal font, and confessional, as well as a simple rectilinear sounding board suspended from the ceiling above the altar, were removed. Four painted panels in molded frames (three on the paneled north wall depicting Christ in the taller, center panel and angels in the flanking panels; and one panel on the middle of the west wall) were relocated to Saint James Catholic Church, between Oxford and nearby Henderson, North Carolina. Original asphalt-tiled floors have been covered with carpeting.

The most distinctive features of the sanctuary are the stained-glass windows exhibiting modern designs. The rose window in the south wall features a white dove in the center surrounded by a kaleidoscope of “petals” subdivided into triangular and rectilinear forms. At the five stained glass windows evenly spaced along each of the side walls, the round arch of each opening is framed in bricks with the headers projecting slightly from the wall. The format of these windows is uniform throughout, dictated by the architect’s plans: a circle at the top centered above a pair of round arches topping vertical columns divided horizontally into four sections. Each horizontal section is subdivided into three vertical sections, the middle sections wider than the flanking ones and featuring a variety of geometric shapes, some in vivid shades of red and blue. The round arches and the side sections immediately below are filled with irregular triangular and rectilinear shapes while the other side sections are broken into simple horizontal and vertical

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rectangles, all in pastel shades. The middle section of each vertical column, immediately below each round-arched section, contains a written message in the left column and an image relating to the message in the right column. The irregular spaces between the circle at the top and the round arches just below are filled with pieces of glass in various shades of dark blue. At the bottom of each window, the full width of the bottom sections opens as a bottom-hinged louver.

The rear (north) spaces of the church, including the bathrooms, meeting room, offices, and kitchen, all have exposed concrete block exterior walls, interior walls covered with drywall, and drywall-covered ceilings. The hollow-core wood doors have molded wood surrounds. The floors are covered with carpet or vinyl flooring and topped by narrow baseboards. An attic level in the north end of the main gable is accessed via a narrow wood stair at the west end of the meeting room. The attic has exposed king post trusses at its north and south ends, drywall-covered walls, and a carpeted floor. An unfinished storage room is accessed from a door on the south wall of the attic. Located between the next two trusses, the storage room holds the HVAC system.

### **Integrity Assessment**

The 1955 Saint Catherine of Siena Catholic Church retains integrity of location, setting, design, workmanship, material, feeling, and association. Located on its original site, the building retains its historic setting with commercial development to its west and residential development to its east. The site maintains its original circulation patterns, deep front lawn, and mature trees with parking relegated to the rear of the site. The church retains integrity of design, workmanship, and material with original overall form and exterior brickwork, columns, and windows in the main, gable-front portion of the building. The interior largely retains its original floor plan, with only minor alterations to the meeting room, and original finishes including wood paneling at the north end of the sanctuary, exposed concrete block on the side and rear elevations, and exposed wood ceiling trusses and decking. The sanctuary has been carpeted and the support spaces at the rear of the building have replacement materials. Furnishings and artwork have been removed, though this is not uncommon when a church has been decommissioned and is no longer serving a liturgical function. Despite these material changes, the church as a whole retains sufficient integrity of design, materials, and workmanship to convey the property's historic feeling and association.

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## 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.)

ARCHITECTURE  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

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**Period of Significance**

1955  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Significant Dates**

1955  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Significant Person**

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

N/A  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Cultural Affiliation**

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Architect/Builder**

Carl F. Andrews, architect  
James A. McGeady, engineer  
George W. Kane, contractor

**Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph** (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance, applicable criteria, justification for the period of significance, and any applicable criteria considerations.)

Saint Catherine of Siena Catholic Church is eligible for the National Register under Criterion C, locally significant as a rare example of the Spanish Eclectic style in Granville County. The church retains a cream-colored brick exterior, multi-curved parapet with inset rose window, an arcaded entry with red-tile roof, and distinctive round-arch multi-colored stained-glass windows, all characteristic of the style. Designed by the Greensboro, North Carolina, architectural and engineering firm of Andrews and McGeady, the building is nearly identical to two other Catholic churches in the state—the 1953 Our Lady of the Highways Catholic Church in Thomasville, North Carolina and the 1933 Saint Jude’s Catholic Church in Grifton, North Carolina—

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indicating the plan may have been disseminated by the Catholic church itself. The period of significance is 1955, the year construction on the church was completed.

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

### **Architecture Context**

The 1955 Saint Catherine of Siena Catholic Church is a small-scale, Spanish Eclectic-style church located just east of downtown Oxford. Plans for the church, prepared by the Greensboro firm of Andrew and McGeedy and dated January 1955, employ elements of the Mission Revival style including a multi-curved parapeted front gable and red-tile roof at the arcaded entry with Solomonic Corinthian columns. The cream-colored brick exterior and arched windows on the side elevations of the sanctuary are characteristic of the Spanish Colonial Revival style.

