

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: 1101 Jackson Street

Postal code: 19148

2. NAME OF HISTORIC RESOURCE

Historic Name: Roman Catholic Church of the Epiphany

Current/Common Name: Epiphany of Our Lord Roman Catholic Church

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: Church and rectory

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 1890 to 1905

Date(s) of construction and/or alteration: 1890 (rectory); 1892 (basement chapel); 1896, 1902-05 (church)

Architect, engineer, and/or designer: Frank R. Watson; Watson & Huckel

Builder, contractor, and/or artisan: 1890: Whelan; 1896: Delaney & McShain; 1902-05: Kiely (builder),

Original owner: Archdiocese of Philadelphia Colgan (masonry)

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 September, 2020

Name with Title Celeste A. Morello, MS, MA Email N/A

Street Address 1234 S Sheridan St Telephone 215-334-6008

City, State, and Postal Code Philadelphia, PA 19147

Nominator ☐ is ☒ is not the property owner.

PHC USE ONLY

Date of Receipt: September 29, 2020

☒ Correct-Complete ☐ Incorrect-Incomplete Date: October 30, 2020

Date of Notice Issuance: November 2, 2020

Property Owner at Time of Notice:

Name: Archdiocese of Philadelphia

Address: 1101 Jackson St

City: Philadelphia State: PA Postal Code: 19148

Date(s) Reviewed by the Committee on Historic Designation: December 2, 2020

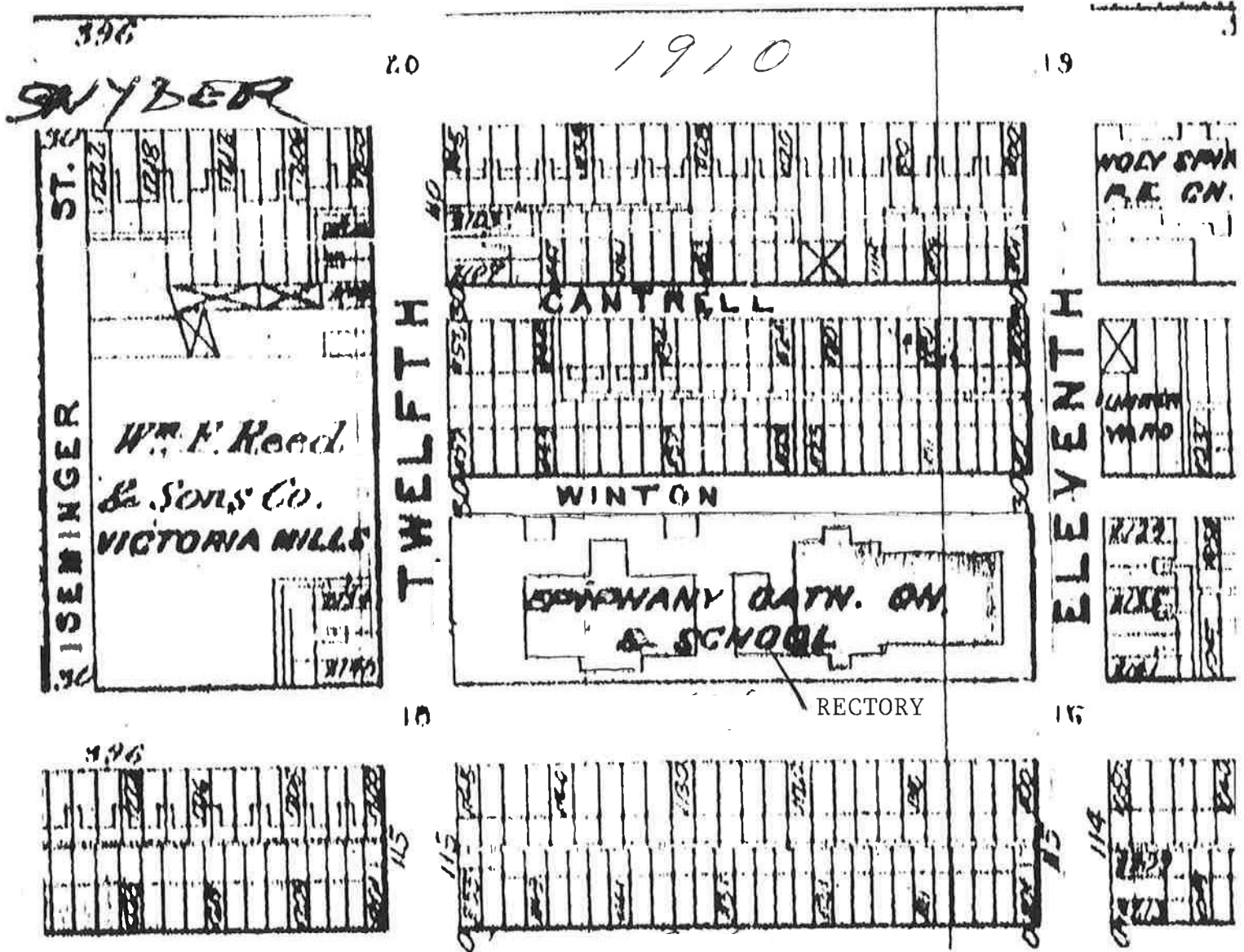
Date(s) Reviewed by the Historical Commission: January 8, 2021

Date of Final Action: January 8, 2021

☒ Designated ☐ Rejected

12/7/18

BOUNDARIES:



In the 1905 "Souvenir," Father Nash recorded on page 71:

The church is built of Avondale stone trimmed with Indiana limestone both outside and in, and is of the following dimensions:

Total length	152 feet.
Total width	103 feet.
Tower at base	22x22 feet.
Height of tower	127 feet.
Height of nave	58 feet inside.
Width of nave	60 feet inside
Width of transepts	77 feet inside
The basement seats	900
The church seats	1000

The work was designed throughout by Watson & Huckel, architects, and erected under their careful supervision.

Boundary Description:

The rectangular parcel at 1101 Jackson Street contains a church, rectory, carport, and parking lot. The parcel is bounded on the north by Winton Street, on the south by Jackson Street, on the east by S 11th Street, and on the west by S 12th Street. Containing in front or breadth on the said S 11th Street 121.5 feet and extending of that breadth in depth westward between lines at right angles with the said S 11th Street 396 feet.



DESCRIPTION:

The Roman Catholic Church of the Epiphany of Our Lord is a Gothic building comprising a basement church/chapel under the superstructure. Constructed of Avondale stone with Indiana limestone trim, there are traditional tracery at the windows and details recalling late 12th and early 13th century French cathedrals. The masonry is finely pointed and in excellent condition, as is the entire structure. Dimensions of the church are previously set forth. The tower at the southeast corner of the block is 127 feet high on a 22 foot square base rising in stages to a belfry. At the tower's top, only one finial is higher than the other three.

A broad stone staircase projects at the entrance to the facade on Eleventh Street, which is original to the 1902-1905 construction. It is of the same Avondale (gray) stone to coordinate with the building. The most Gothic elements are at the facade at the portal and above. (Refer to photograph, p. 7²). The stained glass is from the Mayer & Company factory in Munich and has tracery on each window.

The Rectory, with the entrance at 1121 Jackson Street, has projecting porches on the south and west sides. Brick was used for much of this structure, with the facade in stone to relate to the church to which it is attached at the south side to the sacristy. Landscaping (with many trees to obstruct visibility of the north and south sides of the church and rectory) includes the shallow lawns where small statues dot the areas. (The statues are of Catholic saints, including the Blessed Virgin Mary.) Entrances to the deep basement chapel/church are on the north and south sides. A large parking lot is on the west side, with a tall brick wall at the perimeter. This is a well-kept, beloved church building and the maintenance of the entire block is above-average than most.

