**Nomination of Historic Building, Structure, Site, or Object**  
**Philadelphia Register of Historic Places**  
**Philadelphia Historical Commission**

**1. Address of Historic Resource** *(must comply with an Office of Property Assessment address)*

Street address: 1734-54 W. Thompson Street  
Postal code: 19121

**2. Name of Historic Resource**

Historic Name: Church of the Gesu  
Current/Common Name: same

**3. Type of Historic Resource**

- ✔ Building  
- ✔ Structure  
- ✔ Site  
-  
  - Object

**4. Property Information**

- Condition: ✔ excellent  
- ✔ good  
-  
  - fair  
-  
  - poor  
-  
  - ruins  
- Occupancy: ✔ occupied  
-  
  - vacant  
-  
  - under construction  
-  
  - unknown  
- Current use: Active worship site

**5. Boundary Description**

*Please attach a narrative description and site/plot plan of the resource’s boundaries.*

**6. Description**

*Please attach a narrative description and photographs of the resource’s physical appearance, site, setting, and surroundings.*

**7. Significance**

*Please attach a narrative Statement of Significance citing the Criteria for Designation the resource satisfies.*

Period of Significance (from year to year): from 1878 to 1895  
Date(s) of construction and/or alteration: 1879-88; towers, 1895  
Architect, engineer, and/or designer: Edwin F. Durang (1829-1911)  
Builder, contractor, and/or artisan: Thomas Reilly  
Original owner: Saint Joseph College  
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
Please attach a bibliography.

9. NOMINATOR
Organization______________________________________Date________________________________
Name with Title__________________________________ Email________________________________
Street Address____________________________________Telephone____________________________
City, State, and Postal Code____________________________________________________________
Nominator ☐ is ☑ is not the property owner.

PHC USE ONLY
Date of Receipt:_______________________________________________________________________
☑ Correct-Complete ☐ Incorrect-Incomplete Date:_________________________________
Date of Notice Issuance: _____________
Property Owner at Time of Notice:
Name:_________________________________________________________________________
Address:_______________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
City:_______________________________________ State:____ Postal Code:_________
Date(s) Reviewed by the Committee on Historic Designation:____________________________________
Date(s) Reviewed by the Historical Commission:______________________________________________
Date of Final Action:__________________________________________________________
☒ Designated ☐ Rejected 12/7/18

Criteria D and E, with Criteria A and H added by CHD and PHC.
5. BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

This nomination proposes to designate Church of the Gesu, one building on a larger parcel of 1734-54 W. Thompson Street that currently includes the church and several attached buildings. The overall parcel is bounded by W. Thompson Street at the north, a plaza at the south, N. 18th Street at the west, and additional church property at the east.

The boundary of the church building begins approximately 60 feet southwest from the southeast corner of W. Thompson Street and N. 18th Street. The proposed boundary includes the footprint of the church, with a perimeter buffer. The Philadelphia Historical Commission would not have purview over the adjacent buildings, including the five-story brick building immediately to the north of the church building.
Description:

The Church of the Gesu (hereafter, "Gesu") is the main building in a complex composed of an elementary (Gesu) and secondary / college preparatory (St. Joseph's Preparatory) school, rectory, and other structures that are part of the educational system administered by the Society of Jesus, a Roman Catholic religious order, more popularly called, the Jesuits. The Gesu's architectural style had been described by Webster as "High Victorian Baroque," and by Moss, "Baroque." Each has provided descriptions cited herein.

Constructed of red brick with "painted iron and sheet metal trim," the church has a five bay facade with fluted columns at the center bays, between the square towers with the "low hipped roofs." The church's roof over the nave is pitched and with gables projecting at the east and west sides. The building has a northward orientation with the altar area at the (north) side abutting another building on Thompson Street. The pedimented element braced by volutes at the third level holds the only cross at the facade.

The facade is the most remarkable feature. Three bays in the center have twinned Doric columns with banded drums at the ground, or first level while Ionic columns stand parallel above them at the second level. The towers at the ends slightly project forward, allowing the center to recede. All five bays have portals. Every stage in the towers is different, from niches above the portals to the louvred fenestration in upper, or third level. Piers are the verticals opposing the wide horizontal cornices between levels.

The Church of the Gesu's distance from Girard Avenue allows the facade the space it needs for an effectual appreciation. Scharf & Westcott's History of Philadelphia held that this lot upon which the church is built, measured "259' by 395'" for a building in a northward orientation at 122' by 252'. (Webster, p. 294.) The basilican plan is interrupted by the gables at the east and west sides which otherwise would have been transepts for a cross plan, if extended. St. Joseph's Preparatory (High) School's buildings abut or are adjacent to the Gesu Church, as is the Gesu (elementary) School (northeast), part of a network of Jesuit buildings.
The Church of the Gesu, c. 2004 (Tom Crane photo), presents a different, painted facade, not consistent with traditional Baroque facades on the first churches in this style in Rome.
The Church of the Gesu...

(d) Embodies distinguishing characteristics of an architectural style, or engineering specimen, and,

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

Philadelphia's Church of the Gesu (hereafter, "Gesu") is described as a "High Victorian Baroque," a contemporary hybridization of styles by architect Edwin Forrest Durang (1829-1911), who would become the Archdiocese of Philadelphia most active and articulate of ecclesiastical architects in the late 19th century. The nomination at issue possesses an interesting architectural history of the Baroque's association with the religious order, the Society of Jesus (or "Jesuits") since the 1500s. There also is the history of the Jesuits in Pennsylvania, with a base in Philadelphia's colonial period through the American Revolution where they were the only Roman Catholic priests serving not only the community, but the efforts towards independence. The Jesuits were held in high regard by our first presidents and they had remained prominent despite the Order's suppression by the pope in 1773. Before 1800, other religious orders came to Philadelphia and with the construction of a seminary here to train then ordain diocesan priests, the Jesuits' influence had declined. By the Civil War, more religious orders settled in Philadelphia, lessening the Jesuits' past while moving forward in a growing diocese. The Jesuits however, continued in their pioneering work in education, health care and social services with orphans. Their residence was the rectory at (Old) St. Joseph's on Willings Alley, Society Hill, as today. St. Joseph's Church remained at that discrete location, in the center of a


block, with no facade, no front entrance and barely visible from the main street. In the 1870s, St. Joseph's Church was surrounded by, as if concealed by, large commercial buildings. In regards to the Jesuit community's standing in Philadelphia—in spite of their extensive works that made outstanding contributions in social welfare—there still was no church building in which the Jesuits could publicly hold forth in the city. The "Society," (which Jesuits call their Order) needed to establish a physical presence to the non-Catholic public, as if to present to those unaware of the good done by the Jesuits, through a church that would express the Jesuits' "greater glory of God" message. (In Latin it is "Ad Maiorum Gloriam Dei" or "AMGD" often seen at Jesuit buildings or writings.)

Edwin F. Durang had already executed a Baroque subtly combining some "Victorian" elements at St. Charles Borromeo Church which was dedicated at the start of the Centennial celebration in May of 1876. Most likely, the attention to this grand design—appropriate for one of the Church's great defenders during the Counter Reformation—brought Durang and the local Jesuits together to plan a church that would represent the Society's long, supportive history with that of the City and Nation.

It should be noted to this Commission that approvals for historical designation had already been decided on other major religious orders' founding churches: St. Augustine's (Augustinians); St. Peter's (Redemptorists); St. Vincent de Paul's (Vincentians); St. Michael's (Christian Brothers).

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4 This nominator submitted St. Charles Borromeo Church, located at Christian and 20th Streets, for approval in 2017. Borromeo, (d.1584) lived when the Baroque was still evolving in Rome.
THE BAROQUE and THE JESUITS

As a church for the Jesuits, Gesu's Baroque design is appropriate, as well as historically based at Il Gesu church in Rome. Former Jesuit, scholar Malachi Martin wrote in his history of the Society that the Church of the Gesu in Rome (1575-88) "...was so distinctive that it was adopted by many of the Society's churches and became known as the 'Jesuit style.'" The "style" is the Baroque and art historians agree that Il Gesu in Rome is "basic to Baroque" and that this church significantly contributed to the "evolution of Baroque church facades." The Baroque is regarded as the "architectural embodiment of the spirit of the Counter Reformation." And Il Gesu's design in Rome materialized because Il Gesu is the "Mother Church" of the Jesuits, the religious order approved by Pope Paul III in 1540.

The Roman Catholic Church defended herself and doctrine from "protestations" begun in the early 1500s by England's King Henry VIII and a former Augustinian, Martin Luther in Germany. They would divest from Roman Catholicism, renounce the pope, and begin the Church of England (or Anglican) and Lutheran churches respectively. Other "Protestant" denominations arose: Presbyterian, Methodist, and various sects who would be confronted with the Roman Catholic Church's most illustrious theologians, like Borromeo. And a Basque priest who had been a knighted soldier, Ignatius de Loyola (d. 1556), who organized a "Society" of scholarly, brave men to counter the protesters of Catholicism. The Society's members grew in the thousands by 1600 and included many men who, as missionaries in Asia, North and South American, would meet unspeakable deaths as martyrs defending, or introducing Roman Catholicism. Along with the impressive rise of the Jesuits, the Church initiated a building campaign of churches in the new Baroque which was to

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8 Martin, op.cit.
become "the vehicle of Catholic triumph...celebrating over Protestantism and a successful reassertion of the Church's spiritual authority." More churches in Rome were rebuilt in the 1500s in Baroque as "monumental testimonies to the revival of the papacy and of the Church herself." There are interpretations of the style of Il Gesu and other Roman Catholic churches by art historians in recent decades who may or may not be Roman Catholic. Their opinions are based on how the Jesuits' church in Rome, Il Gesu, had been a "milestone in the history of church architecture," and a "building whose importance for subsequent church architecture can hardly be exaggerated."

Art historians' comments on the Baroque allude to the Jesuits as part of the intangible component of the style. To Chastel, the Jesuits were "responsible...the Jesuits encouraged" the exuberance of a style that evoked awe in its beauty and the mathematical applications of the classical orders, decoration and assembly of horizontal and vertical forms. The Baroque seemed, to art historians, a style unable to be explained without emotion. Which was what the Roman Catholic Church needed and got by the late 1500s with the Church of Il Gesu in Rome, as redesigned by Giacomo della Porta. "Baroque art was the art of a dynamic age, when the very foundations of the modern world were laid," emoted art historian Held. He posed the Church's intent with the Baroque's use in "new churches...made into edifices of unheard-of splendor. They (churches) welcomed the faithful with facades of majestic proportions and a full orchestration of columns, pilasters, niches, pediments, and figural and ornamental decor."

The Philadelphia Church of the Gesu responds to this passionate and technical description of the Baroque used by the Jesuits.

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10 Ibid.
13 Held, pp.20; 23.
The foundations of the Baroque in Rome.

Characteristics of the Baroque began to appear in Rome with the Church of Santa Caterina (left) in 1564 with the volutes.

