

NOMINATION OF HISTORIC BUILDING, STRUCTURE, SITE, OR OBJECT
PHILADELPHIA REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
PHILADELPHIA HISTORICAL COMMISSION

SUBMIT ALL ATTACHED MATERIALS ON PAPER AND IN ELECTRONIC FORM (CD, EMAIL, FLASH DRIVE)
ELECTRONIC FILES MUST BE WORD OR WORD COMPATIBLE

1. ADDRESS OF HISTORIC RESOURCE (must comply with an Office of Property Assessment address)

Street address: 4800-14 Lancaster Ave

Postal code: 19131-5143 Councilmanic District: 3rd

2. NAME OF HISTORIC RESOURCE

Historic Name: Our Mother of Sorrows Catholic Church

Current/Common Name: Our Mother of Sorrows Catholic Church

3. TYPE OF HISTORIC RESOURCE

Building Structure Site Object

4. PROPERTY INFORMATION

Occupancy: occupied vacant under construction unknown

Current use: Unknown; church operations ceased in October 2017

5. BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

See attached.

6. DESCRIPTION

See attached.

7. SIGNIFICANCE

Please attach the Statement of Significance.

Period of Significance (from year to year): from 1867 to 1975

Date(s) of construction and/or alteration: 1867-73; 1892; 1901; 1911-18; 1975

Architect, engineer, and/or designer: Edwin F. Durang; Henry D. Dagit (1911-18 adds./alts.)

Builder, contractor, and/or artisan: James Doyle (builder); John Conway (mason); Guastavino (grotto design)

Original owner: Archdiocese of Philadelphia

Other significant persons: _____

CRITERIA FOR DESIGNATION:

The historic resource satisfies the following criteria for designation (check all that apply):

- (a) Has significant character, interest or value as part of the development, heritage or cultural characteristics of the City, Commonwealth or Nation or is associated with the life of a person significant in the past; or,
- (b) Is associated with an event of importance to the history of the City, Commonwealth or Nation; or,
- (c) Reflects the environment in an era characterized by a distinctive architectural style; or,
- (d) Embodies distinguishing characteristics of an architectural style or engineering specimen; or,
- (e) Is the work of a designer, architect, landscape architect or designer, or engineer whose work has significantly influenced the historical, architectural, economic, social, or cultural development of the City, Commonwealth or Nation; or,
- (f) Contains elements of design, detail, materials or craftsmanship which represent a significant innovation; or,
- (g) Is part of or related to a square, park or other distinctive area which should be preserved according to an historic, cultural or architectural motif; or,
- (h) Owing to its unique location or singular physical characteristic, represents an established and familiar visual feature of the neighborhood, community or City; or,
- (i) Has yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important in pre-history or history; or
- (j) Exemplifies the cultural, political, economic, social or historical heritage of the community.

8. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

See attached.

9. NOMINATOR

Organization Preservation Alliance for Greater Philadelphia Date 3/2/2018

Name with Title Josh Bevan, Architectural Historian Email Patrick@preservationalliance.com

Street Address 1608 Walnut St, Suite 1702 Telephone 215-546-1146 x5

City, State, and Postal Code Philadelphia, PA 19103

Nominator is is not the property owner.