¹ Mahony, D., Historical Sketches of the Catholic Churches.... 1895, p. 151. Nash, Rev. James, "Epiphany Dedication Souvenir." 1905, p. 69.

² "Souvenir," p.59.

Staff-Supplemented Photographs



Front (east) elevation, October 2020.

Staff-Supplemented Photographs



Front (east) and side (south) elevations, October 2020.

Staff-Supplemented Photographs



Side (south) elevation, October 2020.



Rear (west) elevation showing rectory, October 2020.

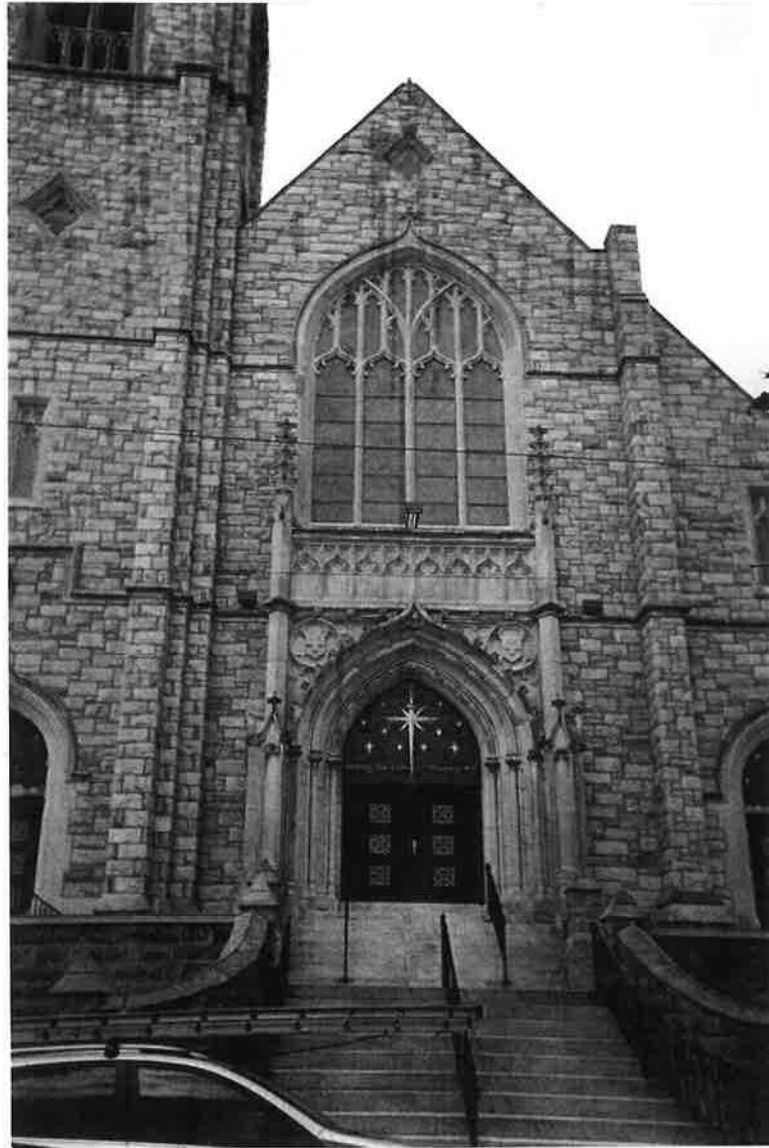
Staff-Supplemented Photographs



Rear (west) elevation showing rectory, October 2020.



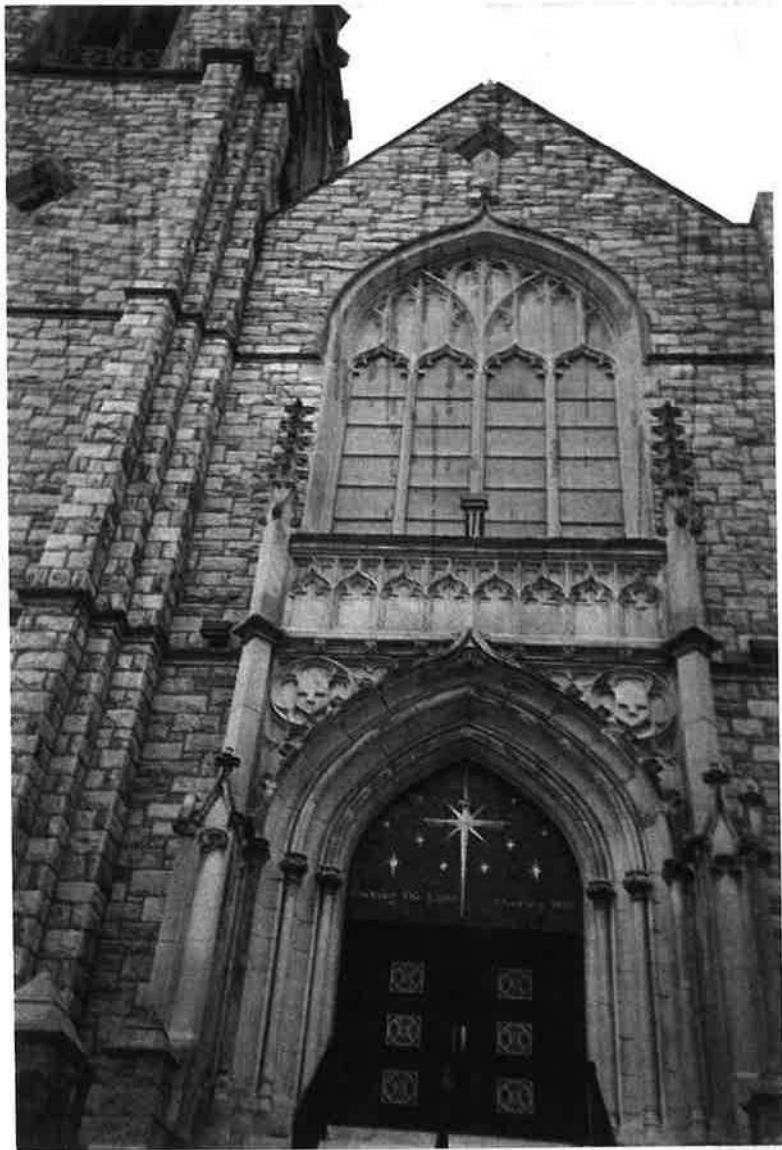
Front (east) and side (north) elevation, October 2020.



The facade at Epiphany Church from ground/street level where more height is achieved by the correlating Avonedale stone staircase leading to a platform, then more steps to the church vestibule.

The facade's layered elements were placed with the horizontal strips of the Indiana limestone, emphasizing how each piece of stone was carefully honed into squarish or rectangular sizes. The sharpness of the stonework contrasts with the frilly tracery and pinnacles.

This facade makes a dramatic scene for weddings, or funerals by the platform elevating those for whom the services occurred.

