

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register Of Historic Places  
Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Saint Scholastica Convent

other names/site number Saint Scholastica Monastery ; St. Scholastica Academy; Site #SB0818

2. Location

street & number 1301 South Albert Pike

not for publication

city or town Fort Smith

vicinity

state Arkansas code AR county Sebastian code 131 zip code 72903

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  nationally  statewide  locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Carrie Matthews  
Signature of certifying official

11/17/05  
Date

Arkansas Historic Preservation Program  
State or Federal Agency or Tribal government

In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria. ( See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of commenting official/Title Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register  
 See continuation sheet.
- determined eligible for the National Register  
 See continuation sheet.
- determined not eligible for the National Register
- removed from the National Register
- other (explain): \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of the Keeper

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

Category of Property

(Check only one box)

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Number of Resources within Property

(Do Not include previously listed resources in the count.)

|              |                 |            |
|--------------|-----------------|------------|
| Contributing | Noncontributing |            |
| 1            | 0               | buildings  |
| _____        | _____           | sites      |
| _____        | _____           | structures |
| _____        | _____           | objects    |
| 1            | 0               | Total      |

Name of related multiple property listing

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

N/A

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

RELIGION / church school

RELIGION / church-related residence

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

RELIGION / religious facility

RELIGION / church school

RELIGION / church-related residence

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

LATE 19<sup>th</sup> AND 20<sup>th</sup> CENTURY REVIVALS /

Late Gothic Revival

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Stone

walls Brick

roof Clay tile

other

Narrative Description (Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

SEE CONTINUATION SHEET (pgs. 1 thru 10)

**8. Statement of Significance**

**Applicable National Register Criteria** (Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing)

- 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.
- 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**

(Mark "X" in all the boxes that apply.)

- A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B** removed from its original location.
- C** a birthplace or a grave.
- D** a cemetery.
- E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F** a commemorative property.
- G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

**Areas of Significance**

(Enter categories from instructions)

ARCHITECTURE

EDUCATION

RELIGION

**Period of Significance**

1924 - 1956

**Significant Dates**

1924 - 1956

**Significant Person** (Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

**Cultural Affiliation**

**Architect/Builder**

Mr. F. W. Redlich = Architect (Oklahoma City, OK)

Mayors & Scheer = Builder (Sapulpa, OK)

**Narrative Statement of Significance** (Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

SEE CONTINUATION SHEET (pgs. 1 thru 3)

**9. Major Bibliographical References**

**Bibliography**

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

**Previous documentation on file (NPS)**

- 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**

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository: \_\_\_\_\_

**10. Geographical Data**

Acreage of Property approximately 4.78 acres

**UTM References**

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

|   | Zone  | Easting | Northing |   | Zone  | Easting | Northing |
|---|-------|---------|----------|---|-------|---------|----------|
| 1 | 15    | 374269  | 3914907  | 3 | _____ | _____   | _____    |
| 2 | _____ | _____   | _____    | 4 | _____ | _____   | _____    |

See continuation sheet.

Verbal Boundary Description (SEE CONTINUATION SHEET)

Boundary Justification (SEE CONTINUATION SHEET)

**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title Galen Hunter, Architect/Ralph S. Wilcox, National Register & Survey Coordinator

organization Arkansas Historic Preservation Program date 10/04/05

street & number 1500 Tower Building, 323 Center Street telephone 501-324-9787

city or town Little Rock state AR zip code 72201

**Additional Documentation**

Submit the following items with the completed form:

**Continuation Sheets**

**Maps**

A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A **sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

**Photographs**

Representative black and white photographs of the property.

**Additional items** (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

**Property Owner**

(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name Saint Scholastica Monastery

street & number 1301 South Albert Pike telephone 479-783-4147

city or town Fort Smith state AR zip code 72903

**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. 470 et seq.). A federal agency may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to a collection of information unless it displays a valid OMB control number.

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including the 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 Keeper, National Register of Historic Places, 1849 "C" Street NW, Washington, DC 20240.

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**NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION - INTRODUCTION**

Saint Scholastica Convent was planned from its inception in 1923 as a single unit consisting of three (3) distinct parts (Convent, Chapel and Academy). For the first wing Architect, F.W. Redlich of Okalahoma City prepared plans (noted as from his Stillwater, OK office), giving them an approval date on the drawings of Oct. 29, 1923 (and a commission #S626). By Nov. 23, 1923, a contract was signed with contractors, Mayors and Sheer of Sapulpa, OK. Construction ensued on the original structure, having 5 stories of buff-colored native brick ornamented with Carthage and Bedford stone, and roofed with green clay tile. The design for this wing was accomplished in a Late Gothic Revival architectural style that includes extensive decorative cut stone treatments of all windows, including dormer windows. The basement exterior is finished in cut stone with decorative cap band where brick veneer rises for 3 more stories, and having a cut-stone parapet to receive the clay tile roof.

The east and west main axis of the 178'x42' structure each has a gable end which includes decorated style buttresses that ascend from the basement to above the roof, topped with a cut-stone spire. The building is south façade has 8'x42' projection for the main entry of cut-stone Gothic arch, with a gable façade that also features the decorative style buttresses flanking the entry. Windows are grouped for all brick façades of this building, each set having (originally) two or more single sash windows comprising an 8-lite lower and 4-lite upper sash separated by vertical and horizontal mulls. The rectangular masonry openings for these window groups have head, jamb and sill in cut stone accents that render the Late Gothic Revival style for the building exterior.

In the original structure completed in Sept. 1924, Saint Scholastica Convent living quarters were in attic floor and temporary chapel on first floor. When St. Joseph Academy (established in January 1879) moved from Shoal Creek to Ft. Smith, Arkansas, in 1924 and settled into this building it changed its name to St. Scholastica Academy, having classrooms and dormitory space for boarders on the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> floors. The dining room was on the basement floor, partitions with one half for academy girls, the sisters utilizing the other half.

