

January 5, 2024

**Honorable City Planning Commission
Cincinnati, Ohio**

SUBJECT: A report and recommendation on the proposed designation of St. Leo The Great School Building at 2569 St. Leo Place in North Fairmount.

GENERAL INFORMATION:

Location: 2569 St. Leo Place, Cincinnati, OH 45225

Petitioner/Owner: 2569 St. Leo, LLC
29 Mountain Avenue, Caldwell, NJ 07006

EXHIBITS:

- Exhibit A Location Map
- Exhibit B Designation Report and Conservation Guidelines
- Exhibit C Historic Conservation Board Staff Report
- Exhibit D Historic Conservation Board Recommendation

BACKGROUND:

On October 11, 2023, an application for the designation of St. Leo The Great School Building as a Local Historic Landmark was submitted by 2569 St. Leo, LLC. According to the Cincinnati Zoning Code (§1435-07-2-B), an application for the designation of a Local Historic Landmark shall be forwarded to the City Planning Commission following a public hearing of the Historic Conservation Board.

On December 4, 2023, the Historic Conservation Board (HCB) held a public hearing on the Local Historic Landmark designation application. After receiving evidence and testimony from the Urban Conservator and proponents of the designation, a quorum of six board members voted unanimously to approve and recommend St. Leo The Great School Building to the City Planning Commission and City Council for approval.

The City Planning Commission is charged with determining whether to follow the recommendation of the Historic Conservation Board (§1435-07-2-B-C). In making such determination, the City Planning Commission shall consider the following factors:

- 1) The relationship of the proposed designation to the comprehensive plans of the city and of the community in which the proposed Historic Landmark is located; and
- 2) The effect of the proposed designation on the surrounding areas and economic development plans of the city; and
- 3) Such other planning and historic preservation considerations as may be relevant to the proposed designation.

The City Planning Commission has the duty to decide whether to approve or deny the designation and forward its decision, whether favorable or not, along with the conservation guidelines, to City Council.

Setting:

St. Leo The Great School Building is a 3-story building that is in the Cincinnati neighborhood of North Fairmount. The school building occupies a 0.337-acre site on St. Leo Place between Baltimore Avenue and Casper Street in North Fairmount. The church faces St. Leo Place to the southeast. Surrounding the

entirety of the building is concrete paving with two raised concrete planters abutting the sidewalk at the front of the property.

This property consists of Hamilton County Parcel 206-0005-0272-00, which is bounded on the north by St. Leo Church, on the west by a vegetable garden, on the south by St. Leo Place, and on the east by a single-family form commercial structure. St. Leo Place is a short, 0.2-mile-long street and is nestled between two hillsides. To the south of the residential houses on the opposite side of St. Leo Place is the Baltimore Run Preserve. To the north, across Casper Street is a privately owned wooded hillside.

Historical Overview:

The formation of St. Leo The Great parish in 1886 and the subsequent school occurred in a time of Cincinnati's history when population growth was rapid, and residents were fleeing the densely populated conditions of the central basin to the surrounding hillsides. The parish was one of the first German Catholic schools organized in the North Fairmount neighborhood and represents the history of social and educational activities of the expanding German Catholic population. The first parish building was completed in 1888, housing the church on the upper floor and the school and pastor's quarters on the ground level. By 1899, the school enrollment had expanded to the point where overcrowding was an issue. In 1911, the church building was built and still exists adjacent to the current school building. After years of continued growth, the current school building was built in 1927.

Following World War II, the parish began serving the public housing communities of English Woods and by the 1960s included evangelizing missions and community outreach in other nearby public housing projects such as Fay Apartments and Shelton Gardens. Enrollment in the school began to decline as many Catholic families began to move out of the North Fairmount area. In 1979, the school closed, but remained in use as a community center until 2022.

General Description:

St. Leo The Great School Building is a significant example of an Italian Renaissance Revival style as applied to a vernacular educational building by architect John Clifford Grunkemeyer. The 3-story school building features a symmetrical façade, masonry bearing walls, a raised foundation, an ornate projecting entry porch and terra cotta and stone banding/ cornices on the upper levels. While the building does not include all features of the style, such as arched or Palladian windows, a stone base and a roofline balustrade, the features included are representative of the Italian Renaissance Revival style as applied to a vernacular educational building.

Significance:

St. Leo The Great School Building is nominated as significant under Criteria 1 and 3 of the Cincinnati Zoning Code (§1435-07-1):

- 1. Association with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history;*

St. Leo The Great School Building meets Criterion 1 for historical significance as a reflection of the history of social and educational activities of German Catholic residents in North Fairmount. The school was one of the first German Catholic schools organized in the North Fairmount neighborhood and represents the history of social and educational activities of the expanding German Catholic population.

3. *Embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, method of construction or that represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction;*

St. Leo The Great School meets Criterion 3 for architectural significance as an example of Italian Renaissance Revival style as applied to a vernacular educational building by architect John Clifford Grunkemeyer. A symmetrical façade, a prominent projecting entryway with Doric columns and a stone entablature, an arched entry door with leaded glass and prominent terra cotta and stone belt courses/ cornices above the second and third stories are defining features of this style.

ANALYSIS:

According to the Cincinnati Zoning Code (§1435-01-H3), certain findings must be made before a Local Historic Landmark can be designated by City Council. The building must be found to have historic significance. Historic significance means that the landmark must possess integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, association, and have attributes that:

1. Are associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history; or
2. Are associated with the lives of persons significant in our past; or
3. Embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period or method of construction, or that represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction; or
4. Have yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important in history or prehistory.

St. Leo The Great School Building is nominated under Criterion 1, “Association with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history,” and Criterion 3, “Embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, method of construction or that represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction”.

St. Leo The Great School Building is historically significant as a religious institution related to the expansion of the German Catholic population in North Fairmount and is a significant example of the Italian Renaissance Revival style as applied to a vernacular educational building. The designation report and the documentation provided indicate that the building meets both criteria. The building was an important place for social and educational activities and incorporates identifiable architectural features of a symmetrical façade, a prominent projecting entryway with Doric columns and a stone entablature, an arched entry door with leaded glass and prominent terra cotta and stone belt courses/ cornices above the second and third stories. The building is one of the few remaining original and intact Italian Renaissance Revival parochial school buildings in Cincinnati.

In summary, staff recommends the designation of St. Leo The Great School Building under sections §1435-07-1(a)(1) and §1435-07-1(a)(3) of the Zoning Code. The documentation in the attached designation and staff report provides conclusive evidence that all required findings may be made for the proposed designation under Criteria 1 and 3. The proposed conservation guidelines for the structure are sufficient and have been included.

PUBLIC COMMENT AND NOTIFICATION:

The Department of City Planning and Engagement held a virtual public staff conference on the proposed designation on November 21, 2023. Notices were sent to property owners within a 400-foot radius of the subject property, the property owner, and the North Fairmount Community Council. The applicant, City staff, and one member from the public were in attendance. The public member attended for information and to ask questions about renovation plans for the building.

The Historic Conservation Board also held a public hearing at its meeting on December 4, 2023. One member of the applicant team spoke in support of the proposed designation. No other correspondence was received.

All property owners within a 400-foot radius of the subject property, the property owner, and the applicants, including the North Fairmount Council, were sent notification of the Public Staff Conference, the Historic Conservation Board meeting and the January 5, 2024 City Planning Commission meeting.