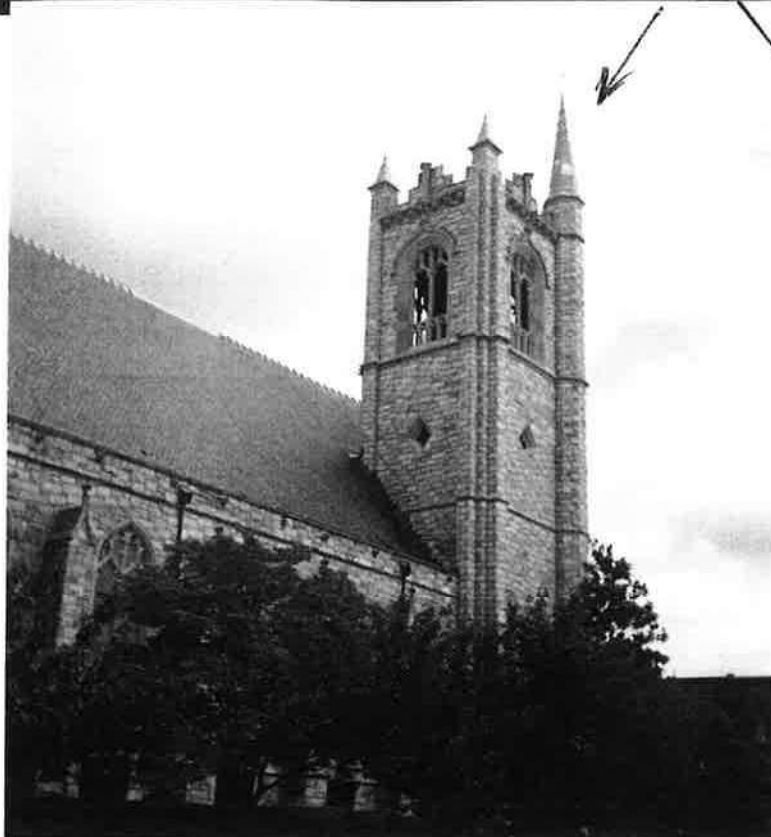


SOUTH 11th STREET: Facade at left has the stone carvings and tracery at the window--all from Gothic conventions.

The tiled tympanum above the doors has the "Bethlehem star" which refers to the celestial guide for the Three Wise Men, or Magi, who visited the Infant Jesus on a day known as the "Epiphany of Our Lord."

The cornerstone below indicates the deep basement chapel which held services from 1892 until 1902 when the church superstructure began and continued to the 1905 dedication by Archbishop Patrick J. Ryan. Services are still held in the basement chapel.

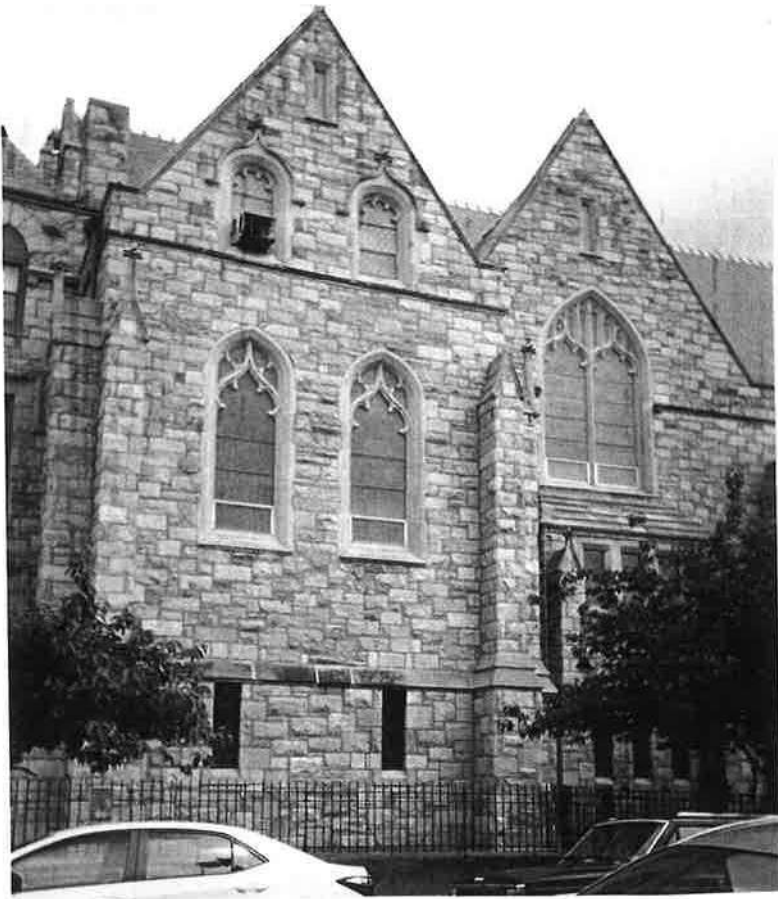




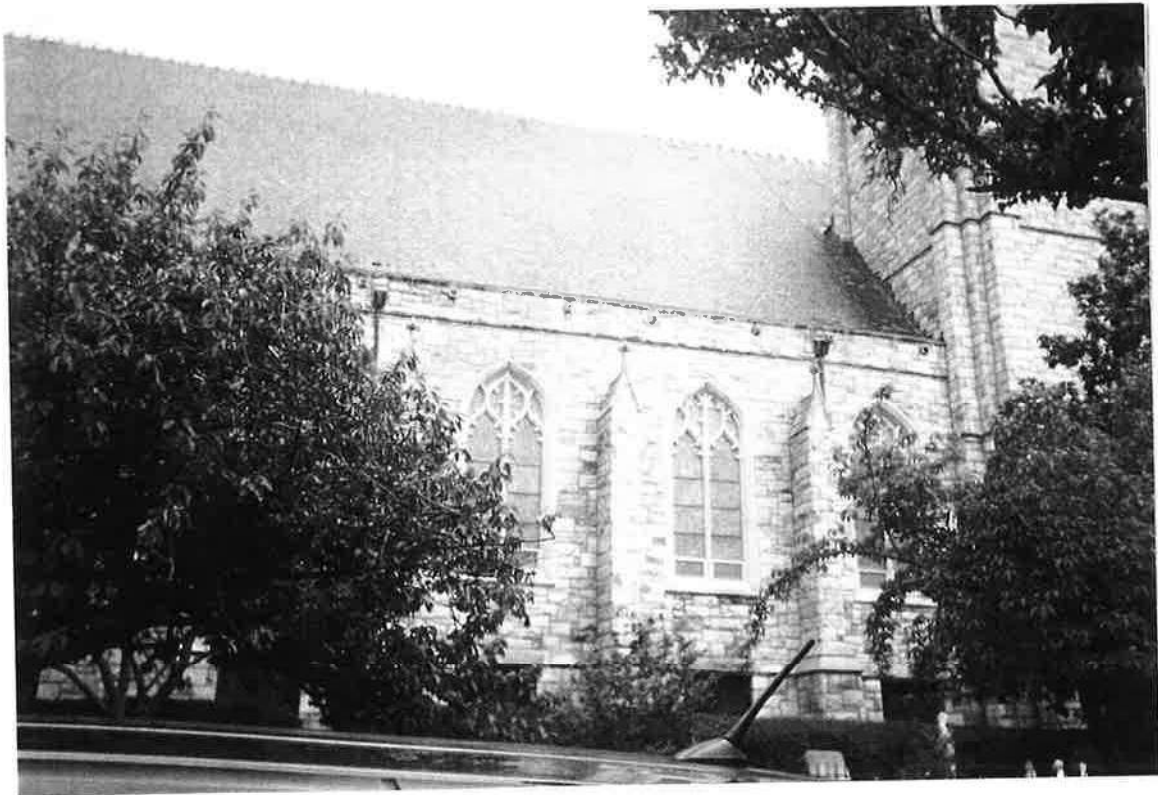
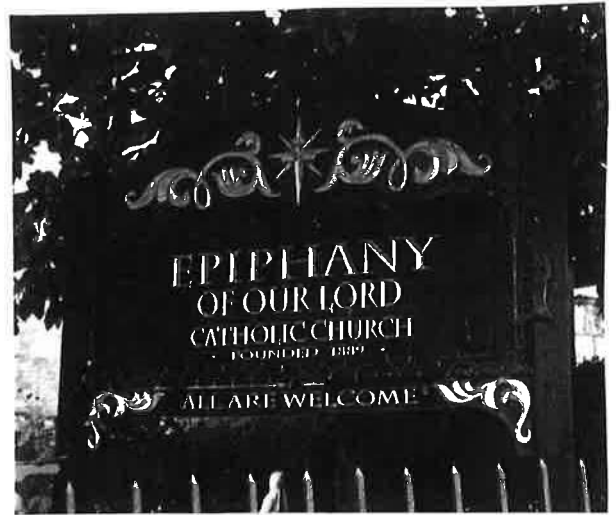
Perspectives of Epiphany's bell tower which is entirely intact, but for the (textured) tall finials at each top corner. (Compare to image, p.17).