Art historians agree that the Church of Il Gesù in Rome (below) epitomizes the Baroque from its 1575 facade.

The Baroque continued to produce more attempts to integrate the parts within each level into the 1600s.

(left image from Held; below, from Janson.)

596. GIACOMO DELLA PORTA.
Façade of Il Gesù, Rome. c. 1575–84
THE BAROQUE STYLE

The near scarcity of the Baroque in Philadelphia, or in the United States may have been attributed to the style's keen association as an architectural artifact of Roman Catholicism's attack on Protestantism. Or, in keeping with the nation's history of affinity to Athens and Rome philosophically, politically and in architecture, the Baroque may not have found any proponents where Roman Catholicism had not been embraced with the Protestant majority through the 19th century. Unquestionably, the Baroque began as a "Roman Catholic style" with strong usage in churches, then later in palaces and other important or monumental buildings.

Art historians have set the Baroque on various time-lines: Baroque expert Held put the Baroque within the context of church historians who determined the late 1500s for the style, which is consistent to Il Gesu's construction. Janson's dating of the Baroque begins as "1600" while Chastel's is "1620," a later time. Nevertheless, Il Gesu's pivotal arrival had solved the then-current problem in revolutionizing the basilican plan. As Janson wrote, on the impetus for the new style: "how to create a classically integrated facade for a basilican church" was the problem many architects sought to solve. Articulating the horizontal elements with the vertical forms at the facade had been tried awkwardly by Palladio in the early 1500s. At Il Gesu, della Porta not only integrated the forms in the design, but was able to emphasize the nave of the church from the exterior, at the facade. This was central to the Baroque. There were two levels required in the basilican plan, with the upper level suggesting only the nave, and a wider lower level for the side aisles. Visually from the facade, the two levels were unified by volutes, the

14 Held, op.cit., p.24; Hitchcock, op.cit., p. 299; Janson, op.cit., p. 483; Chastel, op.cit., p. 308.
scroll-like elements at the top level, alongside of the narrow second level. The volutes' diagonal yet decorative forms were extensively used in Baroque, as if identifying marks of the style. What the art historians express in tandem, however, is how the Baroque "integrates" (the frequent term used) horizontal and vertical forms--and it's only at the facade because no other part of the building's exterior matters. The facade's function was to draw in, entice, and overwhelm with this Catholic convention of decoration and ornamentation of church exteriors and interiors. It is one of the main differences in the separation of the Roman Catholic church architecture from the Protestants who condemned the practice. The facade was the only and most important Baroque feature; aesthetically and intellectually, it had to appeal to an emotional, as well as a logical reasoning to the viewer. The Baroque then had the central pediment topped with the cross, and the vertical elements (pilasters, piers, tall portals) compelling an upward look to the volutes "pushing" the upper level to "heaven." The horizontals (cornices, friezes and lintels) move coordinately into the verticals. It had not been successfully accomplished before Il Gesu in Rome. For architects, it was like an exercise in forms and in the "motion" of forms to evoke a reaction. The Baroque continued only until about the early 1700s, when other interpretations of the Classical architectures of ancient Greece and Rome arose.

However, in American architecture, i.e., architecture constructed in the United States, the Baroque used in Roman Catholic churches in the 18th century, mainly by the Franciscans in Texas and Arizona, extended the style while introducing it to our nation. These churches were the last of this style, but the first in this country until this brief period in the 19th century, in which the Philadelphia Gesu was designed by Durang.
The Baroque's focus on the center nave's access through the middle of the facade distinguished the style's highly ornate style in Spain, then to the areas in the western hemisphere occupied through exploration. Below is one example of an 18th century Baroque, constructed by the Spanish Roman Catholics in Arizona. It is immense and situated where it could be beheld as the majestic church it is. But, its center facade is unusually adrift in a much decorated portal to the nave, made more obvious by the plainer tower bays. This Baroque held the forcefulness of the squared towers—as at the Philadelphia Gesu—as well as the drastic, dramatic contrast in the light-dark colors—as at the more recent appearance of the Gesu. These components, however, fit into the drama which the Baroque creates.

83 San Xavier del Bac, Tucson, Ariz. 1784-97
Library of Congress photo.

THE BAROQUE in the GESU

Moss wrote that the Philadelphia Gesu, with its "disappointing...exterior" was "(B)ased loosely on Il Gesu in Rome," the prototype of the Baroque Style. What is clear from Durang's boxy version of the Roman Gesu is the "integration" of the horizontal and vertical elements for a cohesive facade. (Refer to page 11 herein for comparison.) While both churches

\[16\text{Moss, op.cit.}\]
evoke reactions to the visual impact of these facades, the "Baroque-ness" applied by Durang has a different "rhythm" (Held's term) to the Romans, as they too used the volutes to connect the levels. But Durang's volutes extend to unify the towers into a single facade. Mathematically, Gesu possesses the same capabilities in "stacking" forms, incorporating them, despite how the towers' forward movement deviates from the first Baroques' flat facades. Durang's piers match the Gesu of Rome's, but for the Doric capitals in Philadelphia to the European Corinthians whose "frilly" sculpted curves add decoration and movement.

The nominated Gesu's smooth surface, albeit in brick, is consistent to the granite and marble of the Roman Baroques where the classical elements are necessary for the viewer to look upward, to heaven. Gesu has niches, as in Rome, the rounded arches over the openings, the central pediment from which the bays extend downward and wide, and an elevated base for steps to lead inside.

The "VICTORIAN" at the Gesu

Placed alongside each other, the two Gesu churches have distinctive parts that made Webster correctly adjust a mere Baroque to a "Victorian" for the Philadelphia building. One might consider Il Gesu as softer in form to the strength in the sturdy towers fronting the recessed center in Philadelphia. Durang also added quatrefoils in the upper levels of the towers, torches aflame as "keystones" in the niches' surrounds at the second level of the towers and dismissed the Corinthian capitals for the Doric or Ionic. The low-hipped roofs above the towers and gables are also incongruent to
traditional Baroque churches where the basilican plan had dictated the need for an improved facade.\textsuperscript{17}

Using some contemporary details such as the quatrefoils (which were placed in his Victorian Gothic churches later), Durang's Gesu was a hybrid for its time that would have been acceptable. Amidst "revived" Romanesques and Gothics, and combinations of style in the post-Civil War period, this Church of the Gesu in context adheres more to the Victorian period's experimentation of designs. What Durang designed was an American adaptation of the Italian Baroque, despite how "disappointing" the facade may be to purists.

THE ARCHITECT, EDWIN FORREST DURANG

Born into a family of actors, and named after one of the most popular Shakespearean actors of the time, Edwin Forrest of Philadelphia, Durang chose architecture for his career. Tatman and Moss, then Moss published their biographical accounts of Durang's life and projects which are attached.

This nomination looks at why Durang was commissioned for the Church of the Gesu by the Jesuit fathers, and how the architect may have arrived at the design.

It is the nominator's opinion that Durang was chosen to design the Gesu because of what he accomplished at the Church of St. Charles Borromeo. Dedicated in 1876, this church was named after a theologian and cleric during the Counter Reformation who strenuously defended Roman Catholicism.\textsuperscript{18} Borromeo lived when the Baroque was still developing: The Philadelphia church named for him was basilican, incorporating the Baroque.

\textsuperscript{17}Refer to Janson's explanation for the emergence of the Baroque after attempts by Palladio and Vignola. pp. 457-58.

\textsuperscript{18}Borromeo died in 1584. His illustrious defense of Church doctrine explains why the local seminary was named after him.
Durang left no diary of his experiences with his varied clientele. His only "record" was an "album" where he listed by category, his projects over about four decades. Included were his buildings commissioned by the Jesuits at the Gesu site: the rectory (or "residence"), "St. Joseph's College," and then across Girard Avenue, a rebuilt St. Joseph's Hospital that had its origins during the "famine years" of Irish Catholic migrations into the city. The Gesu was verified as a Durang design.

The 1884 History of Philadelphia reported that the cornerstone of the Gesu was laid in "1879" and "will be similar in design to the Church of the Gesu in Rome." From whom this information was derived was not given and Durang's name was likewise not noted in other contemporary sources. Moss however, had found that Durang originally designed the Gesu to be in "granite" with "limestone trim," (as at St. Charles Borromeo Church). Instead, a less expensive material, local brick was used with "white-painted iron and sheet metal trim." To an architect, this changed the direction of the original plan. Durang compromised. Moss considered the Gesu as "disappointing," but Durang's most "important commission," apparently because of the strong history of the Jesuits and the Baroque style.

Comparatively with Durang's other churches, Gesu's construction in brick was rather unique when the majority of his churches were in stone or granite which were more costly in labor and in material. The "white-painted iron" and "sheet metal" also required occasional maintenance which limestone did not. In all, the short-cuts at Gesu isolated Gesu from Durang's other churches in the city, but it allowed the architect to "Americanize" Baroque.

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19 The Album is a direct and primary source confirming Durang as the Gesu's architect.
20 Scharf & Westcott's History of Philadelphia, p. 1383ii.
21 Moss, op.cit.
Durang's St. Charles Borromeo Church's basilican plan and facade from 1876 seemed to have lead to his hiring by the Jesuits for their Church of the Gesu, although the construction materials here were far more superior.
The photograph (true copy from the Archdiocesan Archives) below is dated "1889," one year after Gesu was dedicated and finished for worship. Durang had designed this "St. Joseph's College" and had greatly contributed to the Archdiocesan School System in the rise of parish complexes which included schools and convents for the teaching nuns. At St. Joseph's College, however, it was solely male in its student body and faculty. (It remains thus today.) Durang had designed public schools in his earlier years, then obtained multiple commissions as the Archdiocese formulated standard parish complexes of church, rectory, convent and school. Gesu's environment was somewhat different from the Archdiocesan plan in its independent administration by the Jesuits—which was not uncommon to this Order or to the Augustinians, or Christian Brothers at La Salle College, later University. Durang's designs were part of this rise in Roman Catholic education and a parochial school system, albeit with some private Roman Catholic schools. He began to design the first Catholic colleges in Pennsylvania, then Trinity College in Washington, D.C. Durang also designed theatres and institutional buildings in the Commonwealth as well as in New Jersey, Rhode Island and Illinois.

What Durang accomplished in Philadelphia, alone, established his reputation as an insightful, thoroughly professional architect.
The Church of the Gesu by Durang established its historical significance as an American representation of the Baroque, a "Roman Catholic" style. Commissioned by the Jesuit fathers who have a long history since the 1600s in this Commonwealth, the Gesu's Victorian Baroque design expresses the intellectual, yet exuberant contemporary taste of the late 19th century with the combination of styles. Constructed from 1879 to 1888, this particular church reflected part of the "eclecticism" in the post-Civil War years towards the Centennial's introduction of Asian and Islamic influences with the Baroque controlling Victorian elements. The Gesu honors its Mother Church in Rome, "Il Gesu," and the time and place of its construction in Philadelphia when the Roman Catholic Church still had not reached a standing at the level of the Protestant majority. Nonetheless, Durang followed what his clients, the Jesuits, wanted, and to date, the Gesu is still a powerful design and one of the few Baroque-like churches in this city, Commonwealth and nation.

