

COLORADO HISTORICAL SOCIETY

COLORADO STATE REGISTER OF HISTORIC PROPERTIES NOMINATION FORM

SECTION I

Name of Property

Historic Name St. Stephen's Episcopal Church / Church of the Holy Redeemer

Other Names _____

Address of Property

[] address not for publication

Street Address 2552 Williams Street

City Denver

County Denver

Zip 80205

Present Owner of Property

(for multiple ownership, list the names and addresses of each owner on one or more continuation sheets)

Name Episcopal Diocese of Colorado

Address 1300 Washington

Phone 303-837-1173

City Denver

State Colorado

Zip 80203-2008

Owner Consent for Nomination

(attach signed consent from each owner of property - see attached form)

Preparer of Nomination

Name Nicole Hernandez

Date 5/25/06

Organization Historic Denver, Inc.

Address 1536 Wynkoop Street, Suite 400A

Phone 303-534-5288 x 16

City Denver

State Colorado

Zip 80202

FOR OFFICIAL USE:

Site Number 5DV.7024

____ Nomination Received

Senate # _____

House # _____

____ Review Board Recommendation

____ CHS Board State Register Listing

____ Approval ____ Denial

____ Approved ____ Denied

Certification of Listing: President, Colorado Historical Society

Date _____

COLORADO STATE REGISTER OF HISTORIC PROPERTIES

Property Name St. Stephen's Episcopal Church / Church of the Holy Redeemer

SECTION II

Local Historic Designation

Has the property received local historic designation?

no

yes --- individually designated designated as part of a historic district

Date designated _____

Designated by _____ (Name of municipality or county)

Use of Property

Historic Church

Current Church

Original Owner Episcopal Diocese of Colorado

Source of Information Profile Church of the Holy Redeemer, (Church Brochure)

Year of Construction 1896, 1907, 1910, 1977

Source of Information Colorado Architects, Biographical Sketch. Architects by Design: The Fisher Legacy. Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation, Colorado Historical Society, Denver

Architect, Builder, Engineer, Artist or Designer William Fisher; Arthur Fisher

Source of Information Colorado Architects, Biographical Sketch. Architects by Design: The Fisher Legacy. Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation, Colorado Historical Society, Denver

Locational Status

Original location of structure(s)

Structure(s) moved to current location

Date of move _____

SECTION III

Description and Alterations

(describe the current and original appearance of the property and any alterations on one or more continuation sheets)

COLORADO STATE REGISTER OF HISTORIC PROPERTIES

Property Name St. Stephen's Episcopal Church / Church of the Holy Redeemer

SECTION IV

Significance of Property

Nomination Criteria

- A** - property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to history
- B** - property is connected with persons significant in history
- C** - property has distinctive characteristics of a type, period, method of construction or artisan
- D** - property is of geographic importance
- E** - property contains the possibility of important discoveries related to prehistory or history

Areas of Significance

- | | | |
|---|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture | <input type="checkbox"/> Economics | <input type="checkbox"/> Landscape |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Education | <input type="checkbox"/> Architecture |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Archaeology –
prehistoric | <input type="checkbox"/> Engineering | <input type="checkbox"/> Law |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Archaeology –
historic | <input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment/
Recreation | <input type="checkbox"/> Literature |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Art | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Ethnic Heritage | <input type="checkbox"/> Military |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Commerce | <input type="checkbox"/> Exploration/
Settlement | <input type="checkbox"/> Performing Arts |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Communications | <input type="checkbox"/> Geography/
Community Identity | <input type="checkbox"/> Politics/
Government |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Community
Planning and
Development | <input type="checkbox"/> Health/Medicine | <input type="checkbox"/> Religion |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Conservation | <input type="checkbox"/> Industry | <input type="checkbox"/> Science |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> Invention | <input type="checkbox"/> Social History |
| | | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation |

Significance Statement

(explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets)

Bibliography

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

SECTION V

Locational Information

Lot(s) 1-6 Block 10 Addition Schinner's

USGS Topographic Quad Map Commerce City

Verbal Boundary Description of Nominated Property

(describe the boundaries of the nominated property on a continuation sheet)

COLORADO STATE REGISTER OF HISTORIC PROPERTIES

Property Name St. Stephen's Episcopal Church / Church of the Holy Redeemer

SECTION VI

Photograph Log for Black and White Photographs

(prepare a photograph log on one or more continuation sheets)

SECTION VII

ADDITIONAL MATERIALS TO ACCOMPANY NOMINATION

Owner Consent Form

Black and White Photographs

Color Slides

Sketch Map(s)

Photocopy of USGS Map Section

Optional Materials

For Office Use Only

Property Type: building(s) district site structure object area

Architectural Style/Engineering Type: Gothic Revival; Foursquare

Period of Significance: 1910; 1931-1966

Level of Significance: Local State National

Acreage less than one

P.M. 6th Township 3S Range 68W Section 35 Quarter Sections NW NE NW NE

UTM Reference: Zone 13 Easting 502986 Northing 4400268 (NAD27)

Site Elevation: 5,260 feet

Property Name St. Stephen's Episcopal Church / Church of the Holy Redeemer

DESCRIPTION and ALTERATIONS

The 1910 St. Stephen's Episcopal Church, later known as the Church of the Holy Redeemer, stands on the southeast corner of the intersection of Twenty-sixth Avenue and Williams Street in Denver, Colorado. The surrounding Whittier neighborhood showcases tree lined streets located just east of downtown Denver. The neighborhood primarily includes single-family residences, many of which were built in the first four decades of the twentieth century. Architectural styles and types include the Foursquare, Queen Anne, Bungalow, Tudor Revival, and Dutch Colonial Revival. Across the intersection from the church is the campus of Manual High School.