St. Scholastica Convent became known by 1986 as St. Scholastica Monastery. Through the years, following completion of the Convent wing, additions attached to the original 5-story structure provided a 'L' shaped plan with a rear 'T' projection. On July 28, 1928, construction began for a Chapel wing addition, which included a chapel of seating capacity for 300 on second floor, and on floor beneath were the gymnasium/ auditorium and swimming pool areas. Materials employed for exterior finishes of walls and roof matched those used for the Convent wing. On the west end of this addition is a six-story tower that has two decorated style buttressed towers that rise nearly 7-stories, flanking an elaborate cut-stone Gothic-arched entry to the Chapel. Directly above the entry are highly decorated cut-stone panels and symmetrical pattern of 3 single window openings for 4-floors, and a gabled shaped parapet having cut-stone spires at ends. Brick walls, which flank this Chapel entry in the tower, have windows openings with stone accents in Tudor style, similar to the Convent wing. A separate unit adjoining the chapel wing on the east end of Chapel addition has an 8-room residence for the chaplain.

Other additions and alterations have been made to St. Scholastica Monastery, but the architectural integrity of the original Convent wing has been retained certified by archives of photographs and original blueprints maintained by owners. Both the exterior and interior architectural details from this building remain in excellent condition, bearing testimony of the durable and distinctive qualities of this Late Gothic Revival architectural style building complex.

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**ELABORATION OF DESCRIPTION**

Beginning at the main entrance near the center of the south façade (which faces towards what is now Rogers Avenue), an equilateral arch of cut-stone, including weather molding elaboration, confers a deeply recessed, ground-level entry to the original convent building. This entry arch has its apex at about the height of the window-heads at the first floor. The entry has a pair of wood doors, each with lights divided into 10 panes, and has a transom-light with similar arch-configuration. The portion that incorporates the main entry projects about 10 ft. from the dominate buff-colored brick-veneer façade; it features a parapeted gable end and gable roof that intersects with the main axis of the building. This short "wing" denotes its function in quite a decorative fashion.

The cut-stone finish of the basement wall is exposed about 5 ft. above finish grade, having a cut-stone ledge table with cyma reversa molding, providing for a set-back to the brick veneer façade that ascends to the parapet 3 stories above. This basement wall wraps the corners of the "wing" and abuts the stone arch of the main entry. About 4 ft. in from the corners to this entry "wing" there are decorative-buttress forms in the buff-tone brick, projecting about 1½ ft. additional and ascending in three steps to the point which receives the gable end. At about the height of the entry arch springing line is a cut-stone kneeler trim set in the brick buttresses; at the sill height of second floor windows is a decorative cut-stone element having intaglio deflecting at archway on which is set in bas-relief a crest, atop of all is a gablet where the buttress forms recedes. A cut stone ledge occurs in the buttress just above the gablet, whereupon the brick buttress ascends with increasing use of decorative cut-stone materials, including similar itaglio and bas-relief crest forms utilized below. Each buttress form of this entry "wing" transforms near the top where there is a four-sided cut-stone column with gothic-arched gablets that then support an octagonal "lantern-shaped" spire complete with a cone-shaped finial.

The south façade has a belt course of cut-stone located at about mid-height, aligning with head of the shorter window openings of second floor, but also corresponding with horizontal mullions for transom lights in the taller window openings. A cut-stone ledge runs above the cut-stone lintel to the third floor window openings, dividing the brick parapet wall from the 3-floors of brick wall and fenestration below. Parapet wall of the south façade has capstone, and is punctuated by short brick walls that appear to support gable ends, trimmed by capstone, to each dormer window. Each dormer's gable roof projects from and matches the green-colored clay-tile of the convent building's roof. A set of three regular-spaced dormers flank the "entry wing" on the east and west sides.

Strong sense of symmetry of the fenestration was accomplished by careful design, even though several different types of window sets are employed in this façade. West of the "entry wing," the 80± ft. of the buff-colored brick has two different widths of windows that generate a rhythm in its fenestration. At the first floor's southwest corner resides the first cut-stone trimmed window opening with a single vertical mullion (matching a cut-stone appearance). Eastward are two successive window openings with two vertical mullions each, followed by one window opening with a single vertical mullion; this pattern is repeated once more to where this portion of façade abuts with the west wall of the entry "wing."

A different pattern emerges at the first floor's southeast corner, with four vertical mullions that divide the five double-hung window-frames of the first cut-stone trimmed window opening. Westward, then, are three successive window openings with two vertical mullion each, leading the point where this 57 ft. long façade abuts with the east wall of the "entry wing." Dormers in parapet wall west of "entry wing" are arranged to align at center of the wall below that separates the pairs of window openings with two vertical mullions; the

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center dormer is aligned to the center window opening below with a single vertical mullion. Dormers in parapet wall east of "entry wing" are arranged in similar fashion, but the east-most dormer that aligns with the center of the window below has four vertical mullions. The fenestration in the cut-stone basement walls are centered below windows of the first floor, most with a single vertical mullion, except the east-most window with the corresponding four vertical mullions; most basement windows have metal awnings except those flanking buttresses at main entry.

Double-hung windows are utilized in fenestration for all three floors. The first floor south façade, flanking the entry wing, includes fenestration with a horizontal mullion and transom light, divided by vertical mullion. At the second floor, the fenestration is similar except for a portion of the façade west of the "entry wing," including the east and west-most windows without transom lights, but each have added cut-stone label molding with label stop in an acorn shape. The cut-stone belt course abuts with the cut-stone jamb trim of all window openings for this floor. Fenestration at the third floor is without transom lights, but includes similar cut-stone sill and jamb trim with a quoin pattern found around most all window openings in this building.