Celeste A. Morello, MS, MA
March, 2019
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Moss, Roger, Historical Sacred Places in Philadelphia. Phila.:
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BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES CITED.
(In chronological order.)
HISTORY

OF

PHILADELPHIA.

1609 - 1884.

BY

J. THOMAS SCHARF AND THOMPSON WESTCOTT.

IN THREE VOLUMES.
Vol. II.

PHILADELPHIA:
L. H. EVERTS & CO.
1884.
The Church of the Gesu, as it is now known, was formerly called the new St. Joseph's, and later the Holy Family. The lot for the church and college under the charge of the Jesuit Fathers was purchased Nov. 29, 1866. It is three hundred and ninety-five by two hundred and fifty-nine feet.

The cornerstone of the chapel of the Sacred Heart was laid June 24, 1868, and the building was opened and dedicated December 6th of the same year.

The parochial school, one of the largest and most complete school buildings in the city, was finished and opened in September, 1879. It is intended as the preparatory department of the Jesuit College contemplated to be erected.

The cornerstone of the new Church of the Gesu, supposed to be the largest non-cathedral church in the country, was laid Sunday, Oct. 5, 1879. The church now in course of erection will be similar in design to the Church of the Gesu in Rome. It will be two hundred and thirty feet on Eighteenth, and one hundred and fifteen feet on Stiles Street. The entire square, from Seventeenth to Eighteenth, and from Stiles to Thompson Streets, will be occupied by the church and college. The parochial school is on the southwest corner of Seventeenth and Stiles Streets, Rev. B. Villiger, S.J., being the rector.

St. Clement's Church is in Fuschville, West Philadelphia. This parish was organized in 1864, when Rev. A. J. Gallagher, first assistant at the Church of the Assumption, was appointed pastor of Darby parish. The Catholics of Darby and vicinity had been attending the Church of St. Mary's, at Kellyville, the cornerstone of which was laid Sept. 23, 1847. Within six weeks after Father Gallagher's appointment he had erected a temporary church, which was blessed under the title of St. Cecilia's.

In 1868 a bequest of ground was made by Clement Ewlg, and the church-site was changed to it. On June 24, 1868, the cornerstone of the present St. Clement's Church was laid by Rt. Rev. J. F. Wood, the dedicatory sermon being delivered by Rt. Rev. John McGill, Bishop of Richmond, Va. Rev. A. J. Gallagher remained pastor four years, when he was succeeded by the present rector, Rev. Thomas O'Neill.

St. Elizabeth's Church (Twenty-third and Berks Streets). - The cornerstone of the temporary church was laid Sept. 22, 1872, and on December 22nd of the same year it was blessed. It continued to be used for divine service until Dec. 28, 1888, when the basement of the present church, the cornerstone of which was laid May 27, 1883, was blessed.

From the founding of the parish, in 1872 to 1878, Rev. Bernard Dornhege resided in apartments over the then church. Other portions were used during that time, and are now, as a parochial school. In 1879 the third story and the present pastoral residence were erected. In December, 1881, a lot on Islington Place, in the rear of the church, was purchased, and upon the erection of a pastoral residence on this lot the present parsonage will be occupied by the Sisters engaged in the parochial school.

Father Dornhege has been assisted during his rectoryship by Rev. F. X. George (died May 26, 1880) and by Rev. John J. O'Reilly (died Nov. 24, 1880). His present assistants are Rev. John F. Lynch, appointed Feb. 1, 1881, and Rev. Michael F. Mulligan, appointed Jan. 1, 1884.

St. Boniface (Diamond Street and Norris Square). - The cornerstone of this church was laid Dec. 9, 1866, by Rt. Rev. J. F. Wood; sermon by Rev. A. Grundtner, pastor of St. Alphonsus. Rev. John W. Gerdesmann, pastor. He afterward apostatized and married. On July 14, 1867, the church was dedicated. In 1876 the Redemptorist Fathers took charge of the church, burdened with a very heavy debt. The rector is Rev. F. X. Schnettgen, C.S.S.R., who has been in charge since July, 1877.

St. John's Church (Manayunk) was erected about 1830. In 1884 it was enlarged at an expense of two thousand dollars, and on Dec. 14, 1884, it was reopened. High mass was celebrated by Rev. Stephen L. Dubuisson, S.J.; Rt. Rev. F. P. Kenrick preached. Rev. Charles H. J. Carter was pastor. Rev. James A. Brehecy is the present rector.

The Church of the Visitation is on Lehigh Avenue east of Front Street. This parish was established under the name of St. Cecilia in 1872, when in November Rev. Thomas W. Power, pastor at St. Dominic's, Holmesburg, was appointed to build a church upon the lot of ground corner of Cambria and C Streets. He erected a temporary chapel, and on Christmas day, 1872, blessed it by permission of Bishop Wood. He remained until September, 1874, when he resigned the pastorship. His successor was Rev. P. J. Garvey, D.D., who remained until the next month, when he was succeeded by Rev. A. D. Flan. On Feb. 5, 1875, Rev. Thomas J. Barry was appointed. He secured the permission of the archbishop, and changed the site of the church to its present location, and the title to the Visitation. The cornerstone of the present church was laid Oct. 22, 1876, by Archbishop Wood. The erection of the magnificent church was completed, and on Sept. 9, 1883, it was dedicated by Rt. Rev. William O'Hara, D.D., Bishop of Scranton; sermon by Rt. Rev. J. F. Shanahan, D.D., Bishop of Harrisburg. In the evening Monseignor Capel, the distinguished English priest, lectured.

The Church of St. Vincent de Paul is in Germantown. The cornerstone was laid Sept. 12, 1849, by Rt. Rev. F. P. Kenrick. Rev. M. Domenec, afterward Bishop of Pittsburgh, was the first pastor. The church was dedicated in 1851, and in 1857 was enlarged.

On July 18, 1875, the cornerstone of St. Vincent's Seminary was laid, and on Nov. 9, 1879, the chapel of the Immaculate Conception, attached to it, was dedicated.
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PROJECTS by EDWIN F. DURANG: (Source: Durang's "Album" c.1910)

CHURCHES
St. Ann's, Richmond, Philadelphia
St. James', Philadelphia
St. Francis Xavier's, Philadelphia
St. Charles Borromeo's, Philadelphia
St. Agatha's, Philadelphia
Our Lady of Mercy, Philadelphia
St. Thomas Aquinas', Philadelphia
St. Monica's, Philadelphia
Visitation of The Blessed Virgin Mary, Philadelphia
Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Philadelphia
St. Peter's, Philadelphia
St. Veronica's, Philadelphia
Church of the Gesu, Philadelphia
Grace Church, Philadelphia
Baker Memorial, Pottsville, Pa.
Zion, Reading, Pa.
Methodist Episcopal, West Pittston, Pa.
St. Mary's, Beaver Meadow, Pa.
St. Joseph's, Hazleton, Pa.
St. Mary's (Polish), Reading, Pa.
St. Bonaventura's, Philadelphia
All Saints', Braddock, Pa.
Church of St. Rose de Lima, Carndale, Pa.
St. Joseph's, Reading, Pa.
St. Mary's, Lebanon, Pa.
Our Lady of Good Counsel, Philadelphia
St. Patrick's, Middletown, Pa.
Church of the Annunciation, Shandon, Pa.
St. Michael's, Chester, Pa.
Sacred Heart, Lamokin, Pa.
St. Joseph's, Ashland, Pa.
St. Laurentius', Philadelphia
St. Cecilia's, Coatesville, Pa.
Convent Chapel of Villa Maria, West Chester, Pa.
St. John's, Lambertville, N. J.
Chapel of St. Francis, Trenton, N. J.
Church of St. Joachim, Frankford, Pa.
Church of St. Nicholas of Tolentino, Atlantic City, N. J.
St. Joseph's (Polish), Camden, N. J.
St. Anthony's, Lancaster, Pa.
Polish Church, Pittston, Pa.
St. John's Es, Philadelphia
Sacred Heart of Jesus, Philadelphia
Church of the Immaculate Conception, Allentown, Pa.
St. Gabriel's, Philadelphia
Our Mother of Sorrows, West Philadelphia
Sacred Heart of Jesus, Allentown, Pa.
St. Mary Magdalen de Pazzi, Philadelphia
St. Peter Claver's, Philadelphia
St. John's, Philadelphia
Church of the Messiah, Philadelphia
Cumberland Distant Memorial, Philadelphia
Oxford Chapel and Church, Philadelphia
St. Andrew's, Newtown, Pa.

St. Edward's, Shamokin, Pa.
St. John's, Pottstown, Pa.
St. Francis de Sales, Lenni, Pa.
Sacred Heart, Chester, Pa.
Villa Marie Chapel, West Chester, Pa.
Our Lady of Good Counsel, Bryn Mawr, Pa.
St. Monica's, Berwyn, Pa.
Holy Infancy, Bethlehem, Pa.
Nativity Blessed Virgin Mary, Meda, Pa.
St. Mary's, St. Clair, Pa.

COLLEGES AND SCHOOLS
St. Augustine School Building, Philadelphia
Annunciation B. V. M. School Building, Philadelphia
Cathedral School Building, Philadelphia
Immaculate Conception School Building, Philadelphia
Our Lady of Mercy School Building, Philadelphia
St. Ann's School Building, Philadelphia
St. Bridget's School Building, Philadelphia
St. Charles Borromeo's School Building, Philadelphia
St. Francis Xavier's School Building, Philadelphia
St. James' School Building, Philadelphia
St. Joseph's School Building, Philadelphia
St. Michael's School Building, Philadelphia
St. Patrick's School Building, Philadelphia
St. Paul's School Building, Philadelphia
St. Teresa's School Building, Philadelphia
St. Thomas Aquinas' School Building, Philadelphia
St. Veronica's School Building, Philadelphia
Visitation of the B. V. M. School Building, Philadelphia
St. Monica's School Building, Philadelphia
St. Mary's School Building, Lancaster, Pa.
St. Gabriel's School Building, Philadelphia
Public School, Race and Crown Streets, Philadelphia
Trinity College, W. Lambert, D. C.
Convent of the Sisters of Notre Dame, Walnut Hills, Cincinnati, Ohio
Convent of the Sisters of Notre Dame, Philadelphia
Chapel and Building of the Sisters of Notre Dame, Moylan, Pa.
Convent of the Sisters of Notre Dame, Fort Lee, N. J.
Mater Misericordiae Convent of the Sisters of Mercy, Merion, Pa.
Convent of the Sisters of Mercy, Philadelphia
Convent of Our Lady of Angels, Glen Riddle, Pa.
Industrial School of the Immaculate Conception, Philadelphia
Mount St. Michael's, Reading, Pa.
St. Anthony's Academy, Philadelphia
St. Joseph's College, Philadelphia
Sacred Heart School, Philadelphia
Geese School, Philadelphia
Kutztown State Normal School, Kutztown, Pa.