The Mission style was utilized for religious architecture, specifically for Spanish religious orders, in the eighteenth century.<sup>2</sup> These buildings were typically constructed of adobe brick covered with stucco and featured arcaded walkways with arched spandrels. Multi-curved parapets and bell towers were also common.<sup>3</sup> The style was revived in the early twentieth century, constructed predominantly in Florida and the American Southwest, the Spanish-settled areas of the United States.

American interpretations of the Mission style, sometimes referred to as Mission Revival, were generally constructed from 1890 to 1920 and are characterized by Mission-shaped multi-curved dormers or parapets, red Mission-tile roofs, deep eaves, and porches or arcaded walkways supported by columns or piers with arched spandrels.<sup>4</sup> Some also feature patterned tiles, carved stonework, or other wall surface ornamentation.

Not purely Mission in style, Saint Catherine of Siena Catholic Church also features elements of Spanish Colonial Revival style architecture, generally constructed beginning in 1915 and reaching its peak in the 1920s and 1930s. Like the Mission style, the Spanish Colonial Revival style is most common in Florida and the American Southwest and often incorporates similar detailing to varying degrees. The style features symmetrical facades with stucco or plastered walls, or in some cases light-colored brick, and often incorporates tiled roofs.<sup>5</sup> In the Spanish Colonial Revival style, which was most often applied to residential architecture, the multi-curved parapets and gables are less common than in Mission-style buildings,<sup>6</sup> but round-arched door or

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<sup>2</sup> Cyril M. Harris, *American Architecture: An Illustrated Encyclopedia* (New York, NY: W.W. Norton & Company, 1998), 214.

<sup>3</sup> Harris, *American Architecture: An Illustrated Encyclopedia*, 214.

<sup>4</sup> Virginia Savage McAlester, *A Field Guide to American Houses* (New York, NY: Alfred P. Knopf, 2015), 511; Harris, *American Architecture: An Illustrated Encyclopedia*, 216.

<sup>5</sup> Harris, *American Architecture: An Illustrated Encyclopedia*, 309.

<sup>6</sup> McAlester, *A Field Guide to American Houses*, 522.

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window openings and covered porches or arcades are typical elements. Round or square towers are also common, suggestive of a bell tower, and in the case of churches, actually house bells.<sup>7</sup>

Spanish Eclectic is a generalized term applied to a hybrid of the Mission and Spanish Colonial Revival styles. The style was most often applied to residential buildings, but was also used for public buildings and churches.<sup>8</sup> Like its contemporaries, it originated in the Southwest and Florida and spread throughout the country, particularly in the 1920s, due in part to the popularity of architecture and home magazines including *Architectural Record* and *House Beautiful*, both first published in the 1890s.<sup>9</sup> In the years between the world wars, these journals turned their attention to residential architecture, sometimes devoting entire issues to suburban housing in Romantic Revival styles.<sup>10</sup>

World War I exposed American soldiers to a variety of European styles of architecture, leading to an increase in the construction of European revival styles in the 1920s, particularly for residential construction. These included the (English) Colonial Revival, Tudor Revival, Norman Revival, and Mediterranean Revival styles. At the same time, architects wishing to study in Europe during the World War I era were relegated to studying in Spain, which remained neutral throughout the war. Thus, architectural professionals were exposed to centuries of Spanish architecture that they then adapted and applied to the early-twentieth-century Spanish Colonial Revival- and Spanish Eclectic-style buildings in the United States.<sup>11</sup>

While Modernist-style architecture was growing in popularity for residential, office, and governmental buildings by the mid-twentieth century, especially in North Carolina's larger cities, its application was more limited in small towns and rural areas and remained relatively rare for religious buildings. The traditional forms and historic details of the revival styles gave a sense of permanence and stability to church buildings. Thus, the Colonial Revival, Gothic Revival, and other revival styles, often with pared-down detailing, remained the most common styles for religious buildings through the mid- and even late-twentieth century, especially in small towns and rural areas.

Examples of the Mission and Spanish Colonial Revival styles, for both residential and religious architecture, are relatively rare outside of the Southwest and tend to be vernacular or eclectic interpretations of the styles.<sup>12</sup> This is true for North Carolina, in which residential examples exist in limited number in middle- and upper-class, early-twentieth-century suburbs, particularly in the state's larger cities. Examples of the styles' application to religious buildings are even less common. Saint Catherine of Siena Catholic Church is the only example of an ecumenical

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<sup>7</sup> Harris, *American Architecture: An Illustrated Encyclopedia*, 309.

<sup>8</sup> Harris, *American Architecture: An Illustrated Encyclopedia*, 309.

<sup>9</sup> Leland M. Roth, *A Concise History of American Architecture* (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1979), 232.

<sup>10</sup> Roth, *A Concise History of American Architecture*, 232.

<sup>11</sup> McAlester, *A Field Guide to American Houses*, 534.

<sup>12</sup> McAlester, *A Field Guide to American Houses*, 522.

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building exhibiting the Spanish Eclectic style (including the Mission style and Spanish Colonial Revival style) in the three-county region of Granville, Person, and Vance counties.