The church has an L-shaped plan approximately 80 feet by 70 feet with the front facing west. A landscaped courtyard occupies the space to the south of the 1910 sanctuary and the west of the parish hall. A concrete sidewalk with a sod curb strip borders the north and west sides of the property. To the south is the rectory, a Foursquare type house built in 1907.

West Façade (Photograph 1)

The church's west façade includes the entrance to the 1910 sanctuary and the entrance to the community space and office wing originally built in 1896 and remodeled and expanded in 1977.

The 1910 portion of the church is approximately 80 feet by 30 feet and characterized as a Gothic Revival style building with a steeply pitched gabled asphalt shingle roof and a raked parapet lined with white sandstone. The walls are of red brick in Flemish bond extending into the rectangular pediment that is framed by white sandstone trim. The front parapet and side parapets were at one time

shortened by a foot or two due to structural failure. The central parapet now contains only the bottom portion of the original sandstone cross. The slight vertical projection at the top of each of the corner pilasters was also lowered. The entrance to the sanctuary is defined with sandstone steps leading to a one-story projecting entrance porch supported by a flattened Gothic entry arch. Double wood doors under a second arch lead into the narthex of the building. Above the entrance is a large stained glass window with Gothic tracery.



Figure 1. St. Stephen's Episcopal Church about 1910. Photographer: L.C. McClure. Source: Western History/Genealogy Department, Denver Public Library

Property Name St. Stephen's Episcopal Church / Church of the Holly Redeemer

North Façade
(Photographs 2-5)

The north façade is characterized by projecting pilasters capped with rectangular trim of white sandstone and windows that are surrounded with white sandstone and a white sandstone keystone. The windows retain their original stained glass elaborately divided with rectangular shaped lead tracery with a single colored symbol in the center of each window. The leaded windows retain their original wood frames and have both Gothic arched or flattened Gothic arched openings. Protective coverings are over the glass windows have become translucent with age, but tracery remains visible. There is a small projecting brick bay.



Figure 2. St. Stephen's Episcopal Church about 1910. Photographer: L.C. McClure. Source: Western History/ Genealogy Department, Denver Public Library

East Façade
(Photographs 6-9)

The east façade faces the alley. The 1910 portion of the east side has a large stucco Gothic arched bay that was presumably once filled with a stained glass window. To the south of the 1910 portion of the building the remains of the original 1896 building are evident in the change of texture and color of the red brick and the evidence of brick window arches and openings. This original Flemish bond, soft fired, red brick extends about 15 feet to where the brick changes to that of the 1977 expansion. The new red brick laid in running bond has a stylized texture and blackish markings. A door accesses the community center kitchen. The gabled asphalt shingle roof runs north-south with small cross gables on the east and west.

South Façade of Parish Hall
(Photograph 10)

The south façade is characterized by small windows that face a fence to the adjacent property.

West Façade of Parish Hall
(Photographs 11-12)

The west façade of the parish hall has three round arched wood entrance doors that lead into the community space. There are also 11 rectangular single light windows and a single recessed entrance to the south. Between the parish hall and the 1910 building is a glass enclosure for the baptismal font. In front of the parish hall and to the south of the 1910 sanctuary is a large red flagstone and red concrete courtyard.

Property Name St. Stephen's Episcopal Church / Church of the Holly Redeemer

South Façade of 1910 Building
(Photographs 13-14)

The south façade of the 1910 building mimics the north façade with projecting pilasters capped with sandstone copping and similarly trimmed windows. Near the west end of the building is a wood single-door entrance under the protruding parapet.

Sanctuary Interior
(Photographs 15-32)

The interior of the sanctuary remains much as it did when originally built. The west doors open into the narthex. To the north a stairs with wood balustrade leads up to the balcony. The narthex opens into the sanctuary. Above the arched entrance is a large mural. The north and south walls are painted white. The original lights with decorative four leaf clover patterns hang from the heavy exposed wood trusses above the wood pews. The raised alter at the east is separated from the sanctuary by a round arch. To the north of the alter is an organ and behind the alter is a large fresco painting of the Madonna and Child. To the south of the alter is a passage to a small chapel. An opening on the west side of the chapel accesses the parish hall. Along the south wall of the sanctuary is a baptismal font niche added in 1977 as part of the renovation. Clear glass surroundings the space, letting in natural light. A connection to the parish hall addition is through a round arch on the south wall.



Figure 3. St. Stephen's Episcopal Church about 1920. Source: Western History/Genealogy Department, Denver Public Library

Parish Hall Interior
(Photographs 33-37)

Wood trusses cross the ceiling of the large fellowship hall and a rounded staircase comes from the second-story offices. Along the east wall are entrances to the chapel, the kitchen, and the nursery. On the south wall are three stained glass windows with grape vine motifs. There is another stair to the offices on the west wall and a large entrance to the foyer of the building that leads to the south and a large meeting space.

Alterations to Church Building

The 1910 sanctuary was added to the original small 1896 building. By 1977, the old parish hall building at the rear had fallen into extreme disrepair and it was decided to completely renovate the space to include some new construction to the west. Denver architect G. Cabell Childress designed the renovation and addition. In 1978, the American Institute of Architects awarded the project a citation in the recycled buildings category stating that the work was “a most sympathetic architectural rehabilitation of existing facilities as well as an addition to accomplish structural as well as social recycling for the parish involved.”

Property Name St. Stephen's Episcopal Church / Church of the Holly Redeemer

As previously mentioned, the front and side parapets were shortened by a foot or two due to structural failure. The upper portion of each of the corner pilasters was also lowered. Funds and circumstances of the congregation at the time did not allow for restoration.