HOMES AND ASYLUMS
Catholic Home for Destitute Children, Philadelphia.
St. Vincent's Home, West Philadelphia
St. Mary Magdalene de Pazzi, Philadelphia
Asylum for Italian Orphan Girls, Philadelphia
St. Catherine's Female, Philadelphia
Orphan Asylum, Reading, Pa.
Home of the Good Shepherd, Philadelphia
Home of the Good Shepherd, Norristown, Pa.
Home of the Good Shepherd, Scranton, Pa.

HOSPITALS

St. Agnes', Philadelphia
St. Mary's, Philadelphia
St. Joseph's, Philadelphia
German Hospital, Philadelphia
St. Francis', Trenton, N. J.

RESIDENCES

St. Mary's, Lancaster, Pa.
St. Anne's, Philadelphia
Visitator, Philadelphia
St. Veronica's, Philadelphia
St. Gabriel's, Philadelphia
St. Patrick's, McAdoo, Pa.
Sacred Heart, Chester, Pa.
Gesu, Philadelphia
Transfiguration, Philadelphia
Our Lady of Good Counsel, Philadelphia
Our Lady of Good Counsel, Bryn Mawr, Pa.
Immaculate Conception, Bryn Mawr, Pa.
Our Lady of Mercy, Bryn Mawr, Pa.
Our Mother of Consolation, Chestnut Hill, Pa.
St. Bonaventure's, Philadelphia
St. Charles', Philadelphia
St. Laurentius', Philadelphia
St. Francis Xavier's, Philadelphia
St. James', Philadelphia
St. John the Evangelist, Philadelphia
St. Mary's, Philadelphia
St. Mary Magdalen, Philadelphia
St. Michael's, Philadelphia
St. Peter Claver's, Philadelphia
St. Teresa's, Philadelphia
St. Thomas Aquinas, Philadelphia
Nativity B. V. M., Philadelphia
St. John's, Pittston, Pa.
Catholic Home, Philadelphia
St. Lewis, Philadelphia
St. Nicholas, Atlantic City, N. J.
St. Mary's, Providence, R. I.
St. Anthony's, Lancaster, Pa.
St. Denis, Ardmore, Pa.
St. Peter's, Philadelphia
St. Francis de Sale, Lemhi, Pa.
St. Joseph's, Ashland, Pa.
S. McIlhose, Reading, Pa.
G. Griscom, Reading, Pa.
W. McIvain, Reading, Pa.
Albert Disston's residence, Philadelphia
Geo. F. Baer's, Reading, Pa.

THEATRES

Dime Museum, Philadelphia
Trocadero, Philadelphia
Dumont's Minstrels, Philadelphia
Pottsville Music Hall, Pottsville, Pa.
Grand Opera House, Reading, Pa.
Opera House, York, Pa.
Fulton Hall, Lancaster, Pa.
Opera House, Columbia, Pa.
Mishler's Opera House, Reading, Pa.
Arch St. Opera House, Philadelphia

BUILDINGS

Little Sisters of the Poor, Philadelphia
Little Sisters of the Poor, Germantown, Pa.
St. Rita of Cassia, Chicago, Ill.
Fullerton & Sheffield, Chicago, Ill.
Little Sisters of the Poor, Chicago, Ill.
Sisters Sacred Heart of Jesus, Chicago, Ill.
National Guards' Hall, Philadelphia, Race Street
Ketterlinus Building, Arch Street, Philadelphia
Ketterlinus Building, Seventh Street, Philadelphia
Crystal Palace Store, Eighth and Fifh Street, Philadelphia
T. A. B. Hall, Rosenn, Pa.
Dooner's Hotel, Philadelphia
Columbia Town Hall, Columbia, Pa.
Beneficial Saving Fund Building, Philadelphia
First National Bank, Reading, Pa.
Mountain City Bank, Philadelphia, Pa.
Stricker's Building, Reading, Pa.
Potter's Oilcloth, Arch Street Philadelphia

SPIRES AND CUPOLAS

St. Augustine, Philadelphia
Annunciation, Philadelphia
St. Bridget's, Philadelphia
HISTORIC PHILADELPHIA

FROM THE FOUNDING UNTIL THE EARLY
NINETEENTH CENTURY

Papers Dealing with its People and Buildings
with an Illustrative Map

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ST. JOSEPH’S AND ST. MARY’S CHURCHES

DENNIS C. KURJACK

Supervising Park Historian, Independence National Historical Park Project

Within a block of each other in downtown Philadelphia are two of the most important churches in the history of American Catholicism. One is “Old St. Joseph’s” in Willing’s Alley between Third and Fourth Streets. The other, “Old St. Mary’s,” lies a block south of it on the west side of Fourth Street. Together, in one respect at least they testify to the success of William Penn’s holy experiment and universality of his Charter of Privileges. For all of the thirteen original colonies before the Revolution, only the Penns permitted Catholics to worship publicly.¹

I. OLD ST. JOSEPH’S, THE “MOTHER” CHURCH

First reference to a Mass in Philadelphia is found in a letter by the Reverend John Talbot, a non-juring Episcopal minister, to George Keith of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, in London, dated February 14, 1708. He writes that Mass is “set up and read publicly in Philadelphia, among which Lionel Britton, the church warden, is one, and his son another.”² This is substantiated in a letter of the following year by William Penn to James Logan.³

There is no evidence, however, of a chapel or house permanently set aside for worship.⁴ Most likely none existed here, nor even in the other British colonies save Maryland.⁵ From that erstwhile Catholic colony, instead, came Jesuit missionary priests occasionally to tend to the spiritual needs of a few professing Catholics.⁶ Among the missionaries was the Reverend Joseph Greaton, an Englishman, who may have visited Philadelphia as early as 1720 or 1721.⁷ He did not establish permanent residence here, however, until sometime between 1729 and 1733.

The precise date of the founding of St. Joseph’s eludes us. Thompson Westcott, citing Griffin, the early Catholic historian, states that Father Greaton acquired the land in 1729, started construction of the chapel in 1731, and celebrated the first Mass in 1732.⁸ But Griffin himself corrects that statement sixteen years later by asserting that St. Joseph’s “almost certain[ly]” was built in 1734. He cites evidence which has been verified by the present writer: First, that on May 14, 1733, John Dixon bought a lot on the south side of Walnut Street east of Fourth and on the following day conveyed it to the Reverend Joseph Greaton; and second, that on July 25, 1734, Lieutenant-Governor Patrick Gordon reported to Council that “a House lately built in Walnut Street, in this City, has been set apart for the Exercise of the Roman Catholick Religion, and is commonly called the Romish Chappell, where several Persons . . . resorted on Sundays, to hear Mass openly celebrated by a Popish Priest.”⁹

Whatever the date of the “founding,” then, it appears certain that the building was completed sometime between 1733 and 1734. As to the celebration of the “first” Mass in 1732, we may rely on Griffin’s conclusion that it was actually at the house of John Dixon on the southside of Chestnut Street below Second.¹⁰

There was obvious concern on the part of some at the sight of a “Romish chappell,” and Lieutenant-Governor Gordon was under “no Small concern” to hear about it. Some thought this to be in violation of the Laws of England and the Provincial Council was forced to discuss the matter in formal meeting.¹¹ Father Greaton and his Catholics, however, rested their case on the Charter of Privileges—and won. This was a victory for Pennsylvania’s first constitution, and for religious freedom.

The number comprising the first congregation is variously estimated at eleven, twelve, thirty-seven, and forty; thirty-seven appears to be the most likely figure.¹²

³ Scharf and Westcott, op. cit.
⁴ Watson in his Annals 1: 452–454 and 3: 316–318 mentions three places where public Catholic worship might have been held; but his informants are vague and unreliable. He mentions, for instance, a house on the northwest corner of Front and Walnut Streets; but Thompson Westcott effectively dispenses of this statement by pointing out that the house was actually lived in by Quakers until 1822. See History of Philadelphia (Book of clippings) 2: chap. CXV, Philadelphia [five volumes of clippings from the Sunday Dispatch] Stauffer Coll., Hist. Soc. of Pa., 1897.
⁵ Devitt, E. I., Planting of the Faith in America, Records 6: 174, 1895.
⁶ Griffin, William Penn the Friend of Catholics, Records 1: 79–83.
Throughout most of the nineteenth century, both approaches were used; those living “uptown” using the Walnut Street entrance and those living to the south using Willing’s Alley.27

Until 1763, little St. Joseph’s was the only Roman Catholic church in Philadelphia, and for miles around. But with the erection of St. Mary’s church that year, it lost much of its importance and became simply a chapel of ease where the clergy said Mass on weekdays. In 1821, however, owing to the protracted (trustee) troubles at St. Mary’s, once more St. Joseph’s came into its own. From that time on, it has existed as a separate congregation, continuing to this day.

Our knowledge of the “human side” of the chapel’s history, its congregation, clergy, and significant events and associations, is limited largely to the period following 1750. The original congregation, as already mentioned, consisted of not more than forty individuals. They were Irish and German, mostly poor tradesmen and servants. By 1757, the Germans outnumbered the Irish.28 Then came other groups. Among the most colorful were the Acadians; theirs is a tragic tale.

Expelled by the thousands from their native Nova Scotia by the British in 1755 during the French and Indian Wars, because of their loyalty to France, 454 of these unfortunates arrived in Philadelphia that year. Through the efforts of Anthony Benezet, they were quartered in a row of one-story wooden houses on Pine Street not far from the chapel. Those who survived became communicants of St. Joseph’s. They were familiar figures in the neighborhood.29 Longfellow immortalized their tragic story in Evangeline.

Under the humble walls of the little Catholic churchyard, in the heart of the city, they lie, unknown and unnoticed.