Note how the finial at the southeast corner is always taller than the others.

JACKSON STREET: South side.
South transept (left) attached
to Rectory.

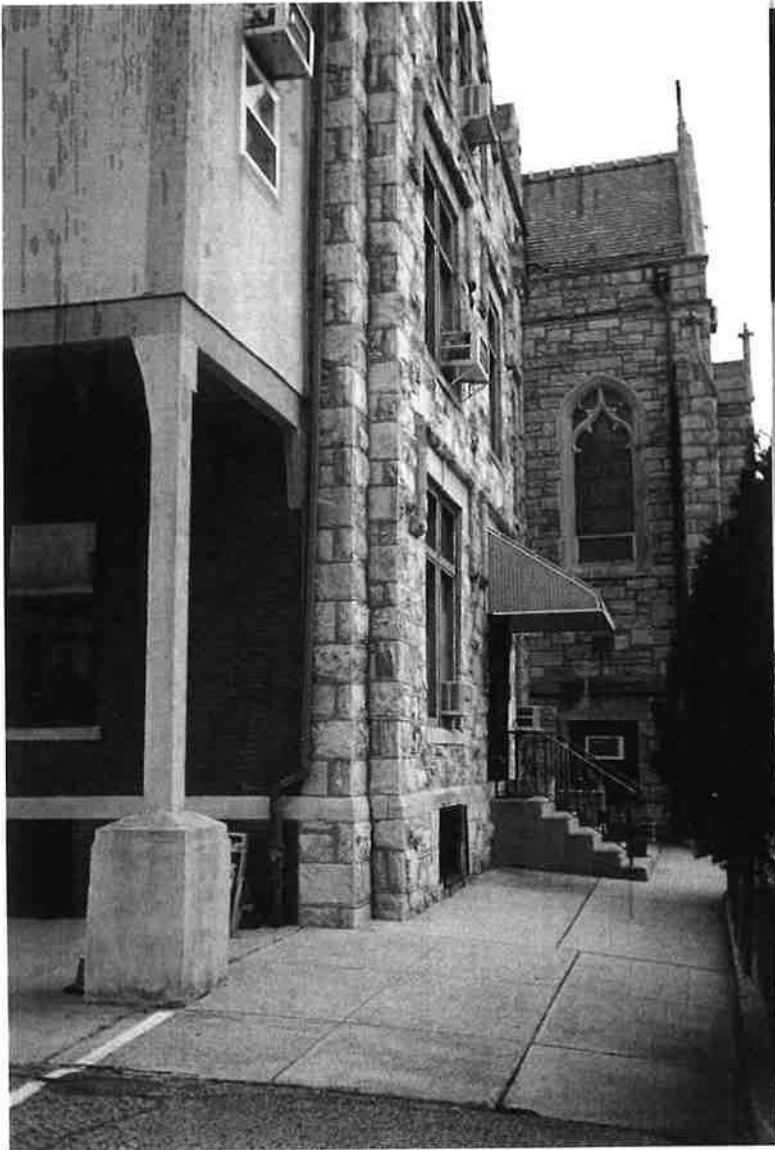


Below is south side of church
with stone buttresses between
the stained glass windows with
tracery.





WINTON STREET:
North side of
Rectory(top,right)
transept(left,top)
basement level
(left) on north.
Lawn and landscap-
ing (with statues)
on north and south.



Epiphany's Rectory:
Main entrance at 1121
Jackson Street (south);
west side with tiered
porches. Note brick.
Left: north side, from
Winton Street at 12th
Street, looking east.

STATEMENT of SIGNIFICANCE:

The Roman Catholic Church of the Epiphany (or Epiphany of Our Lord Roman Catholic Church) reflects the mastery of architect Frank R. Watson,³ once the apprentice of ecclesiastical architect Edwin F. Durang. Executed in a "High Gothic" with sculpted pinnacles and tracery at each of the Mayer & Company (Munich) stained glass windows, the craftsmanship at this church shows the founding pastor's efforts to praise God and the first parishioners' long decades of sacrifice in funding an elaborate basilican church which has been a landmark in the community since 1905.

What is most striking about the Church of the Epiphany is found in the biographical or lifeswork of its designer, Watson. He spent the years from about 1890 to the church's dedication in 1905 planning parish buildings in an area below Snyder Avenue and between the Delaware River and South Broad Street which had no Catholic place for services. Coinciding with the development of this part of Philadelphia during the years when the Vare brothers influ-⁴enced city and state politics, Epiphany's founding drew more southward settlement and residential, with commercial building. What had been occurring in the former farmland and swamp areas of South Philadelphia allowed the Catholics to occupy the new rowhouses here as streets were surveyed at this time. Watson the architect, had been involved in many areas extending beyond Center City, designing churches for Protestants and Catholics alike, but not spending decades at any one site, such as he did at Epiphany.

Indeed, for Watson, his experience at Epiphany parish and in designing a church with such details replicated from the Gothic had evidently affected his design for the Episcopalian Cathedral

³ Tatman, S. and Moss, R., Biographical Dictionary of Philadelphia Architects. Boston: 1985, p. 832.

⁴ George, Edwin and William Vare were from 4th and Snyder Avenue and became millionaires from City contract work, then entered politics. William was Recorder of Wills, rising to become U.S. Senator by the 1920s. He lived at 2304 South Broad St., a PHC-approved property.

of St. Mark's in Frankford. This church mirrors Epiphany (a mere Roman Catholic diocesan church!) but St. Mark's ⁵was to be the most important church--the seat of the Episcopal bishop--in its diocese. (Of course, non-Catholic churches are less ornate than Catholic ones, which raises Epiphany's architectural significance.)

Criteria (d), (e) and (h) thus merge in this instant narrative on Epiphany church as one of Watson's finest works. A student of medieval history, ⁶there is no doubt that Watson applied to Epiphany designs and motifs derived from 12th and 13th century French Gothics. What is more impressive is the care shown to this church and how intact these original features have been maintained by the parishioners since the 1905 dedication. Here, one of the few Roman Catholic interparochial schools, "Our Lady of Hope School" energizes the parish; the weekly subsidies are above average for local Catholic churches. One priest is stationed here, but there are always parishioners around the church overseeing the landscaping and maintenance.

Epiphany of Our Lord Roman Catholic Church is exemplary in its design, which honors architect Watson (who was competing with his former teacher in archdiocesan church plans at the time) for his skill and application of traditional "Roman Catholic" architecture such as the technical "High Gothic" here. This church deserves historical designation on sight and how it has affected the daily lives of so many over the century.

