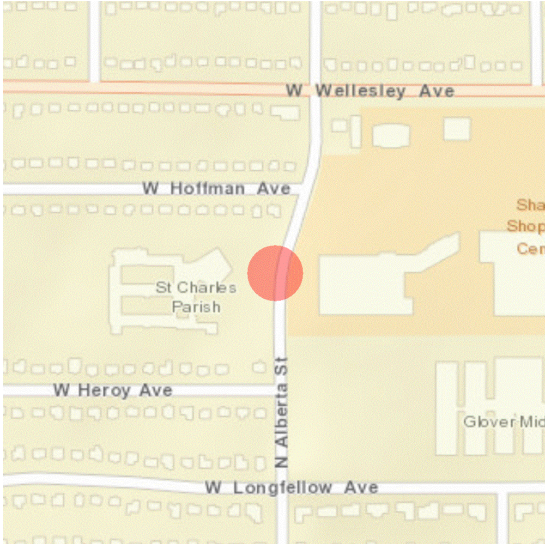


Historic Property Report

Resource Name: St. Charles Borromeo Parish Church

Property ID: 14525

Location



Address: 4515 N Alberta St, Spokane, WA 99205

Geographic Areas: Spokane County, SPOKANE NW Quadrangle, T25R42E01

Information

Number of stories: 2.00

Construction Dates:

Construction Type	Year	Circa
Built Date	1961	<input type="checkbox"/>

Historic Use:

Category	Subcategory
Religion	Religion - Religious Facility
Religion	Religion - Religious Facility

Historic Context:

Category
Religion
Architecture

Architect/Engineer:

Category	Name or Company
Architect	Funk, Murray & Johnson

Historic Property Report

Resource Name: St. Charles Borromeo Parish Church

Property ID: 14525

Thematics:

Local Registers and Districts

Name	Date Listed	Notes
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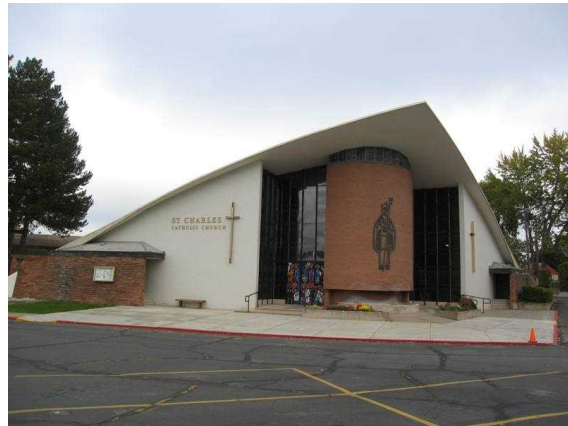
Project History

Project Number, Organization, Project Name	Resource Inventory	SHPO Determination	SHPO Determined By, Determined Date
2011-03-00043, , Nifty From the Last 50	7/16/2003	Not Determined	
2016-12-08751, , Spokane Mid-20th Century Modern Survey 2016	6/30/2017		

