

VLR ✓ 3/13/02
NRHP - 4/18/02

(Rev. 10-90)
NPS Form 10-900

OMB No. 1024-0018

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 How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. 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. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

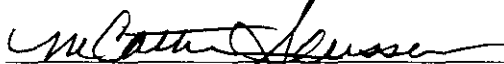
historic name St. Paul's Catholic Church
other names/site number 124-5063-0008

2. Location

street & number 518 High Street not for publication N/A
city or town Portsmouth vicinity N/A
state Virginia code VA county _____ code 740 Zip 23704

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, 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 nationally statewide x locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)


Signature of certifying official
Virginia Department of Historic Resources
State or Federal agency and bureau

April 18, 2002
Date

In my opinion, the property x meets does not meet the National Register criteria. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of commenting or other official

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register
- See continuation sheet.
- determined eligible for the National Register
- See continuation sheet.
- determined not eligible for the National Register
- removed from the National Register
- other (explain): _____

Signature of Keeper

Date of Action _____

U. S. Department of the Interior
National Park Service

St. Paul's Catholic Church
518 High Street, Portsmouth, Virginia

7. Description

Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions)

 Gothic _____

Materials (Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Concrete _____
roof Steel and Slate _____
walls Stone, Brick, Concrete _____

other Copper _____

Narrative Description (Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

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.
- X 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.)

- X A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B removed from its original location.
- C a birthplace or a grave.
- D a cemetery.
- E a reconstructed building, object or structure.
- F a commemorative property.
- G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

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St. Paul's Catholic Church
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Areas of Significance (Enter categories from instructions)

Architecture

Period of Significance 1897-1913

Significant Dates 1897 1905
1898 1913

Significant Person (Complete if Criterion B is marked above)
N/A

Cultural Affiliation N/A

Architect/Builder John K. Peebles and John R. Carpenter

Narrative Statement of Significance (Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

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 # _____

Primary Location of Additional Data

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository: Portsmouth Public Library Newspaper Archives

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 0.77

UTM References (Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

Zone Easting	Northing	Zone Easting	Northing
1 18	383750	4077430	2 _____
3 _____	_____	4 _____	_____

See continuation sheet.

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title: William and Helen Maloney

Organization: St. Paul's Catholic Church Committee for History date 12/27/2001
street & number: 3201 Camellia Drive telephone 757-484-7337

city or town Portsmouth state VA zip code 23703

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

- A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- A sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative black and white photographs of the property.

Additional items (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name Bishop Walter F. Sullivan, Diocese of Richmond

street & number 518 High Street telephone 757-396-7066

city or town Portsmouth state VA zip code 23704

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. 470 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including the 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 Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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St. Paul's Catholic Church
Portsmouth, VA

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7. Description:

Summary Description

St. Paul's Catholic Church is located at the intersection of Washington Street and High Street in downtown Portsmouth. Constructed as an urban church, it has a compact Gothic Revival cruciform plan. Also an historic rectory and a non-historic education/social hall are on the site. The fifth church to be constructed on the site, it was designed by John Peebles and dedicated in 1905. The building is constructed of load-bearing masonry walls clad in quarry-faced granite from Mount Airy, North Carolina, set in an alternating pattern of narrow and wide courses. The roof is constructed of steel beams with slate shingles fastened to iron purlins. The building exhibits typical Gothic Revival details including limestone window surrounds, belt courses, drip moldings, and tracery. The original stained glass windows are located throughout the church building.¹

The rectory, designed by Reverend James F. Donahoe of St. Patrick's Church in Baltimore, Maryland, was constructed in 1913. The building is designed to compliment the church through use of granite from Mount Airy, North Carolina; however, the rectory is less ornate. Facing High Street, the rectory exhibits little stylistic detail. It is a typical urban form, three stories in height with an asymmetrical façade. The building includes space for church offices, a reception room, dining room, kitchen, and four private residential suites.²

The Father Walsh Center, originally constructed from 1961-1965, is non-contributing; however, it does have an impact on the setting of the historic church and rectory due to the small lot size. The Walsh Center is situated on Washington Street, immediately north of St. Paul's Church. The two-story, wood-framed building is clad in stucco. Originally constructed as a convent, and subsequently used as a Sunday school and also a social hall for the congregation of St. Paul's, the building is virtually without architectural detailing.

