

COLORADO HISTORICAL SOCIETY

COLORADO STATE REGISTER OF HISTORIC PROPERTIES NOMINATION FORM

SECTION I

Name of Property

Historic Name Church of the Ascension

Other Names Ascension Episcopal Church: Church of the Ascension and Holy Trinity

Address of Property

[] address not for publication

Street Address 420 West 18th Street

City Pueblo County Pueblo Zip 81003-2625

Present Owner of Property

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

Name Episcopal Diocese of Colorado

Address 1300 Washington Street Phone 303-837-1173

City Denver State Colorado Zip 80203-2008

Owner Consent for Nomination

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

Preparer of Nomination

Name William Henning Date October 30, 2001

Organization Ascension Episcopal Church

Address 420 West 18th Street Phone 719-543-4253

City Pueblo State Colorado Zip 81003-2625

FOR OFFICIAL USE:

Site Number 5PE.4175

_____ Nomination Received

Senate # 3 House # 46

_____ Review Board Recommendation
 ____ Approval ____ Denial

_____ CHS Board State Register Listing
 ____ Approved ____ Denied

Certification of Listing: President, Colorado Historical Society

Date _____

COLORADO STATE REGISTER OF HISTORIC PROPERTIES

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SECTION II

Local Historic Designation

Has the property received local historic designation?

no

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

Date designated _____

Designated by _____ (Name of municipality or county)

Use of Property

Historic Religious facility

Current Religious facility

Original Owner Episcopal Diocese of Colorado

Source of Information Diocesan records

Year of Construction Church, 1913-14; Tower, 1919; Parish Hall, 1941; Rectory, 1926

Source of Information Parish records, Diocesan Records, Public Press

Architect, Builder, Engineer, Artist or Designer Church, Frank E. Wetherell, Wetherell & Gage,

Architects; 1909 Foundation, Noval Wall, Civil Engineer

Source of Information Parish records, Public Press, Architect's plans

Locational Status

Original location of structure(s)

Structure(s) moved to current location

Date of move _____

SECTION III

Description and Alterations

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

COLORADO STATE REGISTER OF HISTORIC PROPERTIES

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SECTION IV

Significance of Property

Nomination Criteria

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

Areas of Significance

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

Significance Statement

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

Bibliography

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

SECTION V

Locational Information

Lot(s) 2-8 Block 9 Addition Bartlett and Miller

USGS Topographic Quad Map Northeast Pueblo

Verbal Boundary Description of Nominated Property

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

COLORADO STATE REGISTER OF HISTORIC PROPERTIES

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SECTION VI

Photograph Log for Black and White Photographs

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

SECTION VII

ADDITIONAL MATERIALS TO ACCOMPANY NOMINATION

Owner Consent Form

Black and White Photographs

Color Slides

Sketch Map(s)

Photocopy of USGS Map Section

Optional Materials

For Office Use Only

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

Architectural Style/Engineering Type: Late Gothic Revival

Period of Significance: 1919

Level of Significance: Local State National

Acreage less than one

P.M. 6th Township 20S Range 65W Section 25 Quarter Sections NE NE SW NE

UTM Reference: Zone 13 Easting 533900 Northing 4237130

Site Elevation: 4680 feet

Property Name Church of the Ascension

DESCRIPTION and ALTERATIONS

Now known as Ascension Episcopal Church, the 1914 Late Gothic Revival style building, with an attached 1941 parish hall, is located about a mile north of the main downtown, immediately north of Parkview Episcopal Medical Center, one city block west of Mineral Palace Park, and less than a half mile southeast of Pioneer Cemetery.

The property which is owned by the Episcopal Diocese of Colorado includes the half-block between Grand Avenue on the east and Greenwood Street on the west. A columbarium is located in an area between the parish hall and a 1926 Tudor Revival style rectory that faces West 18th Street. The western portion of the half-block is occupied by a 1953 International Style education building fronted by a fourteen-space asphalt paved parking area. Landscaping consists of grassed and paved areas and a variety of mature shrubs and trees. Buildings associated with the medical center occupy the half-block across the alley to the south.

