

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 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 PropertyHistoric name: St. Peter de Alcantara Church and RectoryOther names/site number: HT09-001

Name of related multiple property listing:

N/A

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

2. LocationStreet & number: 220 US Hwy 275City or town: Ewing State: Nebraska County: HoltNot 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

/Director

Sept. 28, 2026

Signature of certifying official/Title:**Date**Nebraska State Historical Society**State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government**

St. Peter de Alcantara Church and Rectory
Name of Property

Holt County, Nebraska
County and State

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

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:) _____

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

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

☐

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Site

☐

Structure

☐

Object

☐

Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing

Noncontributing

2

1

buildings

sites

structures

objects

Total

2

1

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

RELIGION/religious facility

RELIGION/church related residence

SOCIAL/meeting hall

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

RELIGION/religious facility

RELIGION/church related residence

SOCIAL/meeting hall

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7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

LATE VICTORIAN/Romanesque Revival

LATE 19TH AND EARLY 20TH CENTURY AMERICAN MOVEMENTS /

Bungalow/Craftsman

MODERN MOVEMENT/Moderne

Materials: (enter categories from instructions.)

Principal exterior materials of the property:

Church Foundation (church): CONCRETE
Walls (church): BRICK
Roof (church): ASPHALT

Rectory Foundation: BRICK
Walls: BRICK
Roof: ASPHALT

Hall Foundation: CONCRETE
Walls: BRICK
Roof: SYNTHETICS/Rubber (EPDM)

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

St. Peter de Alcantara Catholic Church (1913), rectory (1913), and St. Dominic's Hall (1956) are located on a section of land at the corner of N. Elm Street and US Highway 275 in the southwest corner of Ewing, Holt County, Nebraska. The church and associated buildings are directly north of the abandoned Chicago & North Western (C&NW) Railroad line that is now the Cowboy Trail, one of the one of the longest rail-trail projects in the United States. The section of land is occupied by St. Peter de Alcantara Catholic Church's church building, rectory, social hall, parking, and lawns. Walk-ways, signage, benches, and landscaping complete the setting.

The property's dominant resource is the church, a contributing building on the southeast quadrant of the block. Built in the Romanesque Revival Style, its primary façade faces south. The rectory was constructed in the same year, complementing the church, but in the Arts and

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Crafts style. As the church grew, land was acquired north of the buildings and St. Dominic's hall was built in 1956. The church and rectory contribute to the nomination; the hall does not. Other minor features on the property include a grotto, signage, statuary, and a series of concrete walkways connecting the buildings.

Narrative Description

Site

St. Peter de Alcantara Church is at the northwest corner of North Elm Street and US 275 (Front Street) in the small community of Ewing in southeast Holt County, Nebraska. The parish built the church and rectory on lots donated in 1912. St. Dominic's, the parish hall, was added in 1956 on donated lots, adjacent to and north of the buildings. The site is defined at the south by an angled graveled parking area that follows the northwesterly direction of US Hwy 275. The church anchors the southeast corner of the property, comprised of 3.6 acres with the rectory to the west of the church and the parish hall north of both buildings. A series of concrete pathways connect the buildings. The site is generally open grassy lawn with shrubbery and trees around the east and north side of the church.

Church

The church building anchors the site at the southeast corner of the property. It has a rectangular plan with a north-south orientation. The south facing main façade is defined by the ornate entry portal, brick corbeling in the gable end, and off-center single bell tower capped by a shallow pyramidal roof. Seven concrete steps rise to a concrete platform surrounded by simple pipe railings. Landscaping has been added to provide an accessible ramp to the main entry from the south. The red brick masonry façade is laid in a simple running bond with texture added in alternating soldier courses at and around window openings in both rectangular and arched patterns. Stepped brick corbeling along the gable end and under the bell opening offer Romanesque detailing to the exterior. Paired glass and aluminum entry doors with a glass transom replaced the original paired wood entry doors in the 1980s. A stone gabled door surround with a cross at the peak and paneled pilasters with paired brackets within the tympanum formalize the entry door. Flanking the entry door at the first level are three green colored rectangular stained-glass windows. Above these windows at the base of the second floor are two cross shapes embedded within the brick made from brick headers and a piece of limestone at the center. These features align with the limestone sill of the tripartite arched stained-glass window within the choir loft. Within this window is a round stained-glass of St. Peter de Alcantara that was moved from the previous church building. Capping this window and emphasizing the arched shape, are four rows of header bricks. Brick pilasters with limestone at the second level add verticality to the façade. Wood framing of the projecting eaves at the projecting gable roofline has exposed brackets and purlins with a white painted cross at the gable peak.

A second aluminum and glass pedestrian entrance is within the bell tower at the south façade. This door is also surrounded by a soldier course of brick. Above the entry door at the second level are two, tall, thin rectangular, stained-glass windows with limestone sill and soldier

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course of brick above. The tower rises to a third story, above the two-story height of the church, where the opening for the historic bell is located. Framing the shallow arched opening at all four sides of the tower is a row of brick corbeling, a limestone sill, and four rows of header bricks over the arch, matching that above the stained-glass window at the main body of the church. Brick pilasters at each corner of the tower have limestone caps at the first and second story. The tower is capped by a shallow pyramidal roof with broad overhanging eaves. A white painted cross is mounted to the peak of the roof.

At the west wall, the raised concrete foundation is visible and is punctuated at each window bay by fixed basement windows, some of which have been infilled. From the south end of the west wall is the bell tower. Paired rectangular stained-glass windows are at the first and second levels of the tower with brick corbeling around the arched bell opening above. The nave or main body of the church are where three large arched stained-glass windows are located, each with a stone still and capped with four rows of header bricks. These arched header bricks terminate at each end at six soldier course bricks. Brick pilasters have canted limestone block detailing that aligns with the base of the window arches. Near the back or north end of this wall is a projecting bay with a flat roof and pedestrian door to the sacristy. A walk connects the sacristy to the rectory. The sacristy is a rectangular bay with one-over-one windows, replaced in the 1980s. Masonry at this brick bay matches the rest of the building with a soldier course of brick around and between the rectangular windows. A single arched stained-glass window is high on the wall above the sacristy illuminating the altar area.

The back or north wall of the church has one small arched window high on the wall under the gable end. Stepped brick corbels follow the gable end roofline, and the overhanging eaves show the exposed brackets and purlins. Another cross, painted white, is mounted at the crest of the roofline.

The raised concrete foundation is visible at the east wall. A high stained-glass window punctuates the altar area, with three large art glass windows at the main body or nave area of the church. At the north end, the fenestration pattern changes with an arched window near the gable end with two rectangular stained-glass windows below (the choir loft area). All windows have stone sills and the brick soldier courses defining the arches above. Each window bay is divided by brick pilasters defined by the concrete foundation at the base and a limestone block aligning with the base of the window arch. Landscaping has been ramped at the east and north to provide accessibility to the primary entrance.

Interior

With the exception of the altar, the church retains its original statuary, stained-glass windows, furnishings, and fixtures, some of which were brought from their previous building. The interior has been maintained by refreshing the painted stencils at the arches and around the stained-glass windows, adding and updating interior carpeting, refinishing wooden pews, and modernizations as required by Vatican II. Decorative windows along the high walls of the sanctuary were made possible by Fred Beucher and the parish youth in 1911-1912. Two small side altars serve as a shrine of St. Joseph and the statue of Mary and Jesus. After the dedication in 1915, other interior finishes continued to be added. Pews replaced chairs or standing room, and a vigil light stand was purchased in 1918. The small round stained-glass window depicting St. Peter de Alcantara in the choir loft window at the front of the building and the original

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wooden cross located in the entry vestibule were also brought from the old church. In 1981, the stained-glass window was lit from the inside. Installation of the new organ and its pipes blocked the light to illuminate the window and make it visible from passersby on Highway 275.¹ The organ was purchased from the Orpheum Theatre in Omaha and replaced a small pump organ.

The church bell is cast in bronze by Stuckstede and Brothers of St. Louis, Missouri in 1901. The bell weighs 350 pounds and is 24 ½ inches in diameter. It was donated to the church as a memorial to Theresa Spittler by her parents and was also brought from the old church. The engraving on the bell is in Latin. The bell rings in the primary note of D natural.²

The altar was moved from the previous church building with additions incorporated to each side to enlarge it for the new space. This altar served the church until Vatican II (1962-1965) liturgical changes modernized the Mass. Two major changes required the Mass to be said in English and for the priest to face the congregation, rather than worship with his back to the congregation. As a result, the church purchased a new, simple altar, removed Latin from the church, and modernized painting behind the altar. Another significant change in the Mass was the removal of the communion rail. These items, and many others, were sold at a church auction. In 2000, the church purchased another altar from a church in Fordyce that was no longer used. The altar is a close match to the original altar.³

Stained-glass

The six large stained-glass windows in the sanctuary are on the east and west walls of the church. These windows were donated by parish families at a cost of \$500 per window. Window sponsors were Arthur Spittler and wife, Ivo Vandersnick and Family, Mrs. J.P. Spittler, Frank Bauer and wife, Caspar Kubacher, and Jacob Bauer and wife. Each window memorializes their donation in a panel at the bottom center of the piece. The windows were ordered from Europe, but there is no record of where the windows were manufactured or purchased. They are of very high artistic quality with a painterly finish depicting each religious scene. The windows include scenes of Jesus Rising from the Grave, Adam and Even being banned from the Garden of Eden, The Birth of Jesus, Christ Blessing the Children, Crucifixion, and Jesus Raising Lazarus from the Dead. High on the church walls and illuminating the altar area are windows with the Immaculate Heart of Mary on the west and the Sacred Heart of Jesus with the 3-tired papal crown, tri-regnum or papal tiara, and the staff and mitre of the Bishop on the east. In the choir loft is the original round window of St. Peter de Alcantara that has been incorporated into a larger arched window.