Rectory

(Photographs 38-40)

Directly south of the church is a Foursquare style house built in 1907. The red brick house is two stories high with a rectangular plan. The hipped roof is covered by asphalt shingles. The house features double-hung windows and a full-width front porch with Doric columns. The single front door is made of wood and is flanked by a large picture window. Like the thousands of Foursquares built in Denver between 1894 and 1920, the rectory is characterized by its two stories, rectangular plan with four rooms per floor, and its hipped roof with central attic dormer.

Property Name St. Stephen's Episcopal Church / Church of the Holly Redeemer

SIGNIFICANCE STATEMENT

The 1910 building is significant for the State Register under Criterion A in the area of *ethnic heritage*. A collaboration of recently arrived Caucasian English immigrants and African Americans fleeing racial violence in the South formed Denver's Church of the Holy Redeemer in 1892. They came together because of a common faith and acted on the courage of their convictions to found an integrated church. This was a rare occurrence in the late nineteenth century. From their 1931 move to this site, the building's strategic location in a racially charged section of the city allowed the integrated congregation to continually set a standard of racial tolerance, courage, and service to the community.

The property is also eligible for the State Register under Criterion C in the area of *architecture*. St. Stephen's Episcopal Church is a significant example of the Gothic Revival style as designed by the prominent architectural Denver firm of William E. Fisher and Arthur A. Fisher. While Fisher and Fisher are known for residential construction, they were also responsible for significant commercial and institutional architecture in Denver, including St Luke's Hospital, National Jewish Hospital and the Colorado School of Medicine. Arthur Fisher's particular fondness for church architecture led him to form a bureau and issue a small church design publication for the Church Art Commission of the Episcopal Diocese of Colorado. However, St. Stephen's was one of only two churches designed by the Fishers in Denver. St. Stephens possesses strong architectural integrity with the exterior and the interior of the sanctuary essentially intact. The red brick with white sandstone detailing, the wooden main entrance doors, and the stained glass windows are finely crafted and are in a good state of preservation.

Church History

The St. Stephen's congregation was organized in 1885. St. Stephen's members originally met in a frame building on East Twenty-ninth Avenue between Gilpin and High Streets and was led by Reverend Francis H. Potts. When the congregation outgrew its first home about 1896, it moved to a building on a rear lot on the corner of East Twenty-sixth Avenue and Williams at the present location of the church. In 1909, the congregation erected the current building for \$20,000. Prominent Denver architects William E. and Arthur A. Fisher designed the new building, which was dedicated on May 1, 1910, the Feast of St. Phillip and St. James.

The church is located in the Whittier neighborhood, which was named after John Greenleaf Whittier, a nineteenth-century abolitionist poet. As the black population of Denver grew, many of the original residents migrated further East from Five Points, the original African American neighborhood in Denver, to seek housing in the Whittier neighborhood. The white congregation of St. Stephen's Episcopal Church left the neighborhood and vacated the building in 1931 due to increasing dominance of African-Americans living in the neighborhood. This move opened the door for a second congregation that has inhabited this building since that time. The new congregation changed the name of the church to the Church of the Holy Redeemer.

While the Church of the Holy Redeemer has occupied the building since 1931, the congregation's origins date to 1892, with the immigration of a community of Anglo-Catholics to Denver. The terms *Anglo-Catholic* and *Anglo-Catholicism* describe people, groups, ideas, customs and practices within the Episcopal Church that emphasize continuity with Catholic tradition. Since the English Reformation there have always been Episcopalians who identify themselves closely with traditional Catholic thought

Property Name St. Stephen's Episcopal Church / Church of the Holly Redeemer

and practice. The concept of Anglo-Catholicism as a distinct sub-group or branch of the Episcopal Church, however, came to prominence in the Church of England during the Victorian era. In 1892, acting on a common vision of worship in the Anglican (Church of England) tradition, this Anglo-Catholic community united with a community of Episcopalian African-Americans who had moved from Memphis Tennessee to Denver to escape racial persecution. The intentional formation of a multi-ethnic congregation at The Church of the Holy Redeemer was unusual given that Denver was racially divided. St. John's Episcopal Cathedral and Episcopal Bishop John I. Spaulding supported this unique union. This formed the oldest Anglo-Catholic Parish in the Diocese of Colorado. Its history, and that of its parishioners, is one of perseverance. During the late 1880s and 1890s, the legal and de facto practice of "Jim Crow" racial segregation was gaining ground throughout the nation, including within the Episcopal Church. It was extremely unusual for African Americans and whites to worship together, so for the Church of the Holy Redeemer to be established as a racially integrated church was significant, especially because many of the original African Americans who formed the congregation were fleeing racial conflict. In the late 1880s there was a racial unrest in Memphis, Tennessee. A mob of whites lynched a black dentist, Dr. Gordon, at Emmanuel Church in Memphis. Several of the black parishioners of the Emmanuel Church left Memphis and moved to Denver, Colorado. They searched for an Episcopal Church that provided services like Emmanuel Church in Memphis, and found the white Anglo-Catholic community from England. The new parish was named after a church in Clerkenwell, London, the Church of the Holy Redeemer.