Saint Catherine of Siena Catholic Church features a front-gable form with distinctive, Mission-style multi-curved parapet. The inset entrance is sheltered by a shallow porch supported by twisted, or Solomonic, columns and topped by barrel tiles typical of Mission and Spanish Colonial Revival architecture.<sup>13</sup> The symmetrical form, shallow eaves, and round-arch windows are characteristic of the Spanish Colonial Revival Style.

### **Andrews and McGeady**

The building was designed in 1955 by the Greensboro, North Carolina, architectural and engineering firm of Andrews and McGeady. The firm, established in the early 1950s as a collaboration between Carl F. Andrews and James A. McGeady, was known for their design of church and school buildings throughout the state, in which the team utilized a wide variety of architectural forms and styles.

The design of Saint Catherine of Siena Catholic Church is identical to McGeady's design for the 1953 Our Lady of the Highways Catholic Church in Thomasville, North Carolina, with the exception of a square tower at the front left corner of that church. The 1933 Saint Jude's Catholic Church in Grifton, North Carolina, also matches in form and detail, though with a large gabled rear wing that features multi-curved, parapeted gables. While it is unclear whether James McGeady was involved in the design of Saint Jude's Catholic Church, it is notable that all three churches were constructed for Catholic congregations, indicating that the plan may have been provided or approved by the regional Diocese for adaptation to local churches.

James A. McGeady, the older of the two partners, was born in Pennsylvania in 1896, fought in World War 1, and was listed in the 1920 census as a Civil Engineer working and living in Richmond, Virginia.<sup>14</sup> By 1930, he had moved to Wilson, North Carolina, where he was employed as an engineer.<sup>15</sup> McGeady remained in Wilson through at least 1940, when he was listed as a Civil Engineer in the federal census. He was employed by the Works Progress Administration from 1936 to 1941, when he took an engineering position with the Federal Housing Administration.<sup>16</sup> It is unclear how long McGeady held this position and whether he was working concurrently as an architect, but in the 1940s, while living in Wilson, he began a career as an architect, designing predominantly churches and schools, many of them for Catholic congregations.

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<sup>13</sup> McAlester, *A Field Guide to American Houses*, 522-523.

<sup>14</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, *1920 United States Federal Census*, [www.ancestry.com](http://www.ancestry.com).

<sup>15</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, *1930 United States Federal Census*, [www.ancestry.com](http://www.ancestry.com).

<sup>16</sup> "Work to begin on Barnesville Gym within a Week," *The Robesonian* (Lumberton, North Carolina), January 2, 1936, [www.newspapers.com](http://www.newspapers.com).; "In Retrospect," *The Durham Sun*, April 8, 1949, [www.newspapers.com](http://www.newspapers.com).; "Kennedy Made New Durham WPA Chief," *The News and Observer*, June 26, 1941, [www.newspapers.com](http://www.newspapers.com).

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According to Richard Andrews, son of Carl Andrews, McGeady was a lifelong Catholic and his connections within the Catholic church may have led to some of the firm's commissions.<sup>17</sup> While a direct connection cannot be confirmed, McGeady may have designed Saint Jude's Catholic Church in Grifton, North Carolina. The church, constructed in 1933, is located approximately fifty miles from Wilson, North Carolina, where McGeady was living in the 1930s and 1940s and is nearly identical in form and exterior detail to his known designs for the 1953 Our Lady of the Highways Catholic Church and the 1955 Saint Catherine of Siena Catholic Church. It features a front-gable form with multi-curved parapet, inset entrance with rose window and shed roof that extends the full width of the inset bay, is supported by cast-stone columns and pilasters with incised lines in a spiral Solomonic pattern. The church is covered with stucco that may be part of the original design and features inset cast-stone panels at the parapet and arched windows along the side elevations. One-story, side-gabled wings at the rear of the sanctuary also have round-arch windows and door openings and multi-curved parapets in the gables. A large rear wing may have been constructed concurrent with the sanctuary and features matching finishes including a stuccoed exterior, round-arch windows, and multi-curved parapet on the rear gable as well as on gabled dormers that are locate on both sides of the building.

McGeady designed a number of churches and schools in the late 1940s and early 1950s. His church designs were typically executed in revival styles and include the 1947 Saint Eugene's Catholic Church in Wendell, North Carolina, which features elements of the Mission and Tudor Revival styles and the 1950 Our Lady of the Mountains, a Catholic Chapel at Highlands, North Carolina designed in the Colonial Revival style.<sup>18</sup> McGeady's 1951 design for a school building for the Immaculata Catholic Church in Durham, North Carolina, is typical of mid-twentieth-century, streamlined, two-story, flat-roofed school buildings.<sup>19</sup> The 1953 Our Lady of the Highways Catholic Church in Thomasville, North Carolina, was designed by McGeady in the Spanish Eclectic style, the building nearly identical to that of Saint Jude's Catholic Church in Grifton and McGeady's later design for Saint Catherine of Siena Catholic Church.<sup>20</sup> The church features a front-gable form with multi-curved parapet, inset entrance with Mission-tile roof, and arched windows on the side elevations. A two-story bell tower constructed on the northeast corner of the Our Lady of the Highways church and minor differences to the rear, gabled wings, differentiate it from the designs for Saint Jude's Catholic Church and Saint Catherine of Siena Catholic Church.