Alterations and Maintenance

Landscaping was added in 1954 when a privet hedge and English lilacs were planted around the buildings. Padded kneelers and blue wall-to-wall carpet were among other additions. Three-dimensions stations of the cross were added as a memorial to Joseph Thoendel by his wife Anna.⁴

¹ 100 Years of Faith, 14-16.

² 100 Years of Faith, 13.

³ 100 Years of Faith, 13; Interview with Becky Kazor parishioner.

⁴ 100 Years of Faith, 17.

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Vatican II changes were implemented across the church in the 1960s as mentioned above. These included using a new altar that faced the congregation with a new artistic painted backdrop of intertwining grapevines and wheat surrounding the crucifix. English replaced Latin throughout the building.

Brothers Peter and Ignatius Nickolite gifted the church \$15,000 in 1975 as a memorial which funded major rehabilitation and needed maintenance. Repairs included new paint throughout, updated light fixtures where needed, roof louvres replaced, floors repaired, carpets replaced, statuary cleaned and repainted, new altar furnishings and furniture added, confessional rooms added, cabinetry in the sacristy for vestments added, and new heating completed the expenditure of those funds. A new kitchen was installed in the parish house with new wallpaper and paint contributing to a fresh new look.⁵

Restrooms were added in 1976, with new glass entrance doors and air conditioning also installed the same year. In June 1980, the church and parish house were tuckpointed at a cost of more than \$22,000. Showing their continued multi-generational support to the church, the money for this effort was bestowed in a one-weekend collection. The old privet hedge and lilac bushes were removed and a new lawn planted at the same time.⁶ In 1984 the pews were stripped and refinished and new padded aluminum kneelers added.

Rectory

Northwest of the church is the rectory. It was constructed at the same time as the church and utilized the same building materials as the church. Stylistically, the rectory reflects the Craftsman style. It is a one-and-a-half story residence with full-width front porch, a hipped roof with overhanging eaves, and through dormers at each wall. Masonry details match those at the church, so though the residence blends well on the site, it is distinct in its own architectural detail.

The main façade faces south and is defined by the full-width recessed porch, under the shallow hipped roof. Heavy overhanging eaves with exposed brackets, match those at the church roof line. Four brick columns support the porch with a row of soldier course bricks near the roof. This row contributes to the horizontal nature of the building by dividing the bulky square columns and serving as a designed sense of column capital. These columns rest on one of the most distinguishing features of the exterior, the clinker brick foundation, porch wall, and knee walls at the porch stair. Clinker bricks add a riot of unorganized texture across the façade. The material was used to emphasize the irregularity, uniqueness, and hand-made quality of the building. The center stair has a stepped knee-wall on either side with concrete cap. A multi-light main wood and glass entry door is flanked on either side by paired double hung windows. Each pair of windows has multi-light top panel and a single light lower panel. Masonry features a simple running bond with a soldier course capping and following the top of the doors and windows across the façade. A five-window thru-dormer projects from the roofline, also with a significant overhang and exposed brackets.

The west wall rises from the clinker brick foundation where a textured concrete beltcourse divides the foundation elements from the masonry wall. Two bays project from the

⁵ 100 Years of Faith, 19.

⁶ 100 Years of Faith, 20.

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wall, adding dimension to the elevation. Fenestration is grouped into bays of three, two, three, and one unit across the wall and retains the same divisions as the main façade windows. A row of soldier coursing runs along the top of and down approximately 25% of the window height across the wall. A five-light thru-dormer projects from the wall with a pyramidal roof and overhanging eave with brackets.

Alterations are most evident on the north wall of the exterior. Masonry scarring indicates where features have been removed including a former lower-level entry for access to heating unit. The east and west sides of the north wall are distinctly different. At the west side of the north wall there is a clinker brick foundation with concrete beltcourse above. Bricks have been damaged, repaired, and/or infilled under the paired windows. Masonry in this area matches the rest of the exterior walls with the running bond and brick soldier course around the windows. The east side of the north wall rises from a brick foundation with a concrete beltcourse. This concrete band is thinner than the banding on the west side of the wall. Above the band is a section of clinker bricks. Above the clinker bricks the wall has been infilled with vertical paneling with a single fixed window. A five light through dormer punctuates the roof.

The south wall rises from the clinker brick foundation and is capped by the concrete beltcourse. Defining this wall is the fireplace chimney and a rounded three-light bay window. Clinker bricks clad the chimney to the top of the dormer window roof line with plain brick above the roofline. Two small, high, fixed windows flank either side of the chimney. The three windows in the bay and two paired windows on the wall match the configuration of windows throughout as does the masonry patterning. A back entrance to the kitchen area is also located on this wall. A four light through dormer punctuates the roof, matching the configuration and massing of the other dormers.

All dormers throughout the exterior have wood shingles cladding their vertical walls.

The interior retains its original wood flooring, paneling, ceiling beams, doors, and trimwork. There is a priest office immediately off the main entry with a living room, dining room, and kitchen on the main floor and four bedrooms and bathroom upstairs.

St. Dominic Parish Hall

Constructed in 1956 at a cost of \$48,000 on land donated by Clair Tomjack, it is a pre-fabricated steel building with a cement masonry façade. The original steel building was painted red to blend with the brick of the church and rectory. Brown horizontal steel siding and insulation was added in 1981, changing the color from red to dark brown. St. Dominic's Hall is named for St. Dominic Savio, the patron saint of youth and is used for religious instructions, parish activities, and recreation.⁷

Other Site Features

A rock grotto was added in 1984. Several loads of stone gathered from Crofton, Nebraska were used to construct the grotto. It is eleven feet high, ten feet wide, and three feet deep and shelters a statue of Mary, "Our Lady of Grace". The Grotto was donated as a tribute to the people of parish for their one-hundred-year anniversary.

⁷ 100 Years of Faith, 54.

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Integrity

St. Peter de Alcantara Church retains physical integrity. The setting on which it is built remains the same as it did when the oldest buildings were constructed in 1913. The church is surrounded by US-275 on the south with business properties to the west and residential properties to the north and east. St. Dominic's Hall was constructed in 1956 north of the church and rectory and connected by a series of concrete sidewalks. It retains its simple streamlined Contemporary-style features. However, it has been unsympathetically altered and lacks the documentation needed to be determined as having significance, and is counted as non-contributing to the nomination. The church and rectory contribute to the nomination and represent a significant local example of historic architecture and design.

Location and Setting

The church and rectory are in their original location at 220 US-275 in Ewing. It is among the most prominent historic buildings in the community. There are no other buildings in Ewing listed in the National Register. The church's tower can be seen throughout town, and it has maintained the same appearance since its dedication in 1915. The open setting around the church lot retains visibility from the residences surrounding it to the north and the church is visible from the highway from both the north and south as a landmark feature traveling through Holt County.

Design

No architect has been identified for the church. The commitment of Father Leo Rose along with local and regional contractor Anton Kettler and the dedication of volunteer parishioners, implemented the design and style expressed in the building today. The larger building utilized masonry construction, and incorporated elements from their existing church while emphasizing worship, art, and aesthetics. Together they constructed a church complex that physically expressed the beauty of their worship service and established one of the most distinguished churches in the community since its construction.

Materials

St. Peter de Alcantara Church complex retains integrity of materials with its red brick façade and use of clinker brick in the foundation of the rectory. Since construction, the buildings have been maintained and repaired. The buildings have been repointed, new roofs have been added, and updated systems have been incorporated. Landscaping was banked to make the main entrance to the church accessible, and a concrete landing was created. The original stairs were shifted out to accommodate the landing and reconstructed exactly in their new location. St. Dominic's Hall was clad with new siding material in 1981. No other major material changes are evident on the exterior of the buildings.

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Workmanship

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Pride of workmanship is evident in the construction stewardship of Anton Kettler and implementation by church volunteers and his paid staff. The condition and stability of the building over the years, supported by maintenance and care of the parish, illustrates the solid craftsmanship in its construction. The craftsmanship of the stained-glass windows is inspirational and evokes feelings of the biblical stories they represent.

Feeling

The rich history of St. Peter de Alcantara is expressed through feelings of pride in its history, dedication of its parishioners, and contributions from visitors. It is a notable landmark along US 275 in Holt County and has become a place of respite for travelers to stop and visit. Its beauty and artistry is often noted, especially because of its location in such a small community. Feelings of pride, care, devotion, and dedication to the community and its physical condition can be felt throughout.