Photos



Front, east facade



Church, front, east facade



Church, front, east facade, fountain



Church, front, east facade, artwork



Church, front, east facade, detail



Church, north side facade, roofline



Church, north side facade, detail



Church, south side facade



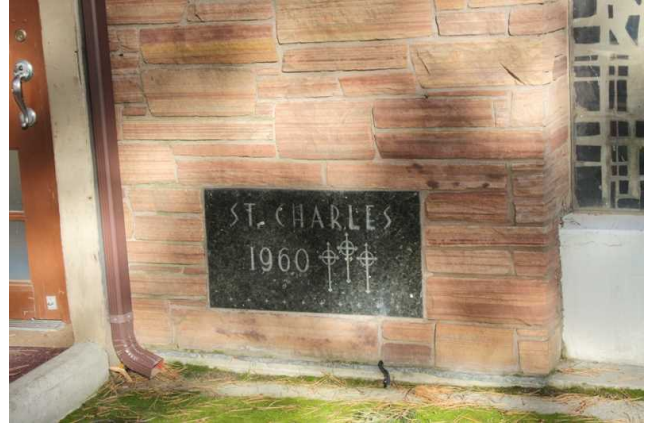
Church, front, east facade, sign



Church, front, east facade, artwork



Church, south side facade, detail



Church, south side facade, sign



Classrooms south of church



Classrooms south of church



Church, south side facade, roofline



Church, north side facade, detail

Historic Property Report

Resource Name: St. Charles Borromeo Parish Church

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Classrooms west of church



Classrooms west of church



Offices west of church, entry



Offices west of church, rear facade



Classrooms and garage south of church



Classrooms west of church

Historic Property Report

Resource Name: St. Charles Borromeo Parish Church

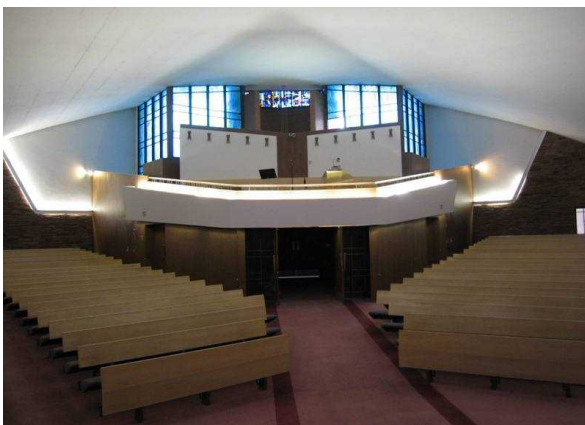
Property ID: 14525



Entry



Rear façade



Church, interior view, sky windows



Church, interior view



Camponile



Camponile base



architect's rendering



Camponile cross



Inventory Details - 6/30/2017

Common name: St Charles Catholic Church

Date recorded: 6/30/2017

Field Recorder: Diana Painter

Field Site number:

SHPO Determination



Historic Property Report

Resource Name: St. Charles Borromeo Parish Church

Property ID: 14525

Detail Information

Characteristics:

Category	Item
Foundation	Concrete - Poured
Form Type	Church
Roof Type	Varied Roof Lines
Cladding	Brick - Roman
Cladding	Stone - Ashlar/Cut
Plan	Irregular
Structural System	Masonry - Poured Concrete

Styles:

Period	Style Details
Modern Movement	Folded Plate/Thin Shell

Surveyor Opinion

Property appears to meet criteria for the National Register of Historic Places: Yes

Property is located in a potential historic district (National and/or local): No

Property potentially contributes to a historic district (National and/or local): No

Significance narrative: History. The St. Charles parish was founded in 1950 with approximately 400 families, who met in the Finch School auditorium and a temporary auditorium in the school until a permanent facility could be constructed. The parish was carved from the St. Francis of Assisi and St. Anthony parishes. The eight-acre site on which the church is located today was actually purchased in 1949 and a master plan was approved by Spokane’s C.P.C. that same year (it is assumed that this organization was the city’s Planning Commission). In its first decade, the church dedicated a school, a convent for the nuns, and a rectory for priests.

Development of the church and school was overseen by Rev. Oakley F. O’Connor, who was considered a visionary by school officials. His guiding principle was that “one should buy the best one can afford.” The first phase of building for St. Charles parish involved competing one wing of four classrooms, a kitchen, and a temporary church and community room. The first mass was held in the temporary church in 1951, the same year that St. Charles school officially opened, taught by the Sisters of St. Francis of Philadelphia. A second wing was constructed in 1952, to meet the demands of the growing parish. In 1954, again to meet growing demand, O’Conner initiated a twelve-day canvassing program, which yielded \$268,265 in pledges for both building expansion plans and the general budget. This particular drive was to complete the third wing of the school and living quarters for the nuns (“\$268,265 Pledged for St. Charles,” Spokane Daily Chronicle, February 25, 1954). The firm of Funk, Molander & Johnson, the same firm that designed the 1961 church, along with architect William C. James, were the architects chosen for this phase of the church’s building program. The fourth wing was added in 1957.