CONSISTENCY WITH PLANS:

Plan Cincinnati (2012)

The proposed designation is consistent with the Sustain Initiative Area of *Plan Cincinnati*, specifically the Goal to, “Preserve our natural and built environment” (p. 193). This designation will help to preserve this historically and architecturally significant building, making it eligible for state historic rehabilitation tax incentives to be used to renovate the school building.

Cincinnati Choice Neighborhoods Transformation Plan (2014)

The proposed designation is consistent with the *Cincinnati Choice Neighborhoods Transformation Plan*. St. Leo The Great School Building is included in the Choice Neighborhoods Concept Plan in an area identified for targeted housing rehab and infill. The proposed designation is specifically consistent with the Community Focus Area Strategy which states that “neighborhood revitalization must occur through small, targeted catalytic investment areas,” one of four focus areas is around St. Leo Church (p. 41). This historic designation will aid in the redevelopment of the former school into senior housing units.

RECOMMENDATION:

The staff of the Department of City Planning and Engagement recommends that the City Planning Commission take the following actions:

- 1) **APPROVE** the proposed designation of St. Leo The Great School Building as a Local Historic Landmark at 2569 St. Leo Place in North Fairmount under Criteria 1 and 3 of the Cincinnati Zoning Code (§1435-07-1a); and
- 2) **ADOPT** the conservation guidelines.

Respectfully submitted:



Maria Dienger, City Planner
Department of City Planning and Engagement

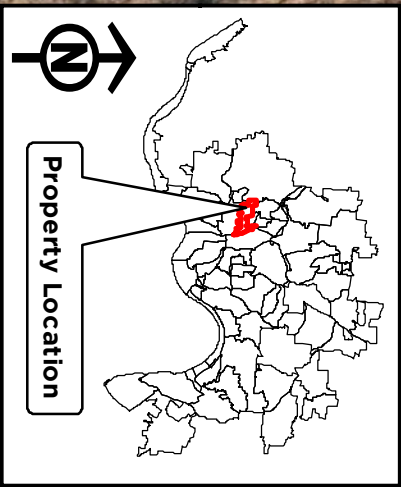
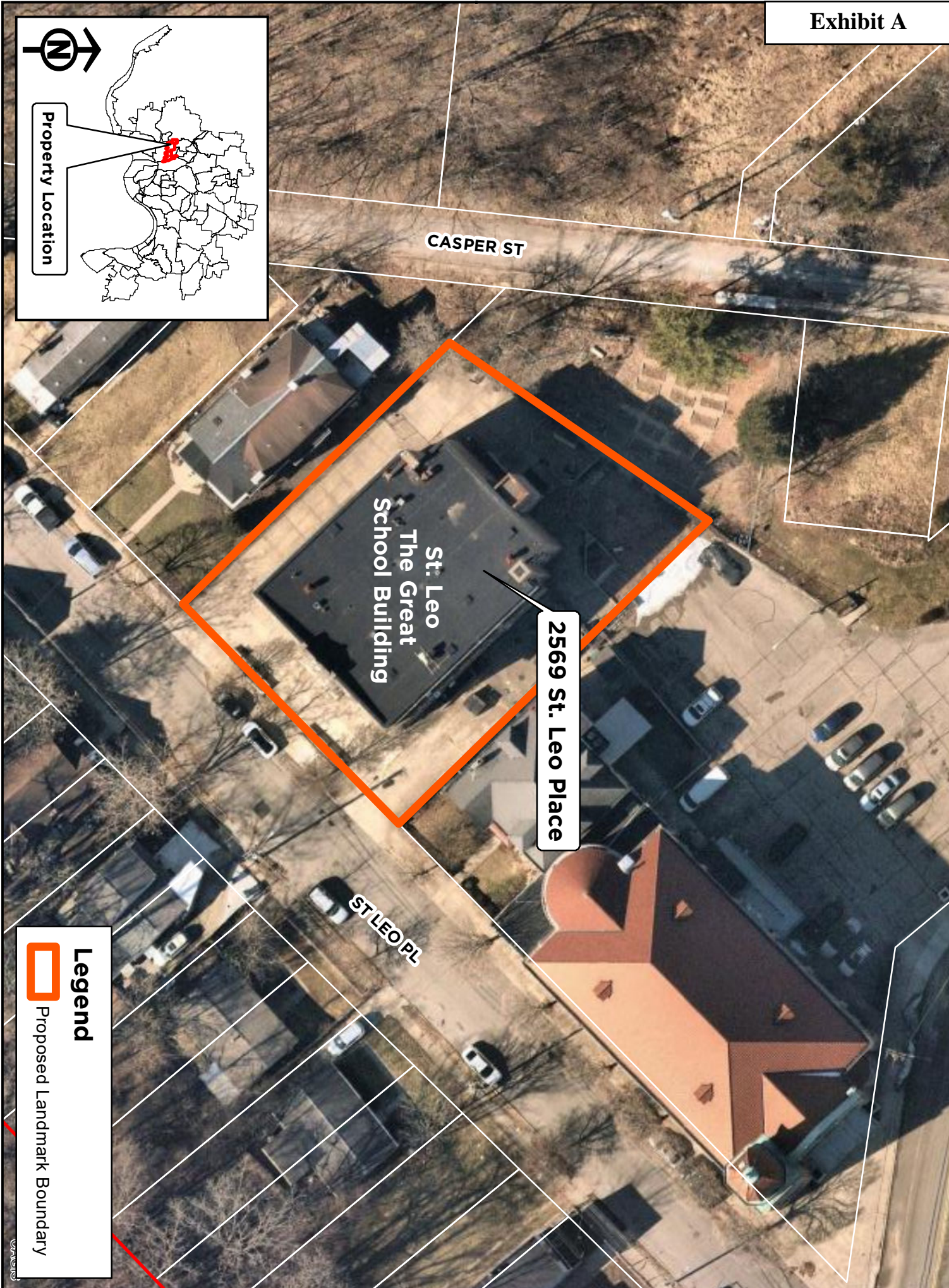
Approved:



Katherine Keough-Jurs, FAICP, Director
Department of City Planning and Engagement

Proposed Local Landmark of St. Leo The Great School Building in North Fairmount

Exhibit A

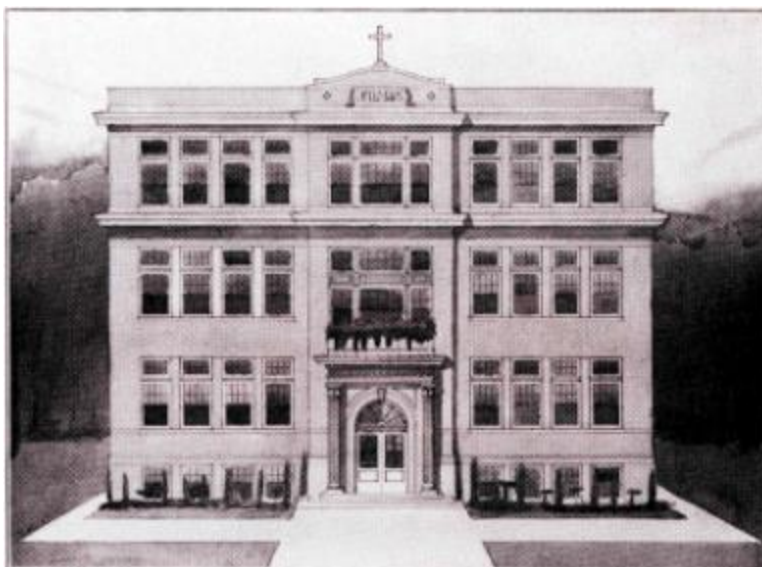


Property Location

Legend

 Proposed Landmark Boundary

Historic Designation Report



St. Leo The Great School Building

2569 St. Leo Place
Cincinnati, OH 45225

Report Submitted to:

Cincinnati Historic Conservation Office

Report prepared by:

Tony Beck, PE
Beck Engineering
10413 Bugle Way
Harrison, OH 45030

September 1, 2023

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Summary Statement

This report represents the findings for a local Historic Landmark Designation of the St. Leo the Great School Building, located at 2569 St. Leo Place in the North Fairmount neighborhood of Cincinnati. The purpose of this designation report is to establish the building's significance as an individual landmark.

