

# Landmarks Preservation Board

## Nomination Form

NAME (present) St. Spiridon Cathedral  
(historic) (same)

ADDRESS 1309 Harrison Street, Seattle, Wa.

### NOMINATION AS:

- ☒ Building  
☐ Site  
☐ Structure  
☐ District  
☐ Object

DEC 13 1974

OFFICE OF HISTORIC  
PRESERVATION

### NOMINATED UNDER CRITERIA (ORDINANCE 102229)

☒ (1) has significant character, interest or value, as part of the development, heritage or cultural characteristics of the City, State or Nation; or is associated with the life of a person significant in the past; or

☐ (2) is the site of an historic event with a significant effect upon society; or

☒ (3) exemplifies the cultural, political, economic, social or historic heritage of the community; or

☐ (4) portrays the environment in an era of history characterized by a distinctive architectural style; or

☒ (5) embodies those distinguishing characteristics of an architectural-type or engineering specimen; or

☐ (6) is the work of a designer whose individual work has significantly influenced the development of Seattle; or

☐ (7) contains elements of design, detail, materials or craftsmanship which represent a significant innovation; or

☐ (8) by being part of or related to a square, park or other distinctive area, should be developed or preserved according to a plan based on a historic, cultural or architectural motif; or

☒ (9) owing to its unique location or singular physical characteristic, represents an established and familiar visual feature of the neighborhood, community or city; or

☐ (10) has yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important in pre-history or history.

NOMINEE Earl D. Layman, HPO.  
address Office of Urban Conservation  
phone 583-4471

NOMINATION DATE November 27, 1974

Reviewed [Signature]

Historic Preservation Officer

date 12/3/74

BOARD SPONSOR Louise Dowey

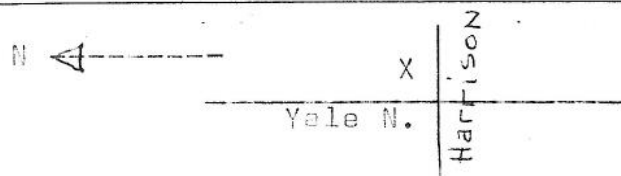
date \_\_\_\_\_

# Landmarks Preservation Board

## Seattle Historic Building Data Sheet

1. Name (common or present and/or historic) St. Spiridon Cathedral
2. Street and Number 402 Harrison St. (office) Pontius Add.  
400 Yale Ave. N. (church) Block 21 Lot 6 Year Built 1937-38
3. Present Owner Autocafely Orthodox Present Use church  
Church of America
4. Interim Owner(s) \_\_\_\_\_ Interim Use(s) \_\_\_\_\_
5. Original Owner same Original Use same  
Indep. Ortho. Ch. in America, org. 1917
6. Architect \_\_\_\_\_ Builder \_\_\_\_\_
7. Assessed Value: Building 49,300 Land 39,600 Assessors File No. 68-47-78-0030  
adj. house bilt. 1947
8. Classification:
- |  |   |   |   |
|--|---|---|---|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Building | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public  | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Occupied              | Open to Public:<br><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes<br><input type="checkbox"/> No <u>services only</u><br>Hours _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Site                | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Private | <input type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied                       |   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Structure           | <input type="checkbox"/> Both               | <input type="checkbox"/> Preservation work<br>in progress |   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Object              |   | <input type="checkbox"/> Threatened by<br>demolition      |   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other               |   | <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown                          |   |
9. Neighborhood Information:
- A. Compatibility With Neighborhood
- Structure Yes X No \_\_\_\_\_
- Use Yes X No \_\_\_\_\_
- B. Importance to Neighborhood
- Great \_\_\_\_\_
- Moderate X
- Minor \_\_\_\_\_
- C. Architecturally Strong Neighborhood
- Comments Formerly a single family  
dwell. neighb., now more light  
indus. and small office, still  
in scale, though parishioners  
now scattered.
10. Special Research Sources (Be Specific, list name or item and where found)
- C. Dwyer, 3151 Alki Ave. S.W., #26, Seattle 98116  
Museum of History and Industry, City Directories

## 11. Cross Street Reference



12. Photos Attached & Photographer LPB office, John Joehman

### 13. Physical Description

A. Style of Architecture  
Russian Orthodox (modified)  
traditional

B. Construction Material  
ordinary masonry  
composition roof

C. No. of Stories  
three, plus basement

D. Condition  
Excellent   X    
Good             
Fair             
Poor           

E. Exterior Desecration of  
Original Design

None or little   X    
Moderate amount             
Considerable           

F. Architectural worth at  
Example of Its Style

Exceptional             
Excellent   X    
Good             
Fair             
Poor           

G. Notable Features: (Be specific, i.e., detailing, craftsmanship, proportions, materials, colors, interior, etc.  
Refer to Guidelines of Landmarks Preservation Board)  
Interior surfaces are plain, one central ceiling painting, many icons.

