

**ADDRESS: 3625 McMICHAEL ST**

Name of Resource: Manor Sunday School Association Chapel

Proposed Action: Designation

Property Owner: RTR Realty Associates LLC

Nominator: East Falls Historical Society

Staff Contact: Megan Cross Schmitt, [megan.schmitt@phila.gov](mailto:megan.schmitt@phila.gov), 215-686-7660

**OVERVIEW:** This nomination proposes to designate the property at 3625 McMichael Street and list it on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places. The nomination contends that the former Manor Sunday School Association satisfies Criteria for Designation D, H and J. Under Criterion D, the nomination argues that the original chapel section of the site “represents the successful and harmonious application of Arts & Crafts design...to the traditional format of an early English country church.” Under Criterion H, the nomination states that despite a series of alterations dating into the 1940s, “the original chapel remains clearly visible for what it was” and is “easily seen from the ‘spine of East Falls’,” Midvale Avenue. Under Criterion J, the nomination documents the role the Manor Sunday School Association Chapel played in turning what was marketed as a “bucolic suburb in the city” into a community.

**STAFF RECOMMENDATION:** The staff recommends that the nomination demonstrates that the property at 3625 McMichael Street satisfies Criteria for Designation D and J. The staff does not find that the nomination makes sufficient argument for Criterion H.



Photos courtesy of Steven Peitzman

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

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

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

Street address: 3625 McMichael Street

Postal code: 19129

**2. NAME OF HISTORIC RESOURCE**

Historic Name: Manor Sunday School Association Chapel

Current/Common Name: Ken-Crest Services

**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: New owner renovating

**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 1916 to 1946

Date(s) of construction and/or alteration: 1916, 1927, 1938, 1946

Architect, engineer, and/or designer: Lawrence Visscher Boyd

Builder, contractor, and/or artisan: John W. Kohl

Original owner: Manor Sunday School Association

Other significant persons: Church of the Good Shepherd of Queen Lane Manor

**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 East Falls Historical Society Date 9/9/2019

Name with Title Steven J. Peitzman & Nancy Pontone Email peitzmansj@gmail.com

Street Address 2911 Woodpipe Lane Apt D Telephone 215-843-7412

City, State, and Postal Code Philadelphia, PA 19129

Nominator  is  is not the property owner.

**PHC USE ONLY**

Date of Receipt: September 9, 2019

Correct-Complete  Incorrect-Incomplete Date: 12/11/2019

Date of Notice Issuance: 12/12/2019

Property Owner at Time of Notice:

Name: RTR Realty Associates LLC

Address: 4127 Main Street

City: Philadelphia State: PA Postal Code: 19127

Date(s) Reviewed by the Committee on Historic Designation: \_\_\_\_\_

Date(s) Reviewed by the Historical Commission: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Final Action: \_\_\_\_\_

Designated  Rejected

## 5. BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The boundary for parcel 107N15127 at 3625 McMichael Street begins at the northwest corner of Midvale Avenue and McMichael Street and extends approximately 108 feet east along the south side of Midvale Avenue; thence approximately 115 feet south toward West Penn Street; thence approximately 108 feet west to McMichael Street; thence approximately 115 feet north to the place of beginning.

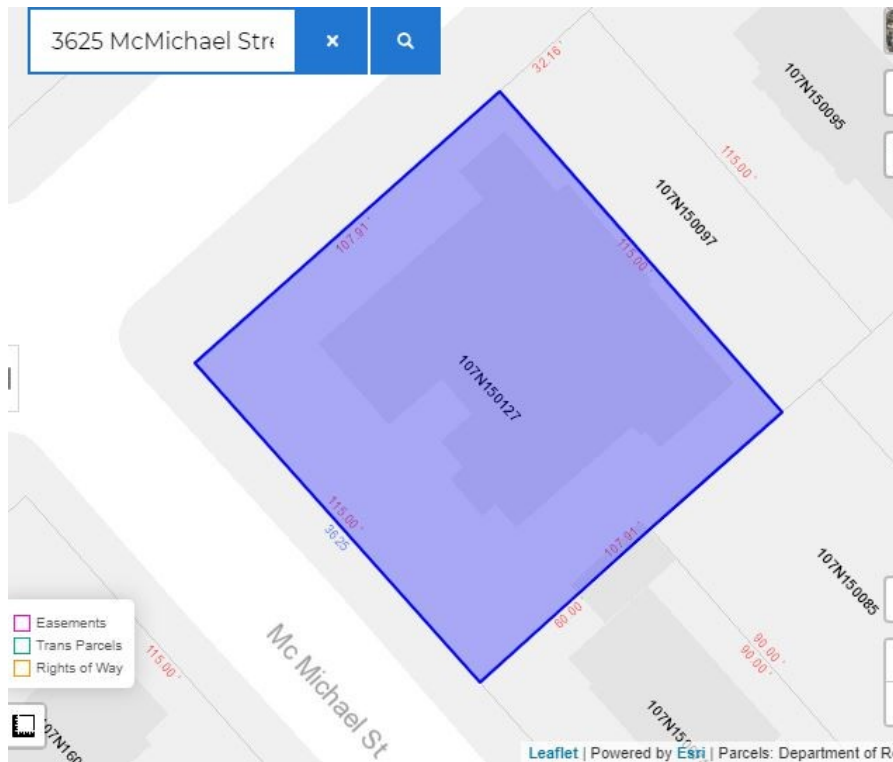


Figure 1: Parcel boundary of 3625 McMichael Street. Source: atlas.phila.gov.