The congregation which formed the Church of the Holy Redeemer first worshiped in the crypt of St. John's Cathedral, and then moved to a church that the diocese owned at 10th and Lawrence Street. In 1893, the congregation received several gifts which it used to purchase lots at 22nd and Humboldt Streets. A rectory was purchased at 2140 Humboldt Street. A later gift was used to build a small chapel. In 1917, there were 153 members and by 1921, with Father Harry E. Rahming at the helm, the congregation had grown to 310 members. By 1940, there were 500 members of the Church of the Holy Redeemer. The Holy Redeemer congregation moved in 1931 to its present location at the corner of 26th and Williams in the Whittier neighborhood. By the end of that year, the congregation of Holy Redeemer had become one of the most active in the area. The priests of the parish as well as the congregation have encompassed people of different incomes and ethnicities. Diversity of people, pluralism of cultures and inclusion have been hallmarks of Holy Redeemer long before they were generally accepted practices. Certainly one must admit that the founders of Holy Redeemer were people of enormous faith and tenacity, to survive and grow in a less than hospitable environment. Indeed they have set a very high standard for those that would follow them.

Whittier is one of Denver's oldest neighborhoods and its history is reflected in the Church of the Holy Redeemer's congregation. In February 1874, the first annexation to the city of Denver included a portion of the Whittier neighborhood. The Whittier neighborhood is bound by York Street, Downing Street, 23rd Street and 32nd Street. The developers of the Whittier neighborhood were among Denver's earliest citizens. These pioneers played vigorous roles as leaders in agriculture, mining, railroading, education, manufacturing, retailing and government during the formation of the city. The neighborhood is an excellent example of late 19th century, middle class residential development. Many of the houses represent the designs of prominent Denver architects of the period. The neighborhood was home to many of Denver's finest craftsmen, who contributed to the architectural details of some of the communities most significant structures.

Property Name St. Stephen's Episcopal Church / Church of the Holly Redeemer

Whittier was initially a white neighborhood until the late the 1920s when the African American population grew and needed to move beyond the Five Points neighborhood, past its eastern barrier of Downing into Whittier, which was known as Struggle Hill, so named for its reputation as a tough neighborhood to penetrate due to resistance, restrictive covenants and discrimination from white neighbors. African Americans were restricted to housing in Whittier and surrounding neighborhoods. "Color Lines" were drawn through the area, creating precise boundaries of streets and alleys beyond which African Americans could not live. These were not legal lines, but were understood by real estate agents and others. African Americans who ignored these lines were subject to threats and violence from the members of the Klu Klux Klan (KKK) and other individuals. For example, when Walter Chapman, an African American postman, moved beyond the color line to 2112 Gilpin Street on July 7, 1921, someone bombed his front yard. A long standing color line was drawn on 23rd Avenue that limited African Americans to residences north of the boundary. A second color line stood in place for an extended time that ran from north to south across Whittier at the alley between High and Race Streets. Into the 1960s, restrictive racial covenants persisted as legacies of color lines. Despite these practices, African Americans continued to move into the Whittier neighborhood, and by 1950 the population of Whittier stood at 9,160 residents, over 90 percent of which was African American. From 1931, the racially-integrated Church of the Holy Redeemer persisted as the color lines and demographics of the Whittier neighborhood changed. Bill Porter, Holy Redeemer congregant born in 1924 in Denver, recalls that one of the most influential members of the church was Dr. Clarence Holmes. Dr. Holmes was an early civil rights advocate who founded the Denver Interracial Committee in 1916. In 1916, Dr. Holmes, along with a group of whites and African Americans, formed the Denver branch of the NAACP, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People. In the 1930s the KKK targeted Dr. Holmes for his advocacy of civil rights by burning a cross on his lawn at Twenty-sixth and Welton in Five Points.

The Church of the Holy Redeemer is noted for its work with youth in the community. According to Holy Redeemer congregant, Jo-Catherine Holliman Page, beginning in the 1940s the church provided a community pre-school. It was so important for the community to have a place for the working and non-working African American families to send their children. Jo-Katherine herself attended the pre-school which was behind her house and she still has friends from the pre-school today. (Interview August 25, 2006)

The 1950s saw a shift in the demographics of many Denver neighborhoods. Overcrowding in the Five Points, Whittier and surrounding neighborhoods had reached dangerous proportions, and there was increasing pressure to remove the restrictions on black migration to other parts of the city. In 1948, the U.S. Supreme Court made racially restrictive covenants unenforceable, and the process of integration began in earnest. In 1959 Colorado strengthened antidiscrimination laws. In 1965, they passed new fair housing statutes, in response to the growth of the civil rights movement. Father Rahming at Church of the Holy Redeemer helped guide and support the community, through peaceful means, through the stressful times of growth and change.

Father Rahming served the church for 46 years, until his retirement in 1966. In 1960 membership had dropped only slightly, to 450 members. Under Father Rahming, the church was noted for its traditional liturgy and the number and quality of art projects displayed in the church contributed by Denver artists. Father Rahming was a remarkable man, whose energy and influence must be credited for much of the early growth of the church. His long dedication and leadership, of both the church and the community,