About 1951, McGeady relocated to Greensboro, North Carolina, and was employed as an architect with the firm of McMinn and Norfleet, which appears to have been where he met Carl Andrews. Andrews, twenty-seven years his junior, was born May 14, 1923, served in World War II and, after the war, attended North Carolina State College (now University) in Raleigh, where

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<sup>17</sup> Personal Communication with Richard Andrews (son of Carl F. Andrews) by Heather Slane, via telephone, July 12, 2022.

<sup>18</sup> "To Be Dedicated Tomorrow," The News and Observer, July 31, 1948, [www.newspapers.com](http://www.newspapers.com); "Highlands Catholic Chapel Will be Dedicated Tuesday," Asheville Citizen-Times, August 13, 1950, [www.newspapers.com](http://www.newspapers.com).

<sup>19</sup> "Durham Immaculata Catholic School Set for Initial Sessions Tuesday," Durham Morning Herald, September 9, 1951, [www.newspapers.com](http://www.newspapers.com).

<sup>20</sup> "Catholics Plan New Church," The News and Observer, July 4, 1953, [www.newspapers.com](http://www.newspapers.com).

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he studied architecture and engineering.<sup>21</sup> Andrews was listed in the 1950 Greensboro city directory as a student and by 1951-52 was working as a draftsman with McMinn and Norfleet. After graduating from college in 1952, he was promoted to architect at the firm, working alongside McGeady. The two soon left to form their own firm, Andrews and McGeady, which first appeared in the Greensboro City Directory in 1954.<sup>22</sup>

Among the earliest known projects of the Andrews and McGeady firm is the 1955 design for Saint Catherine of Siena Catholic Church. According to the 1955 plans for the church, the firm “Andrews and McGeady Architects & Engineers” was located at 1719 Battleground Avenue in Greensboro. The striking similarities in design to McGeady’s Spanish Eclectic-style design for Our Lady of the Highways Catholic Church several years earlier, indicate that McGeady was the main designer of the church. Additionally, the similarities between the 1955 Saint Catherine of Siena Catholic Church, the 1953 Our Lady of the Highways Catholic Church, and the 1933 Saint Jude’s Catholic Church indicate that the basic design may have been dictated by the diocese, designed by an unknown architect, and merely customized by McGeady to suit the individual site and congregational needs.

The team continued to build on the legacy of church and school design that McGeady had begun in the 1940s. The pair were responsible for the 1955 Gothic Revival-style Saint Thomas More Catholic Church in Chapel Hill, North Carolina (no longer extant); the 1957 Modernist-style Parkway Baptist Church in Greenboro, North Carolina; the 1957 Our Lady of Mercy Church and School in Winston-Salem, North Carolina; and the 1959 Saint Pius X Catholic Church in Statesville, North Carolina.<sup>23</sup> In the early 1960s, the firm also had commissions for public school buildings including the physical education buildings at the Nathanael Greene and Stokesdale schools in Guilford County and for one of three consolidated high schools to be constructed based on plans drawn by Robert Conner for the Ragsdale High School and modified by the managing architects.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> Personal Communication with Richard Andrews, July 12, 2022.

<sup>22</sup> *Hill’s Greensboro (Guilford County, N.C.) City Directory, 1950* (Richmond, VA: Hill Directory Co, Inc., Publishers, 1950) <https://archives.greensborohistory.org/home/printed-materials/city-directories>; *Hill’s Greensboro (Guilford County, N.C.) City Directory, 1951-1952* (Richmond, VA: Hill Directory Co, Inc., Publishers, 1951-1952) <https://archives.greensborohistory.org/home/printed-materials/city-directories>; *Hill’s Greensboro (Guilford County, N.C.) City Directory, 1953* (Richmond, VA: Hill Directory Co, Inc., Publishers, 1953) <https://archives.greensborohistory.org/home/printed-materials/city-directories>; *Hill’s Greensboro (Guilford County, N.C.) City Directory, 1954* (Richmond, VA: Hill Directory Co, Inc., Publishers, 1954) <https://archives.greensborohistory.org/home/printed-materials/city-directories>

<sup>23</sup> “Catholics to Break Ground for Building,” *The Durham Sun*, November 5, 1955, [www.newspapers.com](http://www.newspapers.com); “Chapel Hill’s New Catholic Church,” *Durham Morning Herald*, January 14, 1956, [www.newspapers.com](http://www.newspapers.com); Personal Communication with Richard Andrews, July 12, 2022.; Our Lady of Mercy Catholic School, “History of Our Lady of Mercy School,” <https://www.ourladyofmercyschool.org/about/history.cfm>; “Local Convent Events Delayed,” *Statesville Record and Landmark*, November 19, 1959, [www.newspapers.com](http://www.newspapers.com).