The deed of sale from Gustavus Bechtold Services Inc to Ken-Crest Centers dated 8/7/1989 describes the property as such:

Containing in front or breadth on the said Southeasterly side of said Midvale Avenue one hundred and seven feet, eleven inches and extending of that width in length or depth Southeastwardly between parallel lines at right angles to said Midvale Avenue, the Southwestly line thereof along the Northeasterly side of said Thirty-second Street (now McMichael Street) one hundred and fifteen feet.



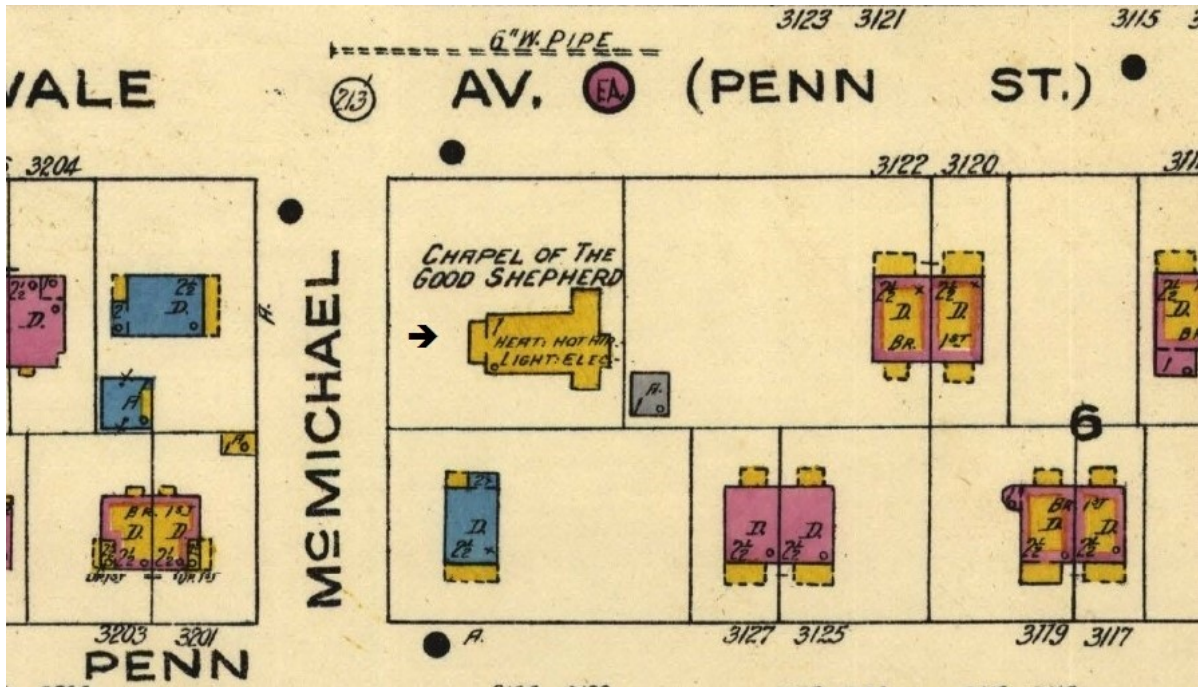


Figure 2: Sanborn Atlas, Philadelphia, 1923. Penn State University Library. Arrow indicates the resource as built in 1916.

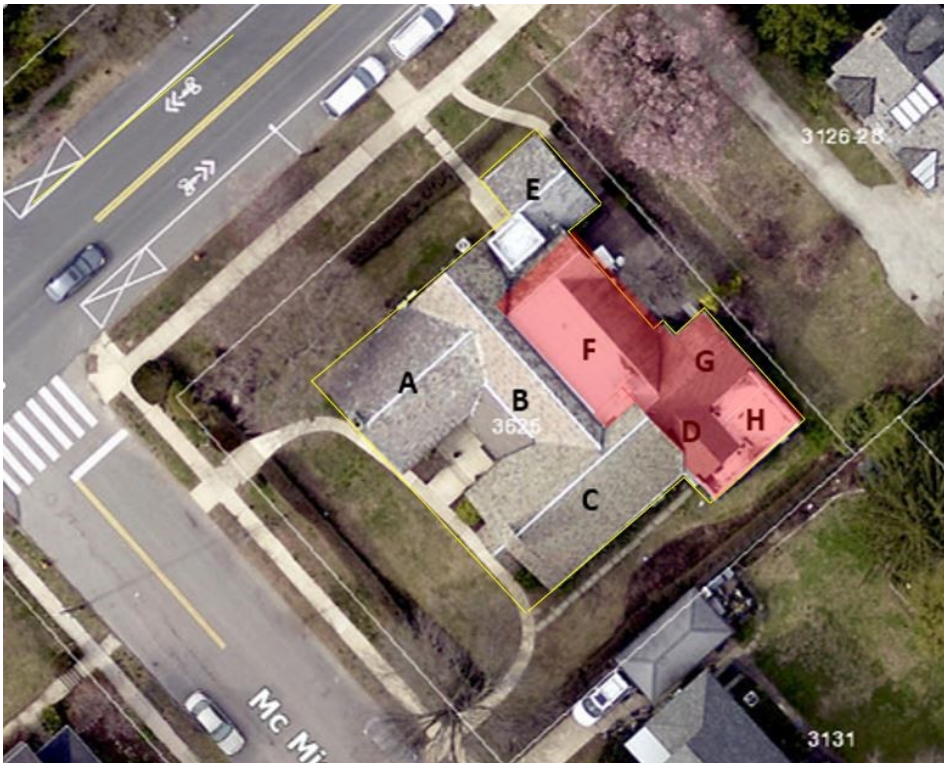


Figure 3: Overhead pictorial view of 3625 Mc Michael Street with lettering of building's segments. Pictometry via atlas.phila.gov.