PHC USE ONLY

Date of Receipt: March 2, 2018

Correct-Complete Incorrect-Incomplete Date: March 16, 2018

Date of Notice Issuance: March 16, 2018

Property Owner at Time of Notice

Name: Rev. Dennis J. Dougherty in Trust

Address: 1030 N 48th St

City: Philadelphia State: PA Postal Code: 19131

Date(s) Reviewed by the Committee on Historic Designation: 4/18/2018

Date(s) Reviewed by the Historical Commission: 5/11/2018

Date of Final Action: 5/11/2018

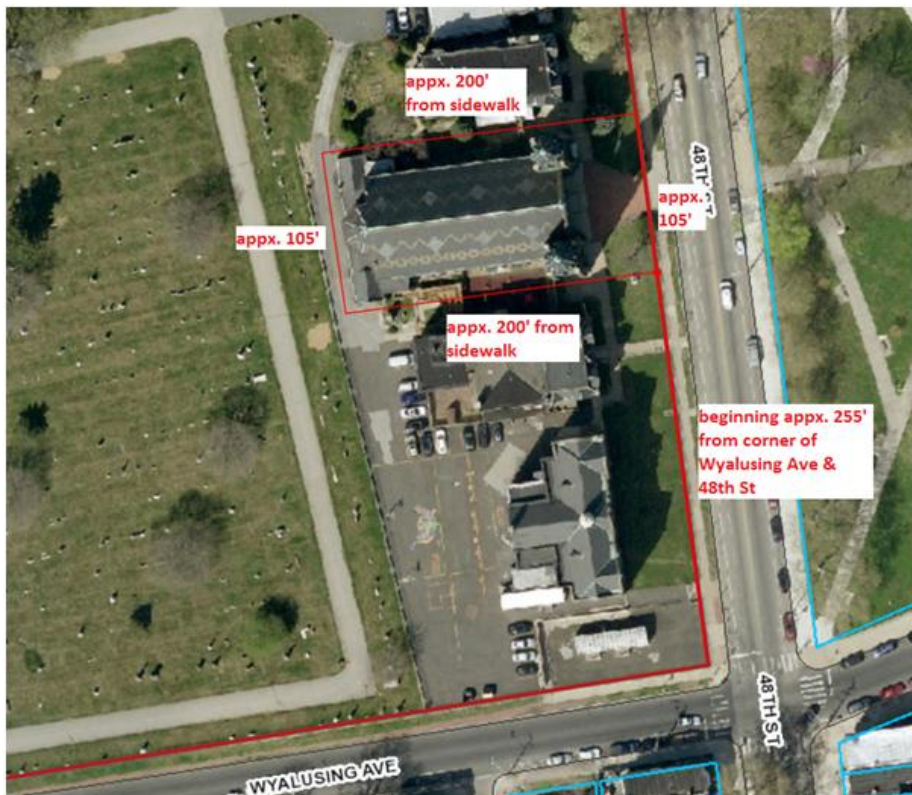
Designated Rejected

5. BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

This nomination proposes to designate Our Mother of Sorrows Church, one building on a larger parcel of 4800-14 Lancaster Avenue that currently includes several buildings and an expansive cemetery. The overall parcel is bounded by Girard Avenue to the north, Lancaster Avenue to the northeast, 48th Street to the east, Wyalusing Avenue to the south, and the rears of the properties along Creighton Street to the west.



The boundary of the church building begins at approximately 255 feet from the northwest corner of Wyalusing Avenue and 48th Street. The proposed boundary includes the footprint of the church, with a perimeter buffer.



6. ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION

Our Mother of Sorrows Church is constructed primarily of granite masonry and designed in the Romanesque Revival style, with elements of the round-arch style. The church's generally symmetrical plan features a central, barrel-vaulted nave, an octagonal apse on the west end, narthex with tripartite entry at the east end, arcaded side aisles north and south of the nave. The steep gable roof features polychromatic slate—not original—and shows traces of small, gabled dormers that once pierced each face. Its 72-foot frontage faces North 48th Street and overlooks Durham Park (also known as Clara Muhammed Square); the sanctuary extends 156 feet west towards Cathedral Cemetery. Two square towers flank the façade (east elevation). Each tower features a pair of round-arched windows on the ground floor and a single, larger window at the tower's second story, all with ecclesiastical stained glass. The square-based towers feature conical, asphalt-shingled spires flanked by truncated buttresses. The buttresses' original copper finials and three copper crosses—one each for the spire and gable apexes—have all been removed. Eleven stairs rise to meet the main entrance of the church. Three round-arched double doors—all surmounted by four-pane, rectangular transom windows and featuring their original round molding—serve as the main entrances and lead into the narthex. Closed shutters surmount the doors' transoms and above these shutters on the two outside doors an additional round-arched, three-pane, stained-glass window illuminates the choir loft; the center door's upper transom is filled in with a wood panel. The façade also features a prominent rose window set at the top of a protrusion that rises towards the gable end and features a semi-circular copper cap.



Figure 1: Front (east) elevation of Our Mother of Sorrows. Source: Cyclomedia, 2017.



Figure 2: Our Mother of Sorrows Catholic Church Complex at 48th Street and Lancaster Avenue. 2015.



Figure 3: Towers of Our Mother of Sorrows Catholic Church at 48th Street and Lancaster Avenue. 2015.