There is a tradition that Seneca Indians, converted by the French, used to attend St. Joseph’s in the early days. It is also said that some negro slaves were among the converts, for whom special services called “Evening Hymns” were held. Then, in the 1790’s, a large number of white and black refugees arrived in Philadelphia from Santo Domingo. Accompanied by their own priest, they became attached to St. Joseph’s as a separate congregation. They had special permission to hold divine services on Sundays. A simple but devout people, they met frequently in the chapel, praying aloud in their native French while counting their beads.30

The clergy, with one exception, was English throughout the colonial period. Something will be said about the most noted among them, the Reverend Robert Harding, in connection with St. Mary’s Church. Beginning with the Federal period and throughout the nineteenth century, however, the complexion of the clergy became predominantly Irish and French. Ecclesiastically, St. Joseph’s was a Jesuit institution and remained in the control of that order, with one significant break, throughout its history.23

The congregation of St. Joseph’s, largely, was made up of simple but devout people. The fashionable and the prominent preferred St. Mary’s. (Clear-cut parochial boundaries were not drawn until 1842.) Historically interesting, however, is one notable exception. Joseph Bonaparte, the elder brother of Napoleon and erstwhile King of Naples and Spain, was a pewholder at St. Joseph’s. Coming to America in 1815, he remained for many years living in and around Philadelphia. Bonaparte maintained a permanent winter home at Eleventh and Market Streets and a summer estate near Bordentown, N. J., where Bishop Conwell was a frequent visitor. It is said that his pew was a great, antique affair sufficiently high to discourage the curious. According to tradition passed down by one of the fathers at the church, the exiled monarch was often seen making his way to his pew, accompanied by his two children, and sometimes by a huge Newfoundland dog.24

There are unpleasant events, too, connected with the history of old St. Joseph’s. On three occasions, in 1740, 1755, and 1844, anti-Catholic rioters threatened the church with destruction. The most serious because most imminent occurred in 1755, when anti-Catholic feeling following the news of Braddock’s defeat ran high. Only the intercession of a number of brave Quakers, citing the Charter of Privileges, succeeded finally in pacifying the mob.25

An unpatriotic episode relates to the British occupation of Philadelphia in 1777–1778, when some Catholics (no less than others) were found to favor the British cause. Among the 180 Catholics who enrolled in the Roman Catholic Regiment of Philadelphia in the service of Great Britain, there were several whose names appear in St. Joseph’s church records; Lieutenant-Colonel Alfred Clifton, commander of the regiment, was one of them.26

St. Joseph’s assumed its greatest importance, ecclesiastically at least, in 1821, during the troubled times at St. Mary’s. Bishop Conwell, locked out of his own cathedral, made St. Joseph’s for a time his pro-cathedral. Many of the congregation followed him thither. To accommodate this abnormally expanded congregation, at least one-third of whom had to attend Mass in the open air, the small chapel was enlarged that year by twenty-seven feet. Even when St. Mary’s reopened again in 1829 and some of her former flock returned, St. Joseph’s still retained a large and flourishing congregation. Moreover, in 1833 she achieved full status as a separate parish.27 But the venerable old chapel could not meet the demands of her new role; a new and larger church must take her place. And so, on May 7, 1838, final services were held, offered especially “for all living

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27 The Roman Catholic Regiment of Philadelphia, Researches 14: 70.
twelve hundred. The three clergymen at St. Mary's and St. Joseph's worked with untiring zeal to minister to this flock. Even the British occupation of Philadelphia in 1777–1778 did not seem to put a damper on religious activity, as the parish registers indicate. In 1784, as a milestone in Catholic ecclesiastical history here, Confirmation was administered to a rather large group by Father John Carroll, the Prefect-Apostolic of the Roman Catholic Church in the United States. Father Carroll was shortly to become the first bishop of the Diocese of Baltimore. 64

In matters of church administration, too, significant changes were taking place. The missionary organization and Jesuit control, following suppression of that Order in 1773, gradually gave way to the trustee system. In 1788, by enactment of the General Assembly of Pennsylvania, St. Mary's congregation became a corporation, empowered to administer church finances and property through trustees. This event was to become a major factor in the troubled history of St. Mary's during the first three decades of the nineteenth century. In 1788, also, a number of Germans seceded from St. Mary's for linguistic reasons and established Holy Trinity Church. Erected at Sixth and Spruce Streets [A. V] and opened in 1789, it became Philadelphia's third Catholic church and the first national church in the United States. The fourth and last Catholic church to be established here before the turn of the century, also as an offshoot of St. Mary's, was St. Augustine's. Completed in 1801, some of the most noted members of St. Mary's, including Commodore Barry, Mathew Carey, and Thomas FitzSimons, as well as the Rev. Matthew Carr, O.S.A., founder of St. Augustine's, transferred to it. 65

Little has been said thus far of the historic churchyard of St. Mary's, resting place of John Barry, George Meade, Thomas FitzSimons, Mathew Carey, and Stephen Moylan. Interments were probably made there shortly after the site was acquired. The first internment at St. Mary's seems to have been in 1759, that of the infant child Ann, daughter of one of the trustees, James White and his wife Ann. 66 However, the earliest tombstone identified in recent years, in the northwest corner of the cemetery, bore the date April 20, 1760. 67

The first wall surrounding the cemetery, apparently, stood just back of the church. An entry in the minute book reads: "Rec'd from the Managers towards building the outside Wall which deriv'd from the burying Ground . . . £22.0.10." No date is given, but it appears to have been sometime after 1762 or 1763. 68 The brick wall on the west or Fifth Street end, however, was not constructed until 1794. A gate four feet wide was allowed in this wall "for the convenience of the Congregation." 69 In 1840 the wall was raised, probably to its present height, and in 1844 an iron railing was erected in the rear of the Church. 70

The founders expected that the cemetery would serve for a long time. But they did not anticipate a rapid increase in the congregation, nor the yellow fever epidemics of the 1790's. Thus, by 1800 the trustees were forced to purchase two lots at Thirteenth and Spruce Streets to serve as a new burial ground. In 1805, they reported that the old cemetery adjoining the church was so "nearly filled up that it is difficult to find a Spot for a Grave without encroaching on Ground already occupied, which renders it necessary to admit as few as possible therein." 71

The yellow fever epidemics of the 1790's, but particularly that of 1793, left their impress on the Roman Catholic community. In St. Mary's cemetery by the middle of September of the latter year, more than two hundred graves had been opened. All Catholic priests had been infected. Nevertheless, Fathers Fleming,

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64 Scharf and Westcott, op. cit., 1371.


66 Ibid., 300-301.

67 Minute Book of the Trustees [Ms., ca. 1829-1885], entries for April 20, 1840 and September 23, 1844, manuscript, St. Mary's Rectory.

68 Minute Book, Records 4: 345. The number of Catholics buried between 1765 and 1774 alone amounted to 405, most of whom must have been buried at St. Mary's; see Robert Proud, History of Pennsylvania 2: 340, Phila., Poulson, 1798.
Rome, The North and the South

ARCHITECTURE AND DECORATION

1
SECOND EDITION

HISTORY OF ART

A Survey of the Major Visual Arts
from the Dawn of History to the Present Day

PRENTICE-HALL, INC., ENGLEWOOD CLIFFS, N. J.,
and HARRY N. ABRAMS, INC., NEW YORK
quarantine, he probably persuaded himself that it was legitimate because he regarded this feature as desirable for both beauty and utility. In any case, the porches of the Villa Rotonda, beautifully correlated with the walls behind, are an organic part of his design. They lend the structure an air of serene dignity and festive grace that still appeals to us today.

The facade of S. Giorgio Maggiore in Venice (fig. 593), of about the same date as the Villa Rotonda, adds to the same effect a new sumptuousness and complexity. Palladio’s problem here was how to create a classically integrated facade for a basilican church. He surely knew Alberti’s solution (S. Andrea in Mantua; see fig. 520), a temple front enclosing a triumphal-arch motif; but this design, although impressively logical and compact, did not fit the cross section of a basilica, and really circumvented the problem. Palladio—again following what he believed to be ancient precedent—found a different answer: he superimposed a tall, narrow temple front on another low and wide one to reflect the different heights of nave and aisles. Theoretically, it was a perfect solution. In practice, however, he found that he could not keep the two systems as separate as his classicistic conscience demanded, and still integrate them into a harmonious whole. This conflict makes ambiguous those parts of the design that have, as it were, a dual allegiance; this might be interpreted as a Mannerist quality. The plan (fig. 594), too, suggests a duality; the main body of the church is strongly centralized—the Transept is as long as the nave—but the longitudinal axis reasserts itself in the separate compartments for the main altar and the chapel beyond.

Palladio’s immense authority as a designer keeps the conflicting elements in the facade and plan of S. Giorgio from actually clashing. In less assured hands, such a precarious union would break apart. A more generally applicable solution was evolved just at that time in Rome by Vignola and by Giacomo della Porta, two architects who had assisted Michelangelo at St. Peter’s and were still using his architectural vocabulary. The church of Il Gesù (Jesus), a building whose importance for subsequent church architecture can hardly be exaggerated, is the mother church of the Jesuits; its design must have been closely supervised so as to conform to the aims of the militant new order. We may thus view it as the architectural embodiment of the spirit of the Counter Reformation. The planning stage of the structure began in 1560 (Michelangelo himself once proposed a design, but apparently never furnished it); the present ground plan, by Vignola, was adopted in 1568 (fig. 595). It contrasts in almost every possible respect with Palladio’s S. Giorgio: a basilica, strikingly compact, dominated by its mighty nave. The aisles have been replaced by chapels, thus “herding” the congregation quite literally into one large, hall-like space directly in view of the altar; the attention of this “audience” is positively directed toward altar and pulpit, as our view of the interior (fig. 597) confirms. (The painting shows how the church would look from the street if the center part of the facade were removed; for the later, High Baroque decoration of the nave vault, see fig. 629.) We also see here an unexpected feature which the ground plan cannot show: the dramatic contrast be-

593. Andrea Palladio. S. Giorgio Maggiore, Venice. Designed 1565

594. Plan of S. Giorgio Maggiore
tween the dim illumination in the nave and the abundant light beyond, in the eastern part of the church, supplied by the large windows in the drum of the dome. Light has been consciously exploited for its expressive possibilities—a novel device, "theatrical" in the best sense—to give II Gesù a stronger emotional focus than we have yet found in a church interior.

Despite its great originality, the plan of II Gesù is not entirely without precedent (see fig. 521). The façade, by Giacomo della Porta, is as bold as the plan, although it, too, can be traced back to earlier sources (fig. 596). The paired pilasters and broken architrave of the lower story are clearly derived from Michelangelo's design for the exterior of St. Peter's (compare fig. 565). In the upper story the same pattern recurs on a somewhat smaller scale, with four instead of six pairs of supports; the difference in width is bridged by two scroll-shaped buttresses. A large pediment crowns the façade, which retains the classic proportions of Renaissance architecture (the height equals the width). What is fundamentally new here is the very element that was missing in the façade of S. Giorgio: the integration of all the parts into one whole. Giacomo della Porta, freed from classicist scruples by his allegiance to Michelangelo, gave the same vertical rhythm to both stories of the façade; this rhythm is obeyed by all the horizontal members (note the broken
entablature), but the horizontal divisions in turn determine the size of the vertical members (hence no colossal order). Equally important is the emphasis on the main portal: its double frame—two pediments resting on coupled pilasters and columns—projects beyond the rest of the façade and gives strong focus to the entire design. Not since Gothic architecture has the entrance to a church received such a dramatic concentration of features, attracting the attention of the beholder outside the building much as the concentrated light beneath the dome channels that of the worshiper inside.