The fenestration of the south facing entry "wing" façade is distinctive. Two window openings serving the second and third floors respectively, each with two vertical mullions, are centered just above the stone entry arch. The wall area between the head and sill of these two window openings includes a recessed cut-stone frame molding with three intaglio of rectangular shape, each having a bas-relief crest centered. The lower (second floor) window opening, presents itself somewhat taller than others in this façade, including a horizontal mullion (matching cut-stone appearance) and transom lights divided by the two vertical mullions. The upper (third floor) window opening, also taller in appearance than its counterparts on this floor, has no transom lights but does include two vertical mullions and an added cut-stone label molding which returns to the cut-stone ledge of the south façade just below the parapet. Flanking this fenestration centered above the entry arch are other window openings, each with a single vertical mullion that's similar to others on second and third floors without a transom light. Flanking the arched entry at the first floor, window openings are similar to those on the third floor; on the outside of the buttress forms, however, a single double-hung window-frame of the same height as adjoining, trimmed by typical cut-stone in quoin pattern. Within the gable end, above the ledge is a window opening whose sill aligns in appearance with those of the dormer windows; this attic-floor window opening, similar to those on third floor, has two vertical mullions without transom lights. In the brick veneer, just above this attic window is a narrow rectangular niche, with head and sill of cut-stone trim. At the peak of the gable end's capstone is established a cut-stone Celtic cross.

The east façade of the convent building includes two decorative buttresses that are identical to those flanking the south façade main entry "wing," but are situated about 10 ft. inside from the north and south corners. Abutting either side of the buttresses are the ledgements and belt course of cut-stone that wrap the corner from the south façade to continue across the east façade. The buttresses intersect with the parapet wall and flank the brick veneer gable end, having similar appearance to that of the main entry "wing" of the south façade, including the niche and Celtic cross at peak of its capstone. Fenestration of the east façade affords a sense of symmetry by careful design of the different types of windows employed. On all three floors the centermost window opening includes three vertical mullions; flanking this is another window opening with a single vertical mullion. Fenestration for first and second floors also includes a horizontal mullion and transom light divided by the vertical mullions (matching cut-stone appearance). The size of double-hung window-frames matches those utilized on south façade.

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The north façade, east of where the 1928 Chapel addition connects with the original 1924 building, has buff-colored brick veneer, as well as ledgements and a belt course in cut-stone, that wraps the northeast corner. Opposite to the east most dormer of the south façade, the chimney mass is located, projecting about 1½ ft. from north façade. Flanking this chimney pilaster are window openings each with single vertical mullion (no transom light), trimmed in cut stone with typical quoin pattern at jambs. About 5 ft. above the stonecap of the parapet wall the brick rectangular chimney-mass has cut-stone "transition" to form into a chimneystack of three connected, square chimney-columns in brick veneer, diagonally set. The stack ascends to above main roof's ridgeline, and there has a cut-stone ledgement to each column, just below what appears as its terracotta chimney pots and chimney caps.

West of the fenestration flanking the chimney mass, at the second and third floors, is a pair of window openings, each having two vertical mullions and typical cut-stone trim with jambs in a quoin pattern. The second floor has horizontal mullions (matching cut-stone) and transom lights that vertical mullions divide, while the third floor window openings do not. First floor fenestration is atypical, where one window matches the third floor's western pair of window openings, while east of this are two, cut-stone lined window openings having but one each double-hung window-frame. Above the parapet wall of this façade are two dormer windows with brick gable ends and capstones that correspond to and are opposite to those of south façade. The basement wall is exposed cut-stone, and a metal covered walkway bisects it at the level of the cut-stone ledgement table. Just at the internal corner, where the wall of the chapel addition abuts and extends northward, are two window openings located each at mid-floor levels above first and second floors; these have but one double-hung window-frame, and are typically trimmed in cut-stone.

The east façade reveals some symmetry about a brick chimney mass some 18 ft. north of the corner where the chapel addition abuts the 1924 building. This chimney is about 4 ft. square, rising about 15ft. above the parapet wall, and projects out about 1½ ft. from the basement wall (cut-stone). The cut-stone ledgement table, belt course and ledgement below the parapet all wrap around the corner of the north façade; these abut the solid brick of the chimney mass, but extends to the south face of chapel wall. The cut-stone divisions in the buff-colored brick wall help tie the addition's design with the original convent building of 1924. Flanking each side of the chimney mass at the first floor is a small window opening with double-hung sash, trimmed with cut-stone having jambs in quoin pattern. Then flanking this small window is a window opening having three vertical mullions (matching cut-stone) and horizontal mullion with divided transom lights, trimmed with cut-stone having jambs in quoin pattern. The south window opening to this symmetrical arrangement about the chimney has but a single double-hung window frame with cut-stone trim, while the north window opening includes a single vertical mullion (matching cut-stone); neither have a transom light. This fenestration symmetry about the chimney repeats in similar fashion for second floor, but having no single window immediate-flanking the brick mass. The third floor fenestration is not symmetrical about this chimney, however: north are seen three, equally spaced, single double-hung window-frames. Centered above the second floor window openings, south of the chimney, is one with two vertical mullion and another with a single vertical mullion. Typically, fenestration at the third floor does not have transom lights, but are trimmed by cut stone jamb in a quoin pattern. Above the parapet wall, flanking the chimney are dormer windows with brick gable end and capstone, having similar treatment to those on south façade. At the basement wall, the pattern of window or door openings is such that they are centered beneath first floor windows.