Property Name St. Stephen's Episcopal Church / Church of the Holly Redeemer

warrant special attention. Rahming's father, James Theo Rahming, was from Africa, and was rescued by the British from a slave ship headed to America. This resulted in a strong tie to the Church of England, which he happily passed to his son. Rahming felt a call to become a priest at an early age, and knew this would require a good education. He attended Howard Academy preparatory school in Washington, D.C., prior to acceptance at Brown University in Providence, RI. He graduated from Brown in 1914. He graduated from Seminary in 1918. He was appointed to Church of the Holy Redeemer in 1920. When the church moved to 2552 Williams, he moved into the adjacent rector house and raised his children and grandchildren in the house. Father Rahming obtained a Master of Theology and a Doctorate of Theology from the Iliff School of Theology in Denver. He was appointed to the Board of Examining Chaplains by Bishop Johnson, and held that post for 34 years. In the mid 1950s, he coordinated the Sachs Foundation Scholarships, which still provide African American students with scholarships for higher education. In recognition of his leadership within the community, he was appointed by Governor John Love to the Judicial Nominating Committee for the second District of Colorado in 1967. This committee was responsible for making recommendations to the governor regarding qualified persons who could be appointed to fill vacancies within the courts. Rev. Rahming died of cancer at the age of 90 in 1985 in St. Lukes Hospital, an Episcopal Hospital at the time. Ironically, when Rahming first began his ministry, he was shocked to learn that this same hospital offered only two beds for black patients. His reactions to such injustice were communicated to the Colorado Diocese and changes were made. In the Rocky Mountain News Article about his life written directly before his high solemn requiem Mass it was described as a, "stylish, scholarly black priest who thrived in a denomination usually identified with the upper reaches of white America." (August 31, 1985.) In that article Rev. Dan Hopkins is quoted as saying, "There were very, very few blacks in the Diocese of Colorado when Father Rahming came here... He was the beginning of a significant black presence in a diocese that had a history of racism...He helped push for changes, but he always did his work through the church. He was committed to the church. He was, indeed, a walking history book of the church in general, but especially in the black church." (August 31, 1985) With his leadership the church members offered some of the strongest leadership of the Civil Rights movement in Denver.

Many members of the congregation belonged to the Urban League recalls Holy Redeemer congregant Bill Porter, the Urban League was a post war organization that promoted employment opportunities including opening up cab driving jobs to African Americans. Porter recalls that the Urban League also promoted social integration among minorities and whites in Denver. Holy Redeemer congregant, Bess Turner was Denver's first African American secondary school principal. Bess Turner recalls Holy Redeemer having a strong influence on youth leadership in Whittier. She was a ballet dancer in High School and taught Ballet at Holy Redeemer to the youth of the community in the late 1950s to early 1960s

Not only was the church active in the neighborhood, but the church had also become one of the most active bodies in the Episcopal Diocese as described in *The Episcopal Church in Colorado 1860-1963*, by Allen Du Pont Breck, PH.D.. According to Breck, a keynote of success at Holy Redeemer lay in the fact that the Rector, the Reverend Harry E. Rahming, was pastor of the church for over forty years, from 1926-1966. As the only Episcopal Church in Denver in which African Americans were the majority and because of the racial division in most Episcopal Churches in Denver, this was the only church in which blacks had leadership positions and felt welcome. For African Americans in Denver and the surrounding states, the Church of the Holy Redeemer and its congregants have made a large contribution to the Ethnic history of African Americans in the Denver and beyond. Harold T. Lewis in his book *Yet with A Steady Beat; The*

Property Name St. Stephen's Episcopal Church / Church of the Holly Redeemer

African American Struggle for Recognition in the Episcopal Church, discusses the situation of blacks in the Episcopal Church,

The Episcopal Church, as we have maintained, has consistently regarded blacks as something of an anomaly. The presence of blacks has at times been considered an embarrassment, and incongruity, a thorn in the Church's flesh, and still at other times a presence many wished would go away. The irony is that when many blacks, after the Civil War, did just that, the Church felt morally bound not only to minister to the faithful remnant, but to reach out to evangelize a new class of people, the freedmen... Black congregants in the North had often been treated by the Church hierarchy with what can be described as benign neglect. (page 47)

Lewis reveals the dilemma of the Episcopal Church and Black Episcopalians like those at Church of the Holy Redeemer.

The Episcopal Church, therefore, in attempting to redouble its efforts to bring the Gospel to blacks, was hoisted by its own petard. While sincere in its efforts to improve the lot of African Americans, it persisted in treating the group as separate but unequal, ministering to them as a special group and making no attempts whatever either to address the broader problem of racism in society, or to integrate blacks into the mainstream of the Church's life. To understand what was the force that kept African Americans within the Episcopal Church Taylor said, 'Black people have found an attraction to the Anglican expression of Christianity in spite of the fact that it is the church of a large number of those who upheld the enslavement of Blacks. It has been among the churches which by word and deed has consistently negated the worth of Black people and yet it is the church which can rightly boast of a noble line of Black clergy and lay persons whose devotion and piety, together with sound scholarship and unwavering loyalty, have enriched immeasurably the fabric of life in the Episcopal Church.' As the Church founded new agencies, commissions, and bureaus to facilitate its work "among" blacks, blacks themselves began to form organizations and caucuses both for their own uplift as well as for providing a platform from which they could best remind the Church that its institutional racism was not only inconsistent with this character but an impediment to its mission. (page 55)

Father Rahming himself is quoted by Lewis as observing, "evangelistic work among blacks has never been scientifically organized, or has the responsibility for Negro conversion ever been determined. These causes alone lead logically to the missionary failure since they are based more upon temporary racial conditions and attitudes than upon permanent situations."(page 55) Given the racially divided Episcopal Church at the time it is significant that the Church of the Holy Redeemer was able to influence social change in the church and the community.

Property Name St. Stephen's Episcopal Church / Church of the Holy Redeemer

Long time congregant Benjamin Clark recalls the atmosphere of Church of the Holy Redeemer and its impact Denver starting in the 1930s.