Exterior Architecture of the Church

The principal façade of the three-story building faces west (Washington Street). Its first story contains the main entrance and two side entrances. Each entrance has double doors situated within a Gothic arch and is between two buttresses crowned with pinnacles ornamented with crockets. (The buttresses mark the three sections within the building: a wide central aisle and narrower side aisles.)

The elaborately decorated set of large doors surmounted by double arches identifies the main

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entrance. In the niche above this entrance is a limestone relief of Christ kneeling. A trefoil pattern appears in the openwork around the niche, and the edge of the gable above is decorated with crockets. The flanking secondary entrances are framed with unadorned arches surmounted by plain triangular stone blocks. Above the northwest door is a decorative stone angled buttress that serves to balance the north portal with the south portal (located in the tower). A four-faceted stained glass window with stone tracery is positioned on the second story above the central door in the primary elevation. The area above the stone tracery window contains a niche protected by a copper-clad canopy. In it is a sandstone statue of St. Paul. At the peak of the gable above the statue the tracery detailing is topped with a cross.

The tower marks the southwest corner of the church. It is located prominently at the intersection of Washington and High Streets and contains the southwest entrance to the building. There are paired louvered lancet arches with limestone surrounds framed by angled buttresses topped with pinnacles on all four sides of the tower. In addition, there is a limestone belt course that truncates the base of the tower and delineates the beginning of the tower. The original bell for this building--delivered from the McShane Bell Foundry, Glen Burnie, Maryland, in the fall of 1901--still hangs in the tower. It contains a small remnant of the bell that was salvaged from the fire that destroyed the previous church in 1897.³ The tower is detailed with louvered openings flanked by angled buttresses.

The south, east, and north elevations are more restrained in their details and exhibit simpler tracery. The south elevation has two wooden doors, one double leaf and one single leaf. The double leaf door on the south side is located in the south base of the tower to relate to the west double leaf door located in the west side of the base of the tower.

The transept extends south approximately 12 feet from the central core of the building; it is ornamented with three large stained glass windows. Extending from the transept is a smaller projection with three small lancet windows. The south elevation (High Street) also has four stained glass windows - one in each bay of the nave - positioned between typical Gothic Revival buttresses.

The north and east elevations are atypical in that they do not have the granite stone veneer from the north side of the north transept to the east side of the apse. Instead, this area, which is not visible from the street, is covered with stucco over bricks. Like the south elevation, the transept extends twelve feet from the core of the building on the north side. Four buttresses frame the windows

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marking the four bays of the north elevation. The dome has five small stained glass windows - each within a Gothic arch. The small building attached to the northeast side of the church houses heating and cooling equipment. It is constructed of brick painted to match the stucco.

Interior Architecture of the Church

The interior of the building exhibits many elements typical of Gothic Revival architecture. Immediately inside the edifice is a large open vestibule flanked by two stairways-- the north leads to the organ and choir loft, and the south leads to the bell tower. A second set of double doors delineates the vestibule from the church nave.

The interior walls of the church are plaster on metal lathe, and the piers are metal with masonry exteriors as is the ribbed roof vault. The piers have foliated capitals and the vaulted ribs have foliated projections covering the bosses (intersecting ribs). Arcades support the ribbed vault and roof, and the space between the piers is filled with tracery. There are twenty-eight stained glass windows--including those located in the clerestory--created by Mayer & Co., Munich, Germany, between 1900-1914. The windows are distributed throughout the church, and serve to instruct the faithful and to adorn the building. Five of the windows are in the east wall above the original altar, three are in either end of the transept, four in each of the north and south walls of the nave, and eight in the clerestory. There are also four-faceted windows in the loft. A special covering was installed in 1976 to protect these windows from possible damage. Original carvings of the Stations of the Cross are situated between the stained glass windows on the north and south walls of the nave. The original quartered-oak pews are still extant in the nave and transept. In the center of the church--under the crossing of the nave and transept--an unadorned wooden altar rests upon a raised platform. Beyond it at the east wall, the original altar remains in place. This altar--like its counterparts in the chapels on either side--was carved of Italian marble and Mexican onyx. Five murals on the walls of the apse--depicting events memorialized in the rosary--were added in 1928.