<sup>24</sup> “\$6 Million Asked by County,” *The High Point Enterprise*, June 29, 1960, [www.newspapers.com](http://www.newspapers.com); “Architects Hired for Schools,” *The High Point Enterprise*, October 2, 1960, [www.newspapers.com](http://www.newspapers.com); “Bids on Schools Total \$986,000,” *The High Point Enterprise*, April 21, 1961, [www.newspapers.com](http://www.newspapers.com).

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The firm of Andrews and McGeady was listed in city directories for the last time in 1961, indicating that McGeady, then in his mid-60s, retired from the practice before 1962 when the city directory lists only “Carl F. Andrews and Associates.”<sup>25</sup> Andrews continued to build on the contacts and experience he gained while working with McGeady, focusing on religious and educational buildings, while also designing a number of homes and commercial buildings.<sup>26</sup> Andrews, himself a Baptist, tended toward more commissions with Baptist congregations than his Catholic former-colleague and also experimented with more contemporary designs as revival styles became less common in the late-twentieth century.

McGeady’s career, together with that of his colleague Carl Andrews, spanned more than forty years and resulted in a significant number of church and school designs in styles ranging from early-twentieth-century revival styles to mid-twentieth century Modernist buildings. However, Saint Catherine of Siena Catholic Church and Our Lady of the Highways Catholic Church (and possibly St. Jude’s Catholic Church) may be McGeady’s only Spanish Eclectic-style churches and are certainly unique to their respective regions. Similarities between the two churches indicate that James McGeady was likely the lead architect/designer for Saint Catherine of Siena Catholic Church. Further, its similarities to the 1933 Saint Jude’s Catholic Church indicate a potential broader connection to, and influence from, the Catholic diocese.

### **History of Saint Catherine of Siena Catholic Church**

In the early twentieth century, Granville County’s Catholic congregants either traveled to Henderson for services or met in the homes of other Catholics. The congregation eventually held services in St. Peter’s Chapel, a “mobile Roman Catholic church” occupying a railroad car. The car, which held sixty congregants and housed a traveling priest, was one of two such cars constructed by the Catholic Church Extension Society in 1892. The cars were moved throughout North America by various railroad companies, often at no cost to the church to serve areas where no Roman Catholic Church existed.<sup>27</sup> For more than four decades, the cars moved frequently, staying for a week or more in each location.<sup>28</sup> In 1939 the North Carolina Diocese acquired St. Peter’s Chapel and parked it for several years in Wake Forest. It was then moved to Oxford in 1942 to serve the growing Catholic population there, including Catholics assigned to nearby Camp Butner, an army camp constructed that year.<sup>29</sup> The car was sidetracked near the intersection of Military and Spring streets, roughly 1,200 feet from the site of the current building.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> *Hill’s Greensboro (Guilford County, N.C.) City Directory, 1961* (Richmond, VA: Hill Directory Co, Inc., Publishers, 1961) <https://archives.greensborohistory.org/home/printed-materials/city-directories>; *Hill’s Greensboro (Guilford County, N.C.) City Directory, 1962* (Richmond, VA: Hill Directory Co, Inc., Publishers, 1962) <https://archives.greensborohistory.org/home/printed-materials/city-directories>.

<sup>26</sup> Personal Communication with Richard Andrews, July 12, 2022.

<sup>27</sup> “Catholics Form Building Plans,” *Oxford Ledger*, April 3, 1953.

<sup>28</sup> “Proceeds to Be Used Towards Building Catholic Church in Oxford,” *Oxford Ledger*, April 4, 1953.

<sup>29</sup> Kathy Wolford, “History of a Local Religious Landmark,” *Oxford Ledger*, July 27, 2017; “Catholics Form Building Plans,” *Oxford Ledger*, April 3, 1953.

<sup>30</sup> “From Ruins of Chapel Car May Come New Church,” *Oxford Ledger*, April 3, 1953.

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By the spring of 1953, the aging rail car was no longer adequate for the congregation, which had begun looking for a site on which to construct a permanent structure in Oxford. In April of that year, they began to dismantle St. Peter's Chapel and its metal components—including copper, iron, and steel—were sold for approximately \$1,669, seed money for the construction of the new church.<sup>31</sup> It is unclear where the congregation met from April 1953 until the new church building was completed. However, newspaper accounts indicate that construction on the church building, performed by Greensboro contractor George W. Kane according to a design provided by the Greensboro architectural firm of Andrews and McGeady, began in April of 1955. Currin Electric Company, along with plumbing contractors Young and Finch, were also awarded contracts for the building.<sup>32</sup>

The building was completed in late 1955 at a cost of \$45,000, and in February 1956 Reverend Joseph Woods was installed as the pastor of the congregation, which had about sixty members, including children. The windows were initially fitted with clear glass while the current stained glass windows were designed and constructed. Correspondence between Father "Joe" Woods and Ade Bethune, a Catholic liturgical artist based in Rhode Island, between September 1955 and at least February of 1956 includes sketches of the windows and discussion of the colors to be used. While an unnamed company from High Point, North Carolina, is mentioned in the letters as having provided designs for the windows, it appears that the designs were a collaboration between Woods, Bethune, and the High Point company.<sup>33</sup> The designs employed symbols, lettering, and simple geometric shapes to minimize the cost of the windows.<sup>34</sup> The windows, pews and other church furniture, and framed panels painted by Bethune and placed behind the altar and on the west side wall were installed by April 8, 1956, when the church was formally dedicated.<sup>35</sup>

The congregation of Saint Catherine of Siena officially merged with Saint Paul's Catholic

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<sup>31</sup> "Catholics Form Building Plans," *Oxford Ledger*, April 3, 1953.