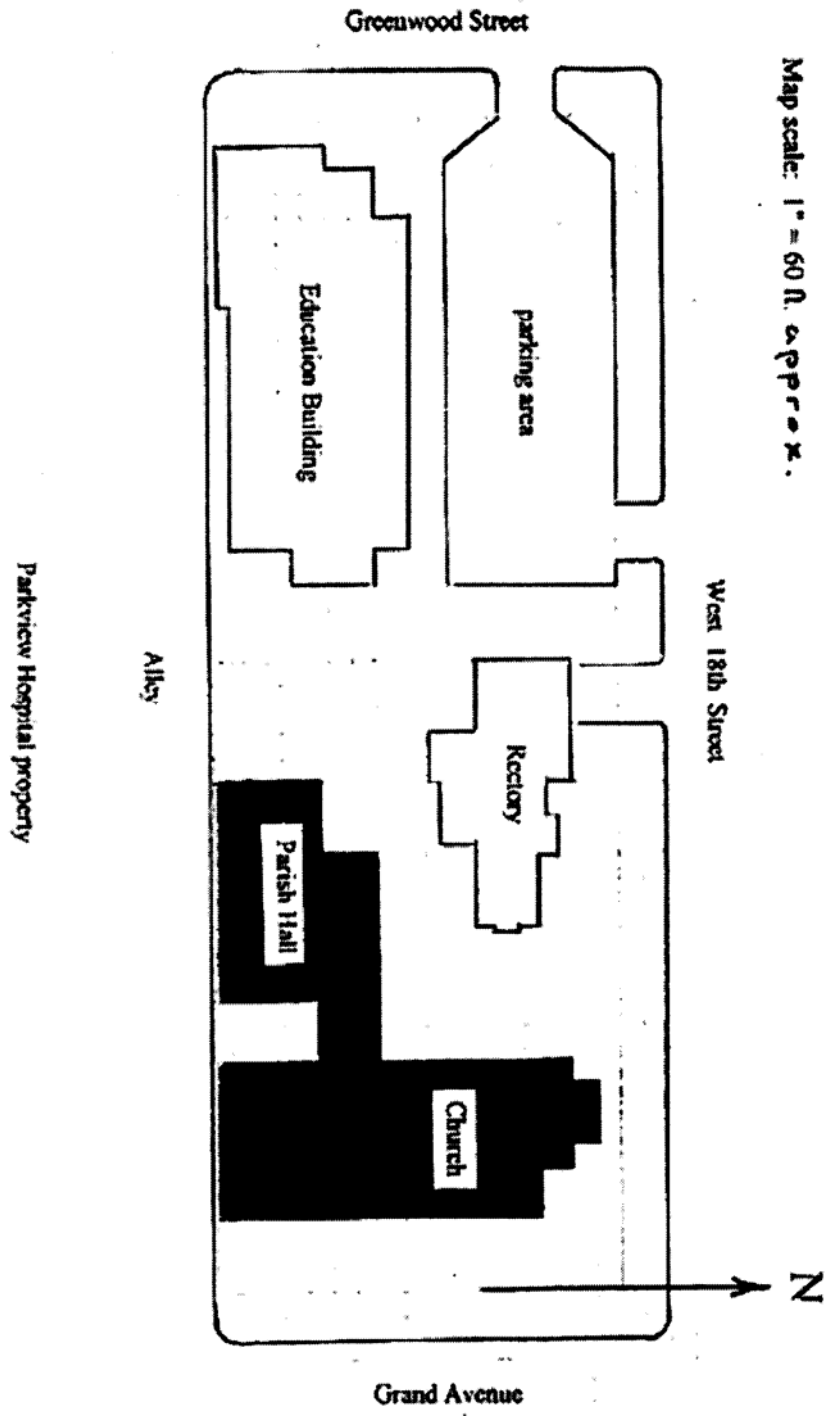
The church building is constructed over a finished concrete basement, which is often referred to as an undercroft by Episcopalians. Basement windows are topped with Tudor arches. The walls of the asymmetrical building are of multi-toned pressed red brick with sandstone trim. The front gable roof is covered with brown composition shingles. In overall appearance, the building is reminiscent of English village or rural parish churches. Notable architectural elements include numerous brick buttresses, pointed arch windows and doorways, stained glass windows in traditional Gothic style, and a tall bell tower completed in 1919.