What are we to call the style of Il Gesù? Obviously, it has little in common with Palladio, and it shares with Florentine architecture of the time only the influence of Michelangelo. But this influence reflects two very different phases of the great master’s career: the contrast between the Uffizi and Il Gesù is hardly less great than that between the vestibule of the Laurentian Library and the exterior of St. Peter’s. If we label the Uffizi Mannerist, the same term will not serve us for Il Gesù. As we shall see, the design of Il Gesù will become basic to Baroque architecture; by calling it “pre-Baroque,” we suggest both its seminal importance for the future and its special place in relation to the past.
THE BAROQUE
IN ITALY AND GERMANY

Baroque has been the term used by art historians for almost a century to designate the dominant style of the period 1600–1750. Its original meaning—“irregular, contorted, grotesque”—is now largely superseded. It is generally agreed that the new style was born in Rome during the final years of the sixteenth century. What remains under dispute is whether the Baroque is the final phase of the Renaissance, or an era distinct from both Renaissance and modern. We have chosen the first alternative, while admitting that a good case can be made for the second. Which of the two we adopt is perhaps less important than an understanding of the factors that must enter into our decision. And here we run into a series of paradoxes. Thus it has been claimed that the Baroque style expresses the spirit of the Counter Reformation; yet the Counter Reformation, a dynamic movement of self-renewal within the Catholic Church, had already done its work by 1600—Protestantism was on the defensive, some important territories had been re-captured for the old faith, and neither side any longer had the power to upset the new balance. The princes of the Church who supported the growth of Baroque art were known for worldly splendor rather than piety. Besides, the new style penetrated the Protestant North so quickly that we should guard against overstressing its Counter Reformation aspect. Equally problematic is the assertion that Baroque is “the style of absolutism,” reflecting the centralized state ruled by an autocrat of unlimited powers. Although absolutism reached its climax during the reign of Louis XIV in the later seventeenth century, it had been in the making since the 1520s (under Francis I in France, and the Medici dukes in Tuscany). Moreover, Baroque art flourished in bourgeois Holland no less than in the absolutist monarchies; and the style officially sponsored under Louis XIV was a notably subdued, classicistic kind of Baroque. We encounter similar difficulties when we try to relate Baroque art to the science and philosophy of the period. Such a link did exist in the Early and High Renaissance: an artist then could also be a humanist and a scientist. But during the seventeenth century, scientific and philosophical thought became too complex, abstract, and systematic for him to share; gravitation, calculus, and Cogito, ergo sum could not stir his imagination. All of this means that Baroque art is not simply the result of religious, political, or intellectual developments. Interconnections surely existed, of course, but we do not yet understand them very well. Until we do, let us think of the Baroque style as one among other basic features—the newly fortified Catholic faith, the absolutist state, and the new role of science—that distinguish the period 1600–1750 from what had gone before.

ROME

Around 1600 Rome became the fountainhead of the Baroque, as it had of the High Renaissance a century before, by gathering artists from other regions to perform challenging new tasks. The papacy patronized art on a large scale, with the aim of making Rome the most beautiful city of the Christian world “for the greater glory of God and the Church.” This campaign had begun as early as 1585; the artists then on hand were late Mannerists of feeble distinction, but it soon attracted ambitious younger masters, especially from Northern Italy. These talented men created the new style.

Caravaggio

Foremost among these northerners was a painter of genius, called Caravaggio after his birthplace near Milan (1573–1610), who in 1597–98 did several monumental canvases for a chapel in the church of S. Luigi dei Francesi, among them The Calling of St. Matthew (colorplate 75). This extraordinary picture is remote from both Mannerism and the High Renaissance; its only antecedent is the “North Italian realism” of artists like Savoldo (see fig. 584). But Caravaggio’s realism is such that a new term, “naturalism,” is needed to distinguish it from
17th and 18th Century Art

BAROQUE PAINTING
SCULPTURE • ARCHITECTURE

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INTRODUCTION

The cradle of the Baroque was Italy, and the artistic capital of Italy was Rome. As time went on, other countries made their bid for leadership, but toward the end of the sixteenth century and in the first decades of the seventeenth, Rome attracted artists from all over Europe, as if by magic. To have made a mark in Rome was then for artists' reputations what favorable reviews in the leading cultural centers are to actors and musicians today. It must have been a source of justifiable pride for Rubens when in 1606 he obtained, over the heads of all Roman artists, the commission to decorate the high altar of the new church of the Oratorian brothers. Virtually every great artist of the Baroque in Rome had come from elsewhere. Carlo Maderno, Caravaggio, and later Francesco Borromini came from northern Italy, Annibale Carracci from Bologna, Pietro da Cortona from Tuscany, Gianlorenzo Bernini from Naples, Nicolas Poussin from France; yet Rome transformed them all, as they transformed her.

Many factors had contributed to this situation, but it was essentially connected with the Counter Reformation and the renewed vigor of the Roman papacy engendered by that movement. The Counter Reformation had been launched in the last sessions of the Council of Trent, when under the guidance of the Jesuits the Church began to assume a militant posture. Starting with Pope Pius V (1566–72), the chair of St. Peter's was occupied by men of great energy and vision. Pius himself adopted the Tridentine Profession of Faith (1566), formulated the Roman Breviary (1568), and reformed the Curia. He also condemned ancient statues as idola antiquorum. His successor, Pope Gregory XIII (1572–85), known for his calendar reform, was a strong supporter of the Jesuits. The church of Il Gesù, the first major work of art sponsored by the Company of Jesus, was built while he was pope. Sixtus V (1585–90) started a complete modernization of Rome by cutting long straight thoroughfares through its old quarters. Armenini, writing in 1586, noted the amazing increase in the construction of churches, chapels, and monasteries.1

Rome undoubtedly gained from the progress Catholicism made all over Europe. With the conversion and absolution of Henry IV (1595), France had again become a Catholic power. Flanders, Bavaria, and Austria were firmly in the
composition. Both monuments give visible support to the papal claims to be the legitimate leaders of Christianity.

Art was enlisted, too, in the defense of the Sacraments. Calvinists had condemned Confession as useless since no amount of penance could change man’s preordained fate. The Church, in response, encouraged the construction of large numbers of richly adorned and conspicuously located confessionals. In Crespi’s painting (fig. 13) the act of Confession is depicted in all its humble intimacy. Christ himself is often rendered as comforter of the great penitents such as King David, the Prodigal Son, St. Mary Magdalen, the Good Thief, and St. Peter himself.

The polemical function of art was not its only one. Just as the new liturgy favored religious services that had the visual and acoustic appeal of a spectacle and the suspense of a drama, the new churches were made into edifices of unheard-of splendor. They welcomed the faithful with façades of majestic proportions and a full orchestration of columns, pilasters, niches, pediments, and figural and ornamental decor. The interiors, especially in the later phases of the development, were still more dazzling, culminating in the richly carved and painted decoration of the altars. Through the symphonic accumulation of a variety of optical impressions, harmonized with an elaborate and stirring ritual, the worshiper is caught up in an emotional transport, carried away by an overwhelming appeal to all his senses (including smell, because of the incense burned). In its desire to glorify God and
impress man, the Church during the Counter Reformation furthered immeasurably the forming of a new artistic ideal in which all arts contributed to the creation of a comprehensive work of art.

The principle laid down by the Church for the treatment of religious art remained valid—with local modifications—wherever Counter Reformation Catholicism held sway: Italy, Spain (and her colonies), France, Flanders, southern Germany, and Austria. Other types of subject matter, however, were developed during the Baroque period and flourished in the non-Catholic countries, especially the Netherlands. These developments in secular art will be treated in their appropriate context.

ARCHITECTURE

The first great church built for the Jesuit Order would have had a place in history for that reason alone. II Gesù, started by Giacomo Barozzi, called Vignola (1507–1573) in 1568, offers even more: a milestone in the history of church architecture. “It has perhaps exerted a wider influence than any other church of the last four hundred years.”

II Gesù owed this success largely to the satisfactory solution of an old problem: to integrate a central plan of building with a longitudinal one (fig. 14). The central plan had been a favorite idea of the High Renaissance, but the longitudinal one had the weight of tradition behind it—and tradition was important to the men of the Counter Reformation. Compared to a fifteenth-century structure that had had similar aims, Sant’Andrea in Mantua, designed by Alberti, Vignola’s church is much more unified, with a clear subordination of all parts to a leading motif. The openings of the chapels hardly affect the impression of a compact space made by the nave beneath its huge barrel vault. The nave of II Gesù is long enough to be felt as a longitudinal room, and short enough to make the visitor at once aware of the light area of the crossing under its soaring dome. A key role in the combination of the two systems, the longitudinal plan of the nave and the central plan of the dome, is played by the last bay, which, belonging to both, ties one to the other.

The design of the façade of II Gesù (fig. 15) was not entirely new, but Vignola, and even more so his successor Giacomo della Porta, introduced a number of innovations that strongly affected the subsequent evolution of Baroque church façades. Like Alberti’s façade of Santa Maria Novella in Florence more than a century earlier, that of II Gesù consists of two stories, the upper being narrower than the lower. The difference is masked by two volutes bracing the upper story on either side. A wide pediment crowns this composition. A façade of this type had been built by Guido Guidetti for Santa Caterina dei Funari in Rome (fig. 16) only four years before II Gesù was begun. Yet in Guidetti’s façade an unbroken entablature kept the two stories completely apart; in II Gesù all the major horizontal elements were broken in order to permit the vertical accents to continue unchecked from one level to the next. This verticalism—all the more important as the façade is as wide as it is high—marks the central bay particularly. In Santa Caterina dei Funari the pediment of the main portal remained below the horizontal division. At II Gesù, a twin pediment above the central door overlaps the socle zone of the upper story, and a wall strip the width of the central bay continues it into the crowning pediment. In the earlier church, furthermore, all the lateral bays, on both levels, are treated in the
SPANISH COLONIAL ARCHITECTURE

The eighteenth century saw the greatest efflorescence of Spanish building in North America and produced several monuments that in scale and aesthetic sophistication are far superior to anything achieved in the English colonies. In New Mexico some of the modest mission churches later rebuilt still exist, the most famous being San Francisco de Asis (1772), the picturesque little church at Ranchos de Taos, which continued the older New Mexican tradition of adobe building (plate 81). Primitive in plan and construction, it is most notable for the massive buttressing of its squat towers and apse. Its trapezoidal battered sides and the boldly simple cubical volumes, made soft and fluid by the adobe surfacing, give it the appearance of some primordial structure organically emerged from the desert flat.

Far different was the rich Baroque architectural expression of Texas and Arizona, a provincial but quite informed version of the Churrigueraesque (that frenzied explosion of the late Baroque in Spain made popular by the architect José Churriguera). Texas was a tough and unprofitable territory, but the Spaniards managed to establish twelve missions in the south and central regions, of which five, all around San Antonio, still stand in varying states of preservation. San José y San Miguel de Aguayo (1723–31), the most splendid of them, covered 8 acres surrounded by a wall, and included facilities for administration, priests, supporting troops, and Indians.
Biographical Dictionary of Philadelphia Architects: 1700–1930

Sandra L. Tatman
Roger W. Moss
The Athenaeum
Philadelphia

G.K. HALL & CO., 70 LINCOLN STREET, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS
1985
firm of Shattuck & Hussey, architects based in New Jersey. After working abroad, not only in China, but in Malaya, for several years, Dunn returned to Philadelphia in 1927 and worked with Ritter & Shay. When that partnership was dissolved, he continued with Versus T. Ritter (q.v.) through 1938. Thereafter he worked for the Bendix Aviation Corporation from 1941 to 1946 and the Portable Products Corp. of Newburgh, N.Y. from 1945 to 1946. He retired in 1954, and at the time of the publication of George Koyl's American Architects Directory in 1962, Dunn was residing in Allentown, PA.