- A. 1946 addition by Park Congregational Church (PCC)
  - B. 1938 addition for more seating space by PCC
  - C,D. Earliest parts of building, the 1916 chapel (Manor Sunday school), which was T-shaped or cruciform (see Sanborn image above)
  - E. Another 1946 addition by PCC
  - F. Third 1946 addition by PCC
  - G. Probable 1927 addition by the Park Congregational Church (PCC)
  - H. Small, flat-roofed addition, uncertain date
- A,B,C,E proposed as contributing  
D, F, G, H proposed as non-

## 6. Description

*[We have not located any early photographs of the resource. The analysis of this complex structure which follows is based as best we could on building permits, measurements, current aerial photographs, and external and internal inspection.]*

The small, frame, one-story oldest part of the structure, with bell-cote and buttresses (segment C), on the south side of 3625 McMichael Street dates from 1916. It was built for use as a Sunday school, but given its appearance and early history, will be referred to hereafter as “chapel.” It was built about 50’ from Midvale Ave and is diagonally across from what became McMichael Park in 1929. Lawrence Visscher Boyd (1873-1941) designed the building as the Queen Lane Manor neighborhood Sunday School.<sup>1</sup> Boyd also designed houses in Queen Lane Manor and lived across the street from the chapel at 3130 West Penn Street. He and other neighbors approved the building of this frame structure on land leased from an estate. The Sunday School evolved into the Chapel of the Good Shepherd and then into the Protestant Episcopal Church of the Good Shepherd of Queen Lane Manor that acquired the property in 1923.<sup>2</sup> The original chapel was subsequently added onto in 1927 by the Park Congregational Church after ownership transferred.



Figure 4: 3/4 view of 3625 McMichael Street streetscape view. Steven Peitzman, June 2019.

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<sup>1</sup> City of Philadelphia, Building Permit No. 5690, 8/18/1916, Philadelphia City Archives.

<sup>2</sup> Protestant Episcopal Church of the Good Shepherd of Queen Lane Manor, vestry minutes, 9/19/1923, church archives.





Figure 5: Pictometry view of 3625 McMichael Street, looking east and north, atlas.phila.gov.



Figure 6: West-facing porch. Steven Peitzman June 2019.

The west facing front porch (fig. 6) on a stone foundation projects from the chapel (see C) and has wooden steps, possibly not original, up to a double batten door framed with wood and a slightly peaked top. Timbers frame the entrance with stucco as the in-fill material. Half timbering appears beside and above the doorway in Tudor revival style. Timbers edge straight diagonal buttresses on either side of the front wall of the porch. The gable roof has a tie beam above the doorway with a centered king post capped with moldings projecting up through the roof line. Roof rafters (real or simulated) are exposed in the unenclosed overhang of the steeply pitched roof covered in slate. Small wood trimmed windows punctuate the north and



Figure 7: Exposed rafters in unenclosed eave. Steven Peitzman, August 2019.

south sides of the porch with the original leaded glass on the north side. Wood trim extends to the base of the side walls in half-timbering style.



Figure 8: Original leaded glass window, north side of porch. Steven Peitzman, August 2019.





Figure 9: 3/4 view of chapel at 3625 McMichael Street, facing south east.  
Steven Peitzman, June 2019.

The chapel measuring 26' 6" by 40' 9" consists of a "temporary" frame structure<sup>3</sup> on a stone foundation without a basement. Stucco on metal lath covers the exterior walls of the one-story structure. Double windows with replacement sashes and wooden trim flank the porch. A circular window with original leaded glass graces the façade above the porch towards the peak of the steep slate covered gable roof with unenclosed overhangs with exposed rafters (fig. 10). A protective covering obscures the ocular window. A stucco bell-cote also with a gable roof of slate with unenclosed overhang tops the gable chapel roof: it's the chapel's defining feature. Straight diagonal buttresses ground the façade of the building on the north and south sides. The south side includes two additional buttresses between three sets of triple windows with replacement sashes. The north side has one set of triple windows also with replacement sashes. Additions from later years cover the north wall toward the east.

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<sup>3</sup> City of Philadelphia, Building Permit No. 5690, 8/18/1916, Philadelphia City Archives.



Figure 10: Exposed rafters in unenclosed eave, north side of chapel. Steven Peitzman, August 2019.



Figure 11: South side of chapel showing grouped windows and plain, angled buttresses. Steven Peitzman, August 2019.

Originally a 44' by 13'6" building<sup>4</sup> (see D) was perpendicular to the east end of the chapel with a short extension to the south and a longer extension to the north.<sup>5</sup> Subsequent additions to the

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<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> Sanborn Atlas 1923, Penn State University Library.

south and east (see H) obscure this structure that included a Guild Room for meetings and business of the Mission. These subsequent additions have flat roofs.

The property was sold and transferred in 1926 to the Park Congregational Church (PCC).<sup>6</sup> PCC built an 8' by 15' addition with stone foundation, hollow tile walls and a slate roof in August 1927<sup>7</sup> that may have been to the east of this building, (see G). Asphalt shingles cover this roof. Section H to the southeast was added around these extensions at an unknown date (see above). Access to this area is limited by the neighboring property.