<sup>32</sup> "Contracts Made for New Catholic Church," *Oxford Ledger*, April 22, 1955.

<sup>33</sup> Father Joseph Wood to Ade Bethune, September 30, 1955-April 1956, Archives and Special Collections, St. Catherine University, St. Paul, Minnesota; Ade Bethune to Father Joseph Wood, December 9, 1955-March 16, 1956, Vertical File, Local History Room, Richard Thornton Library, Oxford, North Carolina; When the building was initially surveyed in 1985, the file indicated that the windows were designed by Belgian artist, Ade Bethune. However, correspondence between Bethune and Father Joseph Woods between September 1955 and March 1956 indicates that Bethune consulted on the colors and general design themes present in the windows, but because of time and budget constraints, did not actually design the windows herself. The letters also give information about the overall construction project, budget, and timeline.

<sup>34</sup> Father Joseph Wood To Ade Bethune, November 18, 1955, Vertical File, Local History Room, Richard Thornton Library, Oxford, North Carolina.

<sup>35</sup> "Bishop Waters to Conduct Service," *Oxford Ledger*, April 6, 1956; Printed Announcement of the dedication of Saint Catherine of Siena, included within correspondence from Father Joseph Wood to Ade Bethune, April 1956, Archives and Special Collections, St. Catherine University, St. Paul, Minnesota; Documentary photographs indicate that folding wood chairs were used until the pews could be installed.

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Church in nearby Henderson on February 12, 1993.<sup>36</sup> While the 1993 Oxford City Directory lists St. Catherine of Siena in operation, it is not listed in 1994, confirming that the church was closed with the merger in 1993. The panels painted by Ade Bethune were removed and eventually placed at Saint James Catholic Church, constructed in 1995 between Oxford and Henderson to replace St. Paul's. The statue of Saint Catherine of Siena and the cross that originally topped the parapet were also likely removed in 1993; their location is not known. The building was used by Celebrations Church, a non-denominational church, from 1994 to 1998.<sup>37</sup> It has been vacant since and was briefly threatened with demolition, but has recently been purchased for rehabilitation as an event space.

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<sup>36</sup> Personal Communication with Mark Pace (Richard H. Thornton Library) by Heather Slane, via phone, July 26, 2022.

<sup>37</sup> Personal Communication with Mark Pace (Richard H. Thornton Library) by Heather Slane, via e-mail, August 3, 2022.

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## 9. Major Bibliographical References

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

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U.S. Census Bureau. *1930 United States Federal Census*. [www.ancestry.com](http://www.ancestry.com).

Vertical File. Richard H. Thornton Library. Oxford, North Carolina.

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### Previous documentation on file (NPS):

\_\_\_ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested

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- 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 # \_\_\_\_\_

**Primary location of additional data:**

- State Historic Preservation Office
  - Other State agency
  - Federal agency
  - Local government
  - University
  - Other
- Name of repository: \_\_\_\_\_

**Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned):** GV0299

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**10. Geographical Data**

**Acreage of Property** 0.52 acres

Use either the UTM system or latitude/longitude coordinates

**Latitude/Longitude Coordinates**

Datum if other than WGS84: \_\_\_\_\_  
(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

1. Latitude: 36.313470                      Longitude: -78.585648

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

The National Register boundary is shown by a black line on the accompanying map, drawn at a 1"=200' scale and aligning with the boundary of the tax parcel (#192313230277).

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

The nominated boundary includes the entirety of the 0.52-acre parcel historically associated with the church.

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## 11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Heather Slane, Architectural Historian  
organization: hmwPreservation  
street & number: P.O. Box 355  
city or town: Durham state: NC zip code: 27702  
e-mail: heather@hmwpreservation.com  
telephone: 336-207-1502  
date: July 2022

### 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

Property Name: Saint Catherine of Siena Catholic Church  
County and State: Granville County, North Carolina  
Photographer: Cheri L. Szcodronski and Heather M. Slane  
Date: March 2018 and October 2021  
Location of Negatives: State Historic Preservation Office, Raleigh, North Carolina

Photo #0001:  
Saint Catherine of Siena Catholic Church  
Exterior, facing northwest  
1 of 10

Photo #0002:  
Saint Catherine of Siena Catholic Church

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Exterior, facing northeast  
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Photo #0003:  
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Exterior, facing east  
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Photo #0004:  
Saint Catherine of Siena Catholic Church  
Exterior, facing southeast  
4 of 10