Association

Today, many of the same families whose names are visible in the stained-glass windows remain active members of the parish. The Spittler Family donated the use of their residence for mass in the 1880s and 90s before the first church was built, supported construction of the wood frame building, and donated a stained-glass window, and the church bell in the church today. This is one among many examples of parish families and descendants who remain as active stewards and parish members today. Generational association from the founding of Ewing remains with the church.

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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

Period of Significance

1913

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Significant Dates

1913 (construction of church and rectory)

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Kettler, Anton (builder)

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.)

St Peter de Alcantara Church, located in Ewing (Holt County, Nebraska) is nominated to the National Register of Historic Places at the local level under Criterion C in the area of architecture. The church campus is comprised of the church, rectory, and social hall. These buildings are notable within Ewing's built environment. The church is Romanesque Revival in style with rounded arches and an asymmetrical façade. The rectory, built in the same year, was constructed in the Arts and Crafts/Craftsman style and reads as a single-family residence. In 1956, the parish expanded and added a contemporary mid-century modern commercial style parish hall to serve the social and community demands of the parish. The period of significance is 1913, when the church and rectory were built. The property is also evaluated under Criterion Consideration A as a religious property. It is not nominated for its significance as a Roman Catholic church or as an endorsement or approval for any specific religious belief or practice, but for its representation of the work of architecture expressed through the design of the buildings and how they contribute to the built environment of Ewing, Nebraska.

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

Setting

Holt County is in north-central Nebraska, with its north border is defined by the Niobrara River. A 76-mile corridor of the river flows through the northern Sandhills and has been designated a National Scenic River.⁸ The Elkhorn River Valley is about 30 miles south of the

⁸ Jessica Corman and Troy Gilmore. "The Niobrara: A National Scenic River," Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources, Nebraska Sandhills, University of Nebraska-Lincoln, October 23, 2024, www.nebraskasandhills.unl.edu/news/niobrara-national-scenic-river/

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Niobrara, and several tributaries to the Elkhorn River run through the southern half of the county. Holt is one of the largest Nebraska counties in land area covering 2,418 square miles. It is rural in nature with a 2020 population of 10,127.⁹ The terrain of low, rolling hills and agricultural flatland has been called the “Gateway to the Sandhills.”¹⁰ Today, transportation corridors in the county are defined by major U.S. Highways 20, 275, and 281, with Nebraska Highways 11 and 95 supplementing automotive transportation. Historical transportation corridors in the county were defined by the rivers and railroads, notably the Fremont, Elkhorn, and Missouri Valley Railroad. The village of Ewing in southeast Holt County had a 2020 population of 373.¹¹

Historical Background

The Niobrara River served as a natural resource for several Plains tribes including the Ponca, Lakota, and Pawnee. The Ponca claim the Niobrara valley as their homeland. Along and near the river, they built earth lodges, hunted big game, and defended the natural resources provided by the river. European explorers and fur traders came through the region in the late 18th century and established small settlements along their routes. When the United States Government created the Great Sioux reservation as part of the Treaty of 1868 north of the Niobrara River, they also established a ring of military forts surrounding the newly declared reservation land. Construction on Fort Niobrara was begun in 1879 near Valentine approximately 100 miles from the center of Holt County. Ranchers and Cattlemen settled shortly thereafter, because of the general stability provided by the military forts and the ready market they offered.¹²

Holt County was created by an act of Nebraska Territory Legislature in 1876 and named for Joseph Holt, Postmaster General and Secretary of War under President James Buchanan. Numerous disputes quickly arose over the permanent location of the county seat. In 1876, the village of Paddock, in the extreme northern part of the county, on the Niobrara River was designated the seat. Its distant location prompted the removal of the seat to O’Neill, a more central location, following an election in May 1879. Proposals to divide the county were put forward by rival communities in the 1880s and 1890s, with a petition circulated and defeated in 1883. One newspaper account wrote in 1885 that “They took a vote on the question last fall and it was defeated by 300 votes, but those who favor division have not given it up. They propose to try again. Holt County is large enough to make four, and that is the proposition”¹³

Bids to divide the county continued until 1908, but ultimately the conflicts were never successful. Holt County remains one of the state’s largest counties, by area, today.¹⁴

The Sioux City and Pacific Railroad line extension reached O’Neill in 1881 and was a key part of the expansion of the Fremont, Elkhorn & Missouri Valley Railroad system that

⁹ U.S. Census Bureau: Holt County, Nebraska www.census.gov United States Census Bureau

¹⁰ The Sandhills are a unique geographic area in Nebraska...

¹¹ U.S. Census Bureau: Ewing, Holt County, Nebraska, www.census.gov United States Census Bureau

¹² “Niobrara National Scenic River, Nebraska.” National Park Service.

www.nps.gov/niob/learn/historyculture/people.htm

¹³ *The Omaha Bee*. Omaha, NE February 17, 1885; Pat Gastor, “Dividing Holt County.” Nebraska State Historical Society Blog. www.history.nebraska.gov/dividing-holt-county/

¹⁴ “Dividing Holt County.” Nebraska State Historical Society Blog post

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brought important transportation connections to small county communities like Ewing. The following year, 1882, the Fremont, Elkhorn and Missouri Valley Railroad came to Ewing. Pioneer Town Site company platted the town with the arrival of the rail and named it for postmaster James Ewing.¹⁵ Immigration to the county grew from the railroad access in the 1880s.

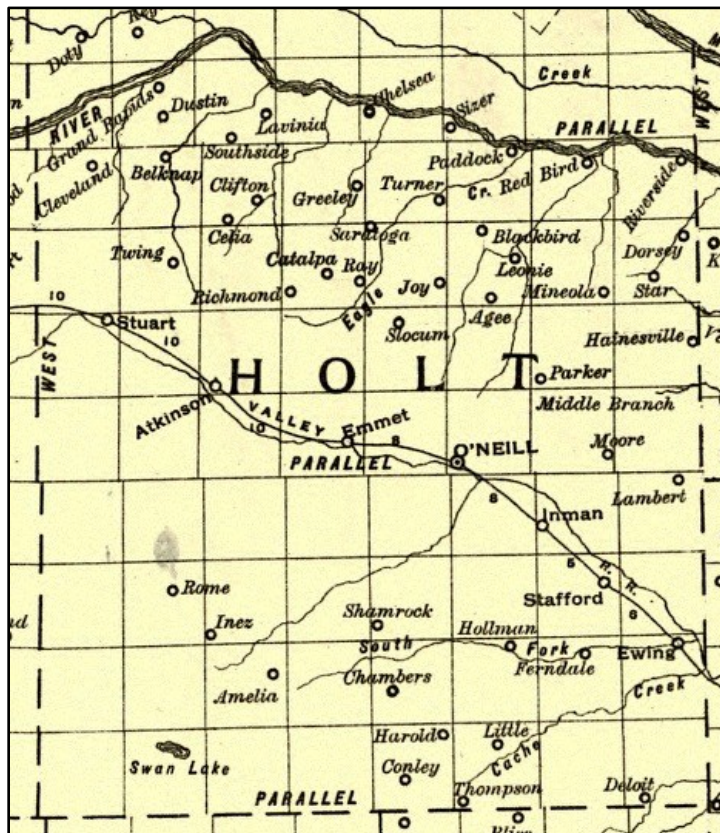
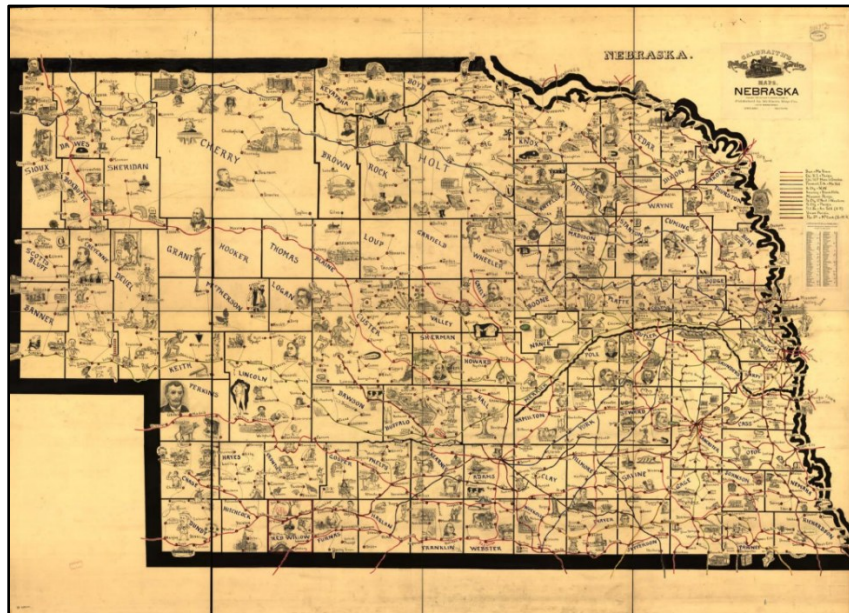


Figure 1. 1889 Railroad map of Holt County detail from railway map of Nebraska issued by State Board of Transportation 1889. Library of Congress State Map Collections

¹⁵ Lilian L. Fitzpatrick, J.T. Link. *Nebraska Place-Names*. (Lincoln, Nebraska: University of Nebraska Press, 1960) 76; James Steely, Thomas Witt, Christian Driver, Barb Gibson. *Railroad Development in Nebraska 1862-1980 A Historic Context*, Nebraska State Historical Society June 2014; "Ewing Nebraska 68735" from www.nebraska-directory.com/nebraska-counties/holt/ewing/



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Many early settlers in the area were Roman Catholic and brought to Nebraska by General John O'Neill, an Irish leader who sought to attract Irish immigrants to the Midwest and Holt County. He promoted the benefits of Holt County in his publication "Northern Nebraska as a Home for Immigrants." He extolled the affordability of materials, stating that a "neat one-story frame house" could be constructed for anywhere from \$200-\$600 while sod houses were generally free, but for doors and windows. He attempted to convince readers of the environmental comforts of sod in winter and summer temperatures.¹⁶ General O'Neill eventually attracted four groups of Irish Catholic colonists to Holt County between 1874 and 1876.