Two large rooms flank the apse: the sacristy on the south and the choir practice room on the north. The sacristy, which has 16-foot ceilings, has paneled oak walls, original cupboards on the west wall, and a sink for ablutions on the south wall. The doorway located in the north wall of the sacristy provides passage from there to the sanctuary. The choir room contains an upright piano and storage space. Additionally, the accessible restrooms installed in 1994 are carved from this space.

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The original organ pipes, installed in 1905, are located in the northwestern loft. The original organ was restored in 1955. However, the original M.P. Muller Organ was replaced with a Westminster 890 organ in 1983.

Architecture of the Rectory

The rectory, which acts as a residence and parish office for the church, is situated in close proximity to the church building, on High Street. The building relates to the church structure through the materials used in its construction. The paramount importance of the church on the property is emphasized by the minimal garnishment on the exterior of the rectory. The south elevation (High Street) and the west elevation (Washington Street) are granite; the north and east elevations are brick.

The primary entrance to the rectory is through a centrally located recessed doorway on the High Street façade of the building. The elevations have large, unadorned one-over-one sash windows, except for some stained glass images that highlight the windows in the parish office and reception room which face onto High Street.

A driveway east of the rectory leads to a carport in the parking area northeast of the building. An outdoor stairway to a small open porch leads to the kitchen door. A second doorway in a covered walkway between the rectory and the church is also accessible from the parking area. From this entrance the church is on the right and the rectory on the left.

The interior of the structure has 12-foot ceilings, and a central hall plan. Originally heated by its 7 fireplaces, the rectory now has a modern furnace. Its plastered walls have wood trimming.. The vestibule entry leads into a spacious hall which divides the front portion of the first floor into four rooms. Those on the left are for the pastor's office and secretary's office, and the two on the right are the reception and dining rooms. A large kitchen and spacious bathroom are located on the northeast corner of the building. At this point, the hall branches left, passing a storage room on the right and another entrance to the pastor's office on the left. Then it continues down the steps, through an external door through the covered walkway into the church's sacristy.

The second floor is accessed either through a small elevator or a wide staircase located on the left front of the center hall. The second floor contains two living-room/bedroom/bathroom suites

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situated on the south (High Street) side of the building, and an additional bath and bedroom on the north side of the building. The third floor has two bedrooms, two baths, and a sitting room.

The kitchen and bathrooms have been updated; however, the rest of the rectory retains much of its historic integrity.

Architecture of the Walsh Education Center

The Walsh Education Center was designed by Waller, Britt, and Yates, and was constructed from 1961-1965.⁴ It is located on the northwest corner of the site, adjacent to the Church's north elevation. Originally, it was designed as a convent and has been converted to an education building for use by the church. The Walsh Education Center is an unadorned two story wood-framed building, clad in stucco. The front façade is divided into 7 bays with 8 granite-clad columns. The primary entrance is centrally located on the Washington Street side of the structure and includes a recessed double-leaf wooden door with no ornamentation. Set directly in the middle of the building's first level, it is crowned with a basket arch similar to those used above the sash windows on the second level.

The south, east, and north elevations are without ornamentation. The unadorned windows are in vertical and horizontal alignment on each elevation and are aligned from elevation to elevation. There is a double leaf door located on both the north and south elevations, as well. Access to the kitchen is through a single leaf door in the building's northeastern corner.

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8. Statement of Significance

St. Paul's Catholic Church is a prominent landmark in inner city Portsmouth, Virginia. John Peebles (1876-1934) of the firm Carpenter and Peebles designed the building in 1897. The current St. Paul's is the fifth church to be built on the same site and is a noteworthy example of the Gothic Revival architectural style. Construction of this building required seven years because specialists in each building trade were hired to carry out the architect's design. Particularly notable are the stained glass windows, referred to in a 1905 edition of a local paper as "among the most beautiful works of art in the South."⁵

Over the years members of St. Paul's congregation have made noteworthy contributions to the development of Portsmouth through their roles in the history of the growing city and their philanthropic support--especially in the areas of education and social welfare. In addition, the Church's architectural style marks it as an object of interest for visitors and residents--as well as a significant landmark for the City.