The north and south elevations are flanked by the aforementioned towers on the east and half-height, sacristy and vestry additions on the west end. Six bays of windows, each buttressed by a masonry pier, regularly puncture the length of both elevations. At the basement level, the original windows have been replaced with rectangular, single-pane, hopper windows. The primary sanctuary windows are 16-foot, stained-glass windows designed by Martin Callanan and installed circa 1900; a single, ocular, stained-glass window pierces the west end of these elevations above the sacristy and vestry entrances. Half-height, gabled additions were added to the north (c.1910) and the south (c.1918) sides to accommodate the sacristy and the vestry, respectively. The gable ends of these additions (facing north and south) are not fenestrated with the exception of a small ocular window near the apex. They feature low stone parapet walls, from which a stone, roman cross rises at the apex. A denticulated cornice runs along both the addition and original sanctuary elevations. The rear (west) elevation features an octagonal, central projection to accommodate the interior apse, which is flanked by two additions forming a flush elevation at the first story.

The exterior of the apse, which rises above the additions, features eleven central-mullioned ocular windows, clad in copper. These windows provide backlighting to the apse behind and were likely a source of ventilation for the attic space. Below this band of windows runs a narrow strip of sloped shingles surmounting a band of copper trim. A single, round-arched, stained-glass window (smaller than those lining the nave) pierces the rear wall just below this copper band and above each addition. The flush stretch of the rear elevation incorporates a single band of round-arched fenestration with various replacement, double-hung windows. Basement level windows (placed at random compared to the first-story bays) have been boarded or plastered shut.



Figure 4: South facade. Nave with round-arched windows and polychrome roof. 2015.



Figure 5: Figure 3: View of church from interior of Cathedral Cemetery. 2016.



Figure 6: West (rear) facade featuring octagonal apse and distinct apse windows. 2015.



Figure 7: Apse windows. 2016.

The following paragraphs describe interior conditions and are provided for documentation and contextual purposes only. This nomination does not seek to designate any interior spaces:

Upon entering the church, there is an elaborately decorated narthex that features a terrazzo floor and polychromatic, encaustic tiling below the height of the chair rail. There are three sets of double doors on the west wall that lead from this space into the sanctuary. At the north and south ends of the narthex there are double doors leading to two small rooms in the base of the towers. Each houses a spiraled, batten board-paneled staircase that provides access to the choir loft, towers, and attic structure. The north spire houses the church bell. The sanctuary features a massive barrel vault that spans 35 feet and rises approximately 47 feet above the nave floor. The side aisles are separated from the nave by a series of alternating circular and octagonal Romanesque columns, which are surmounted by elaborately decorated floral capitals. Pendentive domes rise from each column, creating an arcade of round arches. A round-arched, stained-glass window is centered beneath every dome.

At the west end of the nave the ceiling drops down to meet the apse, which is constructed of concave stained-glass panels that are backlit by windows. Three large paintings above the original marble altar—painted on canvases adhered directly to the plaster wall—are the only original paintings still visible in the sanctuary. At the end of each side aisle there is a ghost of an additional painting, which may still be in place under a modern paint layer (this could not be confirmed on site), in the west wall above the side altars. On the east wall, there is a large organ. It is located in a choir loft that extends out into the nave and features a curvilinear brass railing mounted on a wooden wall. This knee wall is articulated with several bands of molding and small recessed arches.

The current oak pews date to a circa-1975 renovation that incorporated Vatican II ideology. This renovation introduced a new round altar, placed closer to the congregation, and pared down from the

church's original ornament. The new pews were installed angling towards this new altar. An historic marble altar rail and altar screen were removed at this time, and the elaborate, tromp l'oeil paint scheme was covered over. The floors are hardwood, with terrazzo side aisles that show ghosts of the historic pew arrangement. At the west end of the church, there is a step up to the crossing, which retains its original white marble flooring.

The vestry, located to the south of the apse, has been divided with modern partitions to accommodate a bathroom and provide more storage but several historic, built-in cabinets remain in place. The sacristy, located on the north side of the apse, is a large open space with simple plaster walls, oak trim and linoleum flooring. The basement, which is currently used by the neighboring Our Mother of Sorrows School, is divided into two major spaces. The west half serves as a function space with a small stage at its west end, and the east half functions as a dining area.