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By this time the growing congregation could no longer fit in the school auditorium that they were using for services and plans were made to develop a new church that would be “simple, very unique, and daring” (Swoboda, 1981:3). The church was to be 15,000 square feet in size and seat 800, with an additional 1250 people using the auditorium. A fundraising drive for \$250,000 commenced in February of 1959. According to church historian Robert Carriker, a bid of \$324,832 was accepted in July of 1959 and construction began immediately. The church was dedicated on October 25, 1961.

Architectural Context. The roof of St. Charles Borromeo Catholic Church is a hyperbolic paraboloid; the building is referred to as such for its form and construction. It is constructed of reinforced, thin-shell concrete. Thin shell concrete construction was developed as a way to economically span large spaces without columns or other internal supports, and is ideal for use in a church sanctuary, an auditorium, or a gymnasium, where preserving sight lines or movement is important. The form was developed in the 1920s and 1930s in Europe, but not widely utilized in the United States until the 1960s and 1970s. It is defined as follows: “A thin-shell concrete structure is a reinforced-concrete structure whose geometry is optimized to develop membrane forces for the support of the structure against gravity” (Boothby, 2005:3). The term “thin shell concrete” refers to the thickness of the slab or plate, which is thin in comparison to ordinary concrete construction. It utilizes compression and tension, the latter resisted by steel reinforcing.

This method of construction was also popular for its expressive capabilities, which can be readily seen in the design of St. Charles Catholic Church. Thin-shell concrete construction is capable of creating curved and complex geometrical shapes but without the problems caused by the weight of traditional masonry. According to architectural historian Theodore Prudon, the Lambert Airport in St. Louis, designed by Seattle architect Minoru Yamasaki, and the TWA Terminal in New York, designed by Eero Saarinen with engineering by Ammann & Whitney, are excellent examples of the use of thin shell construction “. . . to create unique and spectacular spaces celebrating the modernity of the function” (Prudon, 2008:95). John Christianson, a Seattle engineer perhaps best known for the construction of Seattle’s Kingdome (no longer extant), was a foremost designer of thin shell structures.

The hyperbolic paraboloid seen at St. Charles Catholic Church is in the shape of a saddle, which is defined as follows: “A saddle roof is one which follows a convex curve about one axis and a concave curve about the other. The hyperbolic paraboloid form has been used for roofs at various times since it is easily constructed from straight sections of lumber, steel, or other conventional materials. The term is used because the form resembles the shape of a saddle” (Fleming, 1991). There are no other known hyperbolic paraboloid structures in Spokane.

Architects. The Spokane architectural firm of Funk, Murray and Johnson designed the

1961 St. Charles Borromeo Catholic Church. Albert Harvey Funk, Edwin William Molander, and Carl Herbert Johnson formed Funk, Molander & Johnson in Spokane in 1944. Molander left the firm in 1956 to establish an independent practice; when Donald Howard Murray became a partner in 1957, the practice was renamed Funk, Murray & Johnson. Over its 40-year existence, the firm created some of the Inland Northwest's most iconic – and visually arresting – buildings, including everything from single-family residences to educational facilities to churches. The firm is also known for the design of the 1945 Garland Theater in Spokane, listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 2013, and their collaboration with Spokane architects Culler, Gale, Martell & Davis on the design of the Federal Building in Richland, Washington (1965).

Albert Funk was born in Spokane in 1903 and graduated from Washington State College in 1925. He worked as a draftsman for Whitehouse & Price from 1926 to 1929, when he moved to Washington, D.C. to serve as an assistant architect for the U.S. Treasury Department. He worked as a designer at Morrell Smith in New York City in 1930, returning to Spokane in 1931. After working as a draftsman for the State Highway Department, he joined Monroe Street Lumber Co. as an in-house architect. He eventually opened his own firm in 1937. He died in Spokane in 1986.

Don Murray was born in Walla Walla, Washington in 1920. Following graduation with a BS in architectural engineering from Washington State College in 1942, he served as a frogman in one of the Navy's Underwater Demolition Teams – forerunners to today's SEAL units. Murray's UDT 13 was one of four teams assigned to prepare the beaches of Iwo Jima for a USMC landing; he himself led the first wave of Marines onto Green Beach near Mount Suribachi, and was awarded the Silver Star for his action. Murray's unique design aesthetic and visionary work with fellow partner Johnson led to a number of notable projects, in particular Holy Family Catholic Church (1962) in Clarkston and Richland Lutheran Church (1967), as well as Spokane's St. Charles Catholic Church, all three of which continue to make a visual impact decades after their construction. Murray died in Spokane in 2004.