Celeste A. Morello, MS, MA
September, 2020
(During COVID-19 quarantine.)

⁵ The Frankford Historical Society has the fuller account on Watson's work on this Episcopal Cathedral, enhanced with information from
⁶ the Episcopal Church of Philadelphia.

Tatman and Moss, op.cit., p. 833 on Watson's membership with the Medieval Academy of America.

The Roman Catholic Church of the Epiphany...

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

(h) Owing to its unique location OR singular physical characteristic, represents an established and familiar visual feature of the neighborhood.

Standing amidst rows of plain, late 19th century attached brick homes, "Epiphany" church's Gothic design in gray stone is obvious and invites. Height, color, motifs in various Gothic shapes starkly effect the majesty and superiority of this building over the lesser overlooked rowhouses of no individualized taste. The planning of this church, just as other Roman Catholic churches, was intentional: the architecture was to manifest "Glory to God," through the Roman Catholic Church's tradition in designing buildings to create emotion and inspiration.

Gothic architecture began within Roman Catholic thought: with Abbott Suger at the Abbey of Saint-Denis near Paris, France in the late 1100s.⁷ In his attempts to alter the Romanesque abbey to be a higher structure, Suger is credited for bending the rounded (Roman) arch to force weight to the ground, instead of horizontally. The arch developed by Suger (or his Norman architect in his employ)⁸ was pointed--the description most often used for the "Gothic" as it became known. But, Abbott Suger was not only concerned about how a building would reach far greater height than before; he also sought to bring light and color to illuminate the church interior. Stained glass would thereafter be associated with the Gothic as the rise of France's great cathedrals (Chartres, Reims, Notre Dame and others) would introduce not only more polychromed glass (beyond the standard red and blue), but more ornamentation, such as tracery and architectural ornaments that tested stone masons and sculptors.

⁷ Suger's account of his creation of the Gothic is a popular history of the architectural style's origins: Panofsky, E., (ed. and trans.), On the Abbey Church of St. Denis and Its Art Treasures. Princeton, 1946, pp. 18-24.

⁸ See Janson, HW, History of Art. NY: Abrams, p. 286 where Suger's "Chief Architect" was noted as "Norman" who worked with the abbott at Ste.-Denis in altering the choir to "Gothic" with the pointed arch.

Epiphany Church was constructed in the Gothic, a style which is dated from "between 1137 and 1144" from northern France, outside of Paris. Attributed to Abbott Suger and his anonymous "Norman" architect, Gothic began in a Roman Catholic church and by the 19th century, became "secularized" in the non-religious buildings in England, then in the United States. For Roman Catholic churches in Philadelphia, the Gothic was first seen at Old St. Mary's R.C. Church's facade on South 4th Street, dating from the 1830s. Thereafter, Gothic arches were seen in "rustic" churches of shorter, ordinary design used in all religious denominations for smaller groups with little funds. Archdiocesan churches from the mid to late 19th century (under Archbishop Patrick J. Ryan) were exceptionally larger and more elaborate, due in part to the employment of Edwin F. Durang. As an ecclesiastical architect, specializing in Roman Catholic churches (he also designed Protestant ones), Durang's work raised the visible profile of Roman Catholics in a city still advocating the "Anglo-Saxon Protestant" character of its past. By the late 19th century, Roman Catholic churches and the accompanying parish buildings (rectory, convent and school) identified neighborhoods and formed socially-coherent networks.

Epiphany church was the first building in a parish formed in 1889 when the parish of the Annunciation, Blessed Virgin Mary (at 10th and Dickinson Streets) was divided.¹⁰ A "chapel" was erected for the local rowhouse residents already occupying the properties around the block bounded by 11th to 12th Streets, Winton to Jackson Streets. The Archdiocese permitted this new parish for an established group of mainly third generation descended from those who had fled Ireland, formed St. Paul's parish (1843), then moved southward for Annunciation's founding by 1860. There were many in self-employment and in professions to subsidize a new parish.

⁹ Refer to Clark, Dennis, *The Irish in Philadelphia*. Temple Univ. Press, 1973, pp.94-95.

¹⁰ Archdiocese Chronology of Parishes. Morello, CA, *Beyond History: The Times and People of St. Paul R.C. Church, 1843-1993*. Phila.: Jefferies & Manz, 1992, pp.67. St. Theresa's parish was also divided from St. Paul's at that time, to the west of St. Paul's.

Within two years of its founding, with Reverend James Nash appointed as the pastor, the first significant building was to be constructed: the Rectory, where clergy would live. Frank R. Watson was selected as architect, having just done work at Annunciation parish.¹¹ The contractor would be Michael Whelan¹² for a structure of red brick on three sides and a facade of Avondale (gray) stone and Indiana limestone ornamentation around the windows. For this building, the Gothic was not emphasized: this residence would take a minor, but important position to the future church. Usually, rectories were attached to churches, to give priests immediate access to the church's interior and the locked Holy Eucharist, the most sacred and essence of a Roman Catholic church.

In 1892 and again in 1893, Watson's plans for the church were published in local newspapers. (See next page)

In the interim years from 1890 to 1896, pews at the chapel were charged, more funds were raised through various festivals and celebrations, and a school building was in use. But, Archbishop Ryan was consulted on how to proceed for a more spacious school, or new church and Ryan chose the former. The delay for the construction of the new church however, was not for naught. A very deep basement was excavated along Watson's dimensions and this would suffice as the new worship site until more funding was collected.

Father Nash's "Souvenir" booklet did not indicate whether the plans for the church had been shown to the Epiphany congregants, but the amount needed for an elaborate Gothic church of basilican size was not met until 1902. Cornelius Kiely was the contractor, and Frank A. Colgan (a stone mason used frequently by Durang) would handle the Avondale stonework which would be flawlessly attached to the Rectory's east wall. John Maene would be hired for the delicate

11

12 Tatman and Moss, p. 834.

All contractors were named by Father Nash in the "Souvenir."



The Times, November 7, 1892, p. 3.



The Philadelphia Inquirer, June 14, 1893, p.2.

tracery at each of the Munich stained glass windows and portals. He may also have been responsible for the pinnacles and other Gothic ornamentation.

Medieval art historian Zarnecki wrote that tracery on windows is characteristic of "High Gothic" and was first seen in the Cathedral at Rheims (or Reims) in the early 13th century.¹³ Tracery put more attention to Gothic stained glass windows, often forming the "rose window" design on facades or at the eastern walls (at the altar sites). The tracery would need coordination with the glass makers and with the information from Father Nash, the reader would know that Watson planned what color schemes and the subjects of Epiphany church's north and south windows and the east (facade) window. The orderly flow of these windows' subjects would have to include Nash as well in guiding the architect on particular "Roman Catholic" subjects, such as the Blessed Virgin Mary's status in Church doctrine.¹⁴ One might notice that Epiphany's Gothic style ran parallel to the French cathedrals in honoring Mary, the "Notre Dame" of cathedrals rising in multiples in the late Middle Ages. As the Gothic gained in acceptance throughout northern France, then to Germany, England and Italy, the style became more elaborate with more tracery, more exterior decorations in stone or sculpture in any voided area. Scenes from the life of Mary were part of the entire theme of the Epiphany of Our Lord when Mary received the Magi (Three Wise Men) to see Her Child. The church's stained glass then continues the tradition begun at Chartres Cathedral (1194-1220) in "High Gothic" use of honoring Mary in this medium in one-half of the church's windows.

¹³ Zarnecki, G., Art of the Medieval World. NY: Abrams, p. 349.