Basement renovations, particularly the modern plaster drop ceiling, have obscured some of the original detailing but there is evidence of historic finishes at the southeast entrance, located under the base of the south tower. The ceilings were previously clad in pressed tin, the walls were paneled with bead board, and the doors were surrounded by round molding. The slender, fluted, cast iron columns in the two main rooms feature lotus capitals and taper slightly at the top. The floors are yellow pine and appear to be early, if not original. At the east end of the basement there is a small grotto chapel that features a finely laid, mosaic floor, inlaid marble walls and a Guastavino, barrel-vaulted ceiling. The barrel vault is constructed with structural, terracotta tiles; the mosaic features fish iconography, and retains evidence of a central fountain. The grotto was added to the church in 1911, under the supervision of Henry Dagit, a well-known West Philadelphian architect.

The structure of the church incorporates progressive technologies for its time period. The combination of a timber scissor-truss system and cast iron supports enabled Durang to create a large, barrel-vaulted sanctuary that appears open and airy. The truss system transfers the weight of the roof outwards to the rows of columns that delineate the side aisles from the nave and to the exterior masonry wall. These columns continue to the basement, where they are joined by two smaller rows of columns running between them that support the floor of the sanctuary. The columns in the sanctuary were historically plastered but likely have a cast iron core like those in the basement.

7. STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Our Mother of Sorrows Catholic Church is historically significant and should be listed individually on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places. Pursuant to Section 14-1004(1) of the Philadelphia Code, the property satisfies Criteria for Designation D and E. Constructed in 1867 on a design by preeminent ecclesiastical architect Edwin F. Durang, the church building is significant as the work of an architect whose work significantly influenced the historical and architectural development of the City of Philadelphia, satisfying Criterion E. The church also embodies distinguishing characteristics of the Romanesque Revival style, satisfying Criterion D.

History

Our Mother of Sorrows Church is part of a large Catholic complex located at North 48th Street and Lancaster Avenue in West Philadelphia. This complex is situated on land that was part of a 43-acre farm that Archbishop Francis Kenrick purchased in 1849 for the establishment of a cemetery and a parish for the nascent Irish-Catholics of West Philadelphia.¹ What began as Cathedral Cemetery and the new home of St. John's Orphan Asylum grew over 170 years to include Our Mother of Sorrows Church, its convent and rectory buildings; several iterations of Our Mother of Sorrows School; and Durham park bounded by Lancaster Avenue, 48th Street, and Wyalusing Street. The current complex is comprised from north to south of: Cathedral Cemetery's Gate House; Our Mother of Sorrows Rectory/Parish House; Our Mother of Sorrows Catholic Church; former Convent; and Our Mother of Sorrows School. Cathedral Cemetery extends several blocks west from these buildings and includes a cemetery annex on the south side of Wyalusing Street between 51st and Farson Streets.



Figure 8: Smedley, Samuel L. *Atlas of the City of Philadelphia*. Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott, 1862. Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

¹ *The Parish Visitor: Church of Our Mother of Sorrows, West Philadelphia* 1, no. 1(1902): 1.

Rev. Francis A. Sharkey assumed charge of the West Philadelphia parish in 1865 and oversaw construction of Our Mother of Sorrows Church. The church was designed and constructed between 1867 and 1873 by architect Edwin F. Durang, builder James Doyle, and mason John Canning at a cost of \$80,000.² A largely intact example of Durang's work, the church employs Romanesque details including rounded arches, entrance-flanking towers, and abundant stained glass windows. It was designed, at least in part, to draw interest to Cathedral Cemetery, but also to replace the haphazard St. Gregory's Chapel, a place of worship that originated in a tool shed on the cemetery's grounds.³ The church has undergone several significant alterations throughout the years, but retains much of its 19th-century fabric. The cornerstone was laid in November 1867 and by November 1869 the roof was in place.⁴ The first service was held in the basement of Our Mother of Sorrows on June 12, 1870. Tower construction began shortly after and, by 1872, the Rosary Society supplied the original Stations of the Cross and a rented organ was installed. Our Mother of Sorrows was dedicated on September 28, 1873.⁵



Figure 9: Hopkins, H.W. *Atlas of West Philadelphia Including the 24th & 27th Wards of the City of Philadelphia From Actual Surveys & Official Records*. Philadelphia: G.M. Hopkins & Co, 1872. University Archives, University of Pennsylvania.