Dunn was an emeritus member of the national AIA and also a member of the Eastern Pennsylvania Chapter of the AIA.

LIST OF PROJECTS:
1912 Home Service Garage, Broad St. & Rockland Ave., Phila.


DUPONT, VICTOR, JR. (1852 - 1911). Victor DuPont, Jr., of Delaware appears in Philadelphia only briefly in partnership with Charles Henry Roney (q.v.). He cannot have been much of an architect, and he never actually moved to Philadelphia. The son of a prominent Wilmington lawyer and banker, duPont married in 1880 (the year his partnership with Roney ended) and became, according to Marquis James, the first "oramental Vice President created in the DuPont corporate hierarchy." Personally he is described as "fat, ambitious and lazy."

LIST OF PROJECTS: See Roney, Charles Henry, for Roney & DuPont projects.


DURANG, EDWIN FORREST (4/1/1829 - 6/12/1911). Edwin F. Durang was born in a prestigious family of professional actors and performers. His grandfather, John Durang (1768-1822), was credited with being the first native-born American actor; and his father and uncle, Charles and Richard Ferdinand Durang were the first to perform the "Star Spangled Banner." In later years Charles Durang (1791-1870) worked as director and prompter at both the Chestnut Street and the American Theatres in Philadelphia. After his retirement in 1853, he taught dancing and wrote several books regarding dancing as well as a history of the Philadelphia stage. By 1865 Edwin F. Durang was listed in the Philadelphia city directories as an architect with an office at 304 Vine Street. In 1857 he was noted at 417 Market Street, and it is in this year that he began working for John E. Carver (q.v.), veteran residential and ecclesiastical architect. Upon Carver's death in 1859, Durang succeeded him in the firm, retaining the office at 21 North 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 in the firm by his son, F. Ferdinand Durang (q.v.), who succeeded him in 1911. The Durang firms represent one of the most successful enterprises specializing in Catholic church architecture in Philadelphia, only rivalled in the later nineteenth and early twentieth centuries by the dynasty of architects sired by Henry D. Dagit (q.v.).

Edwin F. Durang was a member of the Franklin Institute.
Biographical Dictionary of Philadelphia Architects

St. Patrick's Ch., parochial res., Phila.

St. Andrew's Ch., 135 S. Sycamore St., Newtown, PA

Pittson Opera Hse., Pittson, PA (attributed)

St. Stephen's Luth. Ch., sw corner of So. Duke & Church sts., Lancaster, PA (attributed)

Sacred Heart Ch., 1406-1418 S. 3rd St., Phila.


St. Agnes Hosp., 1900 S. Broad St., Phila. (with Frank Watson)

Grace Bapt. Ch., Mervine & Berks sts., Phila. (completion only)

Our Lady of the Angels, Glen Riddle, PA

St. Joseph Ch., St. Joseph St., Lancaster, PA

St. Patrick's Schh., 242 S. 20th St., Phila.

St. Francis Ch., als. & adds., Nanticoke, PA

Cottages (2), U.S. Ave., Atlantic City, NJ

Eagle Hotel, als. & adds., Lebanon, PA

 Keystone State Normal Schh., new bldg., Kutztown, PA

Little Sisters of the Poor, bldgs., Fullerton & Sheffield aves., Chicago, IL


Reading Academy of Music, 5th St., Reading, PA

Schuykill Seminary, Fredericksburg Academy, Lebanon Co., PA

St. John's Orphan Asylum, als. & adds., West Phila.

St. Joseph's Ch., Ashland, PA

St. Joseph's Protectorate, als. & adds., Norristown, PA

St. Monica's Ch., Atlantic & California aves., Atlantic City, NJ

St. Peter's Ch. Mission, Reading, PA

Store, Locust abv. 2nd St., Columbia, PA

Beneficial Saving Fund Soc., 1202 Chestnut St., Phila.

Carpenter, C., res., Merion, PA

Jesuit College, 17th, 18th, Thompson & Stiles sts., Phila.

(demolished)

Little Sisters of the Poor, als. & adds., Wingohocking Sta., Gtn., Phila.

Our Lady of Visitation Ch., schl., south side of Lehigh Ave., bet. Front, 2nd St., Phila.

Res., n. of 58th St., east of Hoffman St., Phila.


St. Bridget’s Ch., schl., Falls of the Schuykill, Phila.

St. James Ch., 3728 Chestnut St., Phila.

St. Vincent de Paul Ch., pastoral res., Price St., n. of Evans St., Phila.

Cheatwood Hotel, Atlantic City, NJ

Factory (picture frame), als., 6th & Arch St., Phila.

Hse. of the Good Shepherd, als. & adds., 50th & Pine sts., Phila.


Phila. Art Club competition (lost to P.M. Day)
St. Edwards Ch., convent, York St., bet. 4th & 8th sts., Phila.
St. Joseph's Hosp., alts. & adds., 17th St. & Girard Ave., Phila.
St. Thomas Aquinas College, nr. Scranton, PA

1889
Academic bldg., Glen Riddle, PA
Ch., Lenni, PA
Convent Hse., Glen Riddle, PA
Hse. of the Good Shepherd, 36th St. & Fairmount Ave., Phila.
Maternity Hosp. & St. Vincent's Hse., 70th St. & Woodland Ave.,
Phil. Keystone State Normal Schl., wing bldg., Kutztown, PA
Res., Haverford Ave. bel. 39th St., Phila.
Schl. & convent, Pheonixville, PA
St. Aloysius Ch., Norristown, PA
St. Charles Borromeo, alts. & adds., Kellyville, PA
St. John's Evangelical Ch., Pittson, PA
St. Joseph's Ch., Easton, PA
Wash hse., 18th & Wood sts., Phila.

1890
Nativity Ch., Allegheny Ave. & Belgrade St., Phila.
Our Lady of Mercy Ch., chapel, 2141 N. Broad St., Phila.
R.C. Ch., Carbondale, PA
Schl., alts. & adds., Woodland Ave., Phila.
St. Laurentius Ch., Berks & Memphis sts., Phila.
St. Mary's Ch., Pheonixville, PA
St. Mary's Hosp., n.p.
St. Nicholas Ch., tenesse & Pacific aves., Atlantic City, NJ
St. Patrick's Ch., Pottsville, PA
Store, 16th & Walnut sts., Phila.

1891
Nativity Ch., schl., Belgrade & Wellington sts., Phila.
Our Lady of Mercy Ch., parochial res., Broad St., s. of Susquehanna
Ave., Phila.
Philopatran Literary Institute, 12th St. bel. Locust St., Phila.
R.C. Chapel, Crum Lynn, PA
R.C. Chapel, Cheltenham, PA
R.C. Chapel, Norwood, PA
Sisters of Notre Dame, chapel, Walnut Hill, Cincinnati, OH
Visitation Ch., convent chapel, Mobile, AL
1892
Immaculate Heart Convent, chapel, Villa Maria, West Chester, PA
Keystone State Normal schl., central bldgs., Kutztown, PA
Little Sisters of the Poor, alts. & adds. to hosp. & home, 18th &
Jefferson sts., Phila.
Laundry, Chestnut Hill, Phila.
Our Mother of Sorrows Ch., alts. & adds., 4800-4814 Lancaster Ave.,
Phil.
R.C. Ch., parochial res., Cheltenham, PA
R.C. Ch., pastoral res., Bryn Mawr, PA
Sacred Heart Chapel, Mobile, AL
Sisters of Mercy, convent, Merion, PA
Sisters of Mercy, chapel & add. to present home, Merion, PA
St. Augustine Ch., schl., Ford & Rainbow sts., Bridgeport, PA
St. John's Ch., Lambertville, NJ
St. Thomas' T.A.B. Society, hall, Lancaster Ave., Rosemont, PA
St. Veronica's Ch., schl. & parochial bldg., 2nd & Butler sts.,
Phil.

1893
Our Lady of Mercy, schl., Park & Susquehanna aves., Phila.
Parish res., West Chester, PA
R.C. Chapel, Wayne, PA
St. Anthony's R.C. Ch., schl. & hall, Lancaster, PA
St. Anthony's R.C., pastoral res., Lancaster, PA
St. Francis Xavier, 2323-27 Green St., Phila.
Side elevation. Duplicate color view of HABS PA-1724-2 - Church of the Gesu (Roman Catholic), Eighteenth & Thompson Streets, Philadelphia, Philadelphia County, PA

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Philadelphia
Preserved

Catalog of
the Historic American
Buildings Survey

Richard J. Webster
With an Introduction by
Charles E. Peterson

Temple University Press
Philadelphia 1981
Cherry Hill Penitentiary. See Eastern State Penitentiary

Church of the Gesu (Roman Catholic). Illustrated
(PA-1724), S.E. corner Eighteenth and Thompson sts. (originally at N.E. corner Eighteenth and Stiles sts., since closed). Brick with granite trim, approx. 122' (five-bay front) × 252', one and five stories with two-story facade, gable roof, square towers with low hipped roofs flank cyma-curved center gable, coupled Doric colonnade at ground story, coupled Ionic colonnade at second story, curved pedimented doors; three-aisle plan with four chapels along each side, balconies, apsidal chancel with two side altars, large flattened barrel vault, notable decorations.

Notable example of a High Victorian Baroque church with the country’s widest unobstructed nave when built. Part of an ecclesiastical complex that included parish school, college (St. Joseph’s), and nearby hospital (St. Joseph’s). Masterpiece of an important local church architect. Built 1879–88; Edwin F. Durang, architect. Towers finished after 1895. Interior decorated 1918; Br. Francis C. Schroen, S.J., decorator. Lower half of interior redecorated, renovated 1952–56; Brs. Frederick E. Barth, S.J., and George M. Bambrick, S.J., decorators. Five-story Jesuit Community House built at rear corner 1911; Fr. Charles Lyons, S.J., designer; Thomas Reilly, builder. 3 ext. photos (1973).*

Church of St. James the Less (Protestant Episcopal). Illustrated
(PA-1725), 3200 W. Clearfield St., at S.W. corner Thirty-second St. and intersection of Hunting Park Ave. Random granite ashlar, approx. 36' × 62' with one-story rear vestry, one story, gable roof, pointed-arch windows, open belfry at west end, three-aisle plan, rectangular chancel.

