NPS Form 10-900

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service
National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

RECEIVED 2280
OMB No. 1024-0018
JUN 17 2014
NAT. REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

472

1. Name of Property

Historic Name: Saint Joseph's Chapel
Other name/site number: N/A
Name of related multiple property listing: N/A

2. Location

Street & number: 6400 FM 482
City or town: Schertz State: Texas County: Comal
Not for publication: N/A Vicinity: ☐

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this ☑ nomination ☐ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property ☑ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria.

I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following levels of significance:
☐ national ☐ statewide ☑ local

Applicable National Register Criteria: ☐ A ☐ B ☑ C ☐ D

Mark Wolfe State Historic Preservation Officer 6/10/14
Signature of certifying official / Title **Date**

Texas Historical Commission
State or Federal agency / bureau or Tribal Government

In my opinion, the property ☐ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of commenting or other official **Date**

State or Federal agency / bureau or Tribal Government

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

✓ entered in the National Register
___ determined eligible for the National Register
___ determined not eligible for the National Register.
___ removed from the National Register
___ other, explain: _____

Carol Edson M. Beall 8.1.14
Signature of the Keeper **Date of Action**

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

x	Private
	Public - Local
	Public - State
	Public - Federal

Category of Property

x	building(s)
	district
	site
	structure
	object

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing	Noncontributing	
3	0	buildings
0	0	sites
0	0	structures
0	0	objects
3	0	total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register: 0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions: RELIGION / Religious facility = Church

Current Functions: RELIGIOON / Religious facility = Church

7. Description

Architectural Classification: LATE 19TH AND 20TH CENTURY REVIVALS / Late Gothic Revival

Principal Exterior Materials: Brick

Narrative Description (see continuation sheets 7-6 through 7-10)

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

	A	Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
	B	Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
x	**C**	Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
	D	Property has yielded, or is likely to yield information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations: A (Religious Property)

Areas of Significance: Architecture

Period of Significance: 1905

Significant Dates: 1905

Significant Person N/A

Cultural Affiliation N/A

Architect/Builder: Dielmann, Leo M. J. (architect)

Narrative Statement of Significance (see continuation sheets 8-11 through 8-20)

9. Major Bibliographic References

Bibliography (see continuation sheet 9-21)

Previous documentation on file (NPS): N/A
- _ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.
- _ previously listed in the National Register
- _ previously determined eligible by the National Register
- _ designated a National Historic Landmark
- _ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey #
- _ recorded by Historic American Engineering Record #

Primary location of additional data:
- x State historic preservation office (*Texas Historical Commission*, *Austin*)
- _ Other state agency
- _ Federal agency
- _ Local government
- _ University
- _ Other -- Specify Repository:

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): N/A

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property: 2 acres

Coordinates

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates (use decimal degree format)

Datum if other than WGS84: N/A

1. Latitude: 29.647252 Longitude: -98.219051

Verbal Boundary Description: The nominated property consists of a rectangular parcel which is bound on the north by FM 482. Barbed wire fencing forms the east, west, and southern boundaries.

Boundary Justification: Nomination includes all property historically associated with the building

11. Form Prepared By

Name/title: Dean Weirtz
Organization: Schertz Historical Preservation Committee
Street & number: 4301 Monument Pass
City or Town: Schertz State: Texas Zip Code: 78154
Email: weirtz1@yahoo.com
Telephone: 210-651-0394
Date: February 22, 2014

Additional Documentation

Maps (see continuation sheets Map-22 through Map-24)

Figures (see continuation sheets Figure-25 through Figure-30)

Photographs

Name of Property: Saint Joseph's Chapel
City or Vicinity: Schertz
County, State: Comal, Texas
Photographer: Texas Historical Commission Staff (unless otherwise noted)
Date Photographed: March 2014 (unless otherwise noted)

Photo 1
Primary (north) façade as seen from across FM 482. Camera facing southeast

Photo 2
Primary (north) façade. Camera facing south.

Photo 3
Rear (south) and east elevations. Camera facing approximately northwest.

Photo 4
Rear (south) elevation. Camera facing north.

Photo 5
Detail of entry tower. Camera facing approximately north and up.

Photo 6
Detail of primary entry door. Camera facing south.

Photo 7
Interior as seen from choir loft. Camera facing south. Photo by author, February 2014.

Photo 8
Outhouse, contributing building. Camera facing approximately east. Photo by author, February 2014.

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 100 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Office of Planning and Performance Management. U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.

NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION

Saint Joseph's Chapel is an excellent example of 19th and early 20th century Gothic Revival architectural style as applied by master architect Leo M. J. Dielmann. Most, but not all, of Leo Dielmann's church architectural designs are of the Gothic Revival style. The chapel was dedicated on July 25, 1905. The chapel is most noted for its architecture and is nominated to the National Register under Criterion C as an example of a once common but increasingly rare, early church form. The aesthetic features of the chapel include steeply pitched roof, bell tower, hexagonal pyramidal spire, lancet windows, Gothic interior floor plan and an exquisitely designed altar. All of these combine to present a significant piece of early 20th century Gothic Revival church architecture meant to satisfy cultural, religious and artistic ambitions of the community's inhabitants. The chapel is an outstanding representation of a period in rural Texas history when a population of German ethnic persuasion allowed a master architect to design a cathedral-like edifice within a small footprint of space that has stood mightily against the force of nature and cultural traditions.

Setting

Comal County, Texas, is located along the corridor between Austin to the north and San Antonio to the south. The southeastern quadrant of the county and eight miles south of New Braunfels, along Farm to Market Highway 482 is where sits the former settlement of Comal, Texas (now a part of Schertz, Texas). Comal County was formed by act of the Texas legislature in March 1846 with New Braunfels as the county seat. The initial inhabitants to populate the county were the German immigrants that arrived in 1845 through the 1850s. The German born citizens of Comal County comprised 50 percent of the county's population as of 1850. The county's land area is made up of black land prairies and Hill Country terrain. Comal sits in the black land prairie portion of the county and thereby lent its best use as an agricultural setting. During the 19th and early 20th century the county was primarily a farming and ranching territory. County manufacturing and service industries evolved slowly until the mid-20th century when tourism introduced rapid growth in employment for service industries.[1] The community setting that surrounds Saint Joseph's Chapel is a unique one in that the many physical features that were the lifeblood of the settlement still stand, all be it in varying stages of disrepair. The physical placement of these architectural relics is within a one to two linear mile stretch along FM 482 and Old Nacogdoches Road.[2]

In 1846, the settlement of Comal was established along the water feature now designated as Eight Mile Creek. Comal was located along a heavily traveled road used as a trade route for cotton being shipped from East Texas to San Antonio. That road route (FM 482 and Nacogdoches Road) is part of the U. S. Department of Interior's National Trail System known as the El Camino Real de los Tejas.

The prospect of fertile land for farming operations brought German settlers to the Comal area and most of the early arrivals were of the Catholic faith. The early arrivals were devout believers in dependence on the help of

[1] Rudolph Leopold Biesele, *The History of the German Settlements in Texas 1831-1861* (Austin: Eakin Press, 1987), p. 133.
[2] Schertz Historical Preservation Committee, *Comal, Texas: Community Built on Faith, Family and Sacrifice* (Schertz: Schertz Historical Preservation Committee, 2012).

the Almighty to succeed in every endeavor of their lives. They sought divine intervention through prayer that their crops would produce in abundance and that the weather would cooperate to assure such crop successes. The Catholic settlers were affiliated with the parish church in New Braunfels and would make the Sunday and holy day eight mile trek to New Braunfels to attend services at Saints Peter and Paul Catholic Church. Their faith was such that the weekly Mass experience was insufficient to fulfill their spiritual demands. Consequently, the community eventually acted via its petition and personal commitments of time, talent and funding to bring about a Catholic chapel at Comal.[3]

The grounds surrounding Saint Joseph's Chapel consist of a two acre plot that Peter Ignaz Wenzel (1826-1884) and his wife Anna Maria (1835-1914) donated to the Archdiocese of San Antonio for the construction of a school building.[4] In 1881, a school and attached convent building were constructed on the site. The school building was fifty feet long and thirty feet deep. The convent portion of the building was thirty feet long and twenty feet wide. The school remained public until 1903 when it became private. The school closed in 1941 and both the school and convent were demolished in the mid-1950s. The school house/convent were situated immediately to the southeast of where Saint Joseph's Chapel was later to be constructed. Remnants of the granite foundation stones that once served as the school/convent building's base still remain in place (at ground level) at their original site. Though no archeological survey has been conducted to date, it is possible that additional information could be learned about the school and convent activities through the archeological record.