Historical Background

Among the first groups of Catholics to enter Virginia after Jefferson's Act for Establishing Religious Freedom in Virginia (1785) were refugees from the French Revolution. Soon after Irish immigrants also arrived. These people who came to Portsmouth between 1799 and 1804 brought with them the customs, lifestyles, and religious traditions of their homelands. At first, religious services were held in the French Masonic Lodge downtown. However, in a will dated 1809 Patrick Robertson, a parishioner and "bake house" owner, bequeathed funds for the construction of a sanctuary. Between 1810 and 1815 the congregation purchased land and built its first church at the corner of High and Washington Streets. Because growth in membership made that church too small, the original church was replaced by a larger one built on the same site in 1831. For the same reason this edifice, too, was replaced by the third St. Paul's in 1851. This building was destroyed by fire in 1859 having been used only six years. Although construction of the fourth St. Paul's began in 1859, the church was not completed until 1868 because of the Civil War (1861-1865).

On March 28, 1897 the fourth St. Paul's burned—as did many residences in downtown Portsmouth. Having lost two buildings to fire, parishioners sought to prevent recurrence of this menace. J. T. Parker, chairman of the building committee, informed the congregation, "the new St. Paul's is to be

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a finer, handsomer building, a structure of granite and steel as nearly indestructible as possible.”⁶ For its fifth church, parishioners sought to build an edifice of the highest architectural quality that minimized fire damage. The architectural firm of Carpenter and Peebles was chosen to design the building for a \$50,000 fee. Construction of the fifth--and present--church began the following year. In addition to the special design, quality material, and skilled labor were utilized. For example, the newest heating and electrical technologies were used. Steam pipes were extended the length of each pew, and radiators were placed throughout the building. Two boilers, installed by Whitehurst and Riley, supplied the steam. E. M. Henry & Company wired the building in conformity with the insurance regulations of 1905.⁷

The Architect

When the design for the new St. Paul's was undertaken in 1897, John K. Peebles was still in partnership with James E. R. Carpenter; however, when construction began in 1898, the partnership had been dissolved, and Peebles was the one on the site throughout the construction. In 1898 Peebles formed a new partnership with Thomas M. Sharpe that lasted about a year. It is possible that Sharpe may have been somewhat involved in this undertaking. After dissolving his partnership with Sharpe, Peebles worked alone until 1917 when he formed a partnership with Finlay F. Ferguson that lasted until the 1930s.

John K. Peebles had a distinguished career.⁸ He served on two state committees. He was one of five architects in charge of the restoration of the State Capitol in Richmond in 1902-1903. Also, he chaired the Board responsible for designing the buildings for the Jamestown Exposition in 1907. In 1908 Peebles designed the Chemical Laboratory Building at Virginia Military Institute and the Law Building (Miner Hall) at the University of Virginia. Smaller buildings that he designed include the Catholic Chapel of Star of the Sea, Virginia Beach (1915), and the Walter Herron Taylor School in Norfolk (1916-1917).

During his partnership with Ferguson, Peebles designed buildings for the University of Virginia, Charlottesville, Virginia (1915-1928); Ohef Shalom Temple, Norfolk, Virginia (1917); the College of William and Mary, Williamsburg, Virginia (1924-1926); Ghent Methodist Episcopal Church, Norfolk, Virginia (1919-1922), and the Professional Building in Portsmouth, Virginia (1929).