A great deal of the Holy Redeemer congregants lived in the area. The community was almost self-contained with all black businesses in Five Points, and most of the social activities occurring in the immediate area. The area churches and Glenarm Y.M.C.A were flourishing centers of recreational, athletic, and social activities, Holy Redeemer was in the middle of it all. The area in front of the parish hall was then grassed and was the site of some rather aggressive tackling football games. The parish hall itself was a neighborhood basketball court. Christmas Eve midnight services at Holy Redeemer were the place to be, for members and non-members alike. Early arrivals found a place to sit, while others took their chances in a sanctuary that was filled to the brim. It was customary to attend pre-midnight service parties at various homes in the neighborhood. On Christmas day, after church, it was customary to "drop in" at the home of the parishioner Ruth Parsons for waffles and it was not un-common to answer a knock on the door and find Father Rahming who was walking the neighborhood. He came to socialize, smoke a cigarette and have a shot of bourbon and gossip. (Letter written August 21, 2006)

The congregation embraced social justice and supported public causes through sharing of their time, talents and resources. In an honorary citation from the State of Colorado in 1991 to the church in celebration of the congregation's centennial, the church was cited as being a leader within the community and having served the people of Northeast Denver with its many religious, educational and humanitarian efforts. The state citation honored the church for having been a leader in the desegregation effort and champion for Denver's youth. Holly Wasinger described the desegregation of Denver Public Schools in her article "From Five Points to Struggle Hill; The Race Line and Segragerino in Denver":

In 1973, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled against the Denver Public Schools in the case of *Keyes v. Denver School District No. 1*. In the ruling, the court charged DPS with creating intentional segregation by centrally locating schools in ethnically homogeneous area and dividing the area along geographic and street barriers that had held as unofficial race lines. The court ordered DPS to immediately integrate the entire district.

It was this sort of segregation in the neighborhoods, churches and schools that individual members, and the church as whole, worked against in order to enrich the lives of all Denver citizens.

From 1986 to 1992 Rev. Dan Hopkins was a voice for many social and political issues including suburban migration, city expansion, AIDS, HIV, and help for the homeless. He was most widely known for his work with Denver youth to combat drugs and gang violence. On April 18, 2004, the church dedicated the Rectory home to Rev. Harry Rahming, renaming it Rahming House. To address the needs of the surrounding community the Church of the Holy Redeemer hosted a Head Start Program for Pre-school aged children living in poverty. Other services that have continually been offered to the community are:

Property Name St. Stephen's Episcopal Church / Church of the Holly Redeemer

Northeast Denver Coalition Against Drugs
Needy Families Christmas Gifts & Thanksgiving Meals
Rabies Clinics w/Denver Animal Control
Polling Place for Voters
Wellness/Health Fair Clinics
Luncheons for Seniors
Community Meetings
Saturday Night Live for High School Students
Short Term Housing and Meals for Homeless Families
Food Bank collection for Needy Families
Candidates for Public office Meetings

Through all these efforts in the community, Church of the Holy Redeemer stands in contrast to the words of the eminent civil rights activist Rev Martin Luther King when he lamented that "the most segregated hour of Christian America is 11 o'clock on Sunday morning."

Church Architecture

Few families have impacted the look of Denver as the architects of the Fisher family. The careers of the three Fisher architects has spanned nearly six decades and their cumulative designs represent some of the most prominent and acclaimed work in the state.

William Ellsworth Fisher (1871-1937) was the first to enter into the field of architecture. He began as a draftsman for the Denver firm of Balcomb and Rice in 1890. Two years later, after a brief period of study with the New York Firm of C. Powell Karr, Fisher opened the firm of William Fisher, Architect. The firm evolved in name and partnership several times over the next 57 years. Throughout those years an architect of the Fisher family continued to offer services to the citizens and businesses of Denver and the Rocky Mountain Region. In 1907, William formed a partnership with his brother, Arthur Addison Fisher (1878-1965) who studied at the Beaux-Arts Atelier Barber in New York and apprenticed in New York offices of Don Barber and Benjamin Morris. This pairing lasted thirty years until William's death.

The majority of their work focused on grand residential and commercial architecture. The firm prospered, designing only two churches, several prominent homes, hospitals, and schools as well as commercial designs such as the Denver City Tramway Building at 1100 14th Street and the A.C. Foster Building at 912 16th Street. Both are listed on the National Register. Of the sixty-seven existing buildings in Denver credited to the Fisher firm, fifty are either individually designated historic, within districts, or have been determined eligible for the National Register of Historic Places.

In addition to the residential and commercial work of the firm, Arthur had a particular fondness for church architecture. In 1923 he collaborated on a publication on the design of small churches for the Church Art Commission of the Episcopal Diocese of Colorado. The Commission recognized that good architecture aided worship and service, and represented an asset for any community. The Commission also realized that many mountain and plains towns needed churches, but were without architects. Fisher contributed a design for a small Gothic Revival church that has some of the same detailing found on St. Stephen's. However, St. Stephen's Episcopal is one of only two Gothic Revival churches in Denver built on a design by Fisher and Fisher.

Property Name St. Stephen's Episcopal Church / Church of the Holly Redeemer

The table below includes only a partial list of the Denver-area buildings designed by William and Arthur Fisher.

Buildings Designed by William and Arthur Fisher (Partial List)	Date	Historic Status
Warren United Methodist Church, Denver	1908	Local Historic District
St. Stephen's Episcopal Church, Denver	1909	
Wolff Manufacturing Company Building (Rockmount Ranch Wear Buidling), Denver	1909	Local Historic District
Isaac Soloman Synogogue, Jewish Consumptives' Relief Society, Lakewood	1911	National Register Historic District
Denver City Tramway Building, Denver	1911	National Register
A.C. Foster Building, Denver	1911	National Register
Voorhies Memorial, Civic Center, Denver	1921	National Register Historic District
McPhee and McGinnity Building, Denver	1913	National Register
U. S. National Bank/Guaranty Bank Buildng, Denver	1920	National Register
Morey Middle School, Denver	1921	Local Landmark
Neusteter Department Store, Denver	1924	National Register
Clubhouse, Denver Country Club, Denver	1925	Local Historic District
University of Colorado School of Medicine and Hospital, Denver	1925	
South High School, Denver	1926	Local Landmark
B'nai B'rith Infirmary, National Jewish Hospital, Denver	1926	
Max D. Neuster Rehabilitation Building, Jewish Consumptives' Relief Society, Lakewood	1926	National Register Historic District
Ideal Buildng (expansion), Denver	1927	National Register