The fenestration in the remaining north portion of this east façade, (about 15 ft. to the point where it abuts the south chapel wall) has symmetry which carries from the first through attic floor levels: two window openings, each with one vertical mullion, flank a window opening with a single double-hung window-frame; all are trimmed with cut-stone jambs having a quoin pattern. Fenestration for the first and second floors here are with



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the horizontal mullion (matching cut stone) and transom lights divided by vertical mullion. Fenestration for the third and attic levels are similar, without any transom light. The fenestration here for second through attic levels are centered with those of the floor below. Basement wall fenestration and door openings are centered with the window openings above. The wall also changes for this portion of the east façade, rising above the parapet and capstone to reveal an additional floor height of buff-colored brick veneer wall. Cresting this wall are an embattled molding of cut-stone and, just above the center window opening, a gable end in cut-stone finish; this gable end also includes a decorative niche with lancet arch. This fifth-floor portion of the east façade adjoins at the southeast corner of the six-story tower that forms the northwest end of chapel addition. The south wall of the chapel itself abuts this east façade, and its internal corner has a half-exposed brick buttress.

The chapel's two story brick-veneer south façade features five sets of fenestration set between brick buttresses that have a cut-stone cap and kneeler trim. The basement level of this wall is brick veneer, but has a cut-stone ledge table with cyma reversa molding, providing for a set-back to the brick veneer façade that ascends to a parapet two stories above. The parapet gutter, located at about the third floor level of the adjoining building, provides drainage to the green clay-tile gable roof above the chapel. The west end of this roof abuts the east façade of the six-story tower, and its ridge rises to the sill height of window openings at that level. The south façade of the chapel also features an embattled parapet, having cut-stone coping and trim for the crenels. The symmetry of the embattlement pattern includes merlons centered above the apex of the acute arch for the center stained glass window and above the centerline of each buttress; the merlon above the window is slightly taller than the other ones centered above the buttress. Fenestration between each buttress includes a set of three stained glass window openings rising from a common cut-stone sill, set about 2½ ft. above the ledge table. The stained glass windows have lancet (acute) arches, with two openings, each about 1½ stories in height, flanking the taller, center opening, almost two stories. Located at springing and apex of each acute arch are cut-stone insets. Fenestration includes brick jambs and arches for this façade. Basement window openings are single, double-hung window frames that are centered below the shorter stained-glass window openings above.

At the east end of chapel are two wings projecting from its south and north façade about 10 ft., each having parapeted gable ends and flanking buttress forms. The ledge table of cut-stone continues across the buff-colored brick veneer, and wraps the south east corner of the chapel building. Fenestration above this includes first and second floor window openings, each with two vertical mullions and cut stone trim with jambs in quoin pattern; horizontal mullion (matching cut-stone) and transom lights divided by vertical mullion are part of second floor window opening. The buttress forms ascend about 5 ft. above the second floor window head, and include cut-stone trim similar to buttresses along south façade of chapel. Arising and set back somewhat above the cut-stone trim, each brick buttress continues up, intersecting the gable end with its capstone trim. Each baluster ascends to where the cut-stone forms a lancet arch, with the apex matching the peak of the gable end. A belt-course of cut-stone denotes the base of the gable end, and it intersects with a niche in the brick veneer, whose jamb is trimmed with cut-stone in a quoin pattern and includes a lancet arch of cut-stone. The ridge of the green clay tile gable roof of both north and south wings intersect with the chapel roof's ridge near its east end.

The Chaplain's residence abuts the east façade of the chapel; the brick gable end rises above the green clay tile roof of the one story residence. The east façade of both the north and south wing to the chapel also abuts the chaplain's residence north and south façade respectively; additionally, each wing has window openings at

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basement level and first floor, each having a pair of double-hung window frames. The cut-stone ledgement table wraps both the northeast and southeast corners of the chapel wings and terminates where the residence abuts.

The south façade of the chaplain's residence is of matching buff-colored brick veneer and cut-stone trim of the parapet coping, dormers, gable ends, and arched entry. An equilateral arched entry trimmed in cut-stone is flanked by a wall of brick veneer that projects about 2 ft. from the south façade; cut-stone at finish grade establishes a base for this portion. Additionally, a parapet wall and gable end with cut-stone coping is centered above the arched entry; the gable end features a niche with a semicircular arch trimmed by cut-stone, and jamb in a quoin pattern. The south façade of the chaplain's residence includes another entry that is flanked by sets of 3-each double-hung window-frames on common cut-stone sill, as well as a similar window opening nearest the southeast corner of the residence. Metal awnings are over each of these windows; centered above those which flank the kitchen door are dormer windows, featuring "jambs" of a short brick wall, with belt course of cut-stone above, all topped with gable ends and capstone.

The buff-colored brick veneer gable end with its cut-stone coping, kneelers and belt course trim predominate the east façade of the chaplain's residence. The coping of the gable end abuts a parapet wall of about 3 ft. length; the parapet wall of both the north and south façade abuts about 1½ ft. below coping of the parapets situated at bottom of the gable end. The north and south façade parapets provide for a parapet gutter for the roof to the chaplain's residence, while the short parapets of the east façade provide decorative termination (in cut-stone quoin-pattern) for such gutters. About mid-height of the gable end is a belt course in cut-stone and a similar belt course is situated about 2 ½ ft. beneath the peak; centered in the gable end is a niche with cut-stone jambs in quoin pattern, abutting the belt courses above and below its location. Centered below the lower belt course in this gable end is the attic window opening having four double-hung window frames separated by 3 vertical mullions (matching cut-stone), with a cut-stone sill. Centered below this attic window is a brick wall that projects about 1 ft. from the east façade, where an equilateral cut-stone arch and jambs in quoin pattern provide the "front" entry to this residence. A gable end with coping and kneelers of cut-stone provides an additional accent to this entry. Fenestration at the ground floor of the east façade flanks the entry, having appearance of fixed windows, having muntin that divide 8 columns and 5 rows of panes; a metal awning is over just the south window.

The north façade of the chaplain's residence is similar to its south façade, abutting the east façade of the chapel. The dormer treatment is identical to south façade; but there is no projecting brick wall with entry and gable end above. The north façade's fenestration is similar, except a small single-hung window occurs at point of kitchen entry of south façade. Three window openings have a single vertical mullion and horizontal mullion (matching cut-stone) with divided transom light; all window openings have cut-stone sill and brick jambs.