The main entrance of the church is on the north, facing West 18th Street. Several steps lead up to the central double door entry portion, the sandstone trimmed facade of which appears to have been moved forward when the original narthex was expanded in 1949 as a memorial to members of the parish who gave their lives in World War II. Inside the narthex, a bride's room is on the west, and on the east there is a small area with a stairway leading to the basement. The interior walls are brick, and the floor and steps leading up to the carved double doors of the nave are slate. On the exterior, the roof of the narthex is flat, and there are two small windows on the east and west. On the facade of the building above the narthex, there is a large stained glass window set in a pointed arch. A cross tops the gable peak, and a small pointed arch window is in the portion of the building toward the east that houses a side aisle.

On the east, the portion of the building housing the side aisle exhibits a shed roof, a dogtooth string course, and pointed arched windows with sandstone sills that are centered between a series of buttresses. Toward the rear, at the base of the tower, concrete steps lead down to a basement entry. South of the tower, a concrete stairway leads up to a side entrance to the nave. The square bell tower was part of the original plans. The upper portion of the tower steps back and includes narrow pointed arch openings that are filled with wood louvers. The tower was repaired after a lightning strike in 1947. On the upper portion of the main wall, a series of evenly spaced clerestory windows are set in pointed arches that extend to the eaves.

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SITE PLAN



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On the south, a narrow concrete sidewalk abuts the church, which sits close to the alley. The gable end features a large sandstone cross set within the brick wall.

The west wall of the church exhibits tall lancet arch windows that extend to the eaves and are evenly spaced within a series of buttresses. Toward the rear, a brick chimney runs up the wall. North of the chimney, a narrow connector of brick leads into the 1941 parish hall which is located perpendicular to the church building. Access to the connector from the nave is through what originally was a side entry to the church.

Interior

The interior reflects a near-conventional basilica plan with a tall central nave on a north-south axis leading to the chancel. The maximum seating capacity of the nave and choir area is approximately 400. The design is unusual in that the lower side aisle and seating is only on the east. Clerestory windows are found above the series of pointed brick arches that delineate the east side aisle. The west wall of the nave and chancel reflects the tall "hall church" model and features a series of tall lancet arch windows. The original wall mounted light fixtures remain in place.

The lower interior wall surfaces are primarily of the same red brick as the exterior, with painted plaster at the upper levels. Windows set against the plaster walls include a Gibbs surround effect in brick. The dark stained wood ceiling features an exposed truss; chancel woodwork and pews are dark. Pews in the lower side aisle were installed in 1954.

The nave and chancel are separated by a carved wood rood screen, traditional in older Anglican churches but rarely seen in post World War II church design and decor. A tall, hand-carved oak reredos behind the white marble altar shows Biblical scenes. Floors are of hardwood, with red carpet beneath the pews. The Austin Organ Company of Hartford, Connecticut installed the pipe organ in 1919.

In 1946, clear glass windows were reset in traditional Gothic stained glass, depicting Christian historic personages and symbolisms, by the Conrad Schmitt Studios of Milwaukee. An imposing, but more contemporary style "Christ the King" window at the north end of the nave above the narthex, also by Schmitt Studios, was installed in the mid 1960s.

The full finished undercroft provides space for meeting rooms, archives, nursery, choir rehearsal and robing, music director's office, music library, lavatory, storage, and heating system. Except for conversion to fluorescent lighting, these spaces are little changed from their 1914 appearance.

Property Name Church of the Ascension

Parish Hall

The one-story brick parish hall has a concrete foundation and is basically rectangular in plan. It was constructed in 1941 so as to be attached to the church building at the west transept. The architect for the parish hall is believed to have been Burnham Hoyt; the construction firm was J. E. Anderson of Pueblo. The parish hall provides space for an entry, lavatories, dining room, kitchen, and furnished lounge. Interior walls are primarily brick, and the floor is wood. The ceiling, with its exposed scissors trusses, is of dark stained wood.