Still standing beside the north side of the chapel is a grove of cedar trees planted at the time of the chapel's construction. Two small privies (contributing), that served both the Catholic school (1881-1941) and chapel, sit along the eastern property line.[5] The exact date of construction of these privies is unknown but likely date close to the date of the school's construction. Both of the privies are in serious disrepair and unusable condition, but they retain enough of their historic identity to convey their associations. Because they were present during the period of significance (1905), they are counted as contributing resources for the property.

The chapel is situated on two acres of land positioned on the southwest side of FM 482, at a point 200 yards south of the intersection of Schwab Road and FM 482. The chapel sits on the original two acre plot that is enclosed by a barbed wire fence. There is no known formal landscape plan nor was there ever such a plan. Entrance to the chapel area is afforded by an un-gated dirt entrance way that leads into an open field used for parking. There are no sidewalks and entry to the chapel is via a grassy pathway from the field parking area. The landscape surrounding the chapel is flat farm land in all directions except to the Northwest which is situated directly across FM 482 from the chapel. The latter parcel is occupied by a residential dwelling with an adjacent commercial vehicle repair and storage facility attached. The vehicle storage and repair facilities are shielded from view by a six foot wooden fence that surrounds the facility. The dwelling and vehicle facility are features of the landscape added long after the date of the chapel construction.

[3] Monica Kneuper Fuhrman, "Notes on The History of Comal", Texas, p.1.
[4] *Comal, Texas: Community Built on Faith, Family and Sacrifice*, p. 60.
[5] *Comal, Texas: Community Built on Faith, Family and Sacrifice*, p. 16.

Chapel Exterior

Saint Joseph's Chapel faces FM 482 at an angle that places the front façade in a northwesterly direction. The chapel is of a buff brick construction. The chapel has a rectangular footprint and measures sixty feet in length from the west tower to the eastern apsidal termination. The width approaches thirty feet including the sacristy and cell. The cell is the flanking projection on the south side of the sanctuary opposite the sacristy. The cell is a feature planned as a room for an overnight stay of visiting priests since no permanent priest was assigned to the chapel. The massing components consist of a projecting square, telescoping central west tower capped by an hexagon broached spire, a nave composed of three bays divided by brick and limestone buttresses, and a polygonal apse flanked by the sacristy and cell. The apse and sidewall of the nave have a corbelled brick cornice while the west gabled parapet has a rigid geometric brick corbel table. Both elements are remnants of the German Romanesque found in many German Gothic structures. The windows of the lower tower, west façade, sanctuary, sacristy, and cell are single lancets. The windows of the nave are double lancets with a bisected lozenge. The upper tower, or belfry, has coupled lancet louvered openings on all sides. The west entrance is a transomed pointed arch doorway with two panels. The east doorways into the sacristy and cell are similar, but with only one panel. The flood molds framing the openings are a noteworthy study in stone and brick detailing. The limestone keystone is rustic work with a fascia forming the point of the hood. Fanning out from the keystone are three brick courses, two of which are header courses, forming the inner face. The third is a rowlock course continuing the fascia of the keystone and returning to the window jamb. Each leg of the hoodmold appears to rest on a pair of corbeled brick brackets. The window treatment is finished out with a dressed limestone sill. The dramatic rise of the chapel tower and spire are visible from a distance in nearly all directions as a reminder to travelers that this location is a place where religious devotion was and remains paramount in the lives of its citizens.

The exterior features of the chapel are as they were first constructed with the exception of the front door and the side windows, both of which have apparently been replaced. The original door configuration as shown in a 1980 newspaper photo was a double wooden door; it is today a single wooden door with a permanent wooden encasement where once was a second door. The time of the entrance door replacement is unknown, as is the reason for its replacement. The original side windows in place at the time of the chapel dedication appear to have been clear glass multi-paned casements as opposed to the current multi-paned, single-hung sash, stained glass windows. The date and reason for the change out of windows is unknown, but the new windows fill the original openings and fulfill the original design intent.

The exterior features of Saint Joseph's Chapel appear to have been the basis for the architectural model of another famous Dielmann commission, Nativity of Mary, Blessed Virgin Catholic Church at High Hill, Texas. This Fayette County Church was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1983.

Chapel Interior

The interior of the chapel is accessed through the single door on the west frontage. Above the door sits a single paned arched stain glass window with the inscription "St. Joseph Chapel" centered thereon. Entry to the main sanctuary is provided through a small vestibule area. To the left and right (rear of the Chapel) after passing through the vestibule are a sculpted confessional to the left and the wooden stairway to the choir loft to the right. The choir loft extends from one side of the chapel's north interior wall to the south interior wall and

occupies a space approximately 20 feet in depth. A small portico-like area with an arched entrance is set against the back wall of the loft, within which is found an access latter leading to the bell tower area. The portico element appears as a continuation of the downstairs arch formation at the end of the vestibule area. The portico serves to frame the single lancet stained glass window set above the chapel entry door. The ceiling of the choir loft, nave and chancel areas is covered with plaster with an imprint design throughout its surface. The nave is an open space with two columns of church pews filling the floor area. Three aisles, two along the side walls and a center aisle, provide entry to the pews. The chapel pews are constructed of stained hardwood with wooden kneelers and appear to be original based upon photo evidence of the chapel's interior taken at the 1905 dedication ceremony. The nave is a vaulted area with three arched beams supporting the ceiling from side wall to side wall. The windows (three each) on either side of the nave are double lancet stained glass and rise from church pew level to the arch of the ceiling level. These stained glass windows are replacement windows for the original multi-pane glass windows. An open archway consistent with the width of the chancel area provides entry and observation access to the altar area. There are two altars centered in the chancel, one in the rear of the other. The front alter is that used in contemporary services and which allows the celebrant to face the congregation throughout the service. The back altar (circa 1905) is that which was originally used for services and which was constructed specifically for the chapel by the esteemed altar carver John Henry Sievers (1841-1920). On one side of the chancel is the sacristy of approximately ten feet by fifteen feet and on the other side is the cell area where visiting priests were expected to sleep if they were to perform religious services the following day (now used as a storage area). The latter area is the same size as the sacristy area. Both the sacristy and the cell room contain exit doors leading to the exterior grounds area on the east side.

The only known restoration of the chapel's interior occurred in 2010 when the entire interior structure was resurfaced using plaster, paint and concrete material true to the original construction design and colors.

Dielmann applied interior design features throughout Saint Joseph's Chapel that embodied ecclesiastical requirements for Catholic worship at the time. Worship, in the Roman Catholic tradition, was liturgical based with focus on the Mass as a reenactment of Christ's last supper. Thus, the placement of the altar as the focal point of the service was essential to service fulfillment. The Gothic hall design of the Chapel's interior facilitates clear and unobstructed view of the altar area. The chancel area being partitioned by an archway adorned with religious statues on either side and narrowing focus on the beautifully sculpted altar, two single paned stain glass windows, and the vaulted rotunda which encases it all gives artistic elegance to the chancel. The stained glass windows along either side of the nave and the pointed arch structure of the ceiling bespeaks of the use of Gothic design to produce beauty and function. These latter adornments within the chancel and nave areas are the artistic features of the Roman Catholic and Gothic architectural tradition that are meant to inspire parishioners with feelings of devotion and reverence. Proclamation of the word of God was a feature of the Catholic liturgy but not the main focus as in some Protestant churches. Thus there is no pulpit at Saint Joseph's as would be expected in a Protestant church but instead a wooden lectern is placed to the right of the altar area. The steep slant of the roofline encompasses the entire nave area, a particular German adaptation of the French Gothic style.

The chapel vividly represents the type of church architecture that Roman Catholic communities with German immigrant ancestry adopted as appropriate for a house of Christian worship, reminiscent of the architectural style of such churches in their native German homeland. Saint Joseph's Chapel is a century old religious landmark representative of the finest 19th and early 20th century Gothic Revival architecture as practiced by the

Master Architect Leo Michael Joseph Dielmann. Saint Joseph's Chapel maintains excellent integrity of location, workmanship, materials, feeling and association. Although setting is slightly compromised by the proximity of suburban development, the immediate surroundings retain enough of the integrity to convey a sense of its original rural character. And, though the nave's original clear casement windows have been replaced with stained glass sash windows, the materials were installed in the original openings and in such a way that the original design intent is retained.

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Saint Joseph's Chapel was constructed in 1905 in the small rural community of Comal, eight miles south of New Braunfels, by descendants of the community's original German settlers. The brick chapel is Gothic Revival in style and features hallmark design characteristics such as pointed arch openings, steeply pitched roof, ornamental buttresses, and soaring tower and spire. It is significant as one of the earliest extant works in the long and distinguished career of Leo M. J. Dielmann, a master architect perhaps most well-known for his ecclesiastical designs. Saint Joseph's Chapel is nominated to the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion C, in the area of architecture, at the local level of significance. The period of significance is 1905, the date of its completion. Because this religious property derives its primary significance from its architectural distinction, it satisfactorily meets Criteria Consideration A.