This report was prepared by Tony Beck of Beck Engineering, LLC at the request of the owner, 2569 St. Leo LLC.

Boundary Description

The property boundary is conveyed in Book 14914, Page 2029 as follows: Situated in the City of Cincinnati, Hamilton County, Ohio and being more particularly described as follows:

- Commencing at a set cross notch at the Southwest intersection of St. Leo Place and Baltimore Avenue, thence along the Westerly line of St. Leo Place, South 39d40'00" West 220.18 feet to a set mag nail and the point of beginning;
Thence along said St. Leo Place, South 39d40'00" West, 105.93 feet to a set iron pin;
Thence leaving said St. Leo Place, along a new division line the following three (3) courses:
- 1) North 50d20'00" West, 128.22 feet to a set iron pin;
 - 2) North 28d35'43" East, 107.94 feet to a set iron pin;
 - 3) South 50d20'00" East, 148.95 feet to the point of beginning.

Boundary Justification

The above description is that which is the legally recorded boundary line for the property for which the designation is being requested. The building occupies the entire parcel and not other structures are present. It excludes the adjacent Rectory and Church building of St. Leo the Great Catholic Church, as these are under separate ownership.

Boundary Map



Statement of Significance

The St. Leo School Building is a 3-story building that is located in the Cincinnati suburb of North Fairmount. The school sits behind St. Leo the Great Catholic Church off of Baltimore Avenue. The school was built in 1927 by the Archdiocese of Cincinnati and was constructed with a masonry structural frame with load bearing exterior walls and interior walls. The most striking features of this building are main entrance and the overall scale of the building compared to the surrounding area. While the School sits adjacent to the Church, the surrounding properties are mostly 1 and 2-story single family houses and multi-family units. The school was designed

by J.C. (John Clifford) Grunkemeyer. Grunkemeyer also designed several Catholic Churches in the Cincinnati area, including St. Martin of Tours in Cheviot and St. Stephen in the East End.

Historic and Architectural Overview

Catholicism has always had a large congregation in the Cincinnati area. In the late 1800's and early 1900's, the Church's growth in Cincinnati was having a "coming of age" moment. St. Leo the Great Parish began in 1886. In that year, several German Catholic families petitioned the Archbishop (Elder) to build a church in North Fairmount. These families were attending Sunday Mass at St. Bonaventure on Queen City Avenue or Sacred Heart Church on Marshall Avenue. The distance to these Churches was considerable and quite inconvenient at that time. The formation of the new Church occurred at a time when the City of Cincinnati was experiencing an outward growth of population and also the Catholic Church. More and more families were moving away from the city center into the surrounding hills. North Fairmount was also experiencing this outward growth and the numbers of Catholic families were increasing to the point where they were able to sustain their own parish. The church was built to better accommodate the growing number of catholic citizens in the area.

The first parish building was completed in the Spring of 1888. The church was on the upper floor and the school rooms and pastor's quarters on the lower floor. By 1899 the school had grown so crowded that the parish built a separate rectory at 2573 Trade Street and turned the pastor's former quarters into additional classrooms. This building is still the Rectory for the Church today. In 1901, St. Leo's Pastor, Father Joseph Schmidt, began fundraising for a separate, permanent church. In 1911, Archbishop Moeller dedicated the new church. The new church was a grand Romanesque, basilica-style church with a bell tower reaching 104 feet. The church sat 800 parishioners.

In March of 1926, ground was broken for a new school, as attendance at St. Leo's School continued to grow. The school that was built in 1927 was the third school for this parish. On May 15, 1927, Archbishop dedicated the new school. That same year, St. Leo's Pastor petitioned the City to rename Trade Street to St. Leo Place, "in recognition of the parish's influence and hard work."

As the community grew, towards the end of World War II, English Woods was established close by. This parish was the primary parish for these new residents and established a chapel within the development to evangelize these new residents. In the 1960's, the social make-up of the surrounding neighborhood of North Fairmount changed significantly. This led to a change in the ministerial focus of the church and led to more community involvement, an increase in street evangelization in the English Woods community, Fay Apartments complex, and Shelton Gardens complex, and other efforts to help the needy families of the neighborhood. Today, the parish is primarily serving the Hispanic community with Spanish Masses, English as a Second Language classes, and more.

The school was closed in 1979 due to declining enrollment. The school building was then leased to the North Fairmount Community Center for use as a daycare, a senior citizens center, a

GED classroom, Health clinic, food co-op, and other focuses for the community. The building was last used in 2022 when the North Fairmount Community Center left. The building has been vacant since.

Architecture

The school building was designed in the Italian Renaissance Revival style. The Italian Renaissance Revival style is typically seen with a rectangular plan with symmetrical facades, masonry/stone exterior walls, highlighted with cast stone or terra cotta detailing. Exterior facades also include strong divisions of floors with elaborate string courses that define the sills of the windows. Many Italian Renaissance Revival style buildings have low or flat roofs hidden by cornices, parapet walls, or balustrades.

The school was designed by J.C. (John Clifford) Grunkemeyer. Grunkemeyer's architecture firm began in 1915 and was renamed Grunkemeyer & Sullivan with the addition of C. W. (Charles) Sullivan in 1920. Grunkemeyer & Sullivan also designed several Catholic Churches in the Cincinnati area, including St. Martin of Tours in Cheviot and St. Stephen in the East End, the Busse & Borgman Funeral Home (now Manifest Drawing Center) on Central Parkway, and the Maketewah Country Club in Reading.

The school building is architecturally significant as a commercial example of the Italian Renaissance Revival that is prevalent throughout Cincinnati. The building has a brick façade, cast stone entablature over Roman Doric columns at the front entrance, and a cast stone tablet at the top of the South façade. The cast stone beneath the rows of windows defines each floor with terra cotta detailing highlighting the third floor. The terra cotta and cast stone delineations continue on the sides of the building. On the rear façade, the brick is continued. Where the terra cotta detailing was stopped, a double soldier course of brick continues along the same plane.

On the rear of the building, an elevator shaft was added, along with exterior stairs from the first floor. The shaft is finished with a stucco and concrete veneer and stands out among the large amount of brick.

Inside, the building sits on a rectangular floor plate with symmetrical layout of classrooms on either side of a wide, central corridor of glazed brick. At the ends of the corridor are two curved stairways with glazed brick. A wall was put up at the north end of the corridors to separate the hallway from the elevator. The flooring and ceilings in the hallway of the first, second, and third floors have been replaced with modern vinyl flooring, and acoustic ceilings. The flooring within the stairways has been replaced with a modern, vinyl composite tile.