The primarily side gable roof is covered with brown composition shingles. An asymmetrical front gable roof entry projects from the north facade. An access ramp is located to the east of the low concrete steps which lead to the red painted double entry doors that are recessed within a segmental arch. Extending west of the stairs, a brick wall defines the portion of the church grounds now incorporating a columbarium. West of the entry projection, there is a stuccoed band that appears as a cornice. There are numerous large multi-light casement windows on the north, west, and south. The south wall is located immediately adjacent the alley.

Rectory

The 1926 rectory, which exhibits Tudor Revival style elements, is located west of the church and faces 18th Street. The 1½ story building has an irregular plan, and the steeply pitched complex roof is covered with brown composition shingles. There are several dormers, and the walls are of cream colored stucco. Windows are primarily multi-light wood framed casements. Circa 1934, an addition "consisting of a couple of rooms and a bath with small shower off a downstairs bedroom" was constructed. (Daney, 109) Additional research may provide historic photographs and more information about the building.

The north facade is distinguished by a full height half-timbered entry bay. The single entry door is topped with a segmental arch. Above the door, there is an oriel window filled with diamond shaped leaded glass lights. Toward the east, the lower edge of the roof extends to form an open porch. In this area, the wall is of brick as is a large chimney and the base of the wall on the east side of the building. The area west of the entry may have been altered. Current photographs show two single stall garages, with double gables facing the street, extending to the west.

Property Name Church of the Ascension

SIGNIFICANCE STATEMENT

The Church of the Ascension is eligible for listing in the Colorado State Register of Historic Properties under Criterion C in the area of Architecture.

Designed by Frank E. Wetherell of the Iowa architectural firm of Wetherell and Gage, the 1914 church building exhibits a mix of Gothic and Tudor Revival style elements. Although not completed until 1919, the bell tower was part of the original plan. The well preserved building remains an unusually fine local example of the type of ecclesiastical architecture supported by Pueblo residents wanting to create distinctive places of worship during the early 20th century. In a letter to parishioner and former parish historian Margaret Dowd, dated August 3, 1993, Norman Crowe, Dean of the University of Notre Dame School of Architecture, wrote:

The architectural expression of the Church of the Ascension is remarkably rich. The Tudor/Jacobean style effectively recalls the American Episcopal Church's heritage from its Anglican roots, while the scale and details throughout are carefully coordinated to ensure a unified expression of permanence and stability. I feel strongly about the building on a professional level because of the rarity of its highly refined architectural character.

Notable Late Gothic Revival style elements reflected in the building's design include its numerous brick buttresses, variety of pointed arch windows, and prominent bell tower. Moreover, the quality and integrity of its interior design and appointments further enhance the building's architectural significance. The compatible 1941 parish hall addition, believed to have been designed by noted Denver architect Burnham Hoyt, reflects the evolving needs of the congregation and is clearly distinguishable from the original building.

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Historical Background

Episcopal services were held in Pueblo as early as 1864. The no longer extant St. Peter's Episcopal Church (from which Ascension parish is descended) was built in 1868 and was the first church edifice of any denomination built in the new town of Pueblo.

Ascension Parish was founded as a mission of St. Peter's in 1891. Ascension's congregation met in various rented facilities until construction of the current church building was completed in 1914. In 1946, the South Pueblo parish of Holy Trinity, which was established in 1881, agreed to merge with the Ascension congregation. For a time the parish utilized the name Church of the Ascension and Holy Trinity. Prior to this merger the mission of St. James, established in Bessemer in 1890, had rejoined Holy Trinity Parish in 1926. In 1958, the mission of Saint Peter the Apostle was formed to begin serving the developing suburban neighborhoods to the southwest. A church building was completed in April of 1964, and Saint Peter the Apostle was elevated to parish status on May 4, 1965.