The late 1870s and 1880s were a time of notable growth for not only Our Mother of Sorrows Church, but also for West Philadelphia as a whole. The extension of railroad and streetcar lines west of the Schuylkill and

² Reverend Sharkey may have played a decisive role in establishing the building's overall design; *The Catholic Herald*, October 4, 1873.

³ The original shed structure of St. Gregory's was expanded several times and by multiple rectors beginning in 1854. *ibid.*

⁴ "Souvenir: Golden Jubilee of the Dedication of the Church of Our Mother of Sorrows," Philadelphia, 19 January 1902.

⁵ *ibid.*, 4.

the resulting influx of largely working-class residents, signaled the development of West Philadelphia as a place where homes were located close to their places of employment.⁶ Those laborers in less desirable industries such as meatpacking, tanning, and stock yards were pushed beyond the historic urban core and into fringe areas including Mill Creek in West Philadelphia.⁷



Figure 10: Baist, William G. *Atlas of West Philadelphia, 24th and 27th Wards. Compiled from Official Records, Private Plans and Actual Surveys Based Upon Plans Deposited in the Department of Surveys. Philadelphia: J.L. Smith, 1886. Athenaeum of Philadelphia.*

⁶ Roger Miller and Joseph Siry, “The Emerging Suburb: WEST PHILADELPHIA, 1850–1880”, *Pennsylvania History*, Vol. 47, No. 2 (APRIL 1980: Penn State University Press), 104.

⁷ Dennis Smyth, an Irish-Catholic congregant of Our Mother of Sorrows and one of the parish’s most generous contributors according to church records was a cattle drover/broker who lived at 4327 Aspen Street, about 3 blocks south of the church. Smyth came to Mill Creek in 1865 at a time when many of the areas original speculative suburban land owners were selling lots to incoming residents who worked in industrial trades. Smyth’s land and its subdivision from 3 to over 30 parcels in 1895 connect social and spatial narratives within Mill Creek between 1865 and 1900 to Our Mother of Sorrows’s growth as an Irish- Catholic institution. See: Ancestry Library, 1870 U.S. Census, Philadelphia Ward 24 District 79, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; Roll: M593_1411; Page: 469B; Image: 421; Family History Library Film: 552910. Accessed 11/8/2014 and Ancestry.com. Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, Death Certificates Index, 1803-1915 [database on-line]. Provo, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operations, Inc., 2011.



Figure 12: Our Mother of Sorrows Catholic Church and additional buildings within the complex, pictured in the 1890s. Source: Archdiocese of Philadelphia Archives.

Changes in the complex's fabric reflect increased funding from a growing parish and changes in congregational demographics in concert with larger trends in Philadelphia during the late 1800's. By the 1890's the Philadelphia Archdiocese categorized Our Mother of Sorrows as a territorial Catholic Parish, meaning that the church and associated schools were geographically tied to parishioners. The opening of St. Ignatius Church in 1893 (a German national parish and the parish under which Our Mother of Sorrows is currently maintained) was aimed at attracting German immigrants living in West Philadelphia and connected to residential patterns in the surrounding neighborhoods.¹³

Our Mother of Sorrows parish greeted the twentieth century with great zeal. Their congregation was continuing to grow, the schools were considered among the best in the city and the Archdiocese alike, and the church had a new set of stained glass windows to illuminate the sanctuary.¹⁴ As they prepared for the parish's Golden Jubilee in 1902, they made even more improvements. Services were suspended for several months in April 1901 and upon reopening in time for anniversary celebrations on January 19, 1902, Our Mother of Sorrows had undertaken \$35,000 in improvements. These included new quartered oak pews to replace the original pews, a new Italian marble altar rail, three new altars, and new statuary. Church decoration

¹³ Conversation with Father Francis Kelly at St Ignatius of Loyola rectory, 1 April 2015.

¹⁴ "Building: Church of Our Mother of Sorrows," Census of Stained Glass Windows in America (1992), Philadelphia Architects and Buildings database, Athenaeum of Philadelphia, accessed 15 April 2015, http://www.philadelphiabuildings.org/pab/app/glass_display_building.cfm?BuildingId=249.

was also completed, perhaps meaning new frescoes or millinery in the sanctuary.¹⁵ Bromley maps show a significant change in the building's footprint between 1901 and 1910. At some point, and possibly during the pre-Golden Jubilee renovations, the church received an addition at its northwest corner. The space was used as the sacristy and features an exterior entrance facing the rectory yard; its original use as a sacristy seems likely considering this relationship with the rectory, but cannot be known for certain. This addition appeared larger on the 1911 Smith map, but it is possible that this was a more precise depiction of the addition rather than another physical alteration.