Born in Sheridan, Wyoming in 1913, Carl Johnson earned a Bachelor of Science from the University of Minnesota, St. Paul in 1935. He worked as a draftsman for a variety of firms, including J. van Teylingen (1935-40) and Angus Vaughn McIver (1940-41), both of Great Falls, Montana. Like Funk, he also worked for Whitehouse & Price. A licensed engineer, Johnson was integral to the partnership, with expertise that enabled the firm to explore innovative forms, shapes, and construction methods. He died in 2002 in La Conner, Washington.

Much of the artwork for St. Charles Catholic Church was created and executed by Spokane sculptor and artist Harold Balazs. Balazs was born September 15, 1928 in Westlake, Ohio. He earned a Bachelor of Arts degree from Washington State College (now University) in 1951, and has worked as a self-employed artist ever since. Balazs is best known for his public art – sculptures in wood, metal, concrete, stone, and enamel – in communities throughout the Pacific Northwest, including several important architectural collaborations: the pebble mosaic in Washington Water Power's reflecting pool (1959), an undulating pattern in concrete at Spokane's Unitarian Church (1960), and the carved brick reliefs on an exterior wall at the Richland Public Library (1969). He was named Craftsman of the Year by the Seattle chapter of the American Institute of Architects in 1960. In 1966, at just 38 years of age, Balazs was awarded the highest honor the AIA can bestow: a Gold Medal. In their nomination, the Spokane chapter wrote that "Harold Balazs is a free spirit architect's artist. His genius flowers in the ability to

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contribute positively to the total architectural concept. Balazs is a dynamic, searching personality who lives a creative life. His work shows great range in subject, media, scale, and purpose. We predict his fame, we cherish his friendship, we nominate him for the 1966 A. I. A. Craftsmanship Medal." In addition to serving three terms on the Washington State Arts Commission, Balazs received a Washington State Governor's Award in the Arts in 1988 and a Creative Arts award from the Enamelist Society in 2001.

The stained glass for St. Charles Catholic Church was created by French artist Gabriel Loire, who first gained prominence rebuilding stained glass windows in churches damaged in World War II. Loire contributed all the stained glass, which features chipped glass set in cement, a technique that he is known for perfecting. According to one writer, the technique involves setting thick, chipped pieces of glass into a mortar of epoxy resin. The stained glass for St. Charles was created in France and then shipped to Spokane for installation (Carriker, 2012).

Physical description:

Location and Setting. St. Charles Catholic Church is set in a suburban setting in northwest Spokane, north of the southeast-northwest arterial street of Northwest Blvd., and south of the major east-west arterial of Wellesley Avenue. The parcel owned by the church is 8 acres, bound by Alberta Street on the west, A Street on the east, and the residential parcels within the block that faces onto Hoffman Avenue on the north and Heroy Avenue on the south. The site is accessed from the east by Alberta Street. To the immediate east of the church is a large shopping center with a Safeway, Walmart, and numerous other businesses. To the south of the shopping center is Glover Middle School and the open spaces associated with it. To the east of this commercial center is another large complex made up of Shadle Park, the Shadle Park Reservoir (see survey form in this study), the Shadle Park branch of the Spokane Public Library, Shadle High School, and the recreational facilities associated with the high school. This entire complex is bounded by Wellesley Avenue on the north; Ash Street on the east; Longfellow Avenue on the south; and Alberta Street on the west. The area surrounding this church and complex is primarily made up of residential neighborhoods, interspersed with additional schools, churches and parks.

Materials. St. Charles Catholic Church is a large building complex constructed with many materials. The hyperbolic paraboloid that covers the church itself is constructed of 3"-thick concrete. Cladding on the building includes sandstone, Roman brick, and ceramic tile, as well as reinforced concrete elements. Artwork on the building consists of metal work, enameled panels, and stained glass. The pool in front of the curved entry feature is finished in ceramic tiles, whereas the pool surrounding the base of the obelisk-like feature northeast of the church – which is the bell tower for the church – is concrete. Windows are framed in anodized aluminum. Offices are brick veneer with wood windows and classrooms are curtain wall structures with brick under the sills of the aluminum-frame windows.