Beyond where the chaplain's residence abuts the 3-story east chapel wall, the north façade mirrors the appearance of the chapel's south façade. The six-story tower abuts the west end of this chapel wall, denoted by a full brick buttress form. An unfinished appearance is revealed from the basement through the third floor to this north façade of the tower; instead of matching buff-colored brick, a portion of this façade has beige painted brick, void of fenestration save for a column of window openings serving the stairway inside. A wooden vestibule shed-like structure near northeast corner of the tower provides a basement-level entry; a metal-covered walkway leads out northward, following the sidewalk's route to a separate 3-story academy building (constructed in late 60's), some distance away. There is revealed, from this mismatch in the north façade, a profile that mirrors the building wing south of the tower, indicating the intended location for St. Scholastica's

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third addition. At the tower's sixth floor the buff-colored brick veneer resumes, and the fenestration is complete with cut-stone trim with jambs in typical quoin pattern; three window openings have a single vertical mullion (matching cut-stone appearance); above this the parapet has an elaborate embattlement, with merlons topped with gable end and cut-stone coping and kneelers, and the crenels of cut-stone trim.

The tower represents the northwest corner of the 1928 chapel addition, featuring such highly decorative elements in its design as to make it the focal point of the entire building complex. To each corner of the tower, from the basement up to above its embattlements are four gabled towers, whose cut-stone elaborations appear to soar far beyond, with pinnacles ascending to octagonal "lantern forms" topped with a decorated style finial. About 15 ft. from each corner the west façade of tower has about a 3 ft. wide recess of its brick veneer; each wall recess flanks the central portion of west façade of the tower which has decorated style buttresses that ascend to a point above the embattlements with pinnacle and decorated style finial of cut-stone. As it rises above six floors, the buttresses have three main step-backs, and they flank a segmental arch that yields a deeply recessed entry alcove and vestibule beyond.

The cut-stone entry arch, with embrasure toward exterior, has an archivolt, following the contour of the intrados. Centered and projecting from the base of each buttress is a square cut-stone bollard with gables on three sides exposed, and a round transition above which supports a 6± ft. tall lamp post and hexagonal lantern with lights which splay out towards its crested dome cap. The basement wall of the tower is of cut-stone with a ledge table with cyma reversa molding, providing for a set-back to the brick veneer façade; this ledge table carries across the faces of both buttresses and just above the peak of the archivolt of the entry. On the outside flank of the buttress are set backs of the basement wall that include a narrow window opening in each, with embrasure toward exterior. Flanking this, along the basement wall, are corner portions of the façade that resemble two distinct but attached towers; centered in each are coupled windows of embrasure, each with transom lights and single double-hung window-frames.

Above the ledge table for each "corner portion" of the façade, the buff-colored brick veneer ascends for four floors, to where an upper cut-stone ledge is situated. The fenestration of each corner portion includes a window opening for first and second floors that have the transom light above a single double-hung window-frame, in cut-stone trim with jambs in quoin pattern; the third and fourth floor's window treatment is similar, but without a transom light. At the fourth floor windows a belt course of cut-stone intersects at bottom third of each opening. At the external corners for each "corner portion," just above the ledge table, there is a step-pattern of cut-stone (mounting corners); likewise above and below the cut-stone belt-course near fourth floor this pattern is mirrored. Above the window head at the fourth floor a cut-stone panel with intaglio creates a box-frame pattern just beneath the upper ledge. The fifth floor window opening is similar to third floor window, and the brick veneer above it has inset a decorative cut-stone element with intaglio that creates a square cross pattern. Also, in each corner portion of this façade, above the upper ledge, cut-stone materials predominates each corner; a chamfer surface (about 2 ft. wide) has a fluted treatment ascending to corner pinnacles, each having a decorative style finial. This cut-stone treatment provides appearance of buttress forms that flank a triple set of 1½ story tall lancet windows set in a cut-stone wall located above the intaglio of a square cross. These windows have a protective mesh surface on interior face, to provide for the belfry chamber; above them is a cut-stone gable end arising from flanking pinnacles of the "buttress" forms.

The fenestration for the second through fifth floors is the same for both the "corner portions" of the tower's west façade and the wall recess, flanking inside each. However, at first floor the window opening of each recessed wall is set in a cut-stone wall, with embrasure and segmental arch having an archivolt following the

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contour of the intrados, as well as a gablet above the arch. Each opening has each a single double-hung window-frame and horizontal mullion (matching cut-stone) with transom light above. The parapet above fifth floor window in this wall recess has cut-stone embattlement where the crenels adjoin the corner portions and buttresses; centered in this embattlement is a single cut-stone merlon is topped with a gable end.

Between the buttresses and above the entry arch, the cut-stone wall ascends to a point above the embattlements, where a gable end has a cut-stone acroterion of a Celtic cross. Fenestration at first floor here, between the buttresses, is a set of three windows openings set in a cut-stone wall, each having embrasure and segmental arch with an archivolt, following the contour of the intrados, as well as a gablet above the arch. Each opening has a single double-hung window frame and horizontal mullion (matching cut-stone) with transom light above. Between the arch and gablet above each window opening here, the cut-stone features an intaglio of a conch, with a semi-circular "sill" in bas-relief, resembling a Norman piscina. Between these three window openings of the first floor are two buttress forms of cut-stone which ascend from the transom above the entry arch; the face of each buttress has intaglio of a lancet, and aligned with sill embrasure, is a bas-relief of a crest pattern. The two buttresses step back with a sloped surface that abuts the cut-stone wall below the second floor windows, at a point that aligns with the peak of gablets cresting each arch of first floor's window openings. Finally, on the face of cut-stone transom above the entry arch has about 8" high "German Gothic" style letters inscribed that read, "Saint Scholastica."