The 1911 Smith, 1918 Bromley, and 1927 Bromley maps also depicted different footprints for the two towers, showing the one to the south as much larger. While it is tempting to suggest that this was simply an error that was never corrected, both the 1918 and 1927 Bromley show the otherwise-correct footprint of Our Mother of Sorrows, which, by 1918, included a southwest addition to match that on the northwest. This southwest addition changed dramatically over the years, and now features a drop ceiling, partition walls, and a sealed off stairway into the basement, but retains its original vestry closets and a restroom that was likely part of the addition. Not shown on the maps, but clear through other records, are changes in the basement, now called Daley Hall. It has been used for worship, social space, recreation, and dining; it is presently the school cafeteria and hosts after school activities. There are offices and storage spaces that, if not original, have been in place since the early-20th century. There is also an intact vaulted grotto or chapel with a tiled ceiling, tiled walls, and a mosaic floor. It is located at the east end of the basement and was installed in 1911 under the oversight of Henry D. Dagit.¹⁶ This space is now used as storage for landscaping equipment.

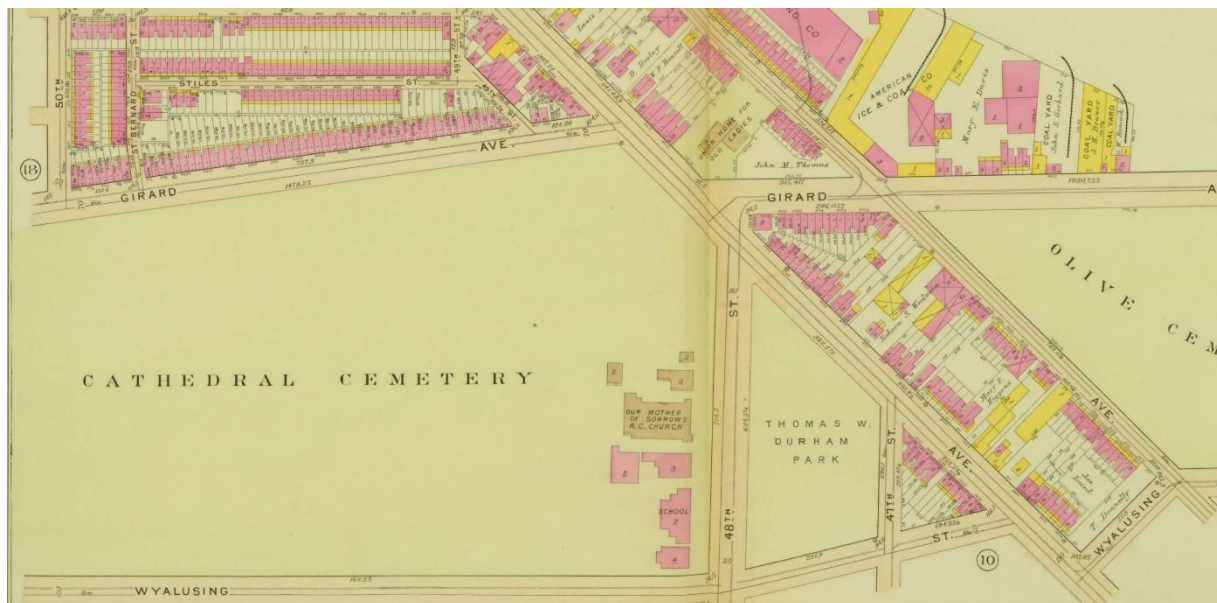


Figure 13: Bromley, George W. and Walter S. *Atlas of the City of Philadelphia, Complete in One Volume: From Actual Surveys and Official Plans*. Philadelphia: G.W. Bromley & Co., 1910. Athenaeum of Philadelphia.

¹⁵ “Souvenir: Golden Jubilee of the Dedication of the Church of Our Mother of Sorrows,” Philadelphia, 19 January 1902: 9.