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Social Significance

Throughout its history, the clergy and congregation of St. Paul's have rendered support to the City of Portsmouth. In 1855, Father Devlin assisted residents of Portsmouth who were stricken during the malaria epidemic. His aid was so appreciated that a monument from the people of Portsmouth to Father Devlin, who fell victim to the disease himself, stands in St. Paul's churchyard.⁹

During the Civil War Father Plunkett, the pastor, served as chaplain for both Union and Confederate troops though he refused to take an oath of loyalty to either side. In addition, he was a member of the Board of Relief Store providing food for the wives and children of Confederate soldiers.¹⁰

The Church focused its philanthropic activities on education after the Civil War. It established and maintained St. Joseph's Academy for girls that opened in 1877 and St. Paul's for boys that opened in 1891. In 1931 the two schools merged becoming St. Paul's High School. This school was later named Portsmouth Catholic. Its last class graduated in 1991.¹¹

In 1945 a committee from St. Paul's Church spearheaded a drive for the Richmond Diocese to acquire Maryview Hospital and recruit a nursing community to operate it--at a time no other hospital was available to Portsmouth residents.¹²

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ENDNOTES

1. Dedication of New St. Paul's Catholic Church," *The Portsmouth Star*, 11 November 1905.
2. "The Rectory of Saint Paul's Catholic Church." Published privately, 1999." This pamphlet is available in the church office.
3. *A Story of Faith, 1804-2000: St. Paul's Catholic Church, Portsmouth, Virginia*. Privately printed, 2000. Information found on various pages. Available in Portsmouth SHP office.
4. Interview with Julia Hoeffler, a long time parishioner, 15 November 2001.
5. "Memorial Windows in New Church," *The Portsmouth Star*, 13 November 1905.
6. "To Rebuild St. Paul's," *The Portsmouth Star*, 2 April 1897.
7. "Dedication of New St. Paul's Catholic Church," *The Portsmouth Star*, 11 November 1905.
8. Information on Carpenter & Peebles was taken from *The Virginia Architects 1835-1955, A Biographical Dictionary*, 1997 and from *Biographical Dictionary of American Architects (Deceased)*, 1970.
9. *Faith*: 8.
10. *Faith*: 11, 12.
11. *Faith*: 140.
12. *Faith*: 94.

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"To Rebuild St. Paul's." *The Portsmouth Star*, 2 April 1897.

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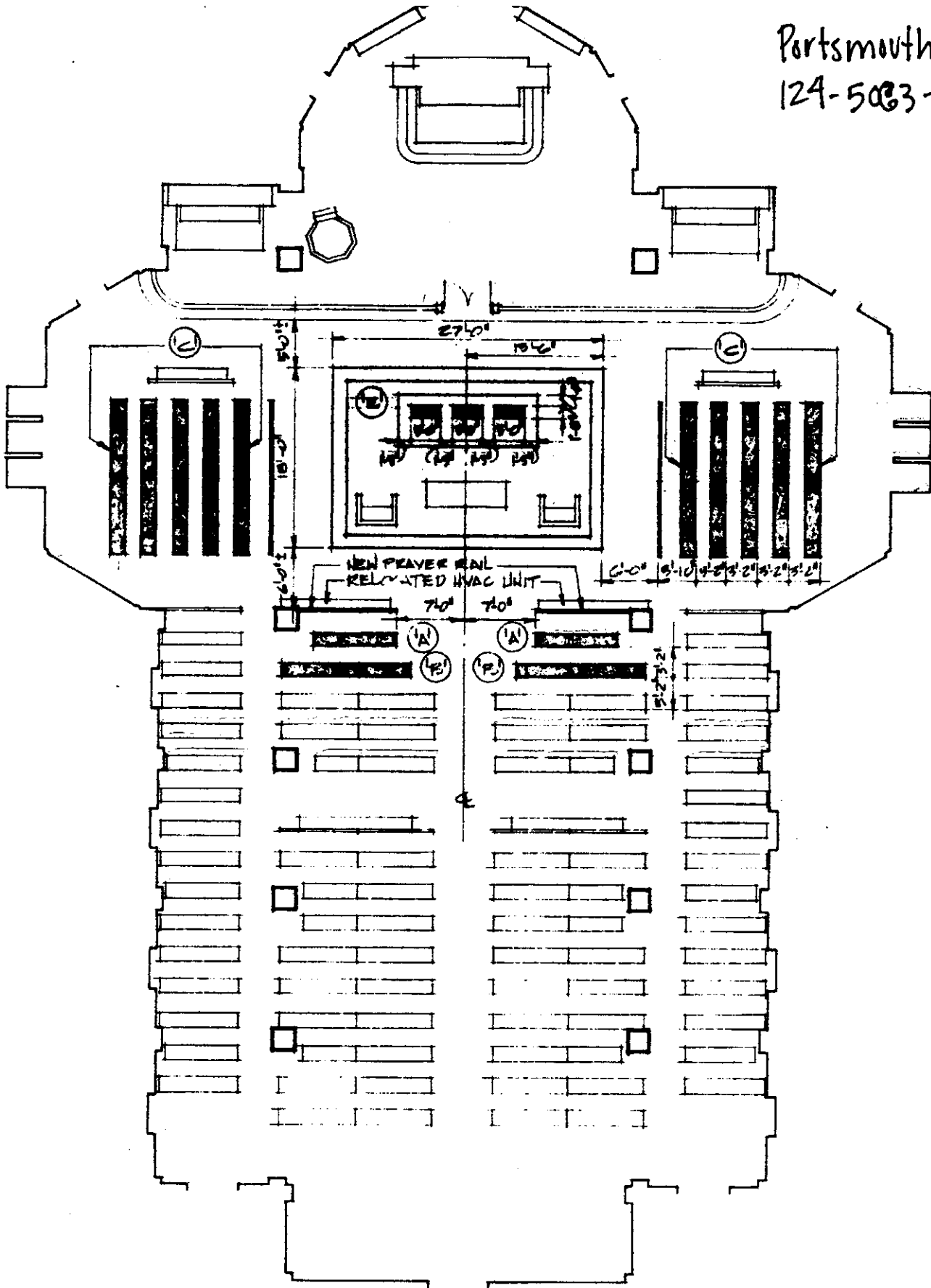
Verbal Boundary Description