Circumstance

The original parishioners of Saint Joseph's were first and second generation descendants of the families that founded the small farming community known as Comal (aka: Wenzel, Corlyn and Seven/Eight Mile Creek) in approximately 1846. The descendant's parents were among the first founders of New Braunfels, German immigrants who ventured from their original town settlement to form a farm community eight miles south.[6] The settlers built farms substantial enough to supply their subsistence needs and cash crops sufficient to support their large families. The Comal settlers were for the most part Catholic families. They demanded hard labor, good education and religious devotion from themselves and their children. Achieving the latter meant having a place of worship accessible for more frequent devotion than offered by their New Braunfels parish church. The Settlement sought to become as self-reliant as possible and the idea of having its own house of worship seemed essential to that end. The local Catholic farm families raised the funds and contributed time and labor toward its construction. Its purpose was to allow the rural Catholic parishioners a house of prayer where occasionally weekday Mass and other religious celebrations could be held exclusively for the local parishioners' benefit. The chapel is today and has always been a mission church under the care and administration of Saints Peter and Paul Parish in New Braunfels, Texas. The chapel has no permanent congregational membership as it once did in its early years, but it has been in continuous use since its construction, primarily for special feast day masses and ceremonial events such as weddings, funeral, baptisms, etc. The Catholic high school students at John Paul II School, situated just a half mile down the road, attend mass periodically at the chapel whenever a commemorative event is being celebrated.

Immigration of Germans to Texas during the two decades before the American Civil War (1840-1860) and the two decades after (1865-1886) was prompted by a hope for full citizenship, freedom from ever present police surveillance at home, escape from military conscription, poor economic and overpopulation circumstance, and the promise of free and fertile land during the Republic of Texas era.[7] The Society for the Protection of German Immigrants in Texas (aka: Marizer Adelsverein or "Verein") was formed in Germany by a group of noblemen seeking to establish a German colony within the Republic of Texas in order to foster trade and commerce

[6] *Comal, Texas: Community Built on Faith, Family and Sacrifice*, p. 9.
[7] Ibid., pp. 6-7.

between the new colony and the motherland.[8] Between 1844 and 1846, the Verein transported 7,380 immigrants to Texas. The Verein went bankrupt in 1847.

By 1860, German immigrants in Texas numbered 30,000 and by the late 19th century they comprised nearly one-quarter to one-third of the population of Texas's largest cities (Galveston, San Antonio and Houston).[9] Many of the new German arrivals chose farming as their future occupation. They purchased acreage and established farms throughout the rural south central Texas countryside. They made farming, school and church related activity their first priorities. The observance of church ritual marked their lives from birth to death. It has been said that much about a people can be discovered by the type of buildings they erect. Those Germans who settled south central Texas erected churches with soaring spires much like those that dotted the countryside in their native Germany. Church architecture for these German immigrants meant much more than placement of brick and mortar without consideration to aesthetic and cultural interests. The churches of their ancestry were the centerpiece of the community and as such were deserving of elaborate construction and design. The one element the German settlers wanted to retain as a reminder of their cultural origins (besides language) was the presence of artistically designed churches.

The small community of Comal dedicated their new chapel on May 25, 1905. According to the June 1 edition of the *Southern Messenger*, Rt. Rev. Bishop Forest and several priests traveled by train from San Antonio to take part in the ceremony. They were greeted by a large crowd, including the school children of both Selma and New Braunfels. The newspaper reported that the bishop expressed surprise over finding such "a substantial and handsome a chapel in this rural settlement." After the celebration of Solemn High Mass, the group enjoyed a dinner and music presentation. The newspaper went on to describe the new chapel:

> "The new chapel is a handsome brick structure, with stone trimmings and built in the Gothic style. It measures sixty feet in length, including the sanctuary, by thirty feet in width, and its steeple is seventy feet high to the top of the cross. The windows in front, and in the sanctuary are of stained glass while the others are plain. The walls are plastered in hard finish inside and the ceiling is steel. All the woodwork is neatly painted, and the outside walls are pointed and the coping finished in cement. Besides the handsome altar, costing about $200, the church is already provided with new pews and an organ, while the sacristy is well furnished. The total cost of the building is $4350, including a small room for the pastor's residence adjoining the sanctuary."

The paper reported that the chapel was built for the "convenience of the Sisters [of Divine Providence] and about fifteen families living in this vicinity, so as to give them an opportunity of hearing mass on weekdays; on Sundays all go to New Braunfels for Mass." The Sisters oversaw the adjacent school with 40 pupils, and the school is cited as "the indirect cause" of the new chapel.

Historic Church Architectural Development - European, American and Texan

Historians report the origin of Gothic architectural style to have first originated in France sometime in the twelfth century. The style was introduced to Germany during the early thirteenth century. The Germans made

[8] Ibid., p. 5.
[9] Gilbert Giddings Benjamin, *The Germans In Texas: A Study In Immigration* (San Francisco: Research Associates, 1970), p. 5.

adaptions to it, the primary being the development of the "hall" church in which the nave and side aisles rise almost to the same height such as is the case at Saint Joseph's Chapel. This innovation required the adoption of immense steep roofs to cover the nave and aisles. The transition in roof design brought with it two designs that feature a single west tower (northwest single tower at Saint Joseph's Chapel) in front to replace the double towered wide façade and multiple doors of the French Cathedrals. Another significant change was the addition of alternate or secondary entrances. The exterior focus of the German Gothic church was the typical single tower with spire. Its basic design was that of a square buttressed tower with a steeply pitched octagonal or hexagonal pyramidal spire set on it obliquely. The focus of the German Gothic church architecture contains the basilica plan, western frontage tower and entrance, polygonal apse, and multiple entrances. All of these features are in play in the design of Saint Joseph's Chapel.

Three centuries of Texas history (18th-20th) brought considerable diversity in church architecture as times and beliefs changed. The form, design and interiors of Texas churches erected before the Civil War consistently conformed to several distinct religious traditions. Builders of various Protestant sects (i.e., Calvinist, Wesleyan) generally executed edifices with one type of space and furnishing. These worship centers were box like structures with one individual exterior space, unadorned walls and wooden floors. The pulpit was the centerpiece of the auditorium like facility. Episcopalians, Lutherans and Roman Catholics, embracing formal liturgies, ordinarily utilized other types of space design. Church architectural preference based upon liturgical traditions remained a mind-set for countless early immigrants who came to Texas.[10] Eventually, the Methodist and Presbyterian churches added altars, communion rails, organ lofts and galleries.[11]

The Post Civil War years brought complex and theological issues to the surface that were to strongly influence the development of Texas architecture. Industrialization and accompanying massive immigration quickened the pace of urbanization and development of urban enclaves. The "sense of community" that church life provided was becoming a victim of the times.[12]

Between 1879 and the end of the century European immigrants arrived in Texas in large numbers, bringing with them cultural and religious baggage that included the need for houses of worship. Renewed evangelistic zeal was expressed in the construction of grand houses of worship by growing congregations.[13] Medieval-based architectural styles had been second in popularity only to Greek throughout the nineteenth century. Gothic form, construction and details were thought to be strikingly emblematic of the doctrines of Christianity. Many saw in the Gothic Revival style a medieval ecclesiastical architecture that had the capacity to influence and inspire reverence.[14] The Gothic style included pointed arches, hood moldings, buttresses, steeply pitched roofs and a belfry and tower. By the mid-to-late nineteenth century French Gothic architectural influence was being witnessed in Texas in the form of churches such as Saint Louis Catholic Church (circa 1850), Castroville; Our Lady of Refuge of Sinners (circa 1854-1856), Brownsville; and Saint Mary's Catholic Church, San Antonio.

[10] Willard B. Robinson, *Reflections of Faith: Houses of Worship in the Lone Star State* (Waco: Baylor University Press, 1994), p. 43.
[11] Ibid., p. 44.
[12] Ibid., p. 48.
[13] Ibid., p. 70.
[14] Ibid., p. 49.

Church edifices of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries were often among the prominent buildings in communities, often reflective of the background and experience of the individual overseeing their construction.[15]

As Texas entered the twentieth century, farming, ranching and lumber production were major contributors to the state's economy. The arrival of railroad transportation in the early years of the century bolstered these economic stimuli as did enhanced manufacturing and trade. Texan's tastes and attitudes were influenced as newspapers and periodicals arrived by train, as well as through personal and business travel made possible by train transport.[16] The outside exposure resulted in Texans adopting numerous amenities not before available. A competitive sprit arose among Texas communities for recruitment of settlers and a part of the enticement to bring newcomers to a community was the presence of impressive religious buildings. Prominent sites were chosen for placement of religious buildings. In many instances, church sites were amidst particular ethnic or sectarian enclaves. High towers were a key feature of many turn-of-the-century churches and served as a reminder of the importance of the church in the society. The prominence of the church also implied a sense of stability or self-reliance within the community and thus served as an essential attribute to attract immigration and investment.[17] This certainly was a part of the Comal Settlement citizenry's thinking as it pursued the establishment of a church within the community.