Findings

According to Chapter 1435 of the Cincinnati Zoning Code (Historic Preservation), certain findings must be made before a historic structure can be designated by City Council. The structure must be found to have historic significance. Historic significance means that the

attributes of a district, site or structure possess integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association, and:

1. That are associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history; or
2. That are associated with the lives of persons significant in our past; or
3. That embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period or method of construction, or that represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction; or
4. That has yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important in history or prehistory.

The St. Leo the Great School Building has historic significance according to Chapter 1435 as defined under Criterion 1. The school is an example of the outward spread of German Catholics in Cincinnati in the late 1800's-early 1900's. The school not only taught hundreds of children, but it also aided the surrounding neighborhood when its usefulness as a school started to go away in the late 1970's.

The School also meets Criterion 3 as a significant example of the Italian Renaissance Revival, located in a mainly residential area, and designed by a Cincinnati architect who had his hand in many Catholic schools and Churches in the region.

The designation of the St. Leo the Great School Building meets the requirements of Chapter 1435 (Historic Preservation) of the Cincinnati Zoning Code. The documents in this designation report provides conclusive evidence that all required findings may be made for the proposed designation.

References

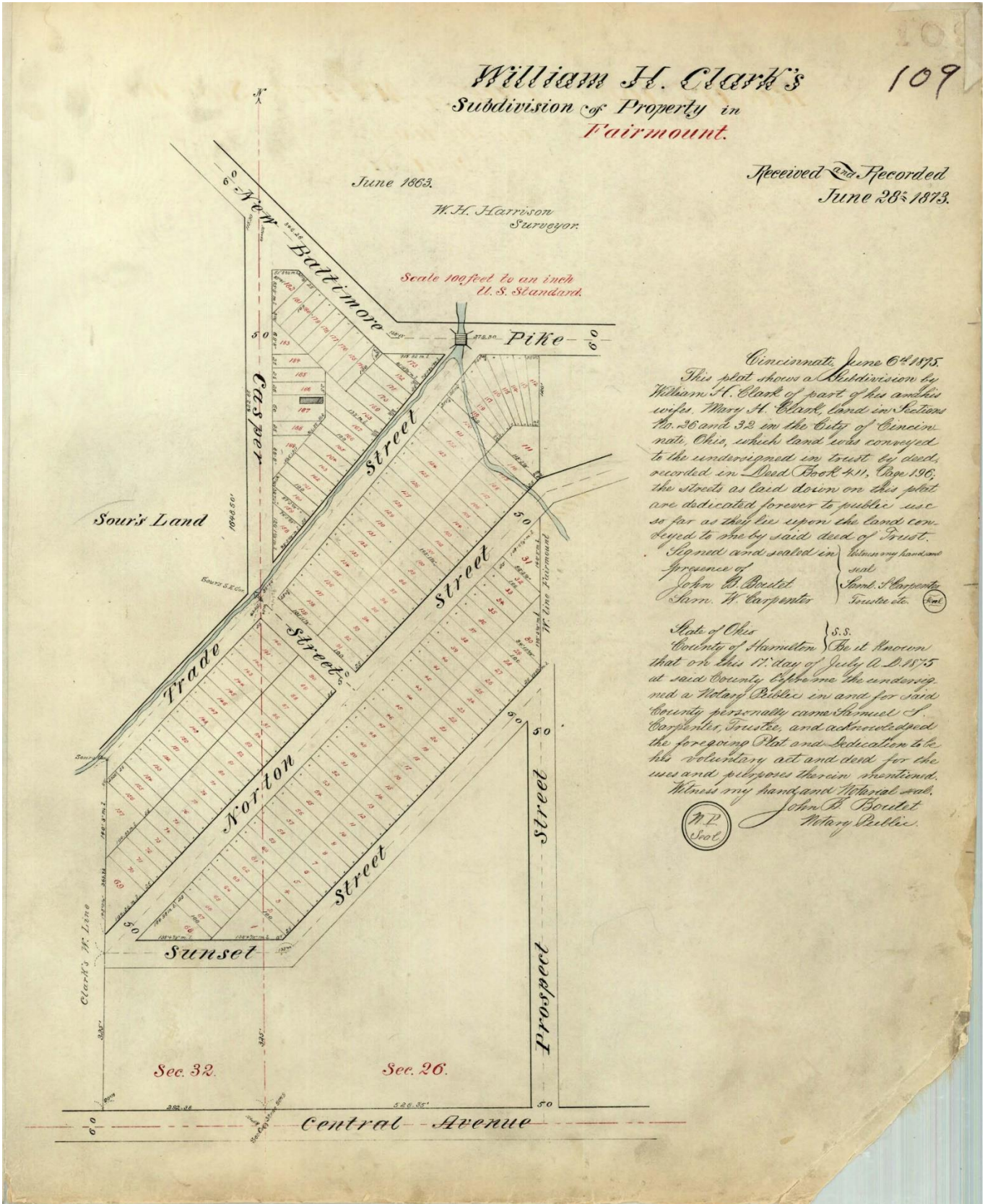
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Pictures