In 1938, PCC added a masonry wing on the northside of the chapel as a worship space for 200 persons measuring about 26' by 42' on a concrete foundation with no basement (B). [Bruce] Wenner and [A. Hensell] Fink designed the irregularly shaped addition.<sup>8</sup> The visible north end of the one-story structure has a triple window with plain wooden trim and replacement windows (originally leaded glass) centered above the eave line of the gable end (fig 12). Slate covers the gabled roof. A few rafters (real or simulated) extend beyond the rake edge of the unenclosed overhang. Stucco covers the exterior consistent with the original building. An entrance east of this addition facing north onto Midvale Avenue has a replacement double door with a parapet façade that intersects the gable roof at the wall line. The sides of the parapet are straight but the top edge is slightly raised in the middle. A slit adorns the blank stucco wall above the door. When this entrance was added is unclear. It may have been added as part of the 1946 17' by 24' addition. A doorway also accesses this 1938 addition from the McMichael Street or west side. It abuts the north side of the chapel (see C) with a shed roof below the gable roof. A small window is on the north side of the double replacement doorway. This entry way extends to another later addition described below.

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<sup>6</sup> Newspaper article, 1926, newspaper not identified, "Churches" scrapbook, Germantown Historical Society.

<sup>7</sup> City of Philadelphia, Building Permit No. 7599, 8/20/1927, Philadelphia City Archives.

<sup>8</sup> City of Philadelphia, Building Permit No. 2935, 5/18/1938, Philadelphia City Archives.





Figure 12: North side of 3625 McMichael Street with Midvale Avenue in foreground. Steven Peitzman, June 2019.



Figure 13: West view of 1938 addition. Steven Peitzman, June 2019.

In 1946, PCC added three more additions built by E. Clifford Durrell & Sons.<sup>9</sup> One 26' by 26' addition (see A) abuts the doorway wall noted above on the north side. A door facing south gives access to this space and also to the patio in front of the western doorway to the 1938 addition. Extending west with a gable end facing McMichael Street, the roof line of this addition cross gables with the 1938 addition. A stone foundation has basement windows on either side of a slightly off-center stone chimney on the west end. Double windows similar to the chapel windows and originally leaded glass adorn either side of the chimney. Chimney wings gather at the chimney throat at the level of the window tops. The north or Midvale Ave side reveals the stone foundation with three basement windows below three sets of double windows originally with leaded glass. The north wall continues across the 1946 and 1938 additions.

<sup>9</sup> City of Philadelphia, Building Permit No. 1303, 3/25/1946, Philadelphia City Archives.



Figure 14: Philadelphia Streets Department photo 1957; north (Midvale Avenue) elevation. note leaded glass windows. City of Philadelphia Department of Records via phillyhistory.org

The gable end of a second 1946 addition measuring 17' by 24" (see E) abuts and may include the doorway on the north in its longest dimension but extends towards Midvale Ave with a single west facing window originally with leaded glass below the gable. A stone foundation without a basement supports the stucco wall and a triple set of windows originally with leaded glass. The east side of this addition contains a double window within the gable end.

A third addition in 1946 (F) according to the building permit measured 10' by 17'6" and may be an extension of the original Guild Room at the north east end of the original chapel to the second 1946 addition mentioned above. A gable roof appears south of the second 1946 addition and a flat roof spans to the center of this gable from the north east end of the chapel. This area is inaccessible because of the property line but also unfathomable because of the overlapping additions. An original leaded glass window is in the east side of this structure but now visible only from the interior owing to additions. It appears to have been in the Guild Room of the 1916 building based on an interior tour of the space.

## **7. Statement of significance**

The structure at 3625 McMichael Street in the part of the East Falls section of Philadelphia once known as Queen Lane Manor, possesses significance under criteria D, H, and J of the Philadelphia Code 14-2007(5) and should be listed on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places. In its current form, it is an entangled accrual of additions, but the original section represents an unusual and appealing application of c. 1900 Arts and Crafts features to a small chapel of a form going back to medieval times, yet timeless in its simplicity (Criterion D). Built in 1916 as a community effort to bring a Sunday school to a new development, the original chapel section with its bell-cote (and bell), slanting buttresses, and half-timbered battered porch has

survived for over 100 years as a unique building that stands out from the substantial dwellings around it, yet harmonizes easily with many of them (Criterion H). Its early history demonstrates how new homeowners in a real estate *development* given an upper crust name, began to become a *neighborhood*, or community, by creation of a modest home for their new Sunday school (the latter an institution with an important place in the social history of the making of American towns and cities). (Criterion J). We believe that components A, B, C, and E as denoted in figure 3 should be designated as contributing, based on architectural features, visibility, and historical interest.

***Criterion J: Exemplifies the cultural, political, economic, social or historical heritage of the community***

**Queen Lane Manor**

By the time of his death in 1895, oil baron William G. Warden had bought up most of the available estates and farms in the region where he lived, present-day East Falls east of Henry Avenue, but then thought of as part of Germantown. Born in Pittsburgh, Warden (1831 – 1895) became one of the wealthiest men in Philadelphia through petroleum – he was a trustee of Standard Oil and in effect a partner of John D. Rockefeller, who attended his funeral.<sup>10</sup> In early 1907, the family or estate of William G. Warden began to market the extensive Warden land holdings through creation of the School Lane Land Company and the Queen Lane Land Company. The well-known suburban developers Wendell and Smith (Herman Wendell and William Bassett Smith), known for the creation of Overbrook Farms, Pelham, and a residential area near Wayne, were engaged to market houses and lots as “Queen Lane Manor,” mainly in the district bounded by Henry Avenue, Queen Lane, Coulter Street (then called Mill Street), and Stokley Street.<sup>11</sup> There resulted an attractive neighborhood of single and twin houses, most of two and one-half or three stories, substantial and well-proportioned, on straight, tree-lined streets. In this transitional period from horses and streetcars to automobiles, few of the early houses (1907-1910) showed garages.<sup>12</sup> Promotional literature clearly pitched the idea of the bucolic suburb in the city, a “rural atmosphere” combined with “every convenience available in the heart of the city.” The “lawn system” would assure the country milieu; the nearby Queen Lane Station of the Pennsylvania railroad the urban opportunities.<sup>13</sup> A brochure issued by

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<sup>10</sup> For biographical information on Warden, see an obituary in the *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, 10 April 1895; “William G. Warden Buried” in the *Philadelphia Times* 13 April 1895; and Peter Binzen with Jonathan, *Richardson Dilworth: Last of the Bare-Knuckled Aristocrats* (Philadelphia: Camino Books, 2014), pp.45-51 (Dilworth was related to the Wardens through marriage).