On the national scene, advances in research, learning, photography and travel all were a part of stimulating new viewpoints regarding architecture.[18] Mechanized fabrication and economical transportation assured that a wide variety of building components were supplied to virtually every region of the country served by railroads. Creative thought began to focus on considerations of design that would directly complement the style of the worship service.[19] The appearance of an eclectic design style occasionally began to be seen applied to the larger church projects. The Protestant worship service was not a good fit for the Gothic basilica style design as it was more of a design that embodied Roman Catholic hierarchy.[20]

Texas experienced a considerable increase in wealth during the early decades of the twentieth century. The expanding economy and growing populations encouraged the construction of stately buildings in formal styles.[21] Church construction also benefited from the improved economic conditions and expanded capital investment all of which meant increased contributions to religious institutions.[22] The Texas oil boom of the early twentieth century was another economic boost to the growth of cities and associated construction projects, including church building. Demographic shifts within the state caused by immigration of Mexican Catholics moving to Texas border towns to escape political and economic trouble in Mexico, as well as the expansion of various African-American communities meant more churches were needed. Nationally, church building was

[15] Ibid., p. 64.
[16] Ibid., p. 71.
[17] Ibid., p. 73.
[18] Ibid., p. 75.
[19] Ibid., p. 81.
[20] Ibid., p. 94.
[21] Ibid., p. 135.
[22] Ibid., p. 136.

booming in the early years of the twentieth century as church membership (Catholic and Protestant) grew appreciably from 1900 to 1920.[23]

Social and scientific societal changes of the times produced a national interest in examining the spiritual forms of worship. While the Roman Catholic theology and ecclesiology remained relatively stable, numerous denominations altered some aspects of their beliefs and worship, which in some instances influenced architecture.[24] The adoption of a sense of state pride in early twentieth century America led to design planning throughout America based on regional character. Texas design planning was no exception. Local historical roots and ethnic traditions influenced the design of numerous Texas churches.[25] In some instances both interior and exterior design was meant to indicate ethnic influence. In other instances, style was intended to reflect proud identity of denomination through property founded in historic European traditions or to demonstrate the importance of the church in the community.[26] Gothic design seemed to most represent deep emotional and mystical values, appropriate to liturgical worship. The Gothic style was developed under conditions essentially Christian, and thus, produced a religious feeling in the worshiper.

World War I and the Great Depression had a profound impact on church attendance and support. Church traditional design forms continued to be used through the period of World War II but changes in scientific discovery as well as social and theological changes set the stage for Modern and Post Modern architecture.[27] Following World War II, a new era of church building began in large part encouraged by new technology that produced numerous new building materials that appealed to architects on the bases of newness and efficiency.[28] New mechanical discoveries (air conditioning, artificial lighting, etc.) influenced both comfort and conveniences in church design. Several variations of modern design (art deco, etc.) were introduced in the 1930s. There arose conflicts amongst the modernist and the traditionalists. The Roman Catholic Church moved to resolve the conflict within its community by mandating the use of modern architectural design.[29] The Second Vatican Council of the Roman Catholic Church called for "apostolic simplicity" and harmony in church design. In general, churches that experienced little change in their theology were slow to depart from historical architectural traditions.[30]

Leo M. J. Dielmann, Architect

Saint Joseph's Chapel is an outstanding example of late 19th and early 20th century Gothic Revival architecture practiced by one of the most prolific and masterful architects of his time, Leo M. J. Dielmann. Dielmann showed promise as a designer in his early years. His promising talent made his father's decision as to which son to send to Germany for advanced study an easy one. Dielmann returned to Germany after completing his studies at Saint Mary's College in San Antonio. He had already absorbed the rich traditions of his German heritage

[23] Ibid., p. 137.
[24] Ibid., p. 138.
[25] Ibid., p. 147.
[26] Ibid., p. 186.
[27] Ibid., p. 191.
[28] Ibid., p. 194.
[29] Ibid., p. 198.
[30] Ibid., p. 210.

through his family life and through close association with his father's German business associates.[31] These business associates were to become some of Dielmann's early clients. Their shared appreciation of the German culture and mutual respect for the beauty of the German and Middle European Gothic architectural style allowed the design work offered by Dielmann to his clients to be readily approved.

Dielmann's early architectural career was marked by an exceptionally prolific array of significant projects. One inventory of his early years contains the following projects: fifty-three churches, ten rectories, thirteen sectarian institutions, six public buildings, thirteen public schools, twenty-three warehouses, factories, hotels, eleven parochial schools, and one hundred twenty residences and business houses.[32] Among his most recognized projects are his Gothic Revival churches of which Saint Joseph's Chapel is a singularly beautiful example. His Gothic designs have placed Dielmann in an esteemed position among the architectural community. His designs have long been the subject of admiration and awe. He was the leader among his peers who set the professional bar for his craft at a particularly high level throughout his career and until his retirement in 1957.

Dielmann's professional reputation grew steadily as a young architect and important projects came his way such as the design of Immaculate Conception Church in Fredericksburg, Texas in 1905 to 1906. In 1907, he received a commission from the Missionary Sons of the Immaculate Heart of Mary to restore the Spanish mission San Juan Capistrano at San Antonio. He had designed the religious order's mission house and chapel in 1904. In 1911, he undertook significant exterior modification of another of San Antonio, Texas' famous Spanish missions, San Francisco de la Espada.[33]

In 1909, Dielmann was appointed City of San Antonio Building Inspector, a post he held for three years. He continued to design structures while holding the City appointment. [34] In 1913, he was elected to the position of Alderman-at-Large and at the same time served on the San Antonio Public Library Board of Directors.[35] He served the library as a director for thirty years. By 1914, he had designed several San Antonio school buildings.[36] In 1916, he was occupied with several major projects in Seguin, Texas, to include a fire station, the Park Hotel and Saint James Catholic Church. In the remainder of the second decade of the twentieth century he completed numerous projects in south and central Texas.

In 1922, he accepted the commission to add a rectory to the eighteenth century San Fernando Cathedral at San Antonio.[37] That same year, he undertook the design of Saint Peter's Catholic Church in Boerne, Texas, as well as the Convent Chapel of Our Lady of the Lake University at San Antonio. The Gothic Revival architectural style suffered a bit of a set back during and after World War I due to the backlash of suspicion attached to the German-American community during those years and an aversion among native born Texans to all things German. But Dielmann's reputation for outstanding design work kept him somewhat above the controversy and

[31] Ralph Edward Newlan, *Leo M. J. Dielmann: Ecclesiology and the continuations of a German Gothic Architectural Tradition in Twentieth Century Texas*, Thesis for the Graduate School of the University of Texas at Austin, Master of Science in Architectural Studies (1988), p. 49.
[32] Ibid., p. 50.
[33] Ibid., p. 55.
[34] Ibid., p. 58.
[35] Ibid., p. 60.
[36] Ibid., p. 61.
[37] Ibid., p. 65.

he kept busy with multiple projects. The same kind of anti-German bigotry arose during and after World War II and again Dielmann weathered the storm, but American tastes and styles had begun to change the architectural landscape.[38] At about the same period the Catholic Church had before it an encyclical from the Pope that suggested that ethnic targeting for parish development was to be avoided. Such Cannon Law diversification efforts in Catholic Church parish development tended to decrease the appeal of architectural styles derived from Central Europe or any other non-American origin. However, the Dielmann designed churches are spread throughout central and south Texas and with their soaring spires, appear to be sentinels in the communities, challenging every encroachment of time and progress.