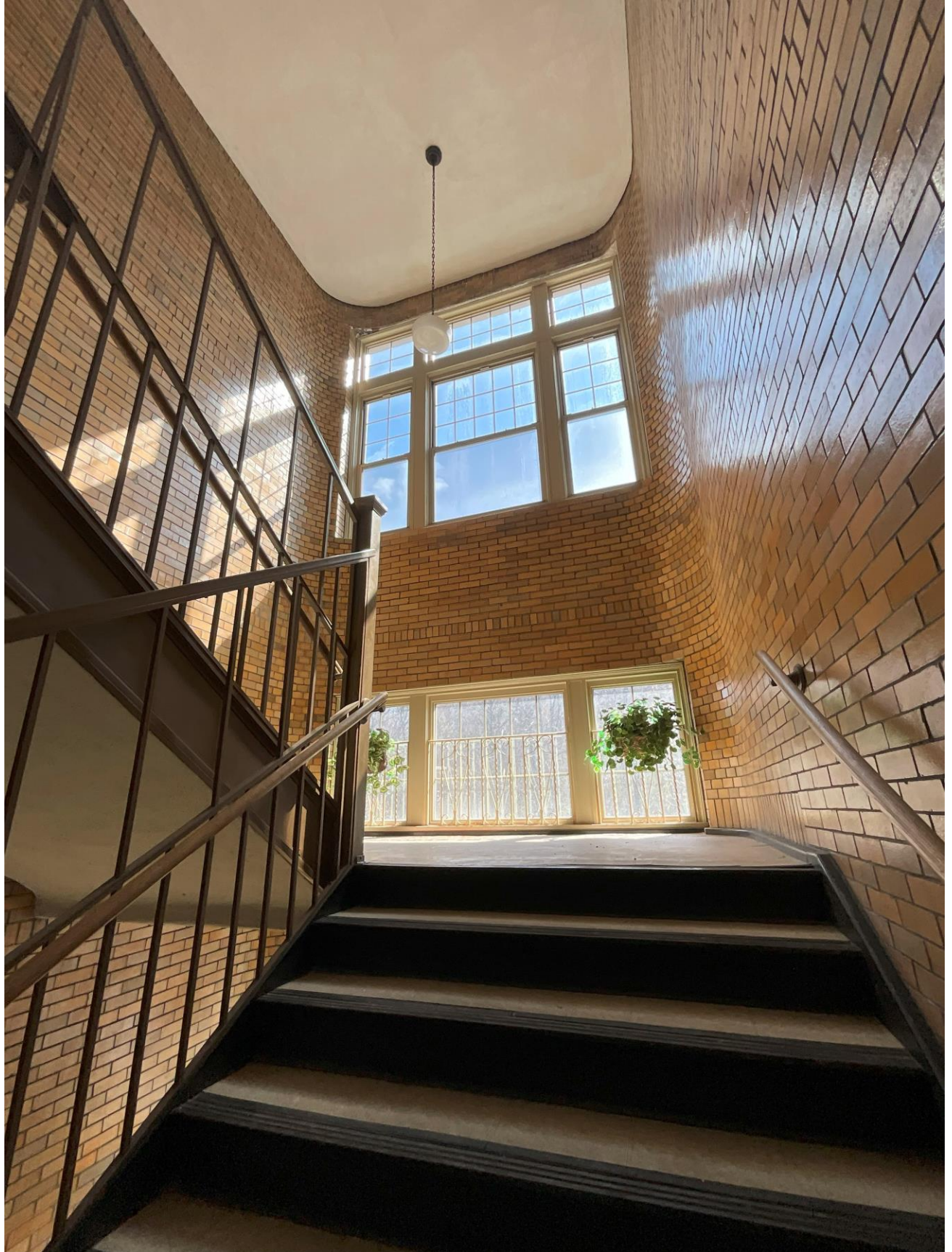












Historic Conservation Guidelines

St. Leo the Great School Building

Rehabilitation

General Terminology

Within these guidelines, the "St. Leo School" refers to 2569 St. Leo Place. St. Leo School's primary façade is the South elevation. The North, East, and West elevations are secondary façades.

Intent and General Guidelines

The following guidelines are adapted and comply with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation. When a proposed change is not addressed by the guidelines, The Secretary of the Interiors Standards for Rehabilitation, Interpreting the Standards Bulletins and Preservation Briefs will be used as guiding documents.

These guidelines are intended to ensure that rehabilitation will maintain significant features of the St. Leo School. Guidelines are intended not as strict rules but are to be used by the Historic Conservation Board as a guide to assess the compatibility and appropriateness of proposed rehabilitation changes. Reviews by the Historic Conservation Board are restricted to exterior changes proposed for this building. Repair and maintenance not changing significant features and clearly complying with the intent of these guidelines do not require board review. Interior alterations are not the purview of the Historic Conservation Board and are not subject to review.

The following general approaches are recommended:

1. Repair and maintenance: Ordinary repair and maintenance of like and kind for matching the original construction, where visible, and that does not change the appearance of the buildings, is acceptable under these guidelines. Rehabilitation may include preservation, restoration, reconstruction, or a combination of these, as appropriate and reasonable for the building.
2. Maintenance: Existing visible features that contribute to the building's overall character and are in good condition should be maintained, preserved, or conserved, where possible. Damaged visible features which can be repaired should be repaired whenever possible.
3. Replacements: Replacements of significant features damaged beyond repair, deteriorated beyond reasonable repair, or missing significant features should sensitively harmonize with the characteristics or the original feature. Replication is appropriate but not required.

Specific Guidelines

The following specific approaches to exterior elements, features, and visible components are recommended:

1. **Materials:** Materials for significant features on primary façades visible from the street that are badly damaged, deteriorated beyond reasonable repair, or missing should be replaced with materials or components that closely match the style, shape, color, treatment, and texture of the element replaced. Composition, type of joint, size of units, visible measures, placement, and detailing should be appropriate for the building. Synthetic materials, where closely matching the existing characteristics, may be utilized.
2. **Masonry Repointing:** Repointing of deteriorated and/or missing mortar shall match the existing historic mortar as close as possible. Elements of the new repointing mix shall be consistent with the existing mortar in formulation, aggregate size, texture, color, and method of application. It is recommended that test patches be applied adjacent to existing mortar and allowed to dry. An assessment should be made of new repointing mix with respect to varied constituents to be matched. The sample that closely matches the original mortar should be used for the repointing. Refer to Preservation Brief for general approach to undertaking masonry repointing.
3. **Masonry Cleaning:** Sandblasting diminishes the integrity of building materials. It is not an approved cleaning method. Should cleaning of exterior materials be undertaken, no harm should result from the approach taken to do the work. In the event that cleaning of building materials is undertaken, use the gentlest method possible to accomplish good results. Scrubbing with a bristle brush and a mild non-ionic detergent is recommended. Should this method be found ineffective, the use of approved chemical cleaning application can be used only after test patches have determined the most gentle means with respect to composition of cleaning agent, method of application, and cleaning results. Refer to PB # 1 for general approach to masonry cleaning.
4. **Water-Repellent Coatings:** Use of water-repellent coatings on historic buildings is not permitted. The problem of water infiltration into a building is associated with structural

or maintenance issues. Water-repellent coatings compound problems because the coating encapsulates moisture and does not allow it to evaporate naturally.
5. **Window and door openings:** Window and door openings are important features of these buildings. The size and location of openings are an essential part of the overall design and an important feature of these buildings' architecture. Original wall openings on primary façades should not be altered or filled. On secondary façades, original wall openings should not be significantly altered without consideration of the impact to the overall character of the original design.
6. **Window replacement:** New windows should be appropriate in material, scale, configuration, style, and size.
7. **Ornamentation:** Significant architectural features including brick and stone detailing elements should be preserved or conserved. Do not make replacements or substitutions of different size, scale, design, or incompatible materials. Replacement ornamentation should closely match originals in character, scale, configuration, style, size, texture, and color. Some synthetic materials, including fiberglass castings or composite materials, may be considered.

8. Roofs: Chimneys, parapets, and other architectural features that define the buildings' roofline should be maintained. On primary façades, vents, skylights, rooftop utilities, and equipment such as elevator mechanicals and other new roof elements should be placed so that they are inconspicuous from the street.

9. Painting: Repainting existing features that were historically painted is acceptable. Existing exterior elements that were historically not painted, such as brick, stone, and terra cotta, should be left unpainted. Use colors that are appropriate to the buildings' age, history, and style.

10. Outside attachments: Exterior light fixtures should be appropriate for the building's style and should be simple and contemporary.

11. Awnings: Awnings are acceptable provided they adhere to the National Park Service Preservation Brief 44 for the use of awnings on historic buildings.¹

12. Signs: Signs should be designed for clarity, legibility, and compatibility with the building or property on which they are located. Signs should not cover or obscure architectural features. Temporary signage is permitted without review by the Historic Conservation Board.

Additions and Exterior Alterations

Intent and General Guidelines

1. Additions: Additions should follow existing codes, and regulations. Any addition should be compatible in character with the original building, with sensitivity to existing massing and scale, site, and appearance within the building's existing context. Additions should be sympathetic, may be complementary, but need not be imitative in design. Additions should be designed to relate architecturally, not overwhelming the original building.

2. Alterations: Alterations should follow construction guidelines for alterations, codes, and regulations. Alterations should not change or alter significant features.

3. Appropriateness: The appropriate addition and alteration design solutions should include:

a. How well the proposed design for the addition or alteration relates to the original building and neighboring buildings.

b. How closely the proposed addition or alteration meets the specific intentions of these guidelines.

Site Improvements

Intent and General Guidelines

1. Site improvements, such as improvement and/or alteration to existing paving, fences, and landscaping should be in keeping with the character of the building and not detract from its setting or architectural character.

2. The design of any new site improvement construction should be in keeping with the character of the existing building and not detract from its setting or architectural character.
3. Any design of site improvements should capitalize on the unique setting and location of the St. Leo School. The existing views towards the facades should be maintained as an important visual contribution to the integrity of the building.