St. Spiridon is a Russian Orthodox cathedral of the 16th C. tradition, modified. It is generally a square main sanctuary, with a rectangular vestibule on the west, and a small portico beyond the vestibule. A side entry has an arched roof containing a large bell. The main portico is actually suspended from the brick building, with side stairways leading to the front door, and a lower door on the front face at ground level. The portico has two twisted concrete columns supporting a roof with octagonal spire adorned with five small pointed "gables". Besides the large central onion dome on the main structure, and the four corner domes, the vestibule has two domes, the bell tower roof has a similar dome, and the portico spire has a tiny echo of the dome shape; each dome topped with an eastern cross. The central and four corner domes represent Christ and the four Apostles.

The cathedral is of ordinary masonry construction, with three stories plus a full concrete basement. The roof is composition but the domes and portico roof are metal sheathed. Slight detail in the brick appears in two tiny corbelled bands at the eaves, bands on the bell-tower entry pillars, and vertical lines at the corners of the main sanctuary. Domes are sheathed in metal, are vertically faceted, and are presently painted blue.

Windows are arched with arched upper lights and 6 or 12 lower rectangular lights. A bronze bell is suspended in the tower of the Harrison Street entrance.

The front doors, on Yale, are of wood, banded with vertical and horizontal metal strips with round head tacks simulating rivets. The doors are painted blue.



14. Significance

A. Major Significance

- ☒ Historical
- ☒ Architectural
- ☐ Engineering
- ☒ Cultural
- ☐ Geographical
- ☐ Archaeological

B. Level of Significance

- ☐ National
- ☐ State
- ☒ Community

C. Statement of Significance (Be specific, history, personages, events, etc.)

Note: numbers refer to numbers of criteria:

1. St. Spiridon's is the focal structure of the Russian Orthodox Church of America. It recognizes the present regime in the USSR, but is separate and established in its present legal form as of 1969. The only other church of this alignment in this area is the church in Wilkinson, Washington, which conducts services in a former Protestant church building. St. Spiridon's is readily identifiable to members and to passersby, and to autos on the freeway or on Eastlake, as a Russian cathedral, by its distinctive onion domes.

3. The Russian community in Seattle had established a church, St. Spiridon, on Lakeview Boulevard, in 1898. Most of the congregation were emigrants from Russia after the death of Alexander III in 1894. In the early years, the church was listed as Greek-Russian in the Seattle city directory. But by 1930 a Greek church was established at Tale and Thomas, and the Russian church remained on Lakeview Boulevard. The Russian community, however, was itself splitting, over the authority of the church and the possible recognition of the new regime in the USSR. During the 1920's by mutual disagreement on theology, a split occurred, with the more conservative members breaking away to found their own church (St. Nicholas). After a court battle over the existing building, that structure was closed and remained vacant until razed during construction of the I-5 freeway. According to the Seattle city directories, briefly the congregation was located at 1932 Federal Avenue. In 1941, St. Spiridon is listed as being at Yale and Harrison, its present location. However, the congregation had raced with the St. Nicholas congregation in construction of a church, and the building was actually erected in 1937 and 1938.

In 1917, the church had become independent of the Russian Orthodox Church, and its ownership is the Independent Orthodox Church in America, now called the Autocafaly Orthodox Church of America, with 15 member churches in the United States.

Surveyor Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Reviewed: \_\_\_\_\_  
Historic Preservation Officer \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

*continued*

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5. Little is known of the construction of the St. Spiridon church. The designer and contractor are unknown at this writing, but the fact of a race in construction with St. Nicholas is well remembered by church members. The present membership pays \$35 per month toward the upkeep of the structure. A home for the priest was built in 1947, adjacent to the church, and also of brick. Both structures have attractive and well-tended gardens. The church is in traditional Russian Orthodox (modified) traditional style, dating originally from the 16th Century.

9. Since its erection, St. Spiridon has been well established as a special feature of the neighborhood. It is visible from many adjoining well travelled streets, so in that respect is better known to the general public than the St. Nicholas cathedral. The neighborhood of Cascade-Eastlake, and Capitol Hill support its activities by attending the annual bazaars. Visitors may attend services and always enjoy viewing the great numbers of exquisite icons in various places in the interior. The congregation stands during services as two or three benches against the walls are for the elderly and infirm members only.

Surveyor Signature

*Margaret A. Corley*

Date

*1975 & 76*

Reviewed: \_\_\_\_\_

Historic Preservation Officer

Date