St. Paul's Catholic Church is located on a corner lot of a city block. The south façade is bounded by High Street. The west façade is bounded by Washington Street. The north façade is bounded by the Walsh Center and a portion of the south façade of the Monumental Methodist Church. On the east are the driveway and The Tidewater Bibleway Temple.

Boundary Justification

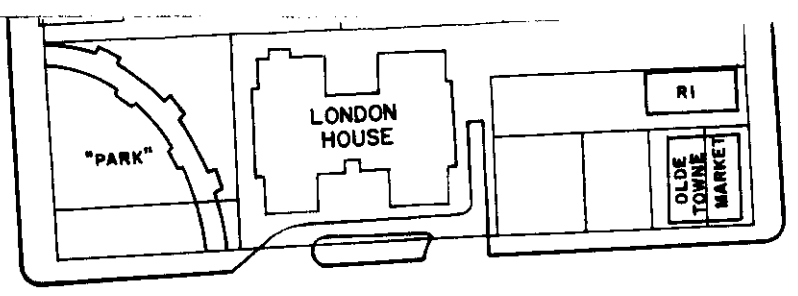
The boundary was established when the property was purchased. It has remained the same.

St. Paul's Catholic Church
Portsmouth, VA.
124-5033-0008

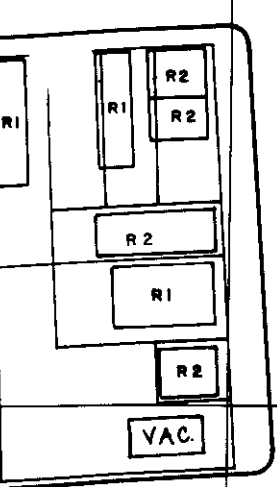


FLOOR PLAN- NEW WORK
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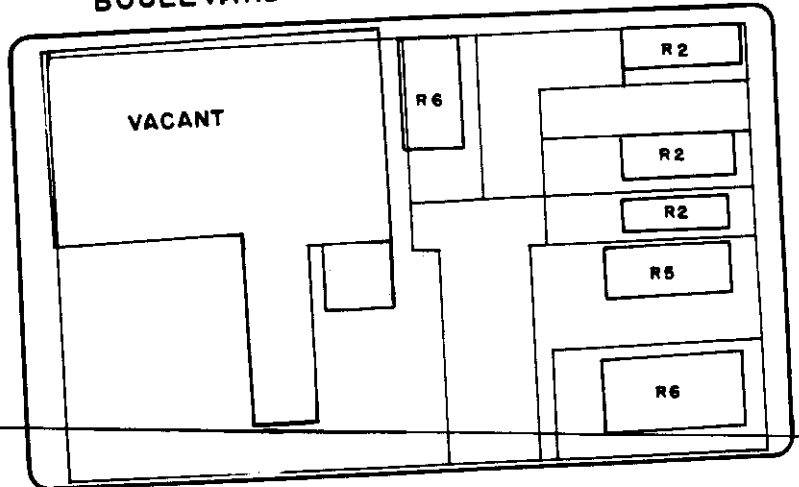
North
Not To Scale