Demolition

Demolition may be considered if the demolition request is for an inappropriate addition or non-significant portion of the building and the demolition will not adversely affect those parts of the building which are significant as determined by the Historic Conservation Board.

**APPLICATION FOR
LANDMARK DESIGNATION
HISTORIC CONSERVATION BOARD PUBLIC HEARING
STAFF REPORT**

APPLICATION #: N/A
APPLICANTS: 2569 St Leo, LLC
OWNER: 2569 St Leo, LLC
ADDRESS: 2569 St. Leo Place
PARCELS: 206-0005-0272
ZONING: SF-2
COMMUNITY: North Fairmount
REPORT DATE: November 21, 2023
STAFF REVIEW: Douglas Owen, Urban Conservator

Nature of Request:

The applicant is requesting a Local Historic Landmark Designation for the property generally located 2569 St. Leo Place known as the St. Leo The Great School Building. The landmark designation is sought for the historic parcel boundary on parcel 206-0005-0272. The property is not currently listed on the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) but received a Determination of Eligibility, along with the larger church complex, from the Keeper of the NRHP in 1981.

1435-07-2-A: *Application for the consideration of the designation of a Historic District, Historic Landmark or a Historic Site may be made by the filing of a designation application, in such form as the Historic Conservation Board may prescribe, by the owner of the subject property or by the owner of a property within the area proposed to be designated, by Council or a member of Council, by the City Manager, by the Urban Conservator, by the City Planning Commission, or by a local community organization, including, but not limited to, preservation associations and community councils. No Historic Structure or Historic Site may be demolished or excavated during the pendency of a designation application, which commences upon the filing of a complete designation application.*

Summary and Background:

The St. Leo The Great School Building is an Italian Renaissance Revival school building designed by architect John Clifford Grunkemeyer located on the north side of St. Leo Place between its intersection with Casper Street on the west and Baltimore Avenue on the east in the North Fairmount neighborhood. The building, built in 1927, is a three-story building featuring a symmetrical façade, masonry bearing walls, a raised foundation, an ornate projecting entry porch and terra cotta and stone banding/ cornices on the upper levels. While the building does not include all features of the style, such as arched or Palladian windows, a stone base and a roofline balustrade, the features included are

representative of the Italian Renaissance Revival style as applied to a vernacular educational building.

The building retains significance under the themes of religious and ethnic heritage as it was one of the first German Catholic schools organized in the North Fairmount neighborhood and represents the history of social and educational activities of the expanding German Catholic population. The St. Leo The Great parish was established in 1886 following the petition of area residents for a church in the neighborhood. Prior to its establishment, the growing Catholic community of North Fairmount had to travel significant distances to St. Bonaventure in South Fairmount or Sacred Heart in Clifton. While the distance to these churches does not seem great by today's standards, when viewed by the transportation standards of 1886, it was significant. The formation of the parish and the subsequent school occurred in a time of Cincinnati's history when population growth was rapid, and residents were fleeing the densely populated conditions of the central basin to the surrounding hillsides.

The first parish building was completed in 1888, housing the church on the upper floor and the school and pastor's quarters on the ground level. By 1899, the school enrollment had expanded to the point where overcrowding was an issue, expanding into the former pastor's quarters when a new rectory was completed in that year. In 1911 the new church was dedicated and still stands adjacent to the current school building in the Romanesque Revival style, seating 800 parishioners. After years of additional growth, the current school building, the third school for the parish, was built in 1927.

Following World War II, the parish began serving the public housing communities of English Woods and by the 1960s included evangelizing missions and community outreach in other nearby public housing projects such as Fay Apartments and Shelton Gardens. With the demographic changes that occurred in the postwar period, enrollment in the school began to decline as many Catholic families began to move out of the North Fairmount area. In 1979, the school closed due to continued declining enrollment; however, it remained in use as it was leased by the church for a daycare center, senior center, GED classroom, health clinic and other community-based uses. The North Fairmount Community Center was the last tenant in the building, vacating the property in 2022.

The St. Leo The Great School Building is significant under Criteria 1 and 3. Under Criterion 1 (and Criteria Consideration A), it is significant as a reflection of the history of social and educational activities of German Catholic residents in North Fairmount. Under Criterion 3, the building is architecturally significant as an example of Italian Renaissance Revival style influences as applied to a vernacular religious educational building by architect John Clifford Grunkemeyer. The Designation Report submitted with this application fully details the historic and architectural significance of the building.

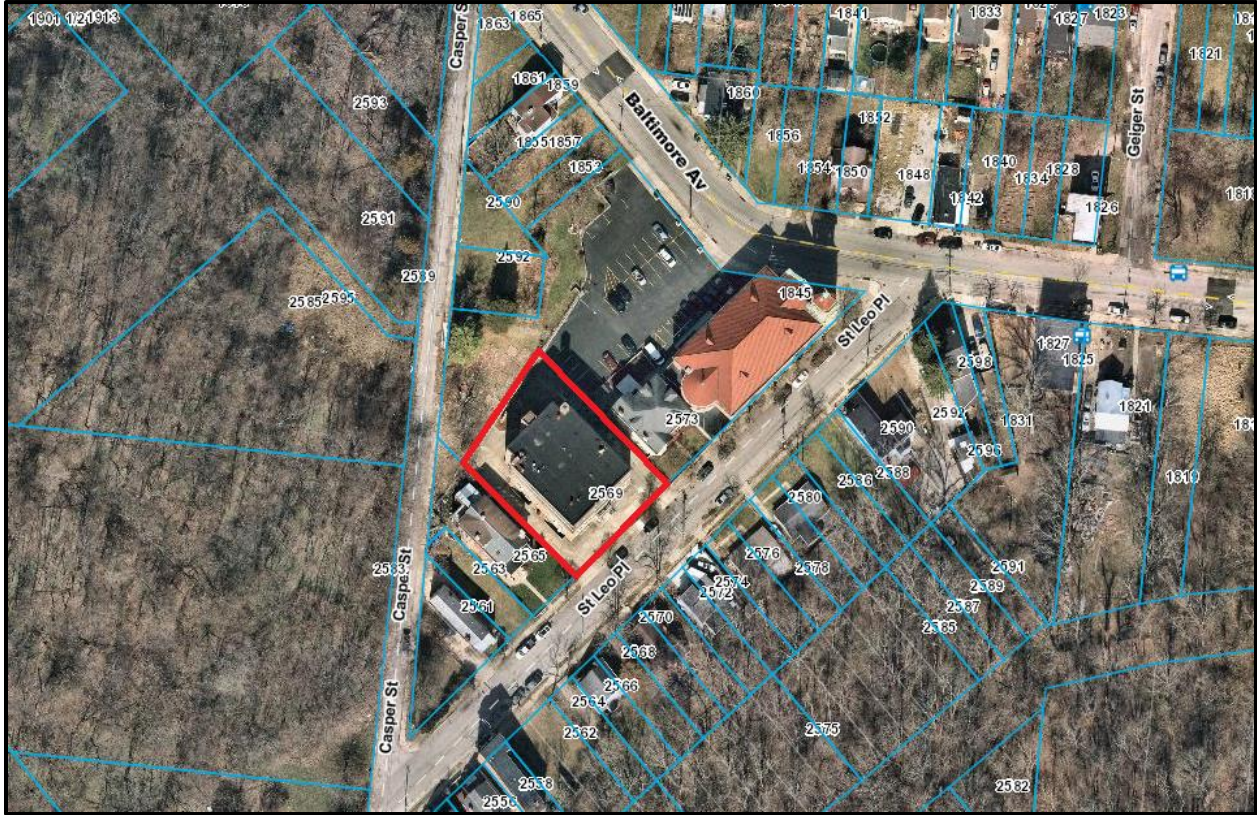


Figure 1. Location of property. Proposed approximate boundary shown in red. Image from Cagis.