Between the main buttress forms and centered above each first floor window opening, the second floor fenestration includes three single, double-hung window-frames and horizontal mullion (matching cut-stone) with transom light; above this the cut-stone wall features three intaglio of box-frame pattern, each with crest pattern in bas-relief centered. Likewise, centered above this second floor fenestration, three third floor window openings are similar but without transom light; above this the cut-stone wall features three intaglio of box-frame pattern, each with a cross pattern in bas-relief centered. Once more, above the third floor fenestration, three fourth floor window openings are the same, but the cut-stone wall above features three intaglio of box-frame pattern, each with a crest in bas-relief centered. Finally, above the fourth floor fenestration, three fifth floor window openings are the same, but have an equilateral arch of cut-stone with archivolt, following the contour of the intrados, and a half-conch pattern at each jamb up to springing of window's arch. Centered and just above the arch to the middle fifth floor window is a high relief in cut-stone that presents an octagonal oriel supported by cul-de-lamp; lancet window openings are set in the five sides exposed. A decorated style finial for the oriel is situated just below the peak of the cut-stone gable end that's set between the main buttresses.

Some additional elements to the main buttresses flanking the entry arch include its cut-stone (west) face, above the ledgement table, with intaglio in rectangular pattern that starts from the point that aligns with embrasure of first floor window sill up to point near base of the gablet, where the intaglio defines a segmental arch. Below this arch is set a bas-relief in crest pattern, while above is another intaglio in trefoil pattern set just beneath the buttresses' gablet, whose peak is at mid-height of second-floor window openings. Above the gablet the buttress sets back and ascends with a segment of cut-stone bisected by a cyma reversa molding; there is a bas-relief of a circular pattern centered in the upper half. At a point just below the sill height of third floor windows, the main buttress includes the buff-colored brick veneer trimmed with cut-stone in quoin pattern, rising up to a point where the upper ledgement is situated, just below sills to fifth floor window openings; above the ledgement each buttress of cut-stone has on its west face an intaglio in pattern of a lancet, with some bas-relief pattern set at center of its arch. The buttress ends with cut-stone pinnacle with finial, set at height matching the peak of the gable end it flanks.

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South of the tower, the west façade continues as a five-story building topped with green clay tile roof, and abuts the 1924 convent building's north façade. The basement wall is exposed full height, of cut-stone topped by ledge table with cyma reversa molding, providing for a set-back to the brick veneer façade that ascends to the parapet 3 stories above. South of the tower, fenestration of the west façade is symmetrical, where metal down spouts divide the facade into three equal "segments." One dormer window, similar to those of the convent south façade, is centered in each "segment" of this west façade. Fenestration centered below this dormer includes a pair of window openings for second and third floors, each with a single vertical mullion, trimmed in cut-stone with jambs in quoin pattern; window openings of the second floor also have horizontal mullion (matching cut-stone) and transom lights divided by vertical mullion. Centered below the dormer at first floor in each "segment" of this façade is a window opening trimmed similarly with cut-stone, but having three vertical mullions and horizontal mullion (matching cut-stone) with transom lights divided by vertical mullions. A pair of window openings is set in each "segment" of the façade for the basement wall and aligns with fenestration of second floor, each having single vertical mullion and horizontal mullion (matching cut-stone) with transom lights divided by vertical mullion. The west façade buff-colored brick veneer has a belt coursing of cut-stone that intersects the jambs and aligns with horizontal mullions of second floor window openings. Above the cut-stone trim of third floor window heads is an upper cut-stone belt-course, denoting base of the parapet; cut-stone coping runs atop the parapet between the brick walls flanking each dormer window.

Near the point where the west façade abuts the north façade of the convent building, the wall chamfers for about 10 ft. length; fenestration is centered in its length, but it does not align with those adjacent window openings. Here, at ground level, is window opening having a cut-stone, obtuse-angled arch, springing from the ledge table of the basement wall. Above this, between the first and second floors, a cut-stone trimmed window opening has a single vertical mullion and a horizontal mullion (matching cut-stone) with a transom light divided by a vertical mullion. Above this, between the second and third floors, is a similar window opening but without a transom light. Finally, between the third and attic floors, a cut-stone trimmed opening has but a single, double-hung window frame. The parapet for this wall chamfer wraps each corner about 2½ ft. and is raised about 1½ ft. above adjacent parapets, and the cut-stone coping provides a broad segmental arch design centered in its length.

The north façade of the 1924 construction mirrors the western portion of the convent building's south façade; it includes three dormer windows and those fenestrations for the floors below centered on them. (See Sec.7, pg. 2, Elaboration for such description.)

The west façade of the convent building includes two decorative buttresses that are identical to those flanking the south façade main entry "wing," but is situated about 10 ft. inside from the north and south corners. Abutting either side of the buttresses are the ledgements and belt course of cut-stone that wrap the corner from the south façade and continue across the west façade. The buttresses intersect with the parapet wall and flank the brick veneer gable end, having similar appearance to that of the main entry "wing" of the south façade, including the niche and Celtic cross at peak of its capstone. Centered between the buttresses, however, is an addition constructed in 1980's that provides a sun-porch and external exit-stair for each floor of the convent. This addition has at the west façade a brick veneer, load-bearing end-wall; the brick color does not match, but blends with the buff-color of the 1924 construction; the north and south façade to this addition reveals open sun decks with metal guard rail, finished in brown paint to harmonizes with original building. The roof to this addition is of matching color to green clay-tile materials of the 1924 convent. Design elements of the addition's end wall do reflect some of the original, to include matching height and slope with the new cut-

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stone coping and kneelers for its gable end. Fenestration, centered on the addition's gable end, features matching cut-stone trim, having jambs finished in quoin pattern; topmost opening has an additional cut-stone headmold with gable design that mirrors coping of the gable end. The end-wall of this addition steps out at second floor level about 3 ft. to the north and south; cut-stone kneelers are provided here and their slope matches coping of the gable end.