With O'Neill, Ewing was among the earliest settlements in the county. John Ewing established a post office in the area in 1876.¹⁷ Many of the early settlers in the southern part of the county came from German and Austrian descent, rather than the Irish in the northern part of the county.

Parish History

The earliest Catholic masses in the 1870s were held south and east of Ewing by Rev. Pierre James Bedard, a French-Canadian missionary priest. He served the sparse settlements in Jefferson, South Dakota and northeast Nebraska. Bedard held Mass in the homes of settlers including the John Hanningan home near Ewing. A small log church building was constructed in the area where traveling missionaries, following the Elkhorn River, could observe Mass. Bedard homesteaded in neighboring Antelope County and eventually served at St. Patrick parish in O'Neill until 1875. He died in 1876 and is buried in St-Tite-des-Caps, Quebec, Canada. Those attending the masses held by Bedard formed the beginnings of the St. Peter de Alcantara parish.¹⁸



Figure 4. Rev. Pierre James Bedard. A Necrology of the Diocesan Priests and Deacons.

In the 1880s, Fr. Ferdinand Lechleitner, another traveling or circuit priest, led Masses for Catholics in the area. Priests would travel from their home parish and offer Mass once a month at various houses, dugouts, or the earliest small log churches scattered throughout the county and neighboring communities. Fr. Lechleitner was from Crete, Nebraska and sent by the Nebraska Apostolic Vicariate of Omaha headed by Right Rev. Bishop James O'Gorman. He first served

¹⁶ Save America's Heritage, 11.

¹⁷ Save America's Heritage. *Reconnaissance Survey Final Report of Holt County, Nebraska*. Nebraska State Historical Society, 1988, 11-13.

¹⁸ *100 Years of Faith: St. Peter de Alcantara 1885-1985*. Book Committee, 5.; Doug Weller, *A Necrology of the Diocesan Priests and Deacons: Catholic Diocese of Salina*, 2024

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St. Helena's in Fordyce and Hartington, Nebraska as a newly ordained priest in 1869. Over the next ten years, he then traveled to Catholic communities in Aurora, Harvard, Lawrence, Norfolk, Hartington, and many others. His name is mentioned in the 1870s and 1880s histories of many Nebraska Catholic churches.¹⁹



Figure 5. Father Ferdinand Lechleitner. Photo from The Kings of Sacred Heart Church

The J.P. Spittler family offered their home, a large two-story Italianate residence built in 1884, as a regular place to offer Mass by visiting priests in Ewing. That year, B.L. and Frances Simpson donated three and one-half acres of land in northwest Ewing to construct the first permanent Catholic church. The parish was named for St. Peter de Alcantara and founded in June 1885. Local papers noted that “Ewing Catholics will build at once a new church to cost \$800.”²⁰ The first church was a small, wood frame building with gable roof, and belltower at the gable end. A Gothic arched window over the main entry door, Gothic arched stained-glass windows, and narrow steeple provided the Gothic Revival style in this simple rural frame building. The interior of the church was described as having an ornate gold and white altar with a tiny sanctuary distinguished from the body of the church by a series of carved posts supporting the communion rail. Framed pictures of the Sacred Heart and St. Peter de Alcantara hung on each side of the main altar. There was one small round stained-glass window donated by parishioner Ivo Vandersnick, which was preserved and is now located in the existing church’s choir loft. Between 1891 and 1899, priests from Atkinson, Nebraska traveled here to say Mass. From 1899 to 1904 priests from Stuart, Long Pine, and Norfolk, Nebraska offered Mass.²¹

¹⁹ Catholic Diocese of Lincoln. Various parish histories St. Stephens, St. Joseph, St. Mary, Sacred Heart, Holy Trinity, www.lincolndiocese.org ; The Kings of Sacred Heart Church Rev. Ferdinand Lechleitner, www.freepages.rootsweb.com/shmagee/genealogy/TheBell/ChapterVI.html

²⁰ “Elkhorn Valley News.” *Fremont Tribune*, (Fremont, NE) May 16, 1886, 4.

²¹ *100 Years of Faith*, 6-7.

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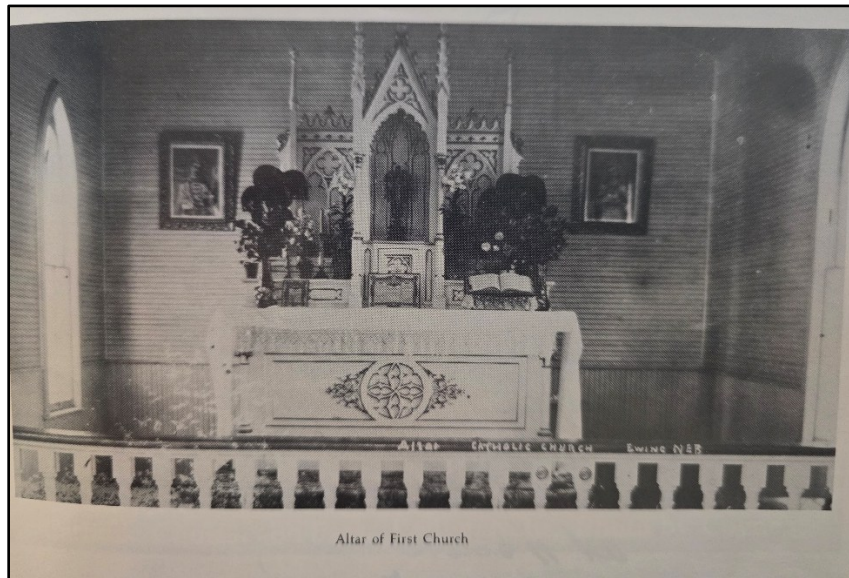


Figure 6. Altar of first church. Photo from *100 Years of Faith*.

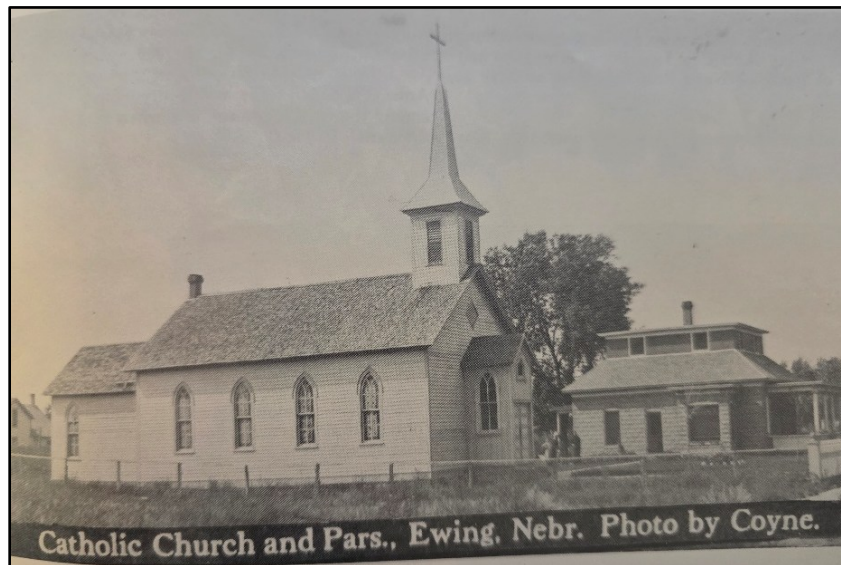


Figure 7. First St. Peter de Alcantara Church. Photo from *100 Years of Faith*.

In 1903 and 1904, church trustees purchased the neighboring property to build a rectory or parish house. The stone block house was constructed, and Father August Heimes became the first resident pastor for the parish. He served from 1903-1907.²² At this time, rural churches that served small enclaves across the county were diminishing. They were often in isolated rural or unincorporated areas and were subject to vandalism and deterioration. One such rural church in Holt County was looted by burglars and damaged by prairie fire. The congregation chose to

²² *100 Years of Faith*, 9.