Massing and design. The full name of St. Charles Catholic Church is St. Charles Borromeo Catholic Church and School. The church itself is connected to the school –which pre-dates the church – and offices and parish hall, which collectively form a large building complex. The church is one story, while the connected buildings are one and two stories in height. The school and offices form a grid that extends to the west and southwest of the church, with garages to the south. There are three east-west wings and two north-south wings in the complex, with a total of three courtyards. Parking for the church is located at the front of the church, to the east, and south of the fountain and campanile. To the immediate rear or west of the classrooms are outdoor play areas. The remainder of the block, through to A Street, is a planted in lawn with baseball diamonds.



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The church itself is an asymmetrical hyperbolic paraboloid. The front peaks over a brick-clad cylindrical form with a depiction of St. Charles marking the front entry. Flanking this entry to each side are double doors with scenes on enameled panels, topped by tall, multi-light windows. The artwork here is by Harold Balazs. Balazs contributed all the metalwork, including the sculpture of St. Charles Borromeo, the twelve baked enamel panels on the front entry door that depict the life of Christ, the baptismal font and baptistery doors, and the copper work in the campanile or bell tower. Flanking the main doors are small, stone-clad projections that house side-entry doors to the church. Following the roofline to the rear of the building are stained glass windows designed by artist Gabriel Loire which, according to one author, “create the illusion that the ceiling ‘floats’ over the pillarless interior.” Loire also created the sky windows.

To the left of the front façade of the church is a three-part wing that wraps around to the south and east that contains offices, classrooms, and a garage. Most of the remainder of the church site is composed of classrooms, with the exception of the newer building in the northwest corner, which appears to be the parish hall and more offices. The site is marked on the north side by the 92’ steel campanile housing the church’s chimes, located within a fountain on a raised, angular platform.

As described in the brochure created for the National Trust for Historic Preservation 2012 tour that included this building, “The St. Charles Borromeo Catholic Church represents a masterful integration of art and architecture by the firm of Funk, Murray and Johnson, Spokane artist Harold Balazs, and French stained glass artist Gabriel Loire of Chartres.” When completed the church was called “the most strikingly modern Catholic church in Spokane” in the Inland Register newspaper. The Spokane architectural firm of Funk, Murray and Johnson designed the church; it was constructed in 1961. The church was recognized with an AIA award for outstanding contemporary architecture.

Changes over time. A master plan for the St. Charles facility was approved by Spokane’s C.P.C. in 1949. St. Charles school and parish hall was constructed in 1951, with additions made in 1952, 1954 and 1957. In 1967, a storage area was added that connected the church with the school. In 1968, an addition provided for attached garages. In 1978, a head start day care facility was added. The building was re-roofed and waterproofed in 1997 and again in 2014.

Landscape and site design. With a dramatic hyperbolic paraboloid form, the church dominates its eight-acre, suburban setting. The building is set back from the street, which is appropriate for a structure of such large proportions. The free form of the church contrasts with the grid-iron pattern of the church school buildings, offices, and rectory. The site is dramatically punctuated by the 92’ form of the campanile, which contains the church’s chimes. There is little formal landscaping on the site. The site displays a few mature trees, around the fountain and campanile, at the offices and garage, and in the courtyards. Other areas are finished in lawn.

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Inventory Details - 7/16/2003

Common name:

Date recorded: 7/16/2003

Field Recorder: M. Houser

Field Site number:

SHPO Determination

Detail Information

Characteristics:

Category	Item
Roof Material	Asphalt/Composition - Built Up
Foundation	Concrete - Poured
Cladding	Brick
Plan	Irregular
Roof Type	Parabolic

Styles:

Period	Style Details
Modern Movement	New Formalism

Surveyor Opinion

Property appears to meet criteria for the National Register of Historic Places: No

Significance narrative: artwork by Harold Balazs, and stained glass by Gabriel Loire.