Noted architectural historian Willard B. Robinson writes "Numerous works of talented (Texas) practitioners (architects) who made outstanding contributions to our cultural history await recognition and their work awaits interpretation. Among these are the churches of Leo M. J. Dielmann, some of which compare favorably with outstanding work found in other regions of America."[39] According to Robinson, Dielmann's churches are significant at several levels to include: 1) they exemplify certain national tendencies of ecclesiastical architectural design of the first half of the twentieth century; 2) they embody, in material form, the ecclesiastical requirements of worship of their time; and 3) they represent a high level of achievement that obtains when a talented artist with Christian dedication makes a firm commitment to his religious work.[40]

Dielmann began his architectural career at a time when the architectural scene was marked by a multiplicity of historical and eclectic styles but generally singular formal design styles.[41] Taste in architecture at the turn of the 20th century had moved away from the Victorian Gothic, Gothic Revival and the Romanesque Revival styles with their emphasis on picturesqueness and irregularity to more of an appreciation for stateliness and formality.[42] The national mood within the architectural community of the time was to develop an appreciation of "Classicism" within the community. Classicism meant unified proportion, rigid formality, effective skillful composition and respect for the Masters of Classical Art.[43]

Dielmann dabbled with Classicism in church design. He designed St. Monica's Catholic Church (1920) in Neo-Renaissance style which was a monumental effort. But, for the most part, Dielmann limited Classical style for public schools and commercial buildings and medieval styles for religious buildings. Dielmann created noteworthy Neo-Romanesque designs for several churches, one of which is Immaculate Heart of Mary Catholic Church (1911) in San Antonio.[44] Many regional critics and architects held to the belief that buildings should reflect some aspects of their location, some attribute of their function, recognition of cultural history, or, even circumstances of the property's climate.

Dielmann designed churches in picturesque style intended to reflect the cultural heritage of several Texas communities. Examples of his cultural themed churches include Hispanic designs such as Saint Anne's Catholic

[38] Ibid., p. 64.
[39] Robinson, Willard B, "To the Glory of God: Texas Churches Designed by Leo M. J. Dielmann," *Journal of Texas Catholic History*, March 1991, p. 27.
[40] Ibid., p. 27.
[41] Ibid., p. 30.
[42] Ibid., p. 30.
[43] Ibid., p. 31.
[44] Ibid., p. 32.

Church (1937-1938) at Beaumont and the chapel at Randolph Air Force Base (1929-1930), Universal City. Another of his cultural themed churches was his Greek cultural design of Saint Sophia Greek Orthodox Church (1926).[45]

Gothic revival architecture has long been considered particularly expressible of church function.[46] Some critics called for use of styles based upon historical associations. But regardless of style, during the early twentieth century the liturgical churches generally endorsed a high standard of art.[47] Decorative paintings, beautifully wrought crosses, challises, vestments, statues, and finely detailed altars were a means of having art serve a religious purpose, something Dielmann included in his church design work, including at Saint Joseph's Chapel.

The altar of Saint Joseph's Chapel is the work of master cabinetmaker and wood carver John Henry Sievers. Sievers was born in Germany in 1841 and migrated to America with his family four years later. They settled in Castroville, Texas, but within three years moved to San Antonio. He was trained in the rigorous German cabinet making tradition. Sievers established the J.H. Sievers Altar Manufacturing Company, based in San Antonio. The company is credited with making furniture for churches throughout Texas, as well as New Mexico, Arizona, Louisiana and northern Mexico. Other members of the family were workers in the firm and contributed in the workmanship and design of many altars and other pieces of church furniture. The company operated until 1975.

The many Catholic churches designed by Dielmann represent adherence to certain functional requirements mandated by rules of Catholic service to include: 1) Narthex or vestibule which provides a transition space from the mundane world into the nave reverently entered by the worshipers; 2) Nave being a tranquil space securely enveloping worshipers with a central processional isle and adjacent side isles; 3) Choir loft that accommodates an organ and space for singers and a space that forms the ceiling of a low space at the back of the Nave; 4) Sanctuary is the dominant place in the church area reserved for the altar and sacred rites, often flanked by side altars; 5) Baptistery consists of a small area set aside at the back of the nave near the narthex; and 6) Sacristies are positioned adjacent to the chancel and provide for storage of vestments and religious articles.[48] Dielmann provided for each of these spaces while adhering to the basilican plan and Saint Joseph's Chapel is an excellent example. The basilican plan originated from design architecture of ancient Roman basilicas or judicial halls which were later adapted to church design after the fall of the Roman Empire. Dielmann's basilican plan design was particularly applied to his smaller church designs such as that employed for Saint Joseph's Chapel.[49]

In contrast to his early church designs, Dielmann's later and larger church designs, such as the Church of the Guardian Angel of Saint Mary's, High Hill, incorporates elaborately painted interiors. As Dielmann progressed in his design development, his work increasingly revealed a complexity and refinement that the churches of Saint James (1913-1914), Seguin, and Saint Joseph's Church (1913), Weimer, exemplify.[50] These churches feature a single towered form with five bays and coupled windows that produce a more complex rhythm than do

[45] Ibid., p. 32.
[46] Ibid., p. 33.
[47] Ibid., p. 33.
[48] Ibid., p. 34.
[49] Ibid., p. 34.
[50] Ibid., p. 39.

single openings. The polychromatic arches clearly emphasize their structural nature.[51] Dielmann's later designs incorporated distinct, octagonal forms at the junction of the tower and nave. More decorative and intricate designs are seen in the forms of Saint Joseph's Church at Weimar, with the addition of pronounced dormers that enhance the visual interest of the roof.[52] At Saint Joseph's Church at Weimer, hood molds accent its arched openings and arched corbel tables rhythmically animate its cornices. The scale and intricacy of these ornamental details were carefully adjusted to fit the size and importance of the structure.[53]

Dielmann capitalized on his early experience in bringing the Neo-Gothic style to a high plane of development in the design of the Conventual Chapel (1921-1923) of Our Lady of the Lake University, San Antonio. Its 190 foot high tower is the focal point of the university campus. The German Gothic style is evident in broad proportions of the portal gables, salient lower gables, decorative crockets, as well as the play of one large window of the upper stage against triple windows in the stage below.[54]

According to Willard B. Robinson, by the second quarter of the 20th century Dielmann had surely become one of the foremost Catholic Church architects in the Southwest.

Constructed in 1905, Saint Joseph's Chapel was one of Dielmann's earliest designs. However, Dielmann's pride in his achievement is evident when twenty-five years later he boasted in a monograph that Saint Joseph's was his "first brick church."[55]

University of Texas graduate student Ralph Newlan wrote his thesis on Dielmann and in his discussion of Saint Joseph's Chapel, Newlan makes this comment:

> "It is essential that the structure be preserved so that as the parish develops, new members can be made aware of its patrimony and the pride in their history can be shared….It is important that individuals become more aware of what the chapel represents to prevent the same fate that befell SS. Peter and Paul Catholic Church in New Braunfels, the removal and obliteration of distinctive German architectural elements. For eighty three years the chapel's spire has remained a beacon for travelers in the area and should continue as such for many years into the future."

Conclusion

Texas German immigrants of the 19th century brought with them great pride, hope and tradition. Their sons and daughters continued their legacy. Dielmann's contribution to promoting his father's legacy far surpassed what might have been expected. His church designs, including Saint Joseph's Chapel, remain as monuments to his unwavering spirit and commitment to his German heritage. Small rural churches that once occupied the Texas landscape are fast disappearing with the encroachment of newcomers, businesses and support facilities throughout the Texas territories. Schertz, Texas is a prime example of such growth and modernization in action. The unique historical aspect of the Schertz community is still intact in the area surrounding Saint Joseph's

[51] Ibid., p. 39.
[52] Ibid., p. 40.
[53] Ibid., p. 40.
[54] Ibid., p. 40.
[55] Newlan, pp. 51-52.

Chapel (photo 3). The architectural remnants of the early pioneer life (general store, cotton gin, blacksmith shop, first school house, etc.), although in disrepair, still remain as reminders of a period in time when mere personal survival, much less community survival, was an uncertain proposition. Saint Joseph's Chapel epitomizes the pioneer Christian church model in Texas.

A historic resources survey of much of Comal County was completed in 2012. Of nearly 900 historic properties surveyed in that effort, only 25 were identified as "high priority." Saint Joseph's Chapel was among them.

As an excellent example of a small rural church building, designed by a master architect in the late Gothic Revival style, the Saint Joseph's Chapel is nominated to the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion C, in the area of architecture, at the local level of significance. The period of significance is 1905, the date of its completion. Because this religious property derives its primary significance from its architectural distinction, it satisfactorily meets Criteria Consideration A.

Table 1:

The following Texas properties are attributed to architect Leo M. J. Dielmann and are already listed (as of 2014) in the National Register of Historic Places.