Photo #0005:  
Saint Catherine of Siena Catholic Church  
Sanctuary, facing southeast  
5 of 10

Photo #0006:  
Saint Catherine of Siena Catholic Church  
Sanctuary, facing northeast  
6 of 10

Photo #0007:  
Saint Catherine of Siena Catholic Church  
Representative Stained Glass Window  
7 of 10

Photo #0008:  
Saint Catherine of Siena Catholic Church  
Kitchen, facing west  
8 of 10

Photo #0009:  
Saint Catherine of Siena Catholic Church  
Bedroom, facing southeast  
9 of 10

Photo #0010:  
Saint Catherine of Siena Catholic Church  
Attic, facing southeast  
(photo not indicated on photo key, as no plan of the attic was available)  
10 of 10

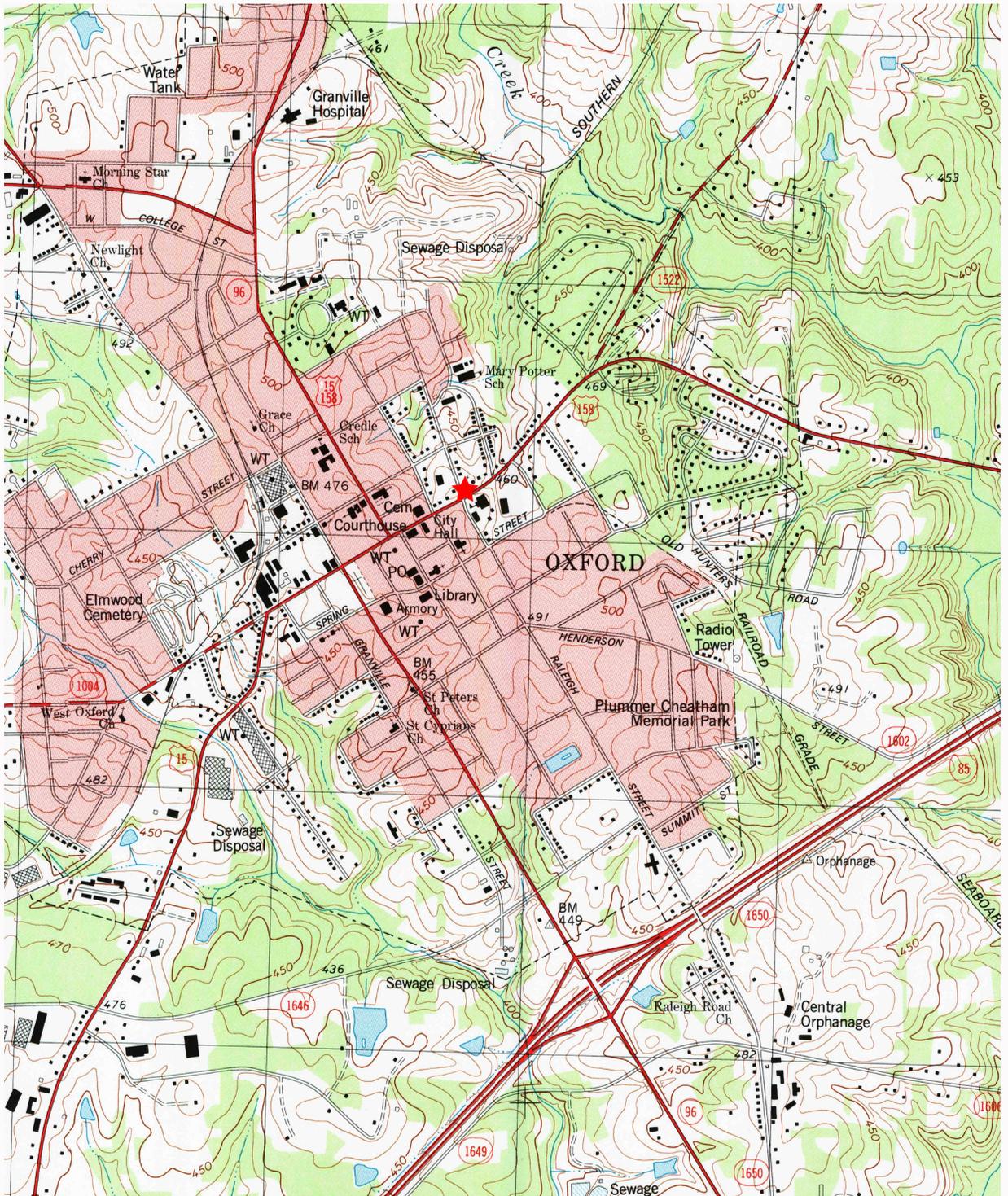
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**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing 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.