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combine with Ewing. That growth contributed to the construction of the rectory and the need for a full-time, resident priest.²³

The Spittler Family, who hosted Mass before the church was constructed, remained active in the parish from its founding. In 1905, Theresa Spittler the adult daughter of John Spittler died. Her loss was felt by many as she served as the organist, choir instructor, religion teacher, and decorated the altar. In memorial to their daughter, her parents donated the church bell to the parish. That bell was moved when the existing building was constructed and hangs in the present church today.²⁴

The parish continued to grow, and it soon became clear the existing church and rectory were insufficient to serve their needs. Father Leo Rose, a dynamic and charismatic leader, and the parish priest, undertook the challenge to construct a new church.²⁵ A flurry of activity occurred in October 1912, when Fr. Rose brokered an agreement with parishioner Tony Drezweicki to purchase the property on which the existing church resided, in anticipation of constructing a new church across the street (north) at its current location.²⁶ On Sunday, October 20, 1912, the parish decision to erect the new building was formalized after a "most hasty deliberation, as the subject had not even been broached before final action was taken."²⁷ Construction cost estimates ranged from \$10,000 to \$15,000, not including the cost of a new parsonage. Excavating began the next day, and local news accounts noted that "when completed the new edifice will be one of the finest in this section."²⁸ Excavations were completed and the site was prepared for concrete and foundation work by August of 1913.

No architect has been identified for the building, but Anton Kettler is credited as the building contractor or main construction supervisor. There is some confusion as P.M. Conger was noted as winning the material contract, while only a few months later, other local accounts note that A.J. Davis was "personally superintending" the work on the church and parsonage.²⁹ This is likely because Kettler was a noted project manager for many churches and schools in the area, and hired local teams to build projects while he traveled widely to supervise his projects. By November, the cornerstone was laid and a special dedication ceremony and Mass were held. This was a noted celebration with sermons delivered in both English and German, followed by a midnight oyster banquet, and a moving picture show. The Haneman Family, who owned the theatre, donated the receipts to the church.³⁰ Both the church and parsonage were fully enclosed by December 1913 and interior work continued throughout the winter.

²³ "Ewing," *Our Sunday Visitor* (Omaha, NE) Dec 11, 1903, 14.

²⁴ *100 Years of Faith*, 11. The bell is cast bronze and was cast by Stuckstede and Brothers in St. Louis, Missouri in 1901. It weighs 350 pounds and measures 24 inches in diameter. Real bronze bells have one primary note and four minor tones. The bell at St. Peter de Alcantara's primary note is D natural. It is engraved in Latin and states it was donated in 1901 by John Peter Spittler family in memory of their deceased daughter, Theresa. Bells are typically named and this bell is named Theresa.

²⁵ *100 Years of Faith* 9-14. Father Rose arrived at St. Peter de Alcantara in November 1908 and served the parish until 1918. He is credited as a spirited and determined leader under whose directorship the new buildings were constructed.

²⁶ "Ewing," *Norfolk Daily News* (Norfolk, NE) Oct 5, 1912, 7.

²⁷ "Ewing," *Norfolk Daily News* (Norfolk, NE) Oct 24, 1912, 3.

²⁸ "Ewing," *Norfolk Daily News* (Norfolk, NE) Oct 24, 1912, 3.

²⁹ "Ewing," *Norfolk Daily News* (Norfolk, NE) September 3, 1913, 5.; "Ewing," *Norfolk Daily News* (Norfolk, NE) Dec 24, 1913, 2.

³⁰ "Cornerstone Laid for Ewing Church," *Norfolk Daily News* (Norfolk, NE) November 18, 1913, 7; *100 Years of Faith*, 12.

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Construction would not have been possible without the labor and donations of the parishioners. Masonry work was completed by Henry Pruden and Geoge Walters. The roof was shingled by Ewald and Ernest Spahn. Hardware supplied by John Sanders, Lewis and Dominic Bohn poured the concrete for the foundation and sidewalks, and other families donated their time and efforts for tasks including plaster, landscaping, general labor, and paint.³¹

Six impressive stained-glass windows were imported from Europe, three in the east and west walls of the nave. Each window was donated or sponsored by a parish family at the cost of \$500 per window. It is not known where the windows were designed or built, but they reflect a similar painterly design to windows attributed to the Franz Mayer Company of Munich, Germany. Their windows are documented in other churches and the similarities are notable. However, though impressive for this small community, the origin of the windows at St. Peter de Alcantara are not yet documented. Other decorative windows along the high walls of the sanctuary were donated by Fred Beucher and the parish youth in 1911-1912.³²

Formal dedication ceremonies took place in November 1915. Attendees filled the church to capacity with crowds overflowing outside the building to participate. The church and parsonage were described as “brick and cement and of peculiarly attractive design and the church is the largest of any in Ewing, its beautifully decorated auditorium having a seating capacity of over 400.”³³ Parish priests took a census in the 1920s and documented 239 members in the county, 127 in Ewing and 41 in Stafford, all belonging to the Ewing parish.³⁴

Other interior features of the church included a small pump organ that was replaced when J. L. Fisher purchased an electric pipe organ from the Orpheum Theater in Omaha and had it moved to the church. The new organ blocked the stained-glass window of St. Peter de Alcantara moved from the original church, so in 1981 the parish installed lighting to enhance the window and make it visible from Highway 275.

Criterion C: Architecture

St. Peter de Alcantara Church is significant architecturally as an example of a Romanesque Revival style Catholic church design. It is an elaborately stylized building in the small community of Ewing. Supporting the church is the Arts and Crafts style rectory. The campus is completed by a non-contributing mid-century modern parish hall. No architect has been identified for the church campus, but the builder, Anton Kettler, was well known across eastern Nebraska for his ecclesiastical and educational construction projects.

Churches in Ewing

St. Peter de Alcantara is on US Highway 275. It is a notable marker for travelers and to the community as it remains one of the most prominent buildings in Ewing. There are three other churches in Ewing: Full Gospel Church Assemblies of God, Church of Christ, and the United Methodist Presbyterian Church. The Full Gospel Church Assemblies of God and the United Methodist Presbyterian Church are both non-historic contemporary buildings. The Church of

³¹ *100 Years of Faith*, 12.

³² *100 Years of Faith*, 15.

³³ “Ewing Catholics Dedicate Church.” *Norfolk Daily News* (Norfolk, NE) November 30, 1915, 8.

³⁴ “Father Albert Takes Census.” *The Ewing Advocate* (Ewing, NE) December 17, 1926, 1.

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Christ is a small scale, gable end, wood frame building with multiple additions that is not eligible for the National Register. None of these religious buildings equal the design aesthetic presented in St. Peter de Alcantara Catholic Church. These three churches are also in the platted neighborhoods of Ewing, while St. Peter de Alcantara is along Highway 275 and highly visible by the traveling public as well as the community.



Figure 8. Church of Christ at the corner of Pine and Nebraska Streets, Ewing, NE. Google Image.

Romanesque Revival

Romanesque style was seen throughout Europe during the medieval period (approximately 1000 to 1200 AD) as a continuation of architectural features based on Roman design. Romanesque design features included rounded arches, towers, and detailed corbeled brick work. Brick corbeling was along eaves and gable ends and provided relief to exterior facades. Churches and monasteries comprise the largest group of surviving examples of the building type.³⁵ Romanesque is typically distinguished from the Gothic style that supplanted it by its rounded arches, rather than the pointed arches seen in Gothic. Romanesque churches typically have a basilican plan, defined by a central nave and side aisles. Soaring high ceilings are common in the center nave, often with columns separating the nave from the side aisles.³⁶ It is common for some Romanesque churches, especially larger churches, to have transepts, or cross-axis extensions from the nave and close to the altar, that give the church a cruciform plan. As a smaller example of the style, St. Peter de Alcantara does not have the cross transepts, and retains its original rectilinear plan.

Another common Romanesque feature is a bell tower, which could be constructed as a paired architectural element at either side of the main façade flanking the entrance, or a single tower either centered or to one side of the facade. Rooflines are typically hipped or shallower

³⁵ “Romanesque Revival.” *Architecture of Faith*, www.architectureoffaithmilwaukee.info/II-Romanesque-Revival
The term Romanesque was adopted by historians who studied the style centuries after it was built and was not used to describe the style at the time by those who constructed the buildings. In and round France, the style was known as Norman.

³⁶ Basilica has a two-fold meaning in Catholic churches. There is the basilica plan as described in the narrative and a Basilica church which is special papal designation that recognizes a church for its unique historical, spiritual, architectural, or liturgical significance. Basilicas are identified with an umbraculum, a papal symbol (shaped like an umbrella) with papal symbols and red and gold colors.

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gables and not the steep and elongated lines seen in Gothic church towers. Common ornamental features on Romanesque buildings are illustrated in the masonry on exterior walls where brick corbelling in the form of small arches projecting from the wall at or near the eaves are present. Churches were generally oriented east/west.³⁷

American examples of Romanesque Revival styles date to the 1840s when the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, D.C., known as “the Castle,” was completed. Like its predecessor, the Revival version of the style was most popular in religious buildings. The revival style reinvented many of the same elements such as the brick corbeling, rounded arches, and ornate entries. Revival styles exhibit larger elaborate stained-glass windows and are typically masonry construction. American revival styles did not place an importance on orientation of religious buildings. Availability of land and street frontage dictated the orientation of American religious buildings in the revival style.³⁸ Romanesque Revival style quickly spread across the country and became a popular choice for many religious buildings. The *Book of Plans* was a popular pattern book for the style, and though written by and for the Congregational Church, the appealing form and applied detailing was widely adopted and seen in the built environment of ecclesiastical buildings across the region from Jewish Synagogues to Roman Catholic Churches.³⁹

St. Peter de Alcantara incorporates the main features of the design at a small scale. The arched windows, formalized entry portal, artistic stained-glass, and brick corbeling are all features that make this building an excellent local example. It is particularly notable because the building was completed under the leadership of contractor Anton Kettler and constructed by many parish volunteers. No architect is recorded for the building.