Year Constructed	Property	Location	Date NR Listed
1903	Kitchen and Dormitory at Our Lady of Charity	San Antonio, Bexar Co.	1999
1905	St. Mary's Catholic Church	Fredericksburg, Gillespie Co.	1983
1906	St. Mary's, Blessed Virgin Catholic Church, Nativity of Mary	High Hill, Fayette Co.	1983
1906	Fairmont Hotel	San Antonio, Bexar Co.	1988
1907	Post Chapel at Fort Sam Houston	San Antonio, Bexar Co.	1973
1913	Church of the Guardian Angel	Wallis, Austin Co.	1983
1917	Park Hotel	Seguin, Guadalupe Co.	1980
1917	LaBorde House, Store and Hotel	Rio Grande City, Starr Co.	1980
1923	Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Church	Victoria, Victoria Co.	1986
1931	Sacred Heart Catholic Church	Abilene, Taylor Co.	1992
1935	St. Mary's Catholic Church	Brenham, Washington Co.	1990

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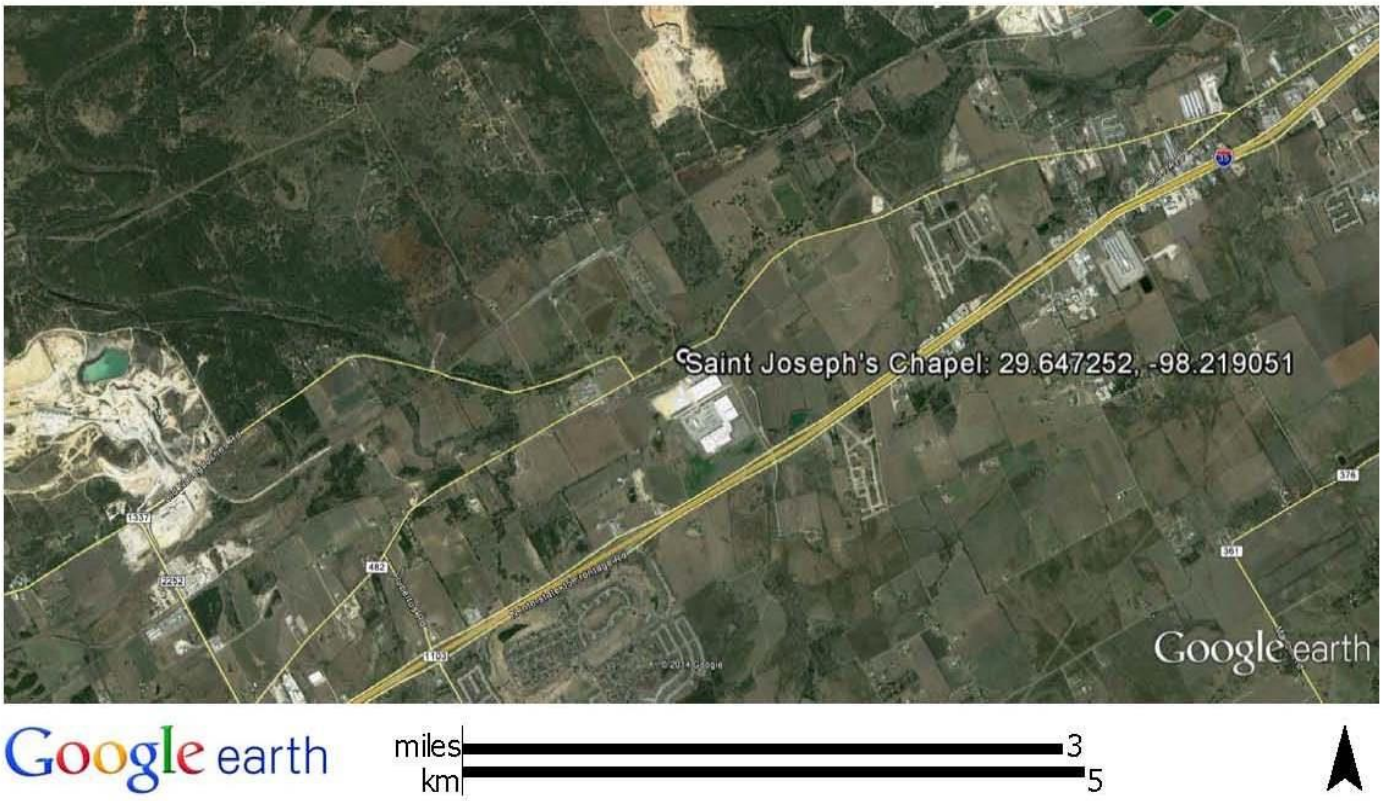
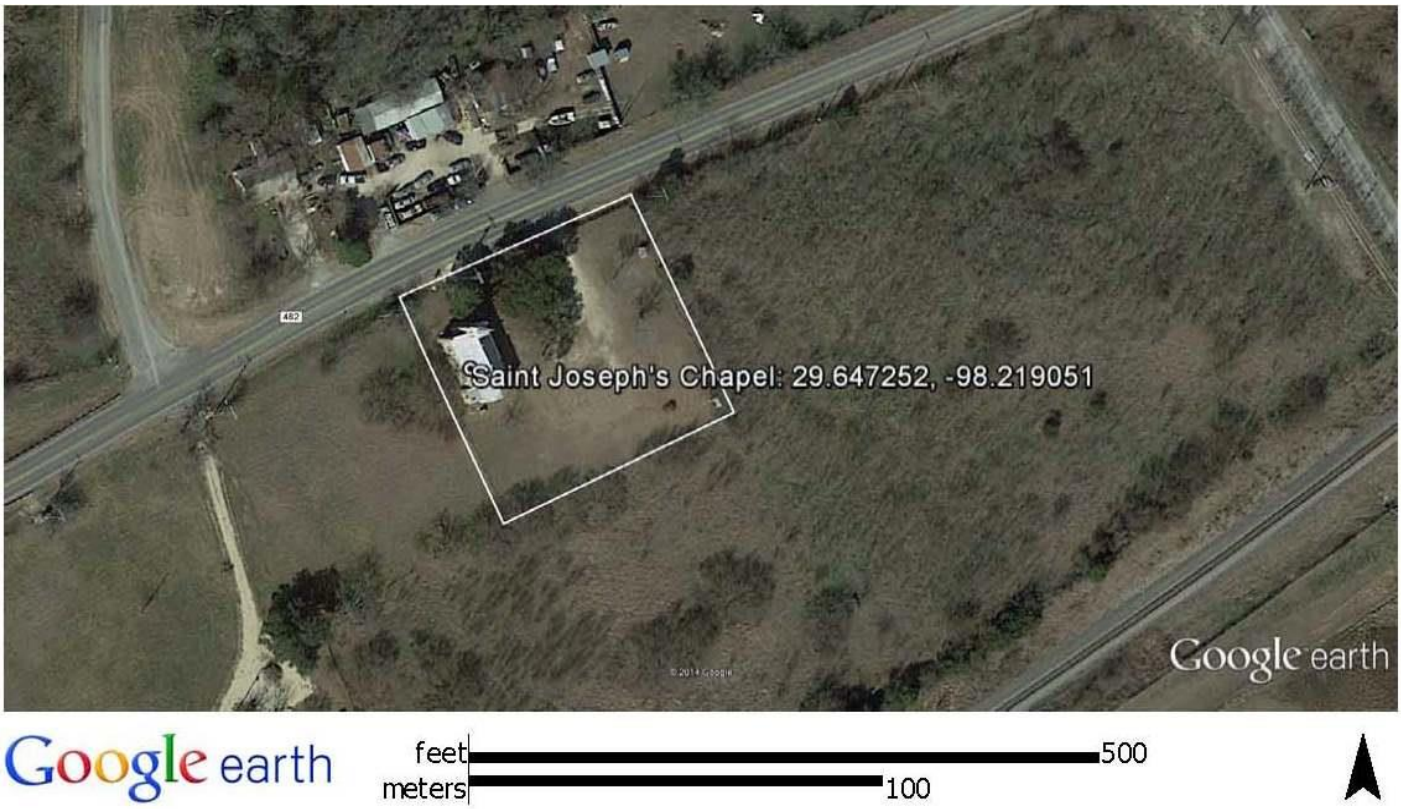
Map 1: Saint Joseph's Chapel is located along FM 482, approximately 8 miles south of New Braunfels, in Comal County. Scaled Google Earth map depicts latitude and longitude coordinates.



Map 2: Scaled Google Earth map depicts nominated property's boundary and latitude and longitude coordinates.



Map 3: Scaled Google Earth map depicts location of the primary resource, the two contributing outhouses, and site of the nineteenth century school and convent (razed).