St Paul's
Catholic Church
Portsmouth, Va
124-5063-0008



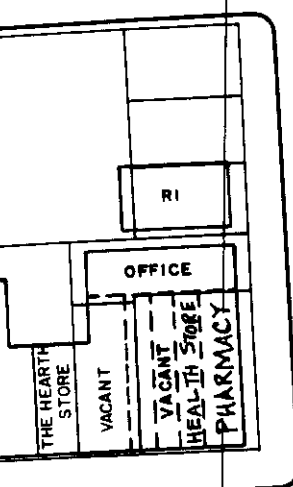
WASHINGTON



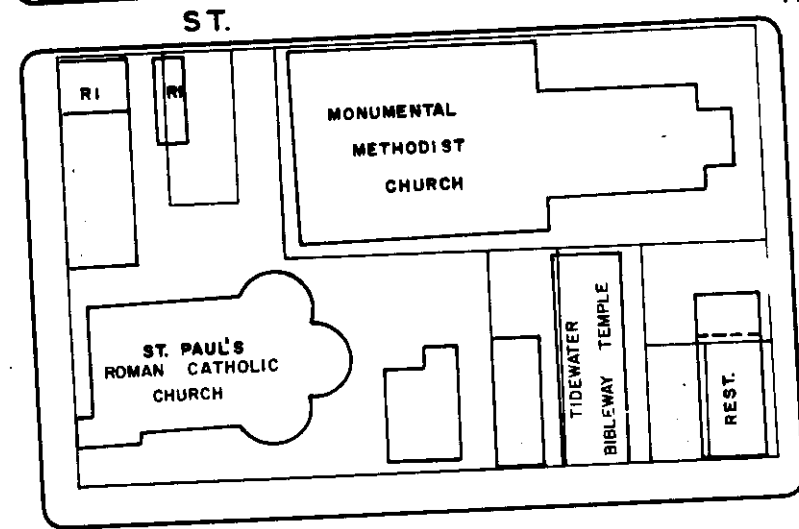
X7.7

BOULEVARD

X8.5



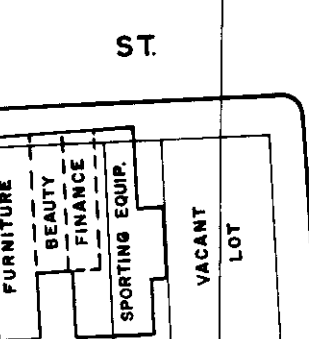
X6.1



ST.

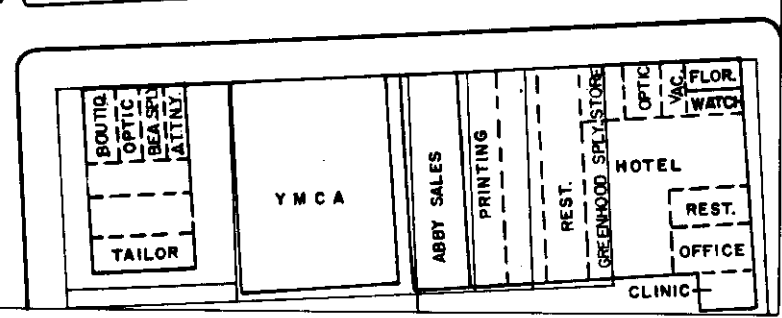
X9

190,500 N



ST.

X6.5



ST.