Romanesque Revival was a popular style for religious architecture across northeast Nebraska and is present in comparable communities. Other examples include those offered below.

³⁷ “Romanesque Revival.” *Architecture of Faith* www.architectureoffaithmilwaukee.info

³⁸ “Romanesque Revival.” *Architecture of Faith* www.architectureoffaithmilwaukee.info

³⁹ Gwen W. Steege. “The “Book of Plans” and the Early Romanesque Revival in the United States: A Study in Architectural Patronage.” *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians*, Vol. 46, No. 3 (Sept., 1987), 215-227.

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Figure 9. Immaculate Conception Church at 2798 S. 24th Street, Omaha, NE. Google Image.

Immaculate conception Church at 2798 S. 24th Street in Omaha, Nebraska was built in 1926. The church was designed by Nebraska architect Jacob M. Nachitgall and illustrates Renaissance Revival style in the elaborate entry portal rounded arched windows, corbeled brickwork at the gable end and paired bell towers with domed roofs. An impressive rose window dominates the main façade. This is an example of the style with paired towers flanking the main entry bay. Located in Omaha, the largest city in the state, the church serves a massive neighborhood community and has an associated school. Though a larger example in scale, massing, and size, the building is an excellent example of the style. It is listed in the National Register in 1998.

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Figure 10. Sts. Peter and Paul Church (CD03-004), Bow Valley, Nebraska. Google Image.

Saints Peter and Paul Church in Bow Valley, Nebraska was constructed in 1903. The church complex is comprised of five buildings and was designed by Josef Schwarz. This church has transepts at a cross-axis near the altar and a single center bell tower. Rounded windows and brick corbeling at the gable ends is present. Here the bell tower has a steeply pitched roof, more typical of transitional styles. It was listed in the National Register in 2000.



Figure 11. St. Anthony's Church, Cedar Rapids, Nebraska. Google Image.

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St. Anthony's Church in Cedar Rapids, Nebraska was built in 1919 and designed by architect Jacob Nachtigall. Renaissance Revival features include a cruciform plan, arched windows, side bell tower with domed roof, and brick corbeling. Cedar Rapids is also in northeast Nebraska and is a relatively small community for the size and scale of this church. The church and its neighboring school are both listed in the National Register in 2000.



Figure 12. St. Bonaventure Church (BO09-001) in Raeville. Google Image.

St. Bonaventure Church in Raeville, Nebraska was built in 1917 and designed by Jacob Nachitgall. The rectory was built in 1920 and is also listed in the National Register. The massive and impressive church is a high style Romanesque building with a rose window above the main arched entry. Paired bell towers are adorned with arcaded openings and brick corbeling. The property was listed in the National Register in 1982. Raeville is an unincorporated village in Boone County, Nebraska and had a 2020 population of 18.

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Figure 13. St. Leonard's Catholic Church in Madison, Nebraska. Google Image.

St. Leonard's Catholic Church complex in Madison, Nebraska is comprised of the church, rectory, and a garage. It has a center domed bell tower, with rounded arched windows, and brick corbeling. It was built in 1913 by Nebraska architect Jacob Nachtigal and is listed in the National Register in 1989. The central bell tower has a copper dome with clock in all four sides.



Figure 14. Sts. Peter and Paul Catholic Church (BU01-15) in Abie, Nebraska. Google Image.

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St Peter and Paul Catholic Church in Abie Nebraska built in 1920. Abie is a small community in Butler County in south central Nebraska. The church has a central bell tower with corbeled brick work at gable ends. It is remarkably similar to the St. Leonard's church in Madison with some notable differences in detailing and refinement. It is known as the first Czech parish in Nebraska and is possible it was built reflecting similar designs without an architect.

The only other church example without a credited architect is the Sts. Peter and Paul Catholic Church in Abie, Nebraska. It is similar in size and scale to St. Peter de Alcantara with notable differences. The examples shown here, largely all in northeast Nebraska, were mostly architect designed buildings. All, but two were designed by notable Nebraska architect Jacob Nachtigall. Josef Schwarz designed Sts. Peter and Paul church in Bow Valley and it is clearly dissimilar to the other Renaissance Revival styles as it represents a hybrid with some crossover into Gothic Revival with the towering spire of its bell tower. Each of the Romanesque Revival churches shown have the truncated bell tower with shallow roof lines to limit the height of the building.

Anton Kettler, the contractor for St. Peter de Alcantara, did supervise the construction of several buildings in northeast Nebraska. Kettler was from Dubuque, Iowa and traveled to Nebraska to supervise his construction projects. Kettler curated construction crews of skilled masons, carpenters, and laborers who travelled across northeast Nebraska to build his projects. In 1914, he built a house in Boone County, east of Petersburg to replace a house destroyed by fire.⁴⁰ It was described as a modern residence that included water, heat and light. It was three-stories of brick construction, and measured 32 x 34 feet, with oak floors. Kettler invested a construction cost of \$7,000 in the residence.⁴¹ He eventually moved to Omaha where he also supervised construction projects. Notably, the St. Stanislaus Church and School and the Sts. Peter and Paul Catholic Church at Howells.⁴² An article describing the construction of Guardian Angels School in West Point, Nebraska noted that he was paying masons as high as \$1.00 per hour, carpenters \$0.90, and laborers \$0.60-0.70 per hour because help was very scarce. His move to Omaha was driven by the demand for residential remodels. He also noted that successful farmers in northeast Nebraska were "putting up magnificent homes."⁴³ Examples of his construction projects are offered below.

⁴⁰ Petersburg is approximately 40 miles south of Ewing in neighboring Boone County.

⁴¹ *The Elgin Review* (Elgin, NE) Dec 25, 1914, 1.

⁴² "Contractor Kettler Will Move to Omaha." *Cuming County Democrat* (West Point, NE), Aug., 22, 1919, 4.

⁴³ "Contractor Kettler Will Move to Omaha."

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Figure 15. Guardian Angels School, West Point 1917

School for St. Mary's Catholic Church in West Point. St. Mary's is a Gothic Revival church built from 1905-1914 and designed by Jacob Nachtigall. The school was built in 1917 and supervised by Anton Kettler.



Figure 16. St. Stanislaus Catholic Church (DO09:0295-031), and school (DO09:0295-032) 4002 J Street, Omaha

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Built in 1919 as a parish to serve the Polish community in South Omaha, today the parish serves the Vietnamese community in Omaha. The church is no longer extant and today a 1953 building stands in its place. The school has been significantly altered with an addition on the front of the building and is a Catholic bilingual academy for the Vietnamese community.



Figure 17. Sts. Peter and Paul Church (CX02-005), 112 N. 6th Street, Howells, Ne 1920

Sts. Peter and Paul Church in Howells was built in 1918-1920. It is a Gothic Revival Style and has an associated rectory. Howells is a small community in Colfax County with a 2020 population of 561.

These examples illustrate not only the skill of Anton Kettler, but his high regard as a builder of ecclesiastical and educational buildings in northeast Nebraska. His formula of hiring trusted and skilled crews to complete his projects, while he travelled the state overseeing the projects proved successful for him. This collection of buildings illustrates that St. Peter de Alcantara serves as a notable instance in which the collaboration of skilled tradespeople and committed parishioners resulted in the successful completion of a structurally sound edifice.

St Peter de Alcantara Grows

St. Peter de Alcantara is also architecturally significant for the rectory, a brick residence, constructed in the Arts and Crafts style in 1913. The building is constructed from the same brown brick as the church, establishing a cohesive architectural connection between the two structures. Although it features the Arts and Crafts style—a twentieth-century design distinct from the Romanesque Revival style of the church—it complements and harmonizes effectively

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with the church's aesthetic. It exemplifies the style with its low-sloping roof with overhanging eaves, recessed full-width front porch, thru dormers, and heavy square brick columns. Unique to the façade, is the randomly scattered clinker brick pattern of the front porch, chimney, and foundation. Clinker bricks are dark in color and distorted or misshapen, even kiln fired rejects, that were sometimes used in the Arts and Crafts movement as a rebellion against standardization and uniformity in building materials. They were meant to over-emphasize the sense of handmade, artisanal materials. Clinker bricks were generally considered a mistake or throw away material and were formed by being too close to the heat source of a kiln, causing them to discolor or even melt into a glass-like material. The warped, rough, irregular features of clinker bricks brought a rustic aesthetic that pushed against the industrialized standardization of materials. However, because of its popularity in the Arts and Crafts style, clinker bricks eventually became mass produced and the cost to achieve the imperfections made them more expensive to produce than standardized masonry units. Though ironic to its origins, the material was mass produced by the early twentieth century and was popular in Arts and Crafts building styles.⁴⁴

The Arts and Crafts movement originated in mid-nineteenth century England and encompassed design world of art, architecture, and lifestyle. Notable individuals such as William Morris and Philip Webb in England as well as American influences Gustav Stickley Elbert Hubbard and Greene and Green defined the style. In America, the style grew and incorporated design elements from the Shakers, Spanish Missions, and Japanese. Brothers Charles and Henry Greene established the residential architectural style popularized as the Craftsman style of the Arts and Crafts movement with their bungalow designs. Elements of their designs and of the movement could be applied to residential properties, big and small, and they became among the most prolific house-type constructed across the country.⁴⁵

The rectory incorporates design ideals from the movement in its sense of scale, design elements, use of clinker bricks, and wood trim and features throughout the interior.