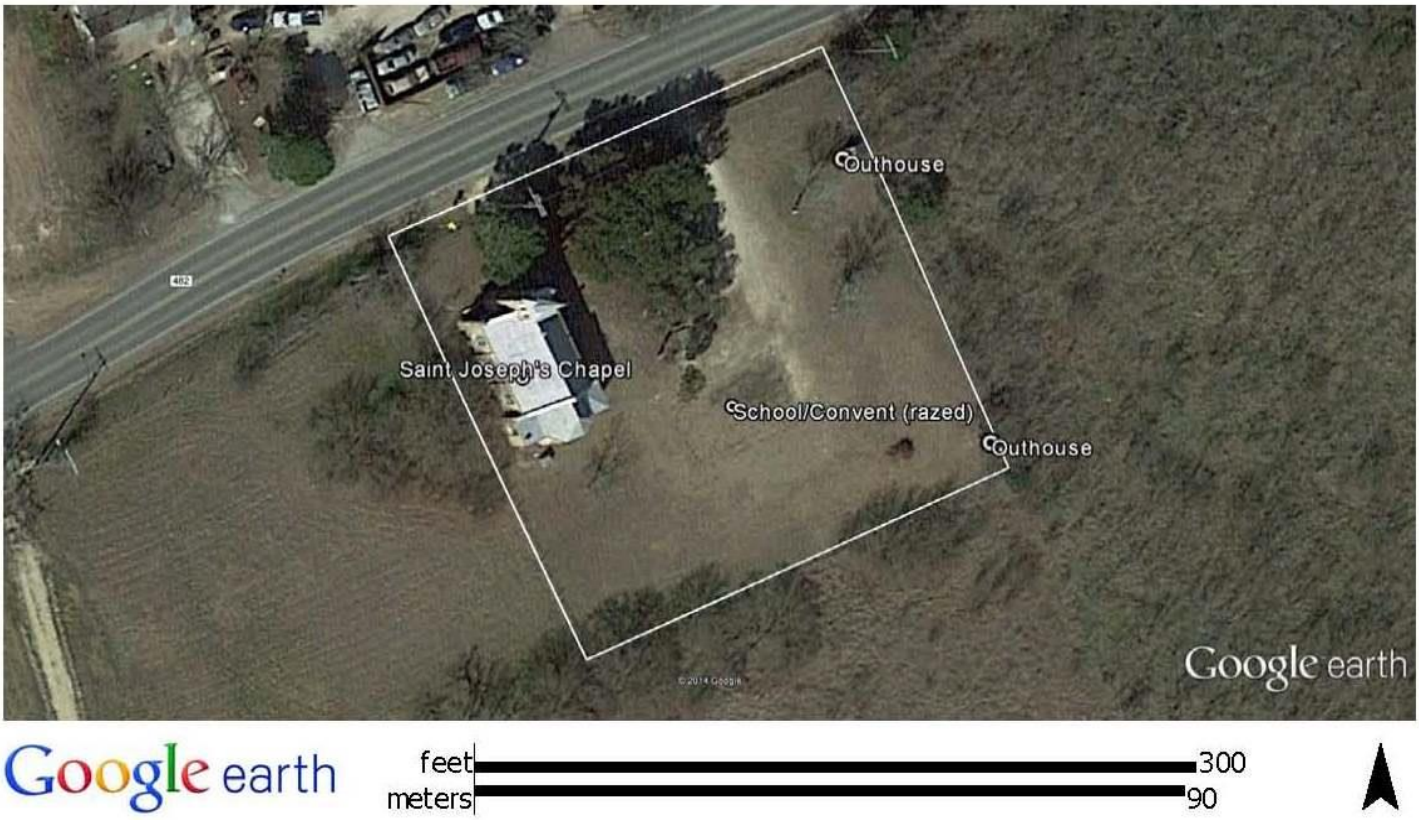


Figure 1: Circa 1905 photo of Saint Joseph's Chapel depicting original side windows with clear glass and newly planted cedar trees beside the chapel.

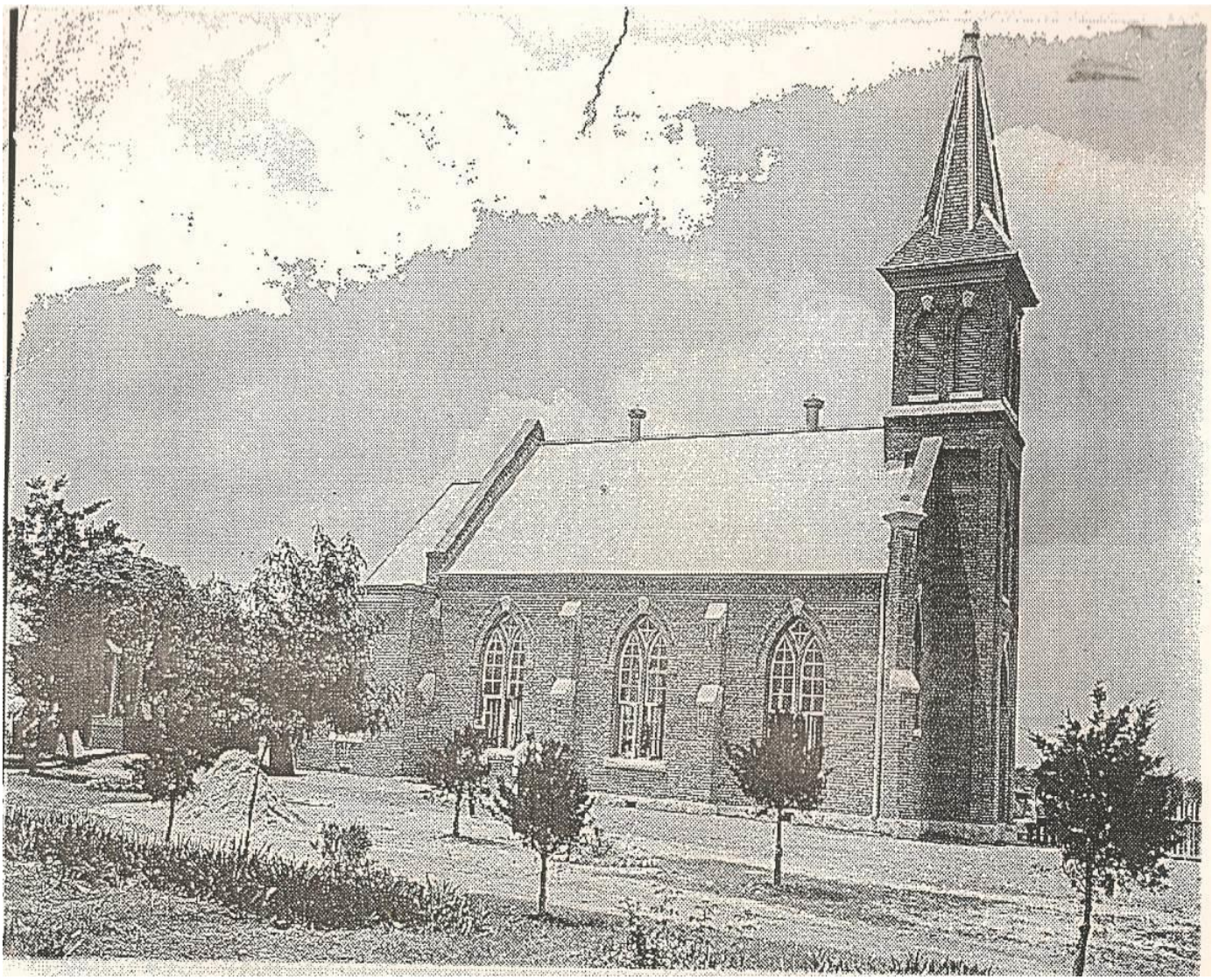


Figure 2: Exterior (southeast side) of Saint Joseph's Chapel at the May 25, 1905 dedication event. Windows appear as clear glass versus stained glass as is the case today.

Figure 3: This school stood adjacent to the chapel until it was demolished in the 1950s.

Figure 4: Interior of Saint Joseph's Chapel (circa 1905) showing wooden pews identical to existing pews.

Figure 5: Newspaper photo clipping (dated Oct. 2, 1980) of the front view of Saint Joseph's Chapel showing double door entrance.