The west façade of the original convent building, flanking the inside of each buttress, has window openings for second and third floors that are trimmed in cut-stone with jambs in quoin pattern; each have a single, double-hung window frame (without transom light). Door openings have been created by the sun-porch addition of the 1980's, at locations for the center-most window openings serving first through attic floor levels of the 1924 building. Finally, the north and south façade at the ground level of this sun-deck addition has a 3 ft. high cut-stone wall, with a wire-mesh to enclose the area beneath the first floor deck; centered in this north wall is a screened door.

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### SUMMARY

Originally established in Ft. Smith on 39-acre tract, known as the old "Barnes Place," purchased on Sept. 19, 1922, the first of 3 units planned was dedicated on Sept. 14, 1924, as St. Scholastica Convent. This building not only served as the Convent, but also as a continued educational ministry. The Sisters of the Benedictine Order came to the undeveloped Southwest frontier of Arkansas in Sept. 1878 where they initially established St. Scholastica at Shoal Creek in Jan. 1879. By 1924 they moved the "motherhouse" to Ft. Smith, while the first parochial school at Shoal Creek continued thru 1940 as St. Joseph Academy. The role this organization and religious facility has played continually in the history and cultural development of this region and in Ft. Smith is significant. St. Scholastica Monastery is being nominated to the National Register of Historic Places with **local significance** under **Criterion A**, for its associations with the spread of religion in the Fort Smith area in the nineteenth century. The architect, Mr. F.W. Redlich from Oklahoma City, worked with Mayors & Scheer, builders from Sapulpa, Oklahoma; they utilized native construction materials and developed a structure that serves as an excellent example of Gothic Revival architectural style and is being nominated under **Criterion C**. It is also being nominated under **Criteria Consideration A: Religious Properties**.

### ELABORATION

St. Scholastica Convent (Monastery since 1986) was officially founded January 23, 1879, in Shoal Creek:

**Background History:** Arkansas had been a state only 43 years, and the Catholic diocese of Little Rock had been in existence only 36 years when a national eagerness to develop the whole Continental United States in the 19th century inspired the government to give large grants of land to railroad companies willing to encourage settlers to populate both sides of the track in western Arkansas. The Little Rock/Fort Smith branch of the Cairo and Fulton Railroad Company invited Indiana BENEDECTINES to Logan county, Arkansas, to minister to the German Catholic settlers.

At the time there was great unrest in Europe, especially in Germany, Prussia, and Ireland, and citizens were looking for a way out. The railroad company sensed an opportunity and offered land grants to religious institutions with European roots recently founded in Indiana and asked them to establish churches and schools along the railroad in Arkansas.

After W.D. Slack, land commissioner for the railroad company, had secured a commitment from the monks of St. Meinrad Abbey in St. Meinrad, Indiana, and from the Sisters of Immaculate Conception Convent in Ferdinand, Indiana, to found monasteries in Logan county, he made an attractive deal for German and Irish Catholics to settle in Arkansas on both sides of the Arkansas River.

In the spring of 1878 the Benedictine monks arrived and built some primitive living quarters in Creole (now Subiaco), and four young Sisters (ranging from 21 to 34 yrs. old) arrived in this wilderness later that year. Since there was no place for them to stay, the monks moved out, letting the Sisters have their quarters until the log cabin for the Sisters was finished 10 miles east in Shoal Creek. Two of these Sisters opened the first Catholic School in Logan County at St. Benedict's in Creole that year. The second school they established was St. Scholastica's in Shoal Creek in Jan. 23 1879. These pioneer Sisters cleared the sandy, rocky soil and could say honestly that they "lived by the sweat of their brow."

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As young women began to join the Sisters in their log cabin, additions to the structure were made. In 1890 the Sisters at Shoal Creek opened a boarding school called The Institute of St. Scholastica. In 1917 they changed the name to St. Joseph Academy. By 1898 a quadrangular building surrounding a courtyard was completed, as well as several other buildings. The Sisters in 1922 considered the crowding at the academy as well as a number of other difficulties at Shoal Creek: lack of water, isolation, poor roads, and inaccessibility to health care. They considered an option of relocation to the capital city of Little Rock. They chose, instead, to move the "motherhouse" in 1925 to nearby Fort Smith. When the sisters completed the move to Fort Smith in 1924 they called it St. Scholastica Academy.

Meanwhile, Shoal Creek's original quadrangular building of St. Joseph Academy, remained in use. A fire on Nov. 20, 1940, destroyed the laundry, parish church, school, and rectory, with the only buildings spared being the Infirmary, Guest House, and the old St. Joseph's Academy then used as a chicken house. A few Sisters were living there at the time of the fire, but none were injured in that devastating time.

Although Sisters in Europe were more contemplative communities, the pioneers in America at first had the primary ministry of educating the children of immigrants. The Arkansas Fort Smith Benedictines helped the Bishop fulfill the 1884 Council of Baltimore mandate to build a school in every place where he built a church.

On July 21, 1923, three Sisters went to Ft. Smith to confer with architect, Mr. F.W. Redlich from Oklahoma City, OK. From the outset, St. Scholastica Convent was planned as a single unit consisting of three (3) distinct parts (Convent, Chapel and Academy). The architect prepared plans for the first wing: those drawings are noted as being prepared in his Stillwater, OK, office with an approval date of Oct. 29, 1923, and a commission #S626. By Nov. 23, 1923, a contract was signed with contractors, Mayors and Sheer of Sapulpa, OK, and construction began. The original structure was to be 5 stories, featuring buff-colored native brick, ornamented with Carthage and Bedford stone, and have a green clay tile roof. The design for this wing was accomplished in a Gothic/Tudor Revival architectural style, with extensive treatments of all windows, including dormer windows with decorative cut stone accents. The basement exterior was finished in cut stone having a decorative cap band where brick veneer rises for 3 more stories, and with a cut-stone parapet to receive the clay tile roof.