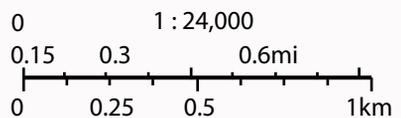
National Register of Historic Places Nomination

## Saint Catherine of Siena Catholic Church

305 Williamsboro Street, Oxford  
 Granville County, North Carolina

### National Register Location Map

Prepared by hmwPreservation 1/1/2022 utilizing the 1981 Oxford USGS 7.5minute map



★ Location of NR Property





Image from NC-HPOweb

**Saint Catherine of Siena Catholic Church**

305 Williamsboro Street  
Oxford, Granville County, NC

Tax Map with National Register Boundary

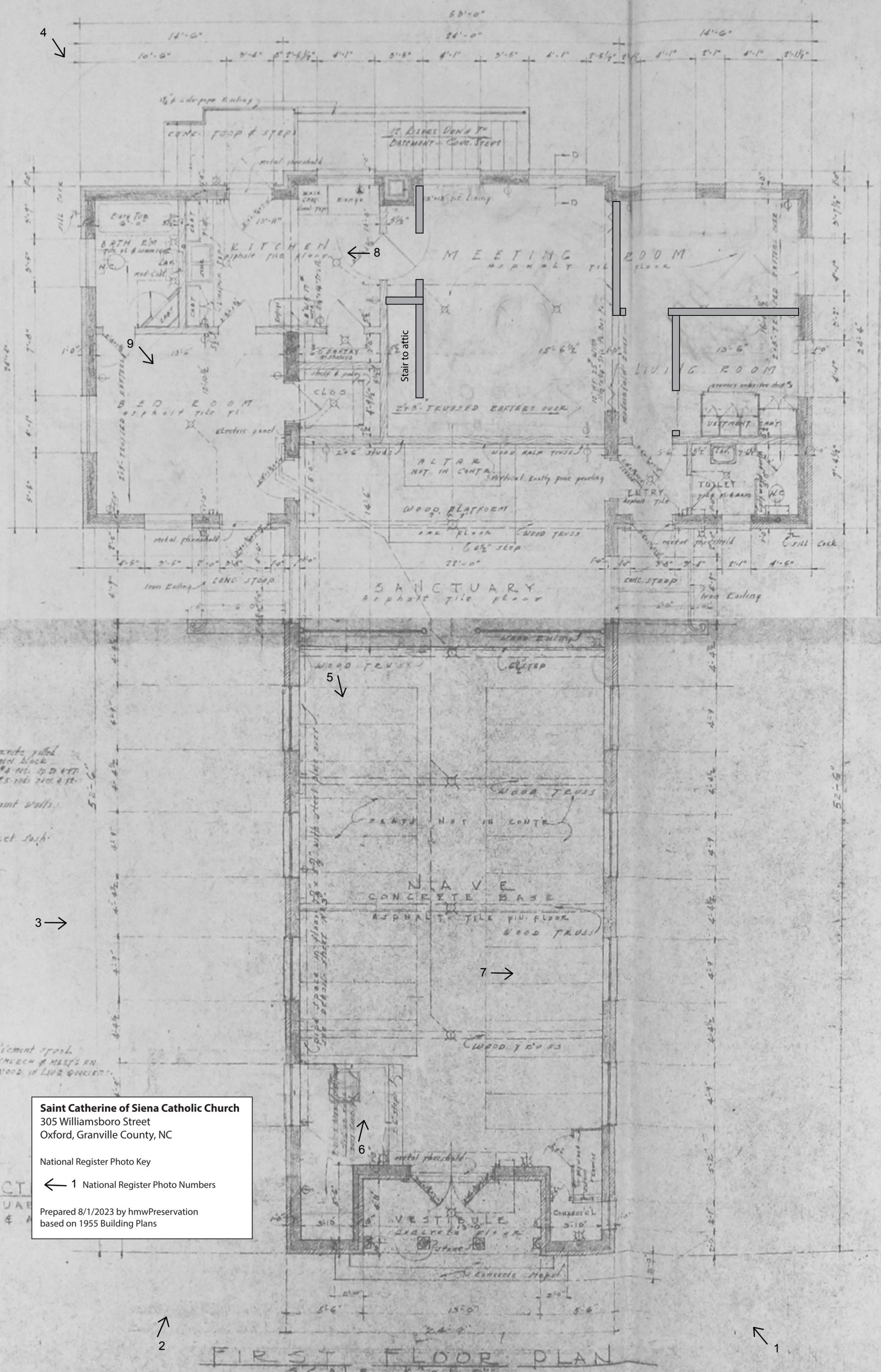
 National Register Boundary



Scale: 1" = 200'



Map prepared 1/1/2022 by hmwPreservation



**Saint Catherine of Siena Catholic Church**  
 305 Williamsboro Street  
 Oxford, Granville County, NC

National Register Photo Key

← 1 National Register Photo Numbers

Prepared 8/1/2023 by hmwPreservation  
 based on 1955 Building Plans

SECT  
 QUAR  
 OL & A

Concrete filled  
 brick block  
 2-4 in. 17 D & T  
 2-5 in. 14 D & T

Paint walls

1/2 inch sash

Cement work  
 CHURCH & MEET'S RM  
 2'00" in LIVE QUARTER

DRAWING BY [illegible]