First plans for the Church of the Ascension's main "church house" were prepared in 1909 by Norval Wall, a civil engineer and Pueblo resident, one-time Pueblo County surveyor, and a member of Ascension parish. Originally, the plans called for the use of Turkey Creek stone. Groundbreaking commenced in April 1909, and the basement was excavated. Shortly thereafter, the project stood idle while the parish endeavored to raise additional funds. In the meantime, parish officials elected not to continue with Wall's proposal. Architect Frank E. Wetherell (who specialized in Episcopal church design) of Des Moines, Iowa, received the new commission in 1913. Construction resumed over the already excavated basement. The building contractor for the project was the Whitlock Brothers firm of Pueblo. The cornerstone was set in October 1913, and the building was formally dedicated in June of 1914.

Ascension has served uninterruptedly as an Episcopal parish and worship center in the present historic church building for eighty-seven years and the parish hall for sixty years. Its facilities have served other community functions as well, including: interfaith and ecumenical services, musical performances open to the public (e.g. its current brownbag noon concerts in May), meeting centers for area clubs and organizations (e.g. AA, Pioneer Cemetery Historical Society), and as a polling place for national, state and local elections. The congregation today, including children, numbers about 600 persons. In member numbers it is the 15th largest Episcopal parish in the Colorado diocese and the largest parish south of Colorado Springs.

Of special note for Episcopalians, four of Ascension's past rectors (parish priests) later went on to become diocesan bishops: the Revs. Thomas Casady, Benjamin Dagwell (for whom Dagwell Hall at St. John's Episcopal Cathedral in Denver is named), James W. F. Carman and Edward C. Turner. The Episcopal Diocese of Colorado has also enjoyed a long term association with the development of health care facilities in Pueblo, having taken over the operation of Parkview Hospital in 1948. Over the years, the close proximity of the two institutions resulted in Ascension's rectors also filling the role of hospital chaplain.

Property Name Church of the Ascension

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Architectural Record, The. "Portfolio of Current Architecture." January, 1917. p. 59.

Ascension Parish Archives and Vestry Minutes.

Breck, Allen D. *The Episcopal Church in Colorado, 1860-1963*. Denver, Colorado: Big Mountain Press, 1963.

Crowe, Norman. Unpublished letter to Margaret Dowd, date August 3, 1993.

Daney, Isabel Stevenson. *Pueblo's First Cross: Episcopal Church History*. Denver: Big Mountain Press, 1966.

McAlester, Virginia & Lee. *A Field Guide to America's Historic Neighborhoods and Museum Houses*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 1998.

Noel, Thomas J. *Buildings of Colorado*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1997.

Pearce, Sarah J. & Wilson, Merrill A. *A Guide to Colorado Architecture*. Denver, Colorado: The State Historical Society of Colorado, 1983.

Pueblo Chieftain. "Norval Wall Dies." February 19, 1921.

Pueblo Star-Journal, June 21, 1914.