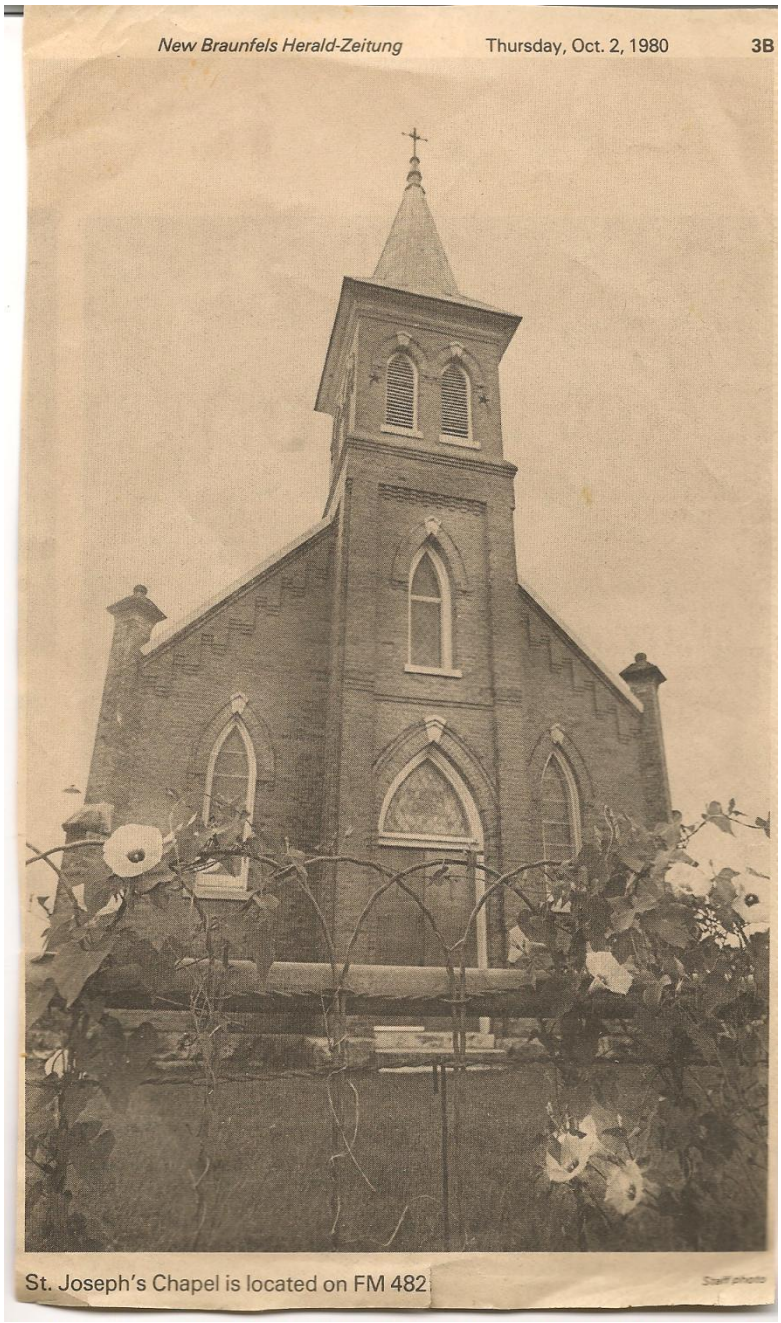
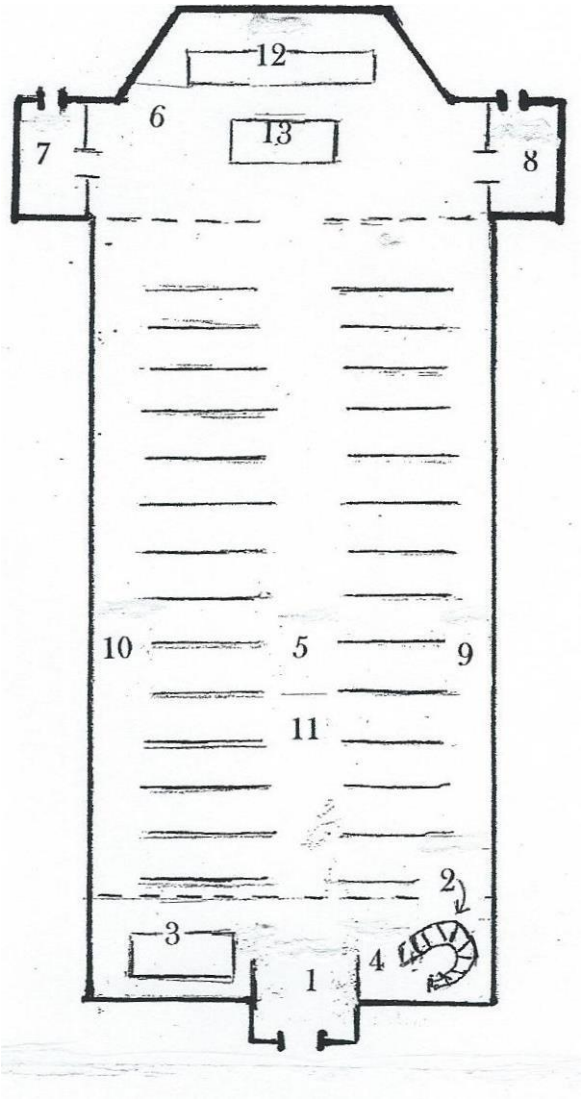
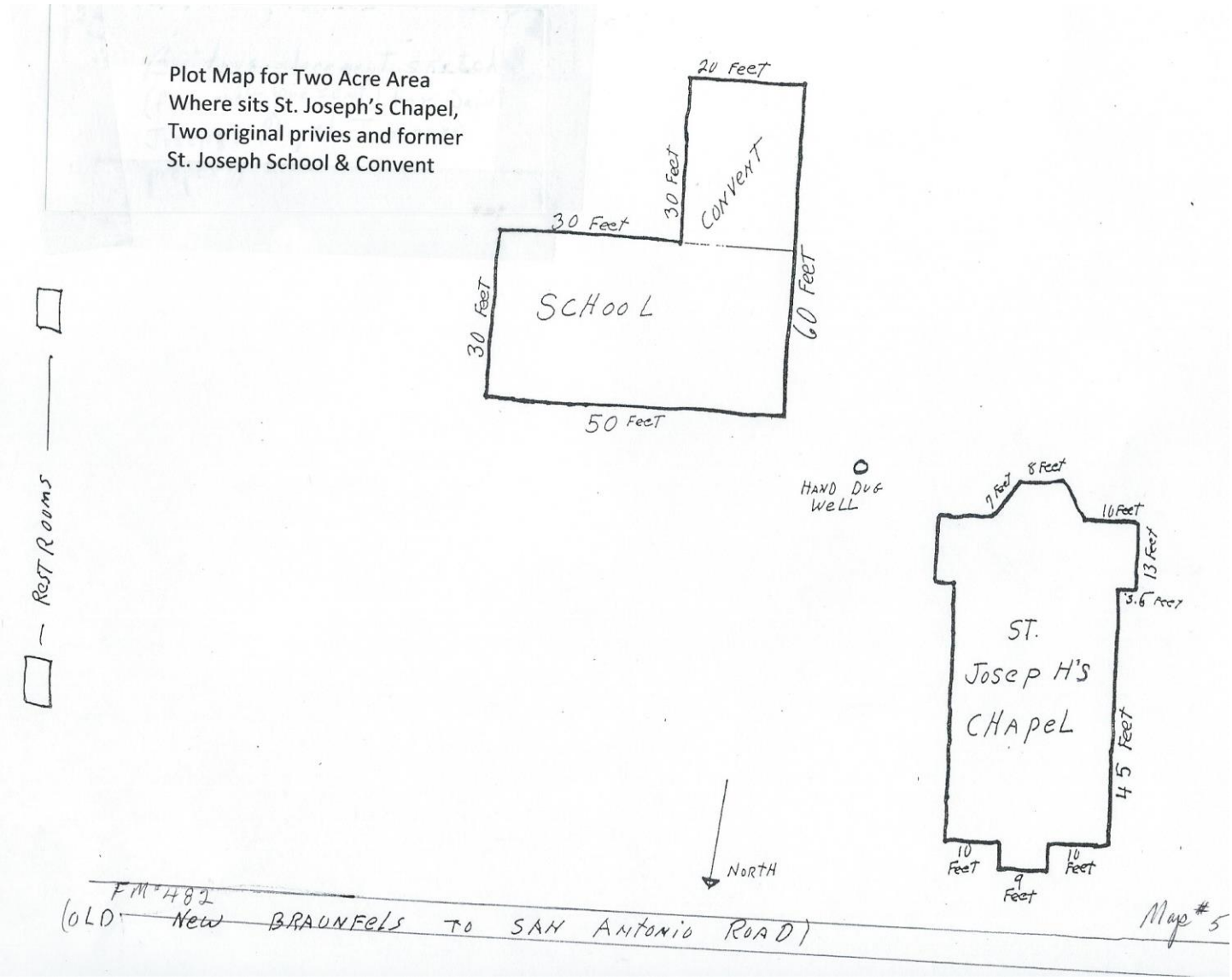


Figure 6: Interior floor plan. Not to scale. Top edge is approximately south. Drawn by the author.



1. Narthex
2. Staircase to choir loft
3. Confessional
4. Choir loft (upper level)
5. Nave
6. Chancel
7. Sacristy
8. Cell
9. Side aisle
10. Side aisle
11. Center aisle
12. Wooden Altar (circa 1905)
13. Stone altar (Post Vatican II)

Figure 7: Site plan of the nominated resource. Not to scale. Drawn by the author. Note that the school and convent are no longer extant.



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