<sup>11</sup> For information about Wendell & Smith, see entries in the on-line service Philadelphia Architects and Buildings of the Philadelphia Athenaeum, which also holds some archival materials. Also see the website of Prichard Design & History Studio, [www.designandhistory.com](http://www.designandhistory.com).

<sup>12</sup> As seen in the 1910 G.W. Bromley *Atlas of the City of Philadelphia*.

<sup>13</sup> “Building a suburb along unique lines,” *Philadelphia Public Ledger*, 24 March 1907 (quotes from this article); “Queen Lane Manor Popular,” *Philadelphia Inquirer*, 6 September 1908. There exists no account of Queen Lane Manor much beyond what is written here. Other sources include newspaper clippings about events of the Queen



Wendell and Smith boasted of the healthy elevation of the area – 245 feet above river level—making it totally “free from malaria.”<sup>14</sup>

The developers appointed mostly younger architects to design houses, such as Edmund Gilchrist, Lawrence Visscher Boyd, Robert McGoodwin, Samuel Hawley, William Price, and others, though buyers could choose their own.<sup>15</sup> In keeping with the fashion of the day, most of the homes display the colonial revival or Tudor revival style, with some of the latter showing compatible Arts and Crafts details. Wendell and Smith did not undertake to create a more or less self-contained community similar to Overbrook Farms. A central plot was set aside for tennis courts and a playground, but they built no distributed heating system, clubhouse, church, or retail buildings. Shops and banks were available fairly close by along Cheltenham and Germantown Avenues, accessible by street car, carriage, or automobile, but not an easy walk. New Queen Lane Manor residents could choose from churches in Germantown, or in the smoky old Falls Village far downhill, on Indian Queen Lane and Ridge Avenue. Not too far away was (and is) the beautiful St. James the Less Church (Episcopal). But these, again, did not stand conveniently down the street from the new homes of Queen Lane Manor.

Who became the residents of this newly created development, with a name given by the developers? A sampling of sheets from the 1920 Census provides some insight.<sup>16</sup> Most if not all homes were occupied by traditional families – wife, husband, children. The names show little ethnic diversity: no names in our sample were obviously Jewish or Italian. This is not surprising for this sort of upper tier development in the early twentieth century. Most households employed at least one maid, a few a cook or butler as well, here and there a nurse. The good sized houses and their owners’ income allowed for live-in help. The heads of household of the first fifteen years, men of course, were of upper middle-class status. Occupations included banker; “merchant”; broker; insurance broker (a lot of these for some reason); owner, president, vice-president secretary, and treasurer of various probably small or mid-sized manufacturing companies; engineer; two architects (Boyd and Hawley); a doctor; a dentist; a

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Lane Manor Civic Association and Queen Lane Manor Women’s Club found in the Chadwick Scrapbooks, at the Falls of Schuylkill Library, with access facilitated by the East Falls Historical Society. By the 1960s the local name Queen Lane Manor had largely drifted out of use except in newspaper advertisements for houses; this was concurrent with the name East Falls supplanting Falls of Schuylkill. The phrase “Queen Lane Manor” persists today only as the name of a small Art Deco apartment building on Queen Lane near Wissahickon Avenue.

<sup>14</sup> *Queen Lane Manor* (promotional brochure), in box “Real Estate,” Henning Library, the Germantown Historical Society. The unknown writer probably had typhoid fever in mind, then a serious scourge in Philadelphia, not malaria.

<sup>15</sup> Architects were identified mostly by searching the relevant street names using the *Philadelphia Architects and Buildings* data base of the Athenaeum of Philadelphia.

<sup>16</sup> United States Census for 1920, Philadelphia, 38<sup>th</sup> Ward, Enumeration District 1373, sheets 3B (labeled as New Queen Street, but actually Queen Lane), 4A (Midvale Avenue), 4B (Midvale Avenue), 5B (Midvale Avenue), 7A (West Penn Street), 7B (Stokely Street), 8A (Coulter Street [formerly Mill Street]).

veterinarian. Several were listed as “salesman,” but this likely meant a manufacturer’s representative rather than, say, a department store employee.

Many children played on the fresh lawns of Queen Lane Manor. Almost all families sampled had a few, the most frequent number being two; the parents were mostly in their 20s and 30s in 1920, so more would be on their way. Most of the children were under ten years old, many still babies. Each family in its own house (though some being twins), separated by the green yards, and soon each with its own automobile—would they come together in this newly built and newly named housing development to establish something like a community? To some extent they *did*: a civic association and a women’s club have been mentioned already (in note 13). But the first thing the new neighbors actually *built*...was a Sunday school for their children.