190,000 N

2,642,500

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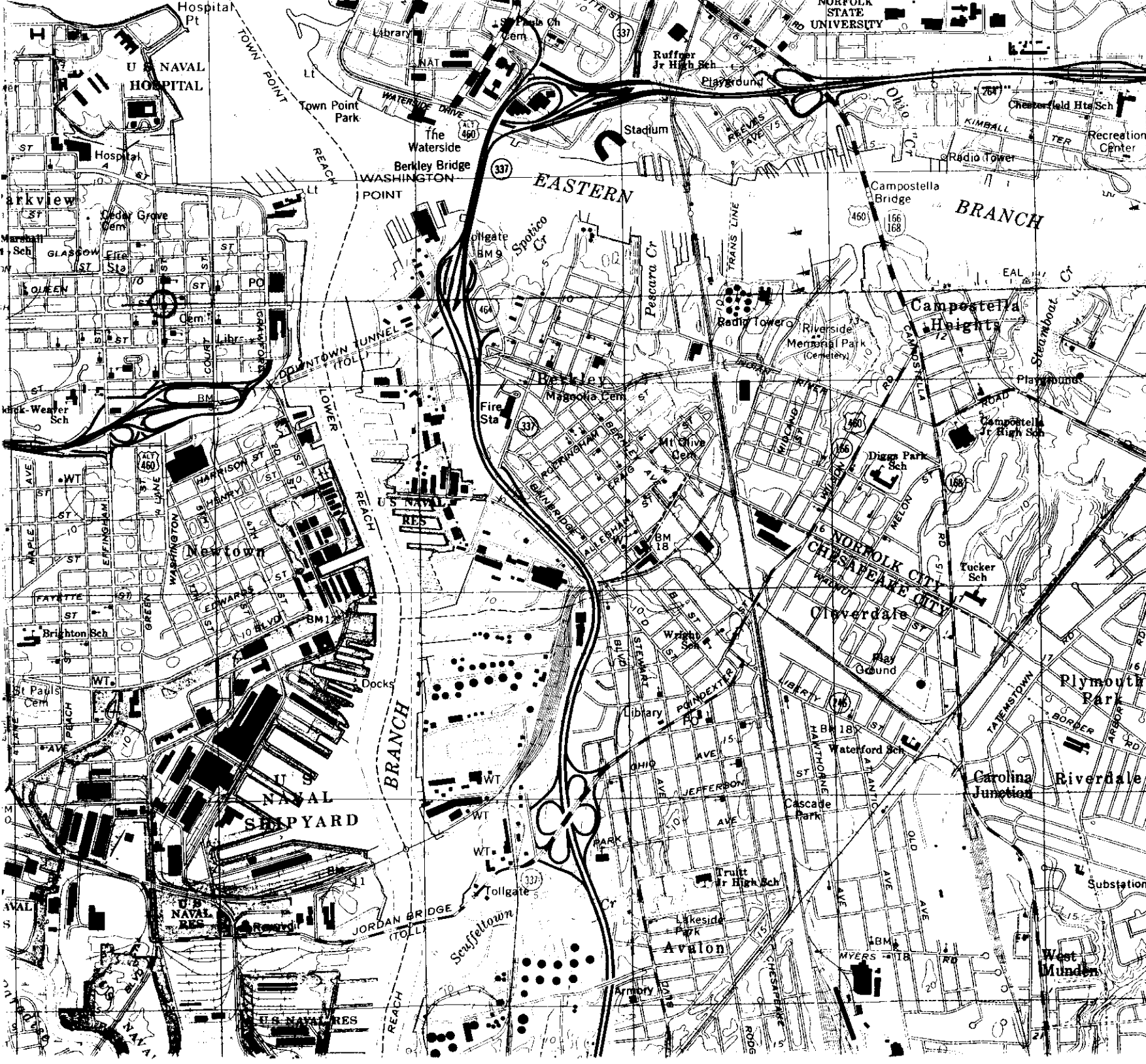
PORTSMOUTH, VIRGINIA

PLANIMETRIC MAP

COMPILED IN APRIL 1960 FROM JANUARY 1960 PHOTOGRAPHY

R. KENNETH WEEKS ENGINEERS

PORTSMOUTH, VIRGINIA



NORFOLK
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78
PORTSMOUTH

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St Paul's Catholic Church

Portsmouth, Va
ID 383752 407430

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