In this original structure completed in Sept. 1924, Saint Scholastica Convent living quarters were located on the attic floor and temporary chapel located on the first floor, while classrooms and dormitory space for boarders were on the third and fourth floors. The dining room was located on the basement floor, having partitions that provided one half the area for academy girls, the sisters utilizing the other half.

Through the years, following completion of the Convent wing, additions were made which attached to original 5-story structure, providing a 'L' shaped plan, with a rear 'T' projection. The purchase in 1925 of an additional 28 acres adjacent to the old "Barnes Place" tract increased the site to a total 67-acres. On July 28, 1928, construction began for a Chapel wing addition, which included a chapel of seating capacity for 300, and on floor beneath were the gymnasium/ auditorium and swimming pool areas. Materials employed for exterior finishes of walls and roof matched those used for the Convent wing. On the west end of this addition is a six-story tower that has two decorated style buttressed towers that rise nearly 7-stories, flanking an elaborate cut-stone Gothic-arched entry to the Chapel.

The cost for the 67 acre site came to \$28,074, the Convent unit was \$188,785, the Chapel unit was \$187,085, furnishings and move to Ft. Smith cost \$80,371, and loan and insurance fees added \$16,227 ... making a total expenditure of \$500,532: an obligation that was compounded by the onset of the Great Depression in 1929. Local parishes supplemented finances to St. Scholastica Convent (and Academy) over the years, and the organization struggled to meet obligations of the accumulated debt. When the Chapel addition was completed



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in 1929, combined facilities were adequate for the approximately 125 sisters and 70 students. However, by 1950 the numbers had risen to approximately 300 sisters and 150 students, including both day students and boarders. Crowding was so great that it became imperative to add the third unit to the building as envisioned in the original plan.

Discussion in this Convent community sought answers to what shape this educational facility should take. Stong support for starting a coeducational college made it more advisable to build a separate building, rather than as originally envisioned for this third unit. Since the sisters recognized they didn't have teachers necessary to staff a college, nor finances to build one, they decided for an academy. My 1955 the Convent community voted to apply for a million dollar loan, which would absorb all the community resources for the next 10 or 15 years to pay for the new building. Over a period of a year, fund-raising occurred where Ft. Smith parishes and other strategies combined to successfully arrange sufficient funds to begin building. Nearly two years in construction, the new academy was dedicated on Oct. 18, 1958: a 3-story structure of 475 ft. length, consisting of a dormitory building for 120 boarders and a classroom building that accommodates 450 students, connected by an enclosed passageway. This building provided space & equipment sufficient for teaching chemistry, commercial subjects, home economics, dramatics, art, journalism and music, as well as housing a library, audio-visual room, printing room, cafeteria and chapel. The building elements of brick, concrete and expansive window areas provide an example of Moderne architectural style. With the completion of this building, the construction period of the first one hundred years of St. Scholastic's history came to an end.

This Academy remained in use until the end of 1968-69 school term, whereupon the high school of St. Scholastica merged into the facilities of St. Anne Academy in Ft. Smith; this arrangement was sufficient to meet parochial education needs for junior & high school for 5 more years, until it closed for financial reasons. St. Scholastica's Academy was thereafter used for special education projects and became know as St. Scholastica Education Center. The Dormitory portion is used currently as a Retreat Center, with kitchen/dining room facilities for local business, church and social-service organizations; the former academic section of the building since 1990 has been leased by Trinity Jr. High School.

While today the sisters of St. Scholastica Monastery in their present day ministries are no longer primarily in schools, hospitals, and orphanages, they contribute to the church and society in various ways. Among those ways are as pastoral care personnel, parish associates, counselors, spiritual directors, religious education, nursing home ministry, prayer ministry, and volunteer work in service projects. The Monastery has its own 24-hour Infirmary to care for the sick and aged of the community.

### STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

St. Scholastica Monastery has grown in such a manner as to reflect the continued changes in history of cultural development in this "hub of the Southwest," Ft. Smith, Arkansas. The architectural integrity of this religious facility is significant, and provides a distinct example of Gothic/Tudor Revival style that retains nearly the original appearance it had when completed in Sept. 1924. St. Scholastica Convent is being nominated to the National Register of Historic Places with **local significance** under **Criterion A**, for its associations with the spread of religion in the Fort Smith area in the nineteenth century. The Convent building is also being nominated to the National Register of Historic Places with **local significance** under **Criterion C**, as an excellent example of the late Gothic/Tudor Revival style. It is also being nominated under **Criterion Consideration A: Religious Properties**.

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**Verbal Boundary Description:**

Beginning at the Southwest Corner of Section 14, Township 8 North, Range 32 West, Fort Smith, Sebastian County, Arkansas; thence northeasterly along the west line of said Section 14, 260 feet; thence southeasterly, 800 feet; thence southwesterly, 260 feet to the south line of said Section 14; thence northwesterly along south line of said Section 14, 800 feet to the Point of Beginning, containing 4.78 acres more or less.

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**Boundary Justification:**

This boundary includes only the original Convent building and its immediate surroundings.

**SOUTH FORT SMITH QUADRANGLE**  
**ARKANSAS-OKLAHOMA**  
**7.5 MINUTE SERIES (TOPOGRAPHIC)**  
SW/4 VAN BUREN 15' QUADRANGLE

754' N NE  
(VAN BUREN)

3 070 000 FEET (OKLA. NORTH) 1 MI. TO JUNC. U. S. 64 & 71

3 080 000 FEET (OKLA. SOUTH) 94° 22' 30"

15/374269/3914707

760 000 FEET

(OKLA., SOUTH)

UTM:

15/374269/3914707

760 000 FEET

(OKLA., SOUTH)

150 000 FEET

(OKLA., NORTH)

9 MI. TO INTERSTATE 40  
RUSSELLVILLE 65 MI.



