### **From Sunday School to Church**

The Sunday school as an organized movement arose in late eighteenth-century England, the project of devout and reform-minded laypersons.<sup>17</sup> The objectives included teaching children of the poor to read, to gain some religion, and, for the ruffians among them, to cease annoying their elders on Sunday – the only day when many of the youngsters were off from work. The idea came to the United States in the 1790s, first to Philadelphia (where else?) where a pluralistic group that included Universalist physician and patriot Benjamin Rush, Catholic publisher and writer Matthew Carey, and Episcopal Bishop William White formed the First Day Society. The American Sunday School Union, founded also in Philadelphia, in 1824, undertook a grand missionary project of sending agents throughout the barely settled parts of the country to start Sunday schools and small associated libraries in every village and valley. Many of these which rooted well became churches. By the period of relevance to this nomination, of course Sunday school had become a customary function of denominational churches, but it is still often taught by lay volunteers, and publication of curriculum material remains a very active enterprise. Although the Manor Sunday School Society began under the jurisdiction of an Episcopal parish church, it was very much a lay project of neighborhood residents, and it too soon became a house of worship.

The Reverend James Clayton Mitchell, Calvary Protestant Episcopal Church, Manheim Street, Germantown, organized a Sunday school for children in the rapidly growing Queen Lane Manor community. Presumably one or more Queen Lane Manor residents who worshipped at Calvary requested this initiative so that children might walk to a Sunday school. Children and adults attended the first session, or service, on a snowy March 1, 1914, in a small farmhouse at the

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<sup>17</sup> Robert W. Lynn and Elliott Wright, *The Big Little School: Two Hundred Years of the Sunday School* (Birmingham, AL and Nashville, TN: Religious Education Press and Abingdon, 1971, 1980); Anne M. Boylan, *Sunday School: the Formation of an American Institution, 1790 – 1880* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988).

rear of houses on Midvale Avenue and Queen Lane between Stokley and Fox Streets. The farmhouse became too small for the rapidly rising attendance. The School subsequently met in the office of the School Lane Land Company (one of the companies marketing Queen Lane Manor) at the corner of Midvale Avenue and Stokley Street.<sup>18</sup>

Reverend Mitchell took a leave of absence in July 1914 for health reasons and resigned in May of 1915.<sup>19</sup> It became necessary that the Sunday School Mission of the Calvary Church be handled primarily by the people of the neighborhood. The Manor Sunday School Association was formed with neighborhood men paying dues to support the school. When the Sunday School outgrew the land company office a small chapel (segment C) was erected in 1916 on the corner of Midvale Avenue and McMichael Street (32<sup>nd</sup> Street) on rented ground with the real estate tax payment as rent.<sup>20</sup>



Figure 15: Farmhouse between Midvale Avenue and Queen Lane and between Stokely and Fox Streets.

Archival materials, Memorial Church of the Good Shepherd, The Oak Road, Philadelphia

In order to build the chapel, Franklin S. Moore, the new Rector of the Calvary Church, Germantown, requested permission from the Bishop of Pennsylvania, the Right Reverend Phil Rhineland, to move the Mission's "site for the furtherance of best interest of said Sunday School".<sup>21</sup> About seventy-five children attended the first session in the new chapel.<sup>22</sup>

(To clarify the terms used here: various sources cited suggest that the building was referred to as a chapel, which architecturally it certainly was, even during the few years when the main, or only, activity it housed was Sunday school. It was referred to as the Chapel of the Good

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<sup>18</sup> "The Memorial Church of the Good Shepherd", printed one-page history, archival material, Memorial Church of the Good Shepherd, The Oak Road, Philadelphia.

<sup>19</sup> Calvary Church, Germantown, Wg\* .999 V.4, 1915, Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

<sup>20</sup> "The Memorial Church of the Good Shepherd", printed one-page history, archival material, Memorial Church of the Good Shepherd, The Oak Road, Philadelphia.

<sup>21</sup> Letter from Calvary Church Rector to the Bishop of Pennsylvania, dated 5/13/1916, Episcopal Church Archives, Lutheran Theological Seminary, Philadelphia.

<sup>22</sup> Handwritten unsigned page of notes, perhaps for a talk, from 1921 by internal evidence, archival material, Memorial Church of the Good Shepherd, The Oak Road, Philadelphia.



Shepherd at least as early as 1919, though why that name was chosen is not known. The name change to the Protestant Episcopal Church of the Good Shepherd of Queen Lane Manor in 1921 is described below.)

Lawrence Visscher Boyd designed the building as well as many homes in the Queen Lane Manor neighborhood. A bond was filed as required by ordinance to regulate the construction of a frame building. Property owners and residents adjacent to the structure, including Lawrence Visscher Boyd, signed approval for the construction of the frame building. The contractor, John W. Kohl, constructed the frame chapel, which now remains undoubtedly one of few frame buildings in Philadelphia from the early 20<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>23</sup>

In the June 10, 1919 minutes of the Manor Sunday School Association, the Women's Guild advanced the notion "that the work in the Chapel be extended beyond the holding of a Sunday-School session," noting that the Reverend William Edwards had offered to take charge of the work of the mission.<sup>24</sup> Subsequently Bishop Rhinelanders appointed Edwards as minister of the Chapel of the Good Shepherd.<sup>25</sup> With the Reverend Edwards as rector the parish was chartered as the Protestant Episcopal Church of the Good Shepherd of Queen Lane Manor as of 5/3/1921 in Charter Book no. 70, p.431, County of Philadelphia.<sup>26</sup>

Land settlements from grantors Lee Sowden and Edwin Atlee were made in 1923 when funds were borrowed for that purpose.<sup>27</sup> Two years later the vestry authorized Lawrence Visscher Boyd to develop plans for expansion of the properties owned by the church since the congregation had grown and the chapel was too small to accommodate it. Boyd prepared architectural drawings for several buildings including a church in the "perpendicular Gothic Style".<sup>28</sup>

These plans became obsolete with a gift of land and a new church building nearby on The Oak Road by the sons of Henry W. Brown, who died on December 22, 1925. The vestry decided to sell the McMichael Street property and use the proceeds along with donations to build a parish hall adjoining the new church.<sup>29</sup> The property of the Church of the Good Shepherd was sold in 1926 to the Park Congregational Church (PCC) of Montgomery Avenue and 32nd Street which

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<sup>23</sup> City of Philadelphia, Building Permit No. 5690, 8/18/1916, Philadelphia City Archives.