Figure 2. Image of subject property facing southeast ca. August 2014. Image from Google.

Applicable Zoning Code Sections:

Zoning District: Section 1403 – Single-Family Residential Districts
Landmark Designation: Section 1435-07

Review Process

The procedure for consideration of an application for designation is detailed in 1435-07-2-B of the Zoning Code. It includes reviews by the Historic Conservation Board, City Planning Commission, and City Council. The complete process and review criteria are included below.

§ 1435-07-2-B. - Report, Public Hearing and Decision.

The procedure for the consideration of an application for the designation of a Historic Landmark, Historic District or Historic Site is as follows:

- a) *Report.* Within sixty (60) days of the receipt of a completed designation application, the Urban Conservator has the duty to prepare and send to the Historic Conservation Board a report and proposed conservation guidelines for the Historic Landmark, Historic District or Historic Site and a proposed boundary map for any Historic District. For a proposed Historic District, the Urban Conservator shall prepare and send to the Historic Conservation Board a list of all structures within the proposed Historic District that the Urban Conservator considers to be Non-Contributing Structures. Not later than thirty (30) days after receipt of the Urban Conservator's report and proposed conservation guidelines, the Historic Conservation Board shall schedule a public hearing on the proposed designation.
- b) *Historic Conservation Board.* After a public hearing on the proposed designation, the Historic Conservation Board has the duty to decide whether to recommend designation of the proposed Historic Landmark, Historic District or Historic Site and forward its decision, whether favorable or not, along with the proposed conservation guidelines to the City Planning Commission.
- c) *City Planning Commission.* Within thirty (30) days of the transmittal of the decision and recommendation of the Historic Conservation Board, the City Planning Commission shall hold a public hearing to determine whether to follow the recommendation of the Historic Conservation Board. In making such determination, the City Planning Commission shall consider all of the following factors:
 - a. The relationship of the proposed designation to the comprehensive plans of the city and of the community in which the proposed Historic Landmark, Historic District or Historic Site is located; and
 - b. The effect of the proposed designation on the surrounding areas and economic development plans of the city; and
 - c. Such other planning and historic preservation considerations as may be relevant to the proposed designation.

After a public hearing on the proposed designation and conservation guidelines, the City Planning Commission has the duty to decide whether to approve or

disapprove the designation and forward its decision, whether favorable or not, along with the conservation guidelines to Council.

- d) *Council*. Upon receipt of the decision of the City Planning Commission, Council shall vote to ordain or overrule the City Planning Commission's decision. A simple majority of the members elected to Council is required to ordain a designation; provided, however, if the City Planning Commission disapproves the designation, a two-thirds majority vote of Council is required to overrule the City Planning Commission's decision.

Designation Review

Historic Significance

Staff finds that, based on the attributes and architectural integrity outlined in the Designation Report, the application for the nomination of 2569 St. Leo Place meets the requirements prescribed in Chapter 1435, specifically §1435-07-1, "Becoming a Historic Structure; Determination of Historic Significance".

The Cincinnati Zoning Code (CZC) § 1435-07-1(a), specifies that a structure or group of structures may be deemed as having Historic Significance if it has at least one of the following attributes:

1. *Association with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history; or*
2. *Association with the lives of persons significant in our past; or*
3. *Embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, method of construction or that represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction; or*
4. *That has yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.*

The Criteria in Chapter 1435-07-1 is based off the criteria for the National Register and in fact models the language exactly. Significance is determined based on if it meets the criteria set forth within the National Register and the local ordinance based upon it.

The Historic Conservation Board is tasked with determining if it meets one of the Criteria set forth in Chapter 1435-07-1 of the Cincinnati Zoning Code and making a recommendation to the Cincinnati Planning Commission and City Council based on its significance.

The applicant is nominating 2569 St. Leo Place under Criterion 1 - *Association with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history* and Criterion 3 - *Embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, method of construction or that represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction*.

It should be noted, in June 1981, the Keeper of the National Register of Historic Places determined the St. Leo Roman Catholic Church and its related buildings, including the St. Leo The Great School Building, to be eligible for listing in the NRHP. It is not currently

listed. In Staff's review of the designation report and the documentation provided, the building at 2569 St. Leo Place meets the criteria in the following ways:

Criterion 1: Association with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.

- Represents the establishment and growth of Catholic congregations and their commitment to education in Cincinnati and the North Fairmount community.
- Represents the history of educational activities of Catholic residents in the North Fairmount and surrounding communities.

Criterion 3: Embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, method of construction or that represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction.

- The building is a brick masonry building that exhibits many of the defining elements of the Italian Renaissance Revival style including a symmetrical façade, a prominent projecting entryway with Doric columns and a stone entablature, an arched entry door with leaded glass and prominent terra cotta and stone belt courses/ cornices above the second and third stories.
- Aside from the elevator shaft on the rear of the building, no significant alterations or additions have occurred since the building's original construction in 1927.
- The building is one of the few remaining original and intact Italian Renaissance Revival parochial school buildings in Cincinnati.
- The building retains exceptional historic integrity, retaining all its major character-defining features.

Conservation Guidelines

The Cincinnati Zoning Code (CZC) § 1435-07-2-C. - Adoption of Conservation Guidelines.

“Conservation guidelines shall promote the conservation, development and use of the Historic Landmark, Historic District or Historic Site and its special historic, architectural, community or aesthetic interest or value. Insofar as practicable, conservation guidelines shall promote redevelopment and revitalization of Historic Structures and compatible new development within the Historic District. The guidelines shall not limit new construction within a Historic District to a single period or architectural style but may seek to preserve the integrity of existing Historic Structures. Conservation guidelines shall take into account the impact of the designation of a Historic Landmark, Historic District or Historic Site on the residents of the affected area, the effect of the designation on the economic and social characteristics of the affected area, the projected impact of the designation on the budget of the city, as well as all of the factors listed in paragraph 1435-07-2-B(c) above. Conservation guidelines shall address Non-Contributing Structures. Approved conservation guidelines shall be published on the City's website and be made available for public inspection in the office of the Urban Conservator.

Staff finds that the proposed St. Leo The Great School Building Conservation Guidelines present best practice approaches in seeking to preserve the integrity of the exterior of the school building while also making the building eligible for future funding sources including grants and tax credits to help with the upkeep of the building. The proposed Conservation Guidelines cover changes to the exterior of the building. The interior is not proposed to be subject to local review.

The proposed guidelines are also compatible with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation.

Other Considerations:

Prehearing Results:

- November 21, 2023 – A Joint Staff Conference was held with the Department of City Planning. No opposition to the proposed designation was presented.

Comments Provided to Staff:

Staff received no objections to the proposed designation at the time of the finalization of this report.

Proposed Work

A development plan has not been presented to the Historic Conservation Office for this building. The applicant has noted their intent to apply for Historic Preservation Tax Credits for renovations to the building.