The Fisher's design for St. Stephens includes the defining characteristics of the Gothic Revival style, including the steeply pitched roof with an extended parapet and the many pointed arch windows. The wood frame, stained glass windows have Gothic or flattened Gothic arched openings with geometrically decorative tracery. The exposed interior roof trusses are also a common design feature. Many Denver churches constructed from the 1870s through the 1930s utilized the Gothic Revival style. While Gothic Revival has long been associated with many Christian denominations, it is strongly associated with Episcopal churches because of the denomination's roots in the Church of England. Church of the Holy Redeemer continues this tradition of physically manifesting in its design the common heritage of the Episcopal Church of the United States with the Church of England.

St Stephens is significant as one of the few examples of church architecture from one of Denver's premiere early 20th century architectural firms. It is also significant as a local example of the use Gothic Revival.

Property Name St. Stephen's Episcopal Church / Church of the Holly Redeemer

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Profile Church of the Holy Redeemer (Church Brochure)

Raughton, Jim L. *Whittier Neighborhood and San Rafael Historic District*. (Historic Denver, Inc. 2004).

Property Name St. Stephen's Episcopal Church / Church of the Holly Redeemer

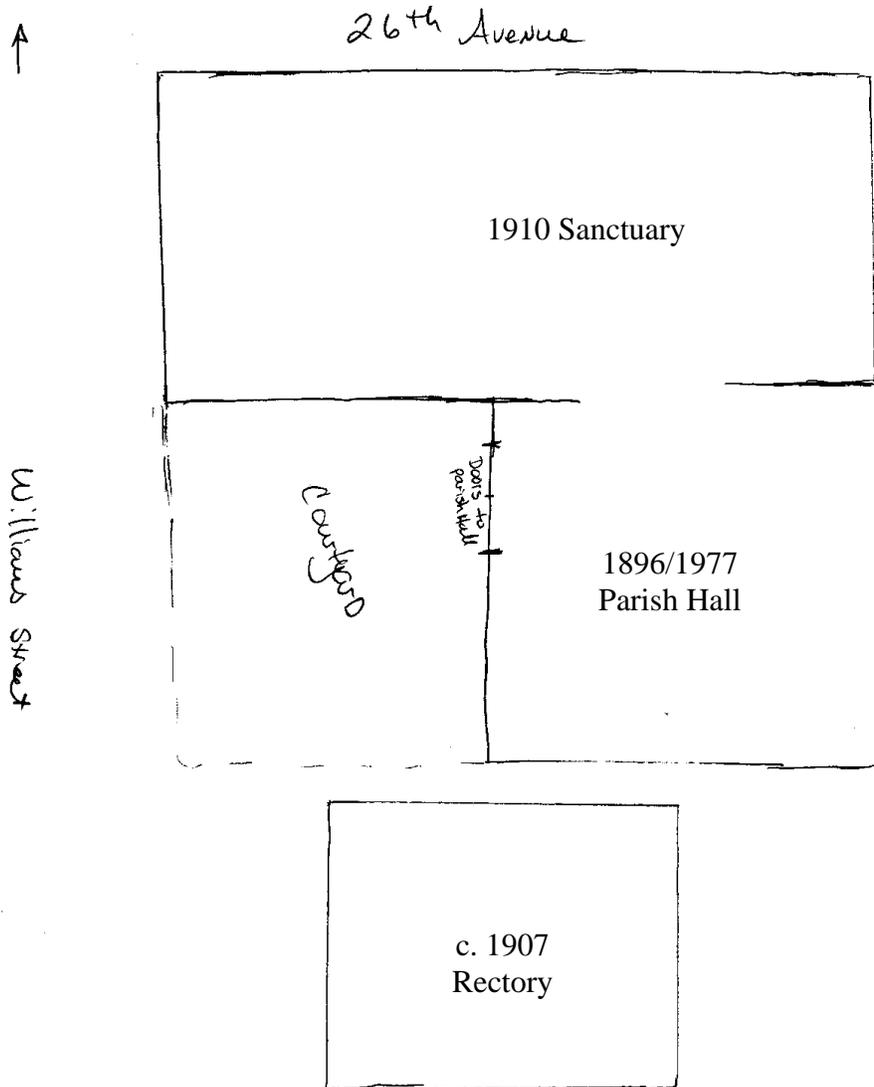
GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The land included in this nomination is defined as follows:

Lots 1 through 6, inclusive, Block 10, Schinners Addition, City and County of Denver, Colorado

SKETCH PLAN



Property Name St. Stephen's Episcopal Church / Church of the Holly Redeemer

PHOTOGRAPH LOG

The following information pertains to photograph numbers 1-40:

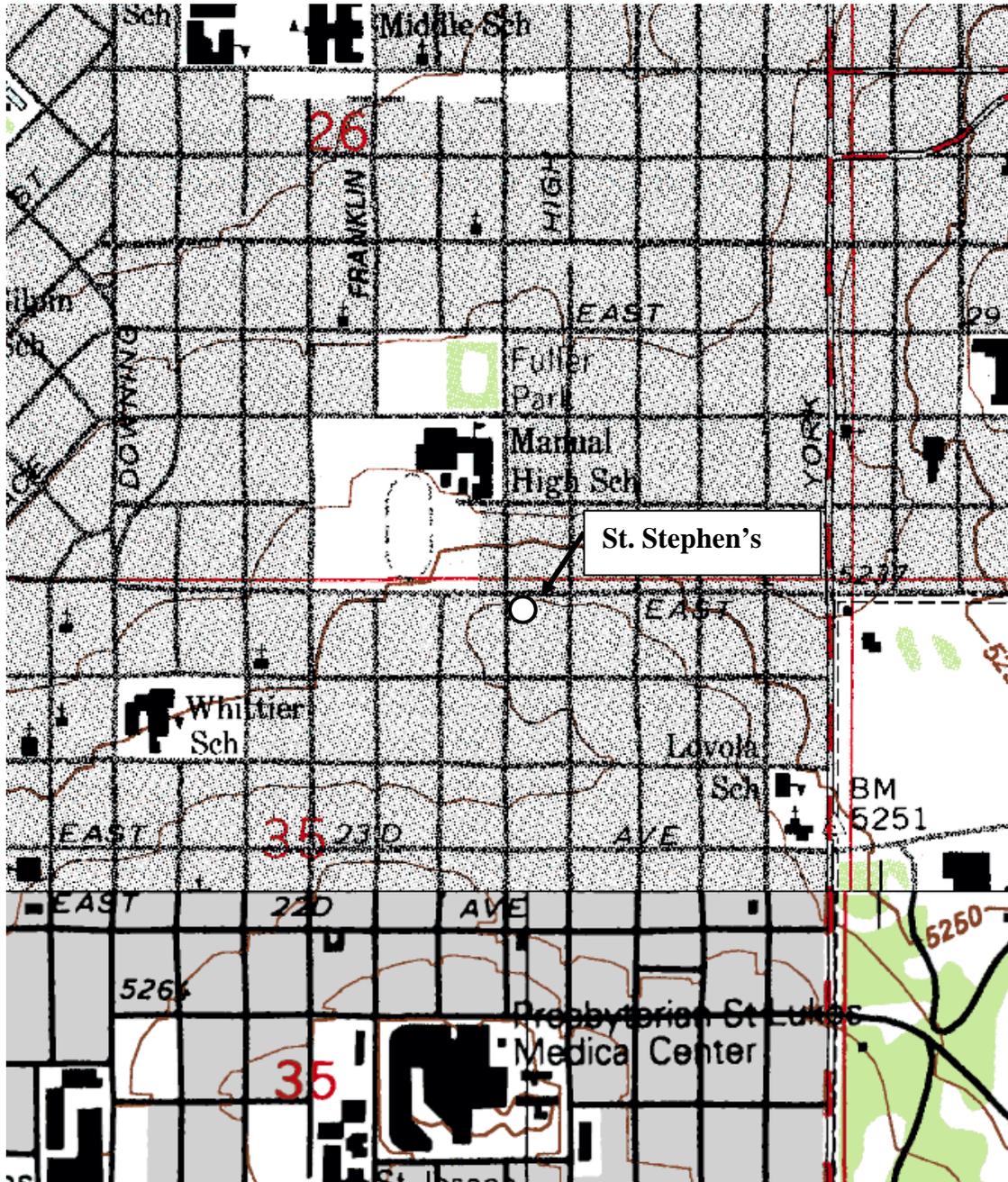
Name of Property: St. Stephen's Episcopal Church Location: 2552 Williams Street, Denver
Photographer: Stephen Young Date: May 2006 Negatives: 2374 Hudson Street, Denver, CO

<u>Photo No.</u>	<u>Photographic Information</u>
1	Northwest corner of Church, view to the southeast
2	North façade of Church, view to south
3	North façade of Church, eastern portion, view to south
4	North façade of Church, eastern portion, view to south
5	Northeast corner of Church, view to west
6	Cornerstone of Church
7	East façade of parish hall and Church, view to southwest
8	East façade of parish hall and Church, view to southwest
9	East façade of parish hall and Church, view to north
10	South façade of parish hall, view to north
11	West façade of parish hall, view of courtyard, and north façade of rectory, view to southeast
12	West façade of parish hall, view to east
13	South façade of Church, view to north
14	South façade of Church, northern opening, view to north
15	Interior brick detail over wood entrance in west facade, view to west
16	Interior view of southern entrance to sanctuary, view to south
17	Interior detail of wood entrance in west facade, view to west
18	Interior detail of painting over entrance in west façade to sanctuary, view to west
19	Interior detail of stained glass window in west façade, view to west
20	Interior view of sanctuary, view to east
21	Interior view of sanctuary, view to south
22	Interior of Church, alter area, note wood trusses on ceiling, view to east
23	Interior of north wall, eastern portion, view to north
24	Interior view of balcony, view to north
25	Interior view of balcony in sanctuary, view to south
26	Interior detail of pews, view to south
27	Interior detail of back room, view to west
28	Detail of original leaded window in Church, view to north
29	Interior of Church, back room, view to east
30	Interior of Church, back room, view of original leaded windows, view to northeast
31	Interior of Church, back room, view of original leaded windows, view to north
32	Interior Detail of original leaded window, view to north
33	Interior of 1977 parish hall, view to west
34	Interior of 1977 parish hall, view to north
35	Interior of 1977 parish hall, view to south
36	Interior of 1977 parish hall, view to south
37	Interior of 1977 parish hall, view to east
38	West façade of rectory, view to east
39	South façade of rectory, view to northeast
40	East façade of rectory and south façade of parish hall, view to west

Property Name St. Stephen's Episcopal Church / Church of the Holly Redeemer

USGS TOPOGRAPHIC MAP
Commerce City, Colorado - 1988
7.5 Minute Quad (Enlarged)

topozone
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