¹⁶ John Ochsendorf, *Guastavino Vaulting and the Art of Structural Tile*. (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 2013): appendix. Dagit (& Sons) appears to have replaced Durang, who died in 1911, as the Archdiocese’s go-to architect and firm.

the Vatican II council. A radical shift from earlier liturgy and aesthetics, the resulting documents (published in 1965) had the potential to dramatically alter centuries-old architectural traditions within the church.

According to Father Francis Kelly, changes to Our Mother of Sorrows' congregation and the church's interior occurred gradually in reaction to demographic trends and the Roman Catholic Church's Vatican II Council. Vatican II doctrines, released in 1965, encouraged—but did not require—churches to approach design more modestly and to facilitate connectivity between celebrant and congregant. OMS renovated with these guidelines in mind circa 1975 by stripping interior ornament, adding a second altar in the center of the sanctuary, and installing new pews in a more inclusive arrangement. At this point they also surrounded every other column in the sanctuary in octagonal wood cladding. African iconography, including the printed fabrics and statuary in the (possibly original) confessionals, was introduced in the late 1970s or early 1980s.¹⁹ At some point also in the late 1970s the church—along with several others in the Archdiocese—was repainted in light blue and gold, the colors of Our Lady Mary.²⁰ Our Mother of Sorrows was dissolved as an independent parish in 2013. St Ignatius of Loyola absorbed the parish and now uses the church for funeral services and occasional masses. The school is still open and the convent has been used as housing for single mothers battling addiction.

CRITERIA FOR DESIGNATION:

D) Embodies distinguishing characteristics of an architectural style or engineering specimen.

OMS Church was designed in the Romanesque Revival style. Regarding the style's emergence in the mid-19th century, the following context is excerpted from architectural historian Mark Gelernter's *A History of American Architecture: Buildings in Their Cultural and Technological Context*:

In the 1840s, while the Gothic Revival was still going strong, some American architects began to take notice of the contemporary German Romanesque Revival. Richard Upjohn...designed in 1844-46 America's first Romanesque building, the Church of the Pilgrims in Brooklyn, New York. Other architects including James Renwick, Henry Austin, and Leopold Eidlitz, subsequently turned to the style. Typical in their schemes were rounded-headed [arched] openings, tall towers, and what are called arcaded corbel tables, a row of small arches supporting a slightly projecting wall or molding above. The most familiar Romanesque Revival building from this period is Renwick's Smithsonian Institution on the Mall in Washington, D.C. Numerous churches, public buildings, railway stations and even houses were built in the Romanesque style in the period leading up to the Civil War. After the war...Henry Hobson Richardson evolved the Romanesque into a more personal - and at the same time more popular - style that swept across the nation [known as Richardsonian Romanesque].²¹

As Gelernter's description above describes, the Romanesque Revival style favored round-arched forms, tall towers, and corbelled masonry; features exemplified at OMS Church—particularly in the church's prominent northeast and southeast towers, round-arched belfries, windows, tripartite narthex entry, arcaded corbel tables along the towers' lucarnes and east gable end. The round-arch

¹⁹ Father Francis Kelly, interview, April 2015. Philadelphia, PA.

²⁰ *ibid.*

²¹ Mark Gelernter, *A History of American Architecture: Buildings in Their Cultural and Technological Context*, (London, UK: University Press of New England, 1999), 152-153.

mode caught on in Philadelphia and across America as a means of providing buildings of quality and beauty with relative economy when compared in many cases to their Gothic predecessors.²²

Durang's choice of Romanesque Revival occurred during the final stages of the style's prime in the U.S., roughly a decade before Richardson's own mode took form and gained popularity through the early 1890s. Durang's design, however, provided his client with what may have been argued as an economized design versus a more elaborate scheme in the previously popular Gothic Revival style, or perhaps a more elaborate or picturesque massing scheme that relied less on symmetry and more on grandeur. For a small but growing congregation on the rise in West Philadelphia ca. 1868, Durang's design appears well-fit. By the end of the 19th century, Our Mother of Sorrows represented the largest Irish Catholic congregation in the city, which suggests that the strength of the congregation was in fact founded with the practicality and stature of its building of worship.

E) Is the work of a designer, architect, landscape architect or designer, or engineer whose work has significantly influenced the historical, architectural, economic, social, or cultural development of the City, Commonwealth or Nation.