<sup>24</sup> Manor Sunday School Association minutes, 6/10/1919, archival materials, The Memorial Church of the Good Shepherd, The Oak Road, Philadelphia.

<sup>25</sup> Coombs, Maurice, "The Memorial Church of the Good Shepherd" in *East Falls: Three Hundred Years of History* (Philadelphia: East Falls Bicentennial Committee, 1976), p.39.

<sup>26</sup> Original Charter hanging in the Parish Hall entry of the Memorial Church of the Good Shepherd, 3820 The Oak Road, Philadelphia.

<sup>27</sup> Protestant Episcopal Church of the Good Shepherd of Queen Lane Manor, vestry minutes dated 9/19/1923, archival materials, Memorial Church of the Good Shepherd, The Oak Road, Philadelphia..

<sup>28</sup> Lawrence V. Boyd letter to the Rector and Vestry of the Church of the Good Shepherd in Queen Lane Manor, dated 9/16/1925, archival materials, Memorial Church of the Good Shepherd, The Oak Road, Philadelphia.

<sup>29</sup> "Three Sons of Henry W. Brown to Erect Church in His Memory", 1926, *Philadelphia Record*, Germantown Historical Society, "Churches" scrapbook.

took possession in 1927 with the intention to expand.<sup>30</sup> Subsequent additions were made by the PCC in 1927, 1938 and 1946 as described in the architectural description. A *Philadelphia Inquirer* article from 1938 described the dedication of a 200-seat wing.<sup>31</sup> Research has not discovered much documentation about the 1946 additions or other activities of PCC. Presumably it thrived at least in the 1930s and 1940s when (in 1938) it added space to triple its seating, and added further to the structure in the 1940s. Several persons who were children in East Falls in the 1960s or 1970s recall going to the PCC mainly for Sunday school, but don't recall the church as ever very full. According to the *Philadelphia Daily News*, the Church dissolved its corporation in 1981.<sup>32</sup>

PCC had conveyed the property to Gustavus Bechtold Services, a non-profit corporation, on November 22, 1978 prior to dissolution. This was a division of Lutheran family services. On August 7, 1989 the property was conveyed to Ken-Crest Centers, a non-profit corporation which originated in the nineteenth century as facilities for the care of poor persons with tuberculosis, though not in East Falls (the "Ken" refers to Kensington). It used the McMichael Street complex for a variety of social services.<sup>33</sup> RTR Realty Associates bought the property on May 22, 2019 with plans to create two residences out of the structure.

***Criterion D: Embodies distinguishing characteristics of an architectural style or engineering specimen***

We believe that the original chapel section of the resource (C) represents the successful and harmonious application of Arts and Crafts design, by a skilled architect, to the traditional format of an early English country church. Furthermore, Lawrence Visscher Boyd (1873-1941), the architect for the Sunday school/Chapel (also a Queen Lane Manor resident and a president of the Manor Sunday School Association) had exemplars immediately available to him.

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<sup>30</sup> "Church Buys New Site", *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, 6/26/1926.

<sup>31</sup> "Church Dedicates 200-Seat Wing", *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, 9/19/1938,

<sup>32</sup> Legal Notice, *Philadelphia Daily News*, 9/30/1981

<sup>33</sup> Philadelphia Deed D 1436 588-591 between grantor Gustavus Bechtold Services and grantee Ken-Crest Centers, 8/7/1989.

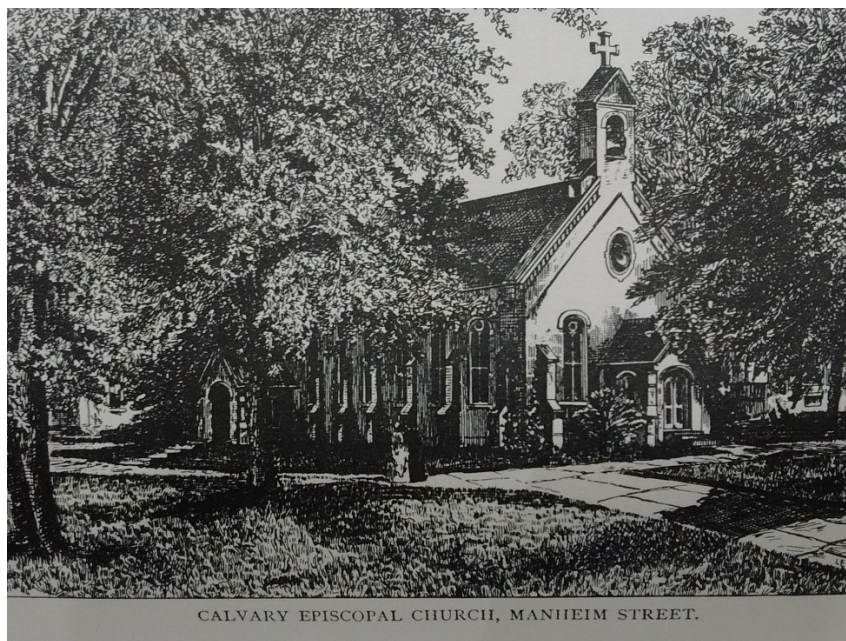


Figure 16: Calvary Church, 1859 print.

Source: S.F. Hotchkiss, *Ancient and Modern Germantown, Mount Airy and Chestnut Hill* (Philadelphia: P.W. Ziegler & Co., 1889), p.279.