Consistency with Plan Cincinnati (2012): This designation is consistent with the Plan Cincinnati goal embodied in the Sustain Initiative, specifically goal #2, preserving our built history as outlined in pages 197-198 of the plan.

Recommendation:

Staff recommends the Historic Conservation Board take the following actions:

1. **RECOMMEND** to the Cincinnati City Planning Commission (CPC) and to the Cincinnati City Council (CC) for the designation of Tax Parcel 206-0005-0272, also referred to as 2569 St. Leo Place and known as the St. Leo The Great School Building as a Historic Landmark and the adoption of the related St. Leo The Great School Building Historic Conservation Guidelines subject to the following conditions:
 - a. Any construction proposed upon the proposed Historic Landmark shall comply with the proposed Historic Conservation Guidelines.
2. **FINDING:** The Board makes this determination per Section 1435-07-1:
 - a. That it has been demonstrated that the St. Leo The Great School Building meets the conditions of §1435-07-1(a)(1) as the building maintains integrity and *“Embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, method of construction or that represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction.”*

- b. The St. Leo The Great School Building has local significance as an excellent example of Italian Renaissance Revival style architecture as applied to a vernacular religious educational building in Cincinnati.
- c. That it has been demonstrated that the St. Leo The Great School Building meets the conditions of §1435-07-1(a)(1) as the building maintains integrity and represents an *Association with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history*.
- d. The building retains an exceptional level of historic integrity.
- e. In June 1981, the Keeper of the National Register of Historic Places determined the St. Leo Roman Catholic Church and its related buildings, including the St. Leo The Great School Building, to be eligible for listing in the NRHP.
- f. That the proposed St. Leo The Great School Building Historic Conservation Guidelines are compatible with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation.

December 15, 2023

Exhibit D

Cincinnati City Planning Commission
II Centennial Plaza
805 Central Avenue, 7th Floor
Cincinnati, Ohio 45202

Honorable Members of the City Planning Commission:

The Historic Conservation Board (“Board”) transmits herewith the following items for your consideration concerning the proposed St. Leo The Great School Building Historic Landmark Designation Application:

1. Local Historic Landmark Designation Report.
2. Proposed Historic Landmark Conservation Guidelines.
3. Historic Conservation Office Staff Report dated November 21, 2023.

Summary:

2569 St. Leo LLC has applied to designate the St. Leo The Great School Building located at 2569 St. Leo Place in the North Fairmount neighborhood as a Local Historic Landmark pursuant to Cincinnati Municipal Code (“CMC”) Section 1435-07-2-A.

Upon review of the designation application pursuant to CMC Sections 1435-07-1(a)(1) and 1435-07-1(a)(3), the Urban Conservator, prepared a report recommending approval of the landmark designation and the associated conservation guidelines. The Board then, at its regular meeting on December 4, 2023, held a public hearing on the proposed designation at which it heard from the Urban Conservator and proponents of the designation whether the St. Leo The Great School Building qualifies for landmark designation. Upon considering the designation application (including the designation report and conservation guidelines), the Urban Conservator’s report, and comments received at its public hearing, a majority of the Board’s members present throughout the hearing and constituting a quorum voted to recommend designation of the St. Leo The Great School Building as a Local Historic Landmark finding that it has Historic Significance based on its association with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history and because it embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, and method of construction and thus satisfies CMC Sections 1435-07-1(a)(1) and 1435-07-1(a)(3). The Board further resolved to recommend approval of the associated conservation guidelines.

Aye

Nav

Absent

Mr. Sundermann

Mr. Zielasko

Mrs. McKenzie

Mrs. Smith-Dobbins

Mr. Voss

Mr. Yung

The Historic Conservation Board

/s/Allison McKenzie

Allison McKenzie
Historic Conservation Board Chair

/s/David Sturkey

David Sturkey, Staff Attorney
Historic Conservation Board

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CALDWELL NJ 07006

2570 ST LEO PLACE LLC
2565 ST LEO PLACE
CINCINNATI OH 45225

ALSTON ANTHONY
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BROOKLYN NY 11211

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2573 ST LEO PL
CINCINNATI OH 45225-1922

ARCHBISHOP OF CINCINNATI TR
100 E EIGHTH ST
CINCINNATI OH 45202

ARTHUR PLACE FARM LLC
1913 ARTHUR PL
CINCINNATI OH 45225

BERLIN JASON MICHAEL
3716 BEEKMAN ST
CINCINNATI OH 45223

BOPE GROUP LTD
1857 BALTIMORE AVE
CINCINNATI OH 45225

CINCINNATI METROPOLITAN
HOUSING AUTHORITY
1635 WESTERN AVE
CINCINNATI OH 45214

DELL LINDA
1919 WEBMAN CT
CINCINNATI OH 45223

ENHANCED HEALTHCARE
SOLUTIONS LLC
1034 SUNSET AVE FLR 2
CINCINNATI OH 45205

FAHNBULLEH MAMMEH
1821 BALTIMORE AVE
CINCINNATI OH 45225

FAIRVIEW ESTATES LIMITED
PARTNERSHIP
21 W 13TH ST SUITE 100
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GILBERT LESTER
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CINCINNATI OH 45225

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CINCINNATI OH 45245

HAMILTON COUNTY LAND
REUTILIZATION CORPORATION
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HILL LAWRENCE E
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HILLSIDE TRUST THE
710 TUSCULUM AVE
CINCINNATI OH 45226

HITCHCOCK CHARLES & LERDA
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CUMMING GA 30041

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MALONE JARED
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UNION CITY IN 47390

MCMILLAN JENNIE
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MCQUEEN YOLANDA
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MOD RS HOLDINGS LLC
P O BOX 42489
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MORELAND ORASA A
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NATIONAL CLEANING CONCEPTS
LLC
1604 W GALBRAITH RD
CINCINNATI OH 45239

NORTH FAIRMOUNT COMMUNITY
CENTER INC
1826 BALTIMORE AVE
CINCINNATI OH 45225

PAUCAR SEGUNDO D
2590 ST LEO PL
CINCINNATI OH 45225

PENDULUM PROPERTIES OF OHIO
LLC
6545 MARKET NOR TH AVE STE 100
CANTON OH 44721

REVELS SHANAE
12067 CEDARCREEK DR
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ROYSE INVESTMENTS LLC
406 MILLBORO SPRINGS DR
BATAVIA OH 45103

RZAGULIYEV JAVID &
ANTWAUNETTE
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CINCINNATI OH 45247

SACHDEV NAVNEET
606 RIDDLE RD
CINCINNATI OH 45220

SCHMIDT SCOTT J
1845 CARLL ST
CINCINNATI OH 45225-1919

SCHNURR DENNIS M ARCHBISHOP
OF CINCINNATI TR
2573 ST LEO PL
CINCINNATI OH 45225

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DEPT OF HOUSING AND URBAN
DEVELOPMENT
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WASHINGTON DC 20410

ST LEO PLACE LLC
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CINCINNATI OH 45225

TAYLOR ROBERT B & RUTH
2554 SAINT LEO PL
CINCINNATI OH 45225-1959

TOKE ILONA TR
2049 QUEEN CITY AVE
CINCINNATI OH 45214

TYE YVETTE Y
2556 SAINT LEO PL
CINCINNATI OH 45225-1959

VICI CINCINNATI LLC
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CINCINNATI OH 45209

WAT GROUP LTD
1853 BALTIMORE AVE
CINCINNATI OH 45225

North Fairmount Community Council
2569 St Leo Place,
Cincinnati, Ohio 45225