Our Mother of Sorrows Church was designed by master architect Edwin Forrest Durang (1829-1911) and completed in 1872, with Durang returning in 1891-1892 to design spires to cap its buttressed towers. Among the most prominent designers of ecclesiastical buildings in Philadelphia during the prime of his career, Durang executed numerous institutional and residential designs throughout the second half of the nineteenth century, but is particularly noted for his commissions for the Archdiocese of Philadelphia. Raised in a New York family with a legacy of theatrical talent, Durang found a career in architectural design in Philadelphia by the mid-1850s. As the Philadelphia Athenaeum's Sandra L. Tatman notes regarding Durang's professional development:

By 1857 he has moved to 417 Market Street and has begun working with John E. Carver, veteran residential and ecclesiastical architect. Upon Carver's death in 1859, Durang succeeded him, retaining the office at 21 N. 6th Street until 1880. Following Carver's example, Durang also specialized in ecclesiastical design, most notably those churches and institutions associated with the Catholic Church. In November 1909, Durang was joined by his son F. Ferdinand Durang, who, in turn, succeeded him after his sudden death in 1911. According to the obituary published 7 June 1911 in *Catholic Standard and Times* Durang "died suddenly Monday morning near the rectory of St. Monica's Church, Seventeenth and Ritner streets, while making measurements for the new convent." The Durang dynasty represents one of the most successful architectural enterprises specializing in Catholic church projects in Philadelphia, only rivalled in the latter part of the nineteenth century and early twentieth century by Henry D. Dagit and his sons. Furthermore, the Durang firm provided a training ground for young architects hoping to excel in ecclesiastical design: Rowland Boyle, father to an architectural dynasty himself; Emile G. Perrot; and Frank R. Watson, all worked with the Durang firm.²³

Our Mother of Sorrows Church was among Durang's earliest commissions, and was integral to the establishment of a presence for Durang in West Philadelphia. Following his original design for the church, completed between 1868 and 1872, Durang returned in 1891 to complete spires that continue to top the towers, which remain visible from surrounding vantage points, including the Market Frankford El. Moreover, the OMS complex represents the work of Durang's firm on a larger scale, and foundational work with respect to the careers of architects, John Jerome Deery and Frank

²² Marcus Whiffen and Frederick Koeper, *American Architecture, Volume I: 1607-1860*, (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1981), 196-198.

²³ Sandra L. Tatman, "Durang, Edwin Forrest (1829-1911)," *Philadelphia Architects and Buildings*, accessed October 12, 2017. https://www.philadelphiabuildings.org/pab/app/ar_display.cfm/23154.

R. Watson, who designed buildings within the OMS complex in the 1880s and 1890s, respectively, following their time in Durang's office.

Although select details such as buttresses with crowned pinnacles at each tower have since been removed from the building, and the interior spatial arrangement of the church shows substantial Vatican II-related changes, the essence of Durang's design remains tangible and well-apparent. Sited adjacent to Cathedral Cemetery, at the convergence of West Philadelphia's Belmont and Hestonville neighborhoods, OMS Church, an early anchor to the area's burgeoning Irish Catholic community, remains an architecturally significant example of the work of Edwin F. Durang.

Conclusion:

For roughly 150 years, Our Mother of Sorrow Catholic Church has witnessed West Philadelphia's emergence and growth from an early suburban fringe, to an urban neighborhood with layered and intriguing history. The building represents continuance of St. Gregory's, a small Catholic parish that developed into one of the city's largest Irish Catholic congregations by the turn of the 20th century in Our Mother of Sorrows. The Belmont-based church was designed and built by one of Philadelphia's most venerated ecclesiastical designers, Edwin F. Durang in 1867, and completed in 1872 as the congregation gathered funds over the course of several years. From the parish's growth, to the 1876 Centennial, and through changes brought about by Vatican II, Our Mother of Sorrows Church continued to exist as a definitive edifice with deep association to West Philadelphia's growth. Today, Our Mother of Sorrows Church stands at 48th and Lancaster as an excellent architectural example of one parish's place of worship, and an important component of one architect's legacy. As evidenced above, Our Mother of Sorrows Catholic Church merits listing on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places by satisfying Criteria D and E as defined in the Philadelphia Historic Preservation Ordinance, Section 14-1004 (1).

8. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

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