Boyd and his wife were members of the Calvary Episcopal parish church on Manheim Street in Germantown, of which the Manor Sunday school became a “mission.” Boyd would have seen prints or photographs of its earlier church (fig. 16), built in 1859 and demolished in 1892 for a much larger structure (still in use in 2019 but not as an Episcopal church). The 1916 chapel looks strikingly like the first Calvary building, though the latter was of stone. The two share these features: simple box with steep gabled roof, porch at one gable end with windows on either side of the porch, a circular window above the porch in the gable end, bell-cote with gable roof, and buttresses between windows supporting side walls. Unlike the chapel, the early Calvary structure showed round-headed Romanesque windows. Although lacking a porch in the gable end with a bell-cote, the Church of St. James the Less at Clearfield Street and Hunting Park Avenue (fig. 17) on the edge of current East Falls, also shares many of the characteristics described above. Built in 1846, prior to Calvary Church, it reflects the Gothic style of St. Michael’s Church in Longstanton England, denoted by the pointed windows. No architect living nearby would fail to study St. James the Less, today a National Historic Landmark. (These two churches in Northwest Philadelphia were both within the Episcopal Diocese. Parishioners in this area went to either church usually based on its proximity to home. The 1916 Sunday school/chapel became an alternative for the growing Queen Lane Manor neighborhood, being closer than the two older churches. Generally, such a small neighborhood or village chapel was known as a secondary church, or in a quaint old term, a “chapel of ease.”)



Figure 17: Church of St. James the Less. HABS, Library of Congress collections.

The basic design of the Sunday school/chapel goes back to the architecture of medieval times, which in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century remained something of an inspiration for the Arts and Crafts Movement. Lawrence Visscher Boyd and some other Philadelphia architects designing houses found themselves attracted to the styles (perhaps better considered as an approach), referred to variously as Arts and Crafts, Craftsman, or Tudor/Craftsman. By 1916, several excellent examples stood in Queen Lane Manor, some by Boyd (see appendix). Boyd developed his small Sunday school building along these lines.<sup>34</sup> Probably no one design element uniquely corresponds to an “Arts and Crafts” architectural style: that is, no element appears *only* in that style, and *always* in it. Some of the details of the nominated resource that can be deemed attributes of the Arts and Crafts mode include: the prominent timbering and half-timbering of the porch front; simple diagonal buttresses, grouped windows (originally casements with leaded glass), overhanging eaves with exposure of rafters (both porch and main structure), double front doors with Tudor “point,” and rough stucco walls (see figs. 6 -11 within “Description”).<sup>35</sup> It is worth pointing out that architects following Boyd mostly saw to it that their additions attained a consistent appearance. And, although additions have indeed partly encased the little chapel, its massing and most interesting design elements remain intact, little changed, and easily visible.

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<sup>34</sup> We thank Professor Jeffrey Cohen for pointing out to us the Arts and Crafts styling.

<sup>35</sup> Of course a vast literature documents the Arts and Crafts movement in Great Britain, Europe, and the United States. For the limited purpose here, we used the following to identify Arts and Crafts architectural features: Virginia Savage McAlester, *A Field Guide to American Houses* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1914), pp. 566-578; Lester Walker, *American Homes: the Landmark Illustrated Encyclopedia of Domestic Architecture* (New York: Black Dog and Leventhal Publishers, 1996), pp. 128-129; Will Jones, *How to Read Houses* (New York: Rizzoli, 2013), pp. 168-183; Trevor Yorke, *British Architectural Styles* (Newbury, Berkshire, UK: Countryside Books, 2008), pp. 49-50.



**Criterion H: Owing to its unique location or singular physical characteristic, represents an established and familiar visual feature of the neighborhood, community, or City;**

Almost all residential neighborhoods of Philadelphia can claim one or more enormous stone churches, many of imposing grandeur and beauty. Residents of the upper part of East Falls, once known as Queen Lane Manor, for over one hundred years—virtually since the beginnings of the neighborhood--have been able to gaze on a curious site – a small chapel complete with bell housing and bell, looking to some vaguely Spanish, sited somewhat elevated from the plane of the street. When built in 1916, it was surely one of the *smallest* religious buildings in Philadelphia. Over the period from when it was built, into the 1940s, a series of additions resulted in a confusing mass of intersecting gables, with an odd abundance of doors, though the original chapel remains clearly visible for what it was. The structure is seen easily from McMichael Park and from Midvale Avenue, which has been referred to as the “spine of East Falls,” connecting the old Falls Village along the River to the twentieth-century district of substantial homes, and on to Germantown. A streetcar once ran on Midvale Avenue, as does the K bus now, and of course numerous automobiles.



Figure 18: The resource from above, showing its prominent corner location along Midvale Avenue (seen running from lower left of image to upper right), and proximity to McMichael Park, seen to the left. Pictometry via atlas.phila.gov



Figures 19: The resource seen from McMichael Park. Nancy Pontone, November 2019.



Figures 19: The resource seen from McMichael Park. Steven Peitzman, November 2019.

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**Appendix: A Few Houses with Arts & Crafts Attributes in the  
Former Queen Lane Manor Section of East Falls**



Figure 20: Midvale Avenue at Fox Street. Tudor Revival and Arts and Crafts Style.  
From 1907, it was one of the first built by the developers and was used in  
an early advertisement. Architect not determined. Steven Peitzman, August 2019.





Figure 21: Twin houses on the 3100 block of West Penn Street, by Lawrence Visscher Boyd. From *AIA/T-Square*, 1911, p.85, via Philadelphia Architects and Buildings data base, the Athenaeum of Philadelphia



Figure 22: Twin houses on the 3000 block of Queen Lane. Architect not determined