¹⁴ Roman Catholic doctrine holds Mary to a higher status than other denominations, even Eastern Orthodox, because She is the mother of Jesus. "The Epiphany" stained glass window is adjacent to the "Coronation of the Blessed Virgin."



CHURCH OF THE EPIPHANY

(Source: "Souvenir"(1905). Catholic Historical Research Ctr.)

Art historians agree that the French cathedral at Chartres, which arose about thirty years after Notre Dame Cathedral in Paris, represents the "High Gothic" or maturation of the Gothic from Ste.-Denis and Notre Dame where height and light became the hallmarks of the Gothic. Notre Dame's extended (about ninety years) period of experimenting and implimenting the new architectural conventions of stained glass (with tracery), the sculptures, steeple and buttresses however, were not fully adapted at Rheims (Reims), another example of "High Gothic" with its own signature elements. Dating from 1225 (and for about seventy years after), Rheims Cathedral has a gable at the facade--which Epiphany Church emulated--along with the delineated horizontals(of the Indiana limestone). At Epiphany, height was dramatized more in the bulky stone staircase on the east facade side, in the same Avondale masonry as if to continue the church building further. (At Rheims, the portals project at the ground level from the upper levels of the church building.)

The Church of the Epiphany's "Landmark" characteristics:

The 1905 image of the Epiphany church from the vantage of the southeast-to-northwest side shows the spatial distance of the church to the rather broad intersection and shorter rowhouses. This has not visually changed, as no new construction has arisen around the church. But for the razing of the building on the southeast corner of Snyder Avenue at 11th Street, Epiphany church is more of a landmark in open view of the heavy traffic on Snyder.

The contrasting architecture of the church to the brick rowhouses is nothing unusual in many Philadelphia workingclass neighborhoods: it is intentional for hierarchal and religious purposes. The skill required in the execution of the Gothic also exceeds that

for the typical Philadelphia rowhouse in areas such as this. The rowhouses were to be affordable to the workingclass while the Catholic church was to be expensively executed again, "For the Glory of God." Such was the purpose of planning Epiphany church as a "landmark" to be seen in an area where Protestant churches outnumbered the sole Roman Catholic one until Our Lady of Mount Carmel R.C. parish would be founded to Epiphany's southeast in "1896."¹⁵ That year was when the church's plans were approved by Father Nash, but the Epiphany elementary school took precedence in funding because the parish's growth warranted a larger school. Catholic education was a priority and it obviously drew more parishioners towards Epiphany and the area in general. This fact would have caused the Archdiocese to divide Epiphany at that early date (a mere seven years after its founding) from a parish spanning the Delaware River to Broad Street, southward to the "Neck," to create a parish closer to the Delaware. "Mount Carmel" then would also have absorbed some of Sacred Heart of Jesus parish's southern area.

There were Methodist and Baptist churches around Epiphany, but none had the height as the Catholic Gothic. This era in Philadelphia history under Archbishop Ryan saw a boldness in the numerous Catholic churches rising suddenly, some in established Protestant neighborhoods. Under Ryan, more Catholic churches were crammed into the City than in the suburban counties, with more national churches¹⁶ to accommodate newcomers in the New Migration. Some chroniclers have attributed the mobility of the Irish descendants at this time to the arrivals of the poor immigrants from eastern and southern Europe who forced the moves from neighborhoods closer to Center City to West, North or South Philadelphia and new parishes, such as Epiphany of Our Lord.

¹⁵ Mount Carmel's church is another Watson design which arose much later.
¹⁶ Clark, op.cit., referred to a "residential" dispersion after the Civil War, pp.166-167 and where the "new immigrants" moved into neighborhoods formerly occupied by the Irish in the 1880s on p. 142. The Irish Americans who became Epiphany's first parishioners were hemmed in by Protestant churches at 11th/Mifflin Streets; 13th/Wolf Streets; 5th/Snyder Avenue; and 3rd/Snyder Avenue--dating from the 1880s and 1890s.

Measuring the numbers of Roman Catholics versus the Protestants below Snyder Avenue, east of Broad Street by the number of churches in their respective denominations would find the variation of non-Catholic churches did outnumber Epiphany parish in 1900; however with the founding of Our Lady of Mount Carmel (southeast of Epiphany) parish by 1896, the scope widens. South Philadelphia's eastern European Jewish population was also rising with a significant number of synagogues.¹⁷ These religious buildings may have seemed to be "landmarks," but they were not as conspicuous in size and height as Epiphany of Our Lord Roman Catholic church, which was what Father Nash and architect Frank Watson had accomplished visually.

Epiphany church's "landmark" presence, design and reflexive response by those seeing the church would be the key factors in one of Watson's most demanding and important projects: The Episcopal Cathedral of St. Mark's in Frankford. This project would best be placed within criterion (e) where the "work (of Epiphany church) is of a designer, architect...who has significantly influenced the historical, architectural, economic, social, or cultural development of the City, Commonwealth, or Nation."

Frank Rushmore Watson (1859-1940) was from the old, established neighborhood of Frankford, where the textile workers periodically raged against their employers, or to Irish Catholics in nearby Kensington. Largely Protestant, Frankford's Episcopal community had dominated the area since the founding of St. Mark's Church in 1832. How affected young Frank Watson was by the changes made at St. Mark's towards the Oxford Movement are unknown, but Watson easily designed Catholic and Protestant churches according to the conven-

¹⁷ Synagoges are identifiable at 2nd/Porter Streets; 1900 block of South 4th; 2200 South 6th Street; The Stifel Center on Porter St. still bears Hebrew words and numbers on the facade.

ventions of each religion. He had learned this from his teacher, Edwin F. Durang, the architect who was almost exclusively the architect of the Archdiocese, until Watson set out in his own office by the early 1880s. From that time, Watson would be another choice for Catholic pastors to plan buildings for parishes.

The difference in Catholic and Protestant churches depends on how astray the Protestant religion veered from the Roman church. The American Episcopal church which had originally been part of the Church of England (Anglican), renounced many "Roman Catholic" elements in church design, especially mindful in the portrayals of the Blessed Virgin Mary who held a higher and more sacred status with the Roman Church. Catholics used more ornamentation and honored saints who were canonized after King Henry VIII's reign. (Catholic church interiors are another matter for discussion.) Crucifixes rather than crosses are "Roman," too. Therefore, in rendering a Gothic church for Protestants (when the Gothic originated with the highly ornate French medieval cathedrals prior to the Reformation and emergence of non-Catholic religions), a pared-down Gothic would be drawn. This was evident in Watson's Borean Baptist Tabernacle at 40th and Chestnut Streets, (PHC-approved), dating from 1896-1897.

Source of image: Minardi, Joseph, Historic Architecture in West Philadelphia: 1789-1930s. Atglen, PA: Schiffer Pub., 2011.