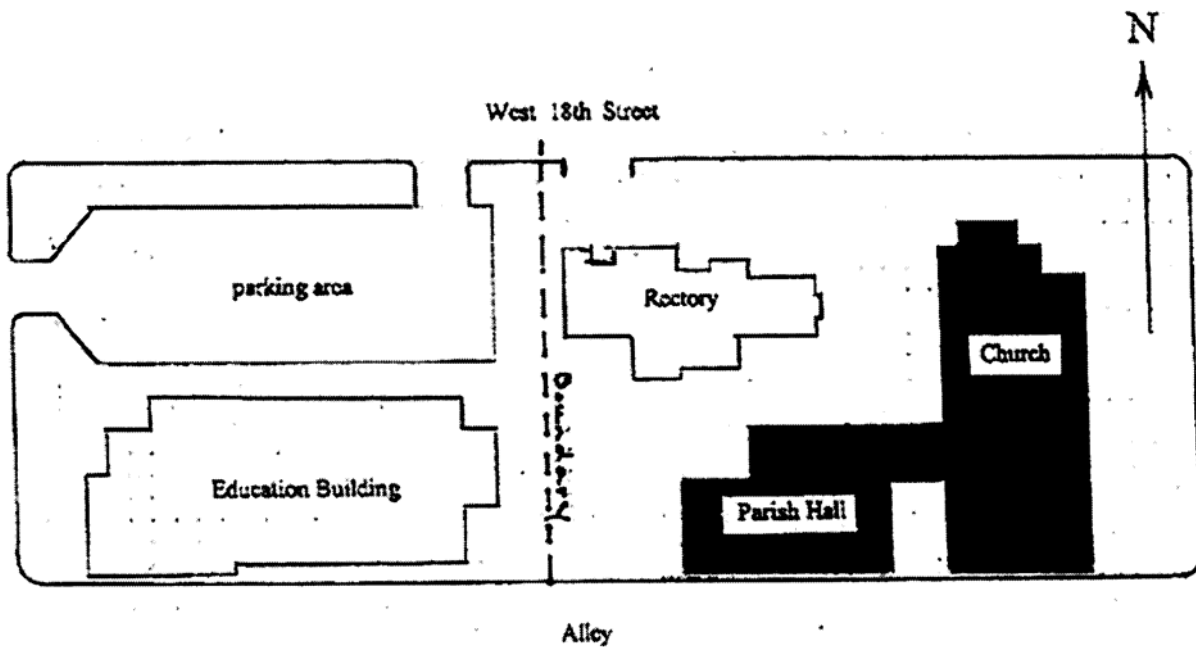
Whiffen, Marcus. *American Architecture Since 1780, A Guide to the Styles*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 1992.

Property Name Church of the Ascension

GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The boundary is as indicated on the site plan below.



Map scale: 1" = 60 ft. approx.

Parkview Hospital property

Property Name Church of the Ascension

PHOTOGRAPH LOG

The following information pertains to photograph numbers 1- 34:

Name of Property: Church of the Ascension
Location: 420 W. 18th Street, Pueblo, Colorado 81003-2625
Photographer: Randy Ford, except Eleanor Henning for 1, 24, 25, 26
Negatives: Ascension Episcopal Church Office,
420 W. 18th Street, Pueblo, Colorado, 81003-2625

Photo No. Photographic Information

- 1 View to southwest, December 2000
- 2 Cornerstone, view to southwest, September 2000
- 3 View of main doors on north facade, December 2000
- 4 North face of tower, September 2000
- 5 View west, portion containing east side aisle, September 2000
- 6 View to east, west side, September 2000
- 7 View to northwest, east side, September 2000
- 8 View to northeast, south side, January 2002
- 9 View to northwest, south and east sides, January, 2002
- 10 View to south, into nave, January, 2002
- 11 View to south, nave rood screen, chancel, altar, September 2000
- 12 Nave, overhead beam ceiling, September 2000
- 13 Rood screen, chancel, altar, reredos, September 2000
- 14 Detail of reredos wood carving, September 2000
- 15 Side aisle, view north, beam ceiling, September 2000
- 16 Pulpit, rood screen, stained glass, September 2000
- 17 Organ pipe loft, September 2000
- 18 Nave, view to north, *Christ the King* window, September 2000
- 19 View to south, west side of church, north entrance into parish hall, September 2000
- 20 View to south, north facade of parish hall, January 2002
- 21 View to north, south side of parish hall, September 2000
- 22 View to northeast, southwest corner of parish hall, January 2002
- 23 View to northwest, south side of parish hall, January 2002
- 24 Parish hall, view west, meeting and dining hall, October 2000
- 25 Parish hall, view east from meeting and dining hall, October 2000
- 26 Parish hall, view west into lounge, October 2000
- 27 View to south, north facade of rectory, January 2002
- 28 View to west, east side of rectory, January 2002
- 29 View to northwest, south side of rectory, January 2002
- 30 View to north, south side of rectory, January 2002
- 31 View to east, west side of rectory, January 2002
- 32 View to southeast, north facade of adjacent education building, January 2002
- 33 View to east, west side of education building, January 2002
- 34 View to northeast, west and south sides of education building, January 2002

Property Name Church of the Ascension

USGS TOPOGRAPHIC MAP
Northeast Pueblo, Colorado
7.5 Minute Series