First and influential example of the Ecclesiological Society’s (formerly Cambridge Camden Society) providing plans of a Gothic church to an American congregation, leading to a fine re-creation of a 13th-century English country parish church and churchyard. Built 1846–50; G. G. Place (England), architect; John E. Carver, superintendent of construction; three windows by Henry Gerente (Paris). Chancel remodeled 1878; Charles M. Burns, architect. Open belfry added c. 1885. Rodman Wanamaker Bell Tower built at edge of churchyard 1908; John T. Windrim, architect. Certified, PHC 1965; Pennsylvania Register 1974; NR. 3 ext. photos (1973, including 1 of doorway sculpture).*
The powerful Baroque style Church of the Gesu towers over the surrounding row houses of its North Philadelphia neighborhood. Imposing as the exterior is, the visitor is not prepared for the vast scale and grandeur of the interior which nearly rival Napoleon LeBrun’s Cathedral Basilica of Saints Peter and Paul (pages 152–157). The Church of the Gesu evolved from a decision by the Society of Jesus to move its educational programs from Saint Joseph’s Church on Willings Alley (pages 50–53) and develop a new college complex. For this purpose land was purchased in 1866 and a small chapel erected. As the North Philadelphia population rapidly expanded—fueled by the influx of Irish and German Catholic immigrants—the need for a new parish church of substantial size became obvious.

The Jesuits selected Edwin Forrest Durang (1825–1911) as their architect. Throughout a practice spanning six decades, Durang specialized in ecclesiastic...
This print illustrates Durang's original design for the Church of the Gesu, including the final stages of the twin towers that were omitted to save on construction costs. American Catholic Historical Society.

The barrel-vaulted nave is the most impressive feature of the Church of the Gesu. The nave terminates in a semidome over the main altar, which rises 70 feet above the sanctuary. This grand space is now used by Saint Joseph's Preparatory School for a variety of purposes.

design, especially for Catholics; his projects include scores of churches, schools, convents, rectories, and hospitals. Born in New York City, Durang moved as a youth to Philadelphia where his first recorded effort as an architect is a drawing submitted in the Academy of Music competition of 1854 that survives in The Athenæum of Philadelphia collection. That this early design is a theater should not be surprising; acting was a family birthright. His grandfather, John Durang, is often called the first native-born American actor, while his father and uncle, Charles and Richard Durang, are said to be the first persons to perform the "Star Spangled Banner." At the time Durang entered the Academy of Music competition his father was director of the Chestnut Street Theater.

By 1855 young Durang had entered the office of another unsuccessful Academy competitor, John Carver (1803–1859, pages 248–253), and he continued the practice after the older architect's death. When Napoleon LeBrun, favorite architect of
Philadelphia Catholics, departed to establish an office in New York City, Durang succeeded to that patronage, enjoying a highly successful career specializing in Catholic church architecture in Philadelphia, including such projects as Saint Charles Borromeo (1868–1876), Saint Francis Xavier (pages 230–233), and, what is probably his most important commission, the Church of the Gesu.
Construction on the church moved slowly after the cornerstone was laid in 1879; the unfinished church was not dedicated until 1888. Based loosely on Il Gesù in Rome—mother church of the Society of Jesus—the main façade consists of a symmetrical central block defined by two towers tied together by horizontal entablatures of contrasting color. Durang specified granite for the body and limestone trim, but to reduce costs red brick and white-painted iron and sheet metal trim were substituted. These gave the church a lively polychromatic effect, albeit different from that originally intended. Less successful was the decision to truncate the upper stages of the towers, again as a cost savings.

However disappointing the exterior, the visitor is compensated by the interior composed of a vast barrel vault without columns spanning the 76-foot-wide nave. According to a Public Ledger account of the dedication, “The interior, which is not finished yet, is a large open space, without pillars to obstruct the view. The ceiling is 105 feet from the ground, and is considered by many the finest piece of stucco work in this country. The main altar is 72 feet high, and in keeping with the surroundings.” In plan the church is essentially a single space consisting of the nave without side aisles and only vestigial transepts holding altars, much in the manner of the Roman prototype. The high altar and its flanking altars were constructed of marbled wood when the church opened. Eventually there would also be five chapels down each side of the nave, again following the Il Gesù plan. The interior would not be embellished with marble altars and wainscot, decorative painting, and murals until the early decades of the twentieth century.

At its high point the Gesù Parish numbered 20,000 communicants, serving a densely populated, largely Irish neighborhood with strong social, political, and religious ties. But during the Depression of the 1930s, factories closed and banks failed. Further economic deterioration in the 1950s rent the social fabric; by 1980 half the population had fled the area and 40 percent of the housing stock had been abandoned. As the author of one report on these conditions remarked, North Philadelphia had become “a region of the very young, the very old and the very poor.” By 1987 the parish congregation had dwindled to fewer than 200 souls. Reluctantly, it was decided to close the sanctuary and pass title to Saint Joseph’s Preparatory School. In 1993 the Archdiocese of Philadelphia reorganized and consolidated fifteen North Philadelphia parishes—including Gesù. In several cases architecturally significant sacred places were closed. The Church of the Gesù, however, has been more fortunate. St. Joseph’s Prep engaged the firm of John Blateau Associates to prepare a master plan for the school that included restoration of the church for sympathetic use by the school. In 1990 the school received substantial funding to restore the exterior and to repaint and relight the interior.
HISTORY OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH

From the Apostolic Age to the Third Millenium
Reform and Counter-Reform

The renewed emphasis on eucharistic piety had effects on architecture. The altar was the focus of the worshipper's attention, often under a magnificent canopy, and the tabernacle was set on the high altar as a visible affirmation of the Real Presence. Churches were built as large open spaces, without rood screens and with as few pillars as possible, in order not to interfere with the worshippers' view of the altar and the monstrance. Since Jesuits did not celebrate the Divine Office in common, their churches also dispensed with the choir stalls that separated the laity from the sanctuary in many medieval churches.

As the Baroque style developed, it became the vehicle of Catholic triumph, celebrating an admittedly partial victory over Protestantism and a successful reassertion of the Church's spiritual authority. The theme of the triumph of the soul over the heaviness of earth—its flight to the heavenly realms—blended almost imperceptibly into the celebration of the triumph of the Church over her enemies, both merging into a single event in which the victory of truth over falsehood made possible the soul's triumph over evil.

Sixtus V systematically rebuilt Rome around its most important churches, putting the statues of Peter and Paul on top the columns of the Roman emperors Trajan and Marcus Aurelius and setting up Egyptian obelisks at strategic points around the city, each surmounted by a cross, thereby symbolizing the triumph of Christianity over paganism. The papal project of rebuilding the city provided unparalleled opportunities for architects and artists, and, among others, the Jesuits and the Oratorians commissioned great churches in the new style—Philip Neri the Chiesa Nuova ("new church") and the Jesuits the Church of the Gesù—although there was some tension between Tridentine austerity and the new style.

Urban VIII (1623–1644), during whose pontificate the Papal States reached their greatest extent, opened St. Peter's Basilica in 1626 as the greatest structure in Christendom, where almost every detail was a proclamation of a faith that had survived its greatest crisis: the papal throne and the giant statue of St. Peter reaffirming papal authority, the pillars around the high altar serving as huge reliquaries, the wide panoply of saints overlooking St. Peter's Square promising their protection and intercession to the faithful. The opening of St. Peter's marked the successful completion of a project that had begun as a disaster, when the indulgence preached on its behalf triggered events that seemed to threaten the end of the Church. Both the brand-new churches and the rebuilt older ones were monumental testimonies to the revival of the papacy and of the Church herself.
Correspondence Received by the Philadelphia Historical Commission

13 DECEMBER 2019
December 6, 2019

Via U.S. Mail & E-Mail
Philadelphia Historical Commission
Robert Thomas, Chair
1515 Arch Street, 13th Floor
Philadelphia, PA 19102

Re: Historic Nomination of the Church of the Gesú

Dear Chairman Thomas,

I am writing on behalf of St. Joseph’s Preparatory School (“The Prep”) to request that the Philadelphia Historical Commission not extend a historic designation to the Church of the Gesú. The Prep respectfully requests that the Commission deny the application as, among other reasons, we cannot commit to maintaining the Gesú in a manner commensurate with a historical designation. Ensuring that our limited resources are judiciously managed and spent in the most impactful manner for our students is essential to the fulfillment of our mission. The Prep’s primary sources of revenue are tuition and, to a much lesser extent, fund raising.

The Prep is an independent Catholic, Jesuit high school dedicated to academic excellence and developing the minds, hearts, souls, and characters of young men from Philadelphia and its surrounding areas. To accomplish this mission, The Prep provides a classical curriculum, faculty devoted to the advancement of its students, an urban campus situated on over six acres of land, and a vibrant student life that promotes service. The Prep is committed to providing this unique educational and social experience to talented students regardless of their financial situation. To that end, The Prep provides over $5.5 million in financial aid and scholarships each year to its students.

The Gesú is owned, operated, and maintained exclusively by The Prep. It is not an operating parish church of the Archdiocese of Philadelphia nor is it open to the public. Furthermore, the Gesú is only used a few times throughout the year for events such as school holiday masses and occasional alumni weddings. Maintenance of Gesú is included in The Prep’s budget for its facilities, which consist of academic, administrative, and athletic buildings, classrooms, libraries, offices, kitchen, dining hall, theatre, chapel, pool, locker rooms, bathrooms, and parking lots. While we take great pride in our
facilities, the vast majority of our budget is allocated to costs associated with faculty, staff, and student services. As a result, and to ensure the fulfillment of The Prep’s mission, we pursue cost-effective ways of maintaining our extensive facilities.

Over the years, we have been able to maintain the Gesù by pursuing affordable maintenance projects. For instance, in 2005 The Prep replaced the Gesù’s roof with an economical and reliable shingle roof. The Prep’s ability to maintain its facilities, including the Gesù, in a cost-effective manner is critical to ensuring that we can continue to invest our limited resources in our students, educators, financial aid, and other social services and activities that are necessary to fulfill our mission. The Prep’s ability to pursue cost-effective maintenance and repair will become of more paramount importance as the Gesù continues to age.

We value our longstanding relationship with Philadelphia and greatly appreciate having had an opportunity to meet with the Commission’s staff to discuss our concerns. As we explained to Mr. Farnham and Ms. Cross Schmitt, we are concerned about the restrictions and financial burdens that would accompany a historic designation. We explained that our concerns are rooted in our deep desire to preserve The Prep’s ability to operate (including making maintenance decisions) in a manner that protects and promotes the best interests of our students and community. Based on our meeting, we understand that the Commission’s staff is recommending that any designation be limited to only the Gesù’s exterior and not the entire tax parcel upon which it is situated.

In making your determination, we ask that you consider The Prep’s success in developing young men into well rounded and compassionate leaders, the positive social and economic impact that The Prep has had on our local neighborhood and City, and The Prep’s responsibility to judiciously manage its limited resources. If the Commission is inclined to place a historic designation on the Gesù, then The Prep requests that the Commission exclude the exterior walls that are predominantly integrated into The Prep’s academic and administrative buildings (i.e. the walls facing N. 17th and W. Thompson Streets).

Thank you in advance for taking into consideration The Prep’s interests and concerns.

Sincerely

Richard J. Scanlan
Chief Financial Officer
St. Joseph’s Preparatory School

Aerial Photographs
Aerial View Over N. 17th Street
Wall Facing N. 17th Street
Aerial View Over W. Thompson Street