The church complex grew again in 1956 when the parish hall was constructed. St. Dominic Hall is a simple rectangular plan building with a gable roof behind a false front commercial style main façade. The brick façade has a tripartite panel of glass block windows with pedestrian entry doors at the north and south ends of the wall. The exterior of the building is generally non-descript, reflecting a minimalist contemporary exterior. The building does not contribute to the complex as it not express significant architecture on its own merit.

Criterion C

St. Peter de Alcantara Church is locally significant under Criterion C in the area of architecture. It represents an important example of Romanesque Revival style and remains the most notable building in the community of Ewing. Use of the brick corbeling, expression of stained-glass in the arched windows, and its off-center bell tower are exemplars of the style. The

⁴⁴ Alafia Akhtar. "One Man's Trash is Another Man's Treasure: The Transition of Clinker Brick From Disposable To Decorative." Masters Theses, Graduate school of Architecture planning and Preservation, Columbia University May 2013, 3-5.

⁴⁵ Teresa Grimes. *Los Angeles Citywide Historic Context Statement*, Survey LA Los Angeles Historic Resources Survey, June 2016, 1-2.

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rectory exemplifies the Arts and Crafts movement with its scale and massing, use of clinker bricks, and extensive woodwork inside.

Criterion Consideration A

St. Peter de Alcantara Catholic Church is a religious property and used for religious purposes. It is being nominated for its architectural merit and not for its religious significance or as an endorsement or approval for any religious beliefs or practices. It is significant and nominated for its important association as part of Ewing's built environment for its locally significant architectural history.

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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 # _____

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): _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property: Four (4) 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: 42.260629	Longitude: -98.349274
2. Latitude: 42.260629	Longitude: -98.347924
3. Latitude: 42.259015	Longitude: -98.347924
4. Latitude: 42.259646	Longitude: -98.349267

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Or

UTM References

Datum (indicated on USGS map):

☐ NAD 1927 or ☐ NAD 1983

1. Zone:	Easting:	Northing:
2. Zone:	Easting:	Northing:
3. Zone:	Easting:	Northing:
4. Zone:	Easting :	Northing:

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

The nominated property is located at Section: 3; Twp: 26; Rng: 9W; EWING VI; NOND. PT OUTLOT A 3-26-9 of Ewing, Holt County, Nebraska.

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The boundary encompasses an urban section of land containing the church, rectory, and social hall associated with the church.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Melissa Dirr Gengler and Elizabeth Chase
organization: Historic Resources Group, Inc.
street & number: 2840 Calvert Street
city or town: Lincoln state: Nebraska zip code: 68502
e-mail: melissa@hrg-nebraska.gov
telephone: 402-770-5877
date: May 15, 2026

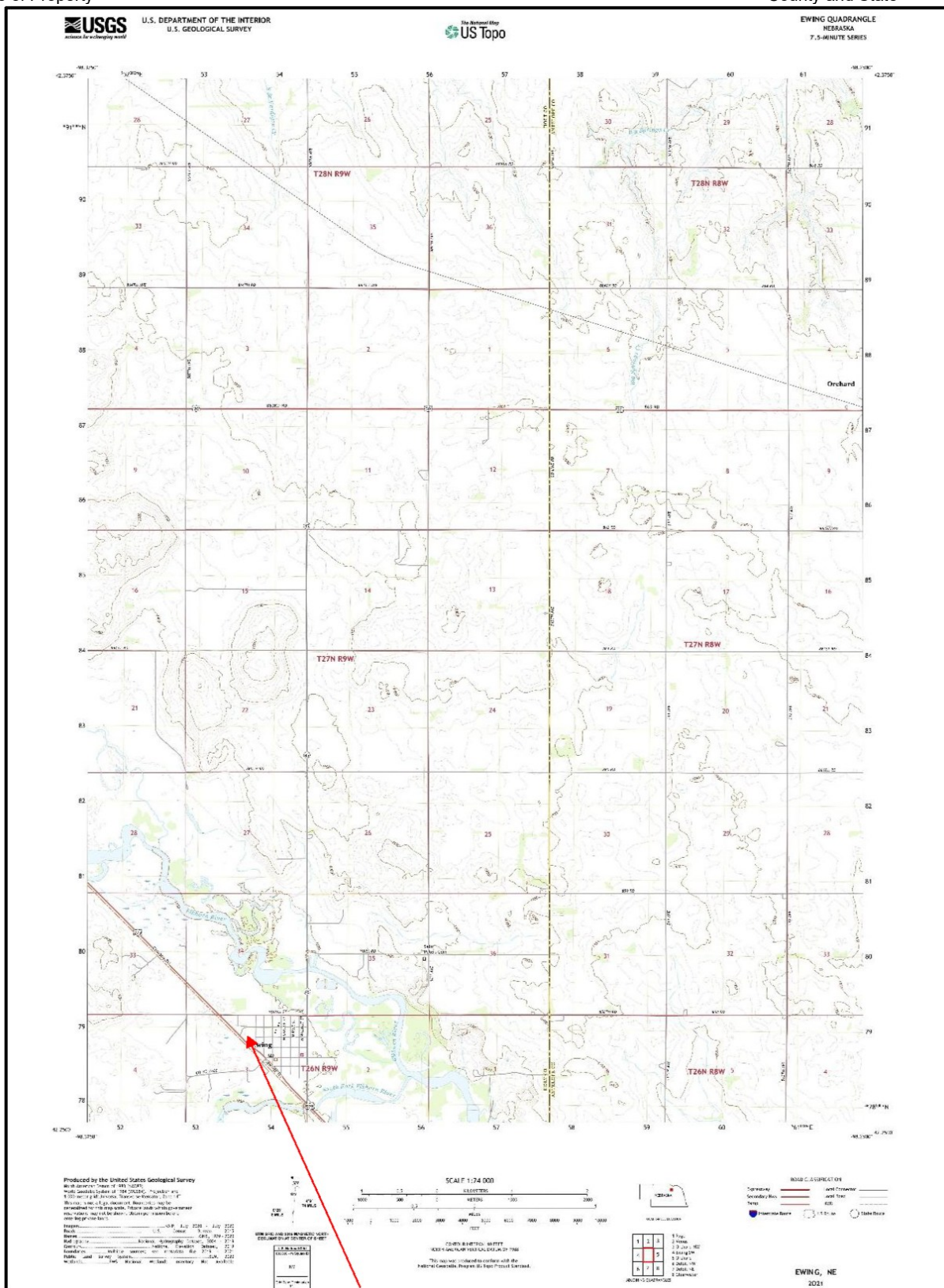
Additional Documentation

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.)

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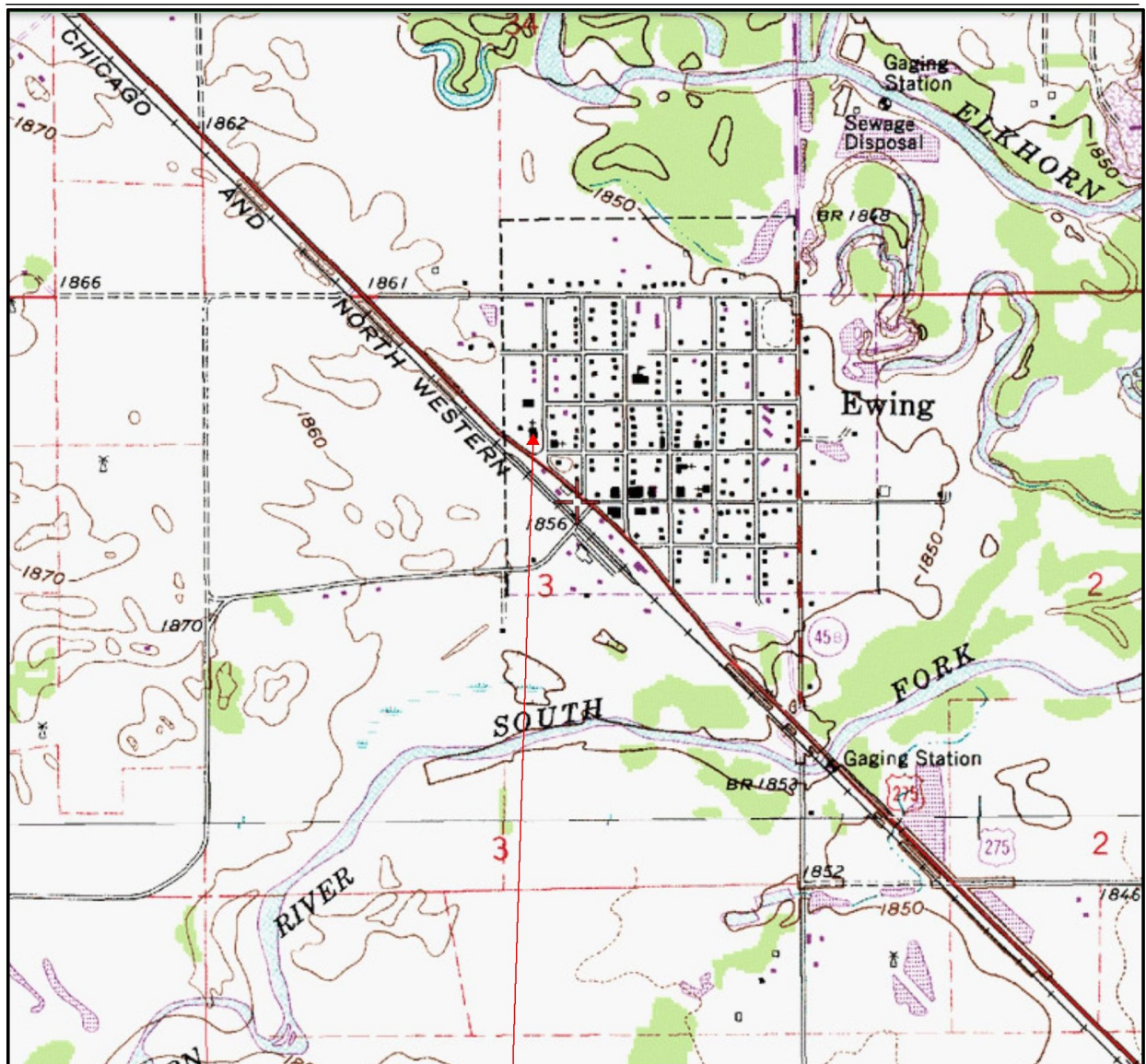
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Map 1. Ewing, NE USGS Topographical Map, 2021.

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Map 2. Ewing, NE Topographical Map detail, 2021.

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Map 3 (not to scale). Site boundary enclosed in doubled red line. Resources and their contributing/non-contributing status indicated with dashed red lines.

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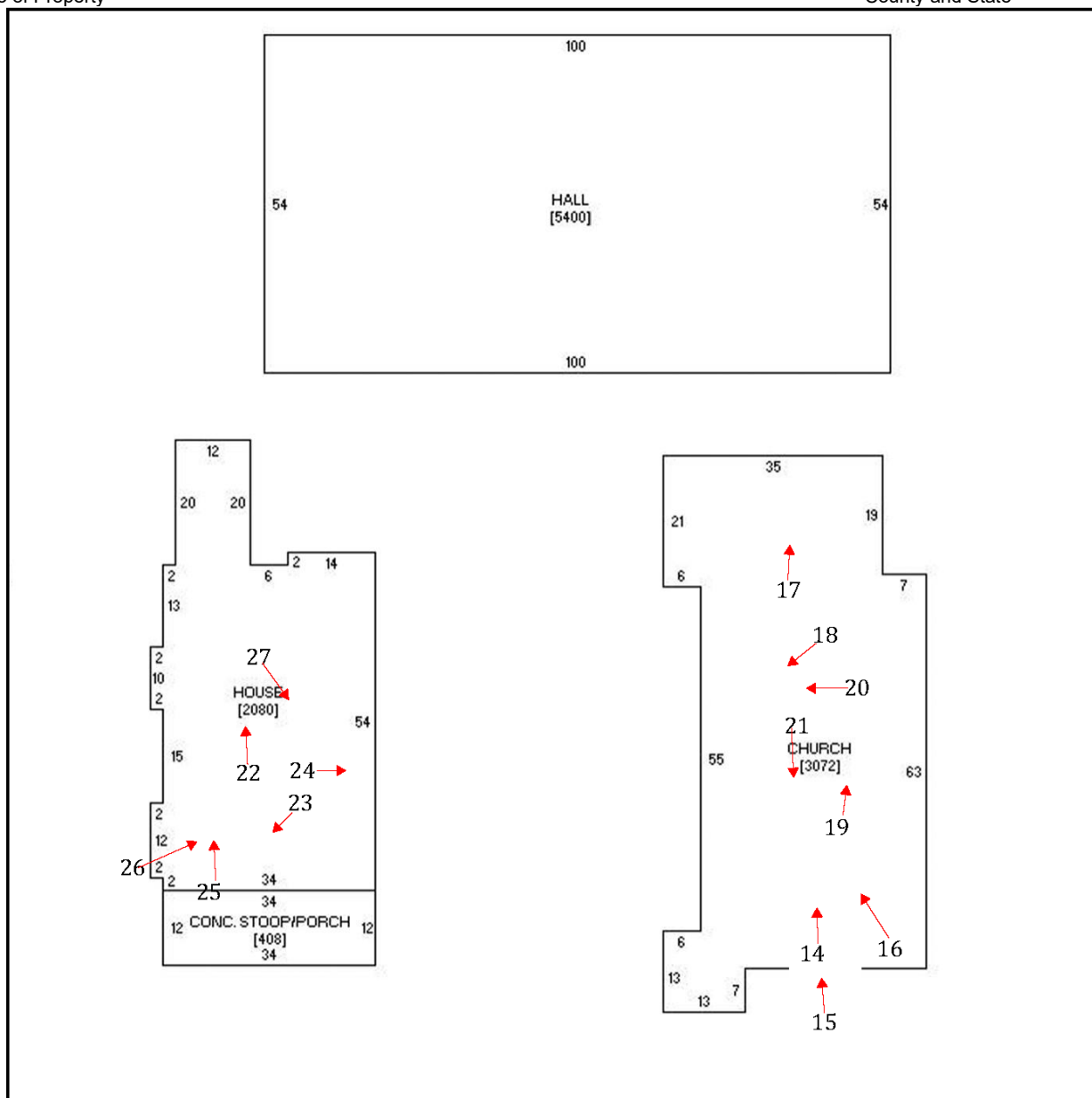
Map 4 (not to scale). Exterior Photo Key.

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Map 5 (not to scale). Interior Photo Key (not to scale).

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.

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Photo Log

Name of Property: St. Peter de Alcantara Church and Rectory

City or Vicinity: Ewing

County: Holt

State: Nebraska

Photographer: Melissa Dirr Gengler and Elizabeth Chase

Date Photographed: October 8, 2025 (Photos 1–9, 12–27); March 9, 2026 (Photos 10–11)

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

1. Main façade of church and rectory looking north.
2. Main (south facing) façade of church, looking north.
3. South and east sides of church, looking northwest.
4. Rectory and church looking northeast.
5. Rectory looking northeast.
6. Rectory main (south facing) façade, looking north.
7. Rectory looking southwest showing back and east walls.
8. St. Dominic Hall main (east facing) façade, looking west.
9. St. Dominic Hall looking southwest.
10. St. Dominic Hall main (east facing) façade, looking west
11. St. Dominic Hall looking north.
12. Grotto between church and rectory, looking north.
13. Church back and west wall, looking south.
14. Church interior looking north showing main aisle, pews, and altar.
15. Church interior looking north from choir loft.
16. Church interior looking northwest.
17. Main altar detail looking north.
18. Stained glass windows on west wall, looking southwest.
19. Pews, main altar, and statuary looking northeast.
20. Detail view of pews looking west.
21. Choir loft railing looking south.
22. Rectory interior looking north showing living and dining rooms.
23. Rectory interior looking southwest showing living room and entry vestibule.
24. Rectory interior looking east showing living room fireplace and woodwork.
25. Rectory interior showing entrance vestibule and stair to second level, looking north.
26. Rectory newel post detail, looking northwest.
27. Rectory dining room looking southeast.

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List of Figures and Maps

- Figure 1. 1889 Railroad map of Holt County
- Figure 2. Galbraith's railway mail service map
- Figure 3. Detail of Galbraith's map
- Figure 4. Rev. Pierre James Bedard
- Figure 5. Father Ferdinand Lechleitner
- Figure 6. Altar of first church
- Figure 7. First St. Peter de Alcantara Church
- Figure 8. Church of Christ
- Figure 9. Immaculate Conception Church
- Figure 10. Sts. Peter and Paul Church
- Figure 11. St. Anthony's Church
- Figure 12. St. Bonaventure Church
- Figure 13. St. Leonard's Catholic Church
- Figure 14. Sts. Peter and Paul Catholic Church
- Figure 15. Guardian Angels School
- Figure 16. St. Stanislaus Catholic Church and school
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- Map 1. Ewing, NE USGS Topo Map, 2021
- Map 2. Ewing, NE USGS Topo Map detail, 2021
- Map 3. Site boundary
- Map 4. Photo Key, exterior.
- Map 5. Photo Key, interior.

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for nominations 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.). We may not conduct or sponsor and you are not required to respond to a collection of information unless it displays a currently valid OMB control number.

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for each response using this form is estimated to be between the Tier 1 and Tier 4 levels with the estimate of the time for each tier as follows:

- Tier 1 – 60-100 hours
- Tier 2 – 120 hours
- Tier 3 – 230 hours
- Tier 4 – 280 hours

The above estimates include time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and preparing and transmitting nominations. Send comments regarding these estimates or any other aspect of the requirement(s) to the Service Information Collection Clearance Officer, National Park Service, 1201 Oakridge Drive Fort Collins, CO 80525.