Epiphany of Our Lord Roman Catholic Church as the Model for the Anglican Cathedral, St. Mark's in Frankford:

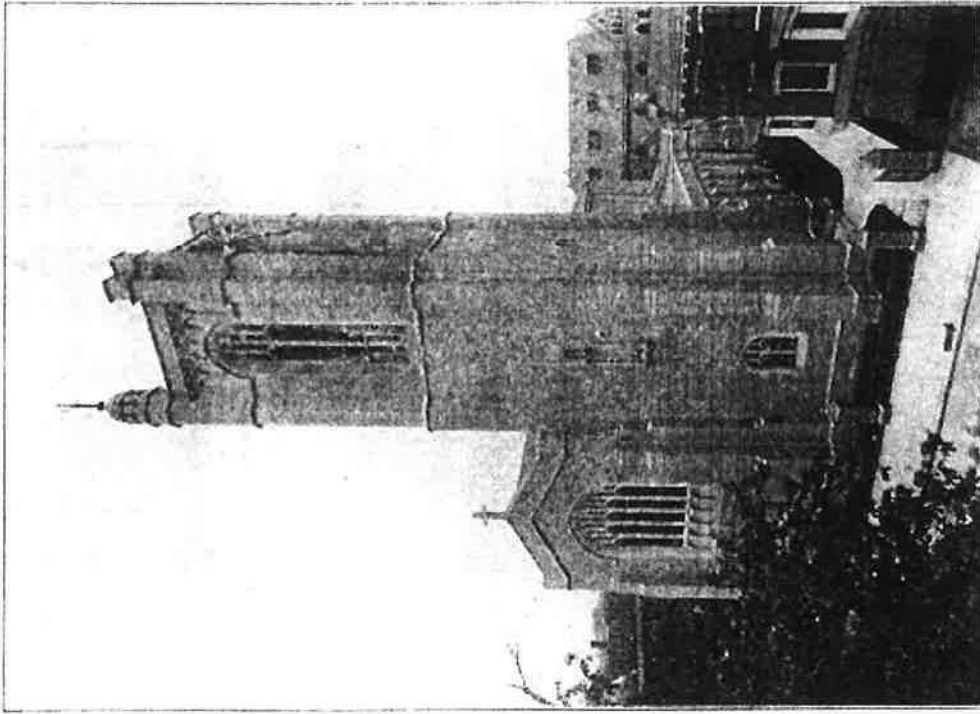
Frank Watson's hiring by Father Nash in about 1890 was for designing buildings for a Roman Catholic parish, which consists of the church, rectory, convent and school. These were the standard structures for a parish to continue to thrive. With Epiphany, the slow pace of construction was due to what parishioners could afford, (not the Archdiocese) and how they could sustain a parish community. This fact had been known to Watson where he had designed large churches of skillful design, such as Our Lady of the Rosary or St. Anthony of Padua, landmarks in their own right who were financed over time by faithful. Alternatively, the parish of St. Leo's was only able to afford a "rustic" church bearing none of the stylishness of the late 19th century designs, or the elaborate characteristics of Roman Catholic churches in more established neighborhoods. Father Nash's experiences with Durang at St. Joachim's, and perhaps more knowledge of the Gothic enabled him to pursue a church whose design would represent Roman Catholicism that would progress into the future. The foresight of the priest and parishioners into the very patient stages of raising money for not only a structure, but for the extra accoutrements (Munich stained glass, tracery and carved stone work) would take nearly a decade. The particular care in constructing this church--from the hacking of each stone for the squared or rectangular placements, to the masonry itself which wove in and out at the tower and facade, Epiphany demonstrated quality. Apparently, its architect, Watson realized this.

Epiphany church was finally ready to be dedicated by Archbishop Ryan in 1905. Father Nash wrote and published the "Souvenir" to memorialize the event, the participants and the details of the church's exterior and interior, including the contractors.

That was in 1905; the cornerstone of St. Mark's Cathedral for the Episcopal Diocese has "1907" and work there would continue to 1915. One can only speculate why St. Mark's, still an Anglican (not really "Episcopal" but more akin to the traditional Church of England) church, would carry so many of the Roman Catholic Epiphany Church's architectural characteristics--but this fact renders more significance to Epiphany's design by Watson.

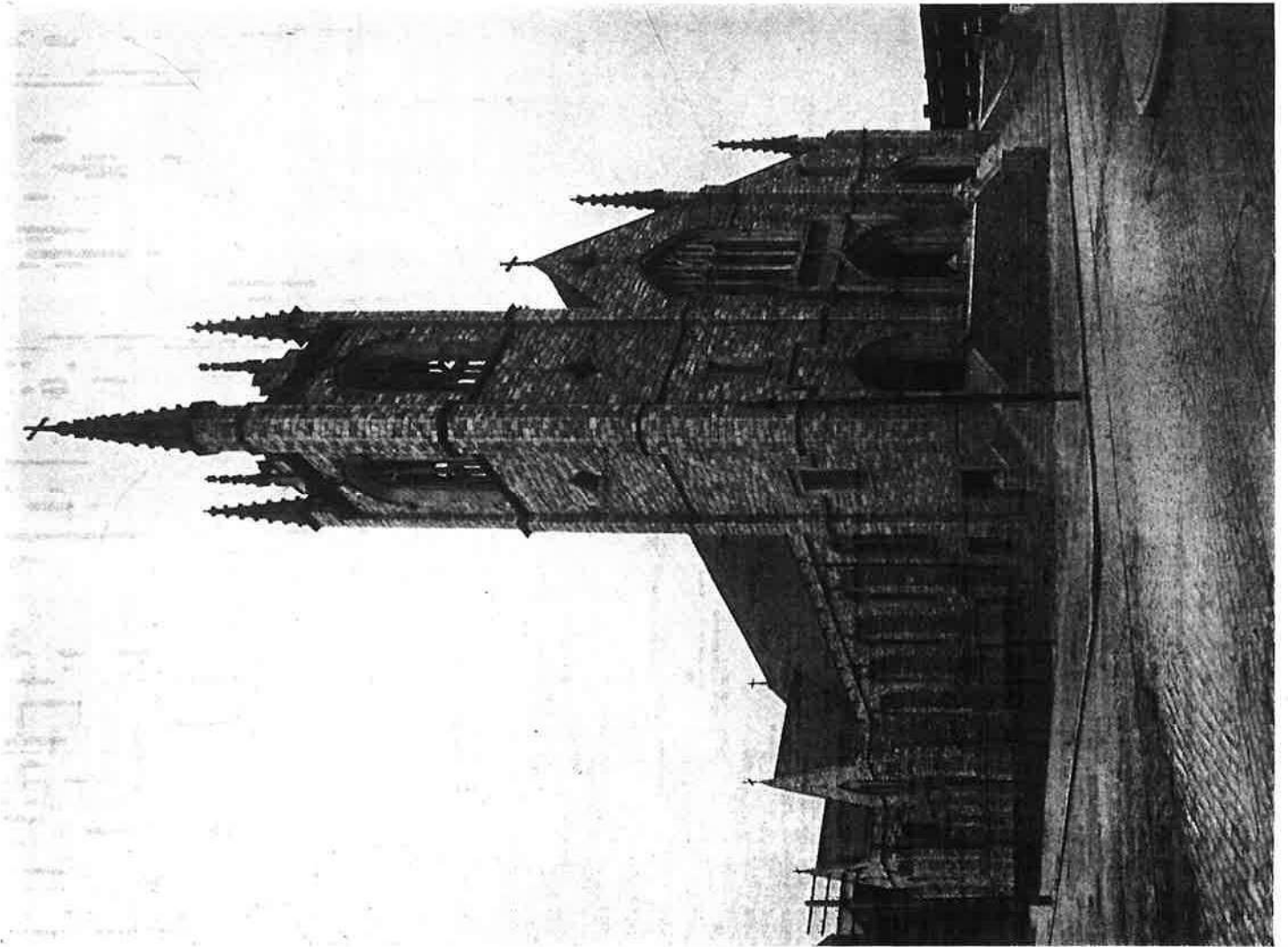
St. Mark's, the Cathedral for the Episcopal Diocese:

In "A Historical Look at St. Mark's Church," (1916), The Reverend John B. Harding wrote about the Frankford church which was constructed under his rectorship. He noted St. Mark's relationship with "Trinity, Oxford" (England) since the 1830s, with the "services (in Frankford) in charge of the Rev. George Sheets" from the English Trinity Church in Oxford. The "Oxford Movement" began with some theological scholars at the medieval university in Oxford where there was a sudden reconsideration of Roman Catholicism at the Anglican-run school. Centuries after King Henry VIII denounced the pope and created his own church, with him as the Head, Anglicans from the 1830s (three centuries later) explored the foundation of the division from Roman Catholicism. By then, as well as in the 16th century, Church of England followers repudiated iconoclastic tradition such as the stained glass windows, statues, relics in reliquaries, and other "Catholic Art." Typical of Protestant churches, the exteriors were plain, devoid of ornamentation or anything arousing the senses. But, the Oxford Movement ceded more to "Roman" tradition, and many Anglicans eventually converted to Roman Catholicism, including many clergy. So, by the 1840s, ecclesiastical architecture for Roman Catholic churches still dominated in decorative details and adherence to traditional motifs, but Anglican churches closely resembled them. Earlier examples in Philadelphia of Anglican church-



St. Mark's Church, Frankfurt

Architect Watson's completed Epiphany of Our Lord Church (1905) is the obvious prototype for the Episcopal Cathedral, St. Mark's in Frankfurt (1907-1915) with numerous details in the plan and facade in common, but Epiphany is more elaborate.



CHURCH OF THE EPIPHANY

ches derived from the John Notman rendering of St. Mark's on Locust Street, which Webster said encompassed "elements of Roman Catholicism that had been purged during the Reformation."¹⁸ This church dates from 1848-1851, was influenced by clergy at Oxford and had a rather long run in acceptance by American Anglicans in the city. (Ironically, Watson's partner at Epiphany, architect Samuel Huckel had in 1892 to 1893 worked on the Locust Street church's parish house with his former partner, Hazlehurst.) This St. Mark's is described as "Gothic Revival." Richard Upjohn's Trinity Church (1839) in New York City was one of the first Gothics for non-Catholics in the United States, standardizing the Catholic Gothic for Protestants.

The Gothic, known as Roman Catholic in origin and a style for Catholic churches dovetailed the Oxford Movement's goals in trying to find why the Roman Catholic Church's doctrine caused "protestations" by so many in the 16th century. John Ruskin, an art critic, writer and student at Oxford in the 1840s, defended the Gothic as "honest" and "Christian" as he lectured on architecture. But, how long the Gothic Revival would last--and how by the 1890s, its use was less seen except for churches--and in a "Victorian Gothic."¹⁹ Epiphany church was not "Victorian" anywhere within its design; this may have been the agreement between Nash and Watson, or something else on why a purer Gothic remained at Epiphany, and would be likewise seen at the Frankford St. Mark's.

Comparing the Roman Catholic Epiphany with the Anglican St. Mark's seems neverending: the horizontal limestone divides, the masonry, the tracery at the main (east) window which is under a gable topped with a cross, the stained glass (Munich), the treat-

¹⁸ Webster, R., Philadelphia Preserved. Temple Univ. Press, pp.110;
¹⁹ 143 (on Huckel).

Brown, M., American Art. NY: Abrams, 1979, p. 252.

ment of the stone masonry and other stone carvings.... But, there was no theatrical facade to initiate the emotionally-spiritual response upon seeing the church, then ascending the stairs in awe. St. Mark's has no facade on Frankford Avenue, the main thoroughfare, to note its presence. Unlike Epiphany, the Anglican church also does not drive the eyes upward--as the Gothic is supposed to do. While resembling Epiphany so keenly, St. Mark's still is restrained as most Protestant churches are. So, while Epiphany was indeed the "model" for St. Mark's, the latter Protestant church is still truer to its doctrine than following more of the Oxford Movement's theories.

Frank R. Watson at Epiphany:

Watson had drawn a plan for Annunciation, BVM Church in 1889,²⁰ the year of Epiphany's establishment from Annunciation's southern part of the parish. There were not many choices in ecclesiastical architects at the time, with Watson's former teacher, Durang, engaged in most archdiocesan projects in the city, suburbs, then in New Jersey and other states. In fact, Durang asked Watson to assist him in designing St. Agnes Hospital (for the Franciscan nuns) not far from Epiphany at Broad Street and McKean Street where crossing at Passyunk Avenue in 1880.²¹ Watson experienced Durang's work for the religious, Church hierarchy and their specialized services in previous decades to be known. Watson was the likely choice of architect, but Father Nash seemed well pleased with him to retain Watson for nearly two decades. In fact, Father Nash included a formal photograph of Watson in the 1905 "Souvenir" (reprinted here next page,) And Watson is given broad credit at Epiphany, from planning which stone to use to which scenes from the life of Christ and His Mother would be chosen and done in certain colors for the church's north and south walls. Evidently, Father Nash was grateful to Watson.

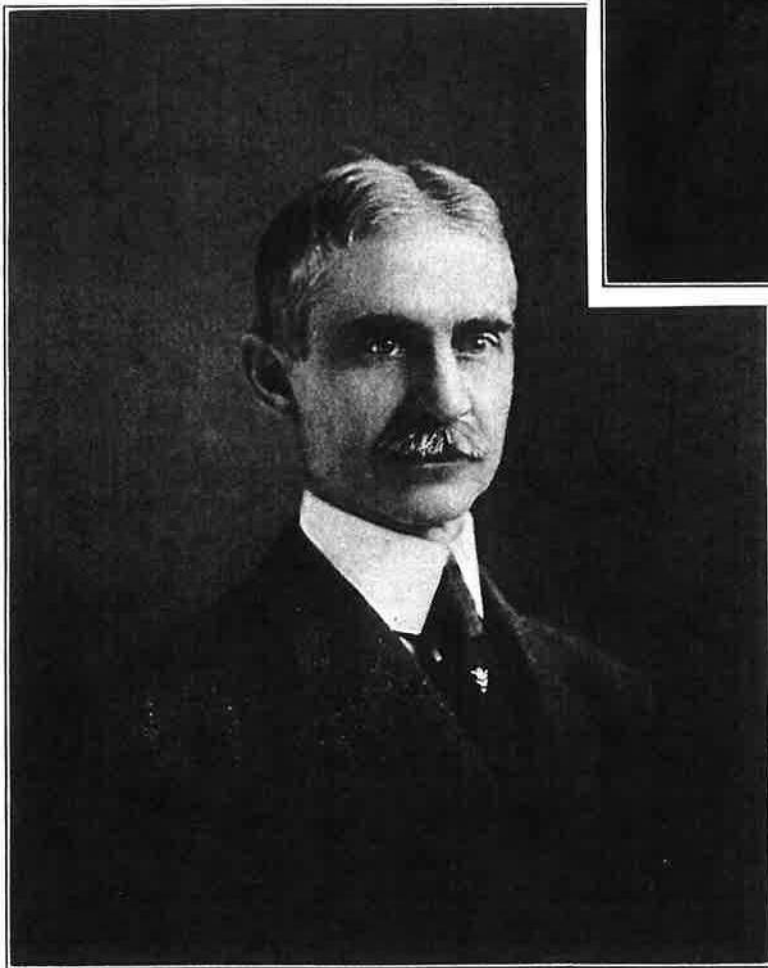
²⁰ Tatman & Moss, op.cit., p. 230.

²¹ Ibid., p. 834.

The principals in the planning and construction of the Roman Catholic Church of the Epiphany, c.1895 to 1905 when consecrated by Archbishop Patrick J. Ryan: Pastor James Nash and Architect Frank R. Watson, whose portrait was included by Father Nash in the 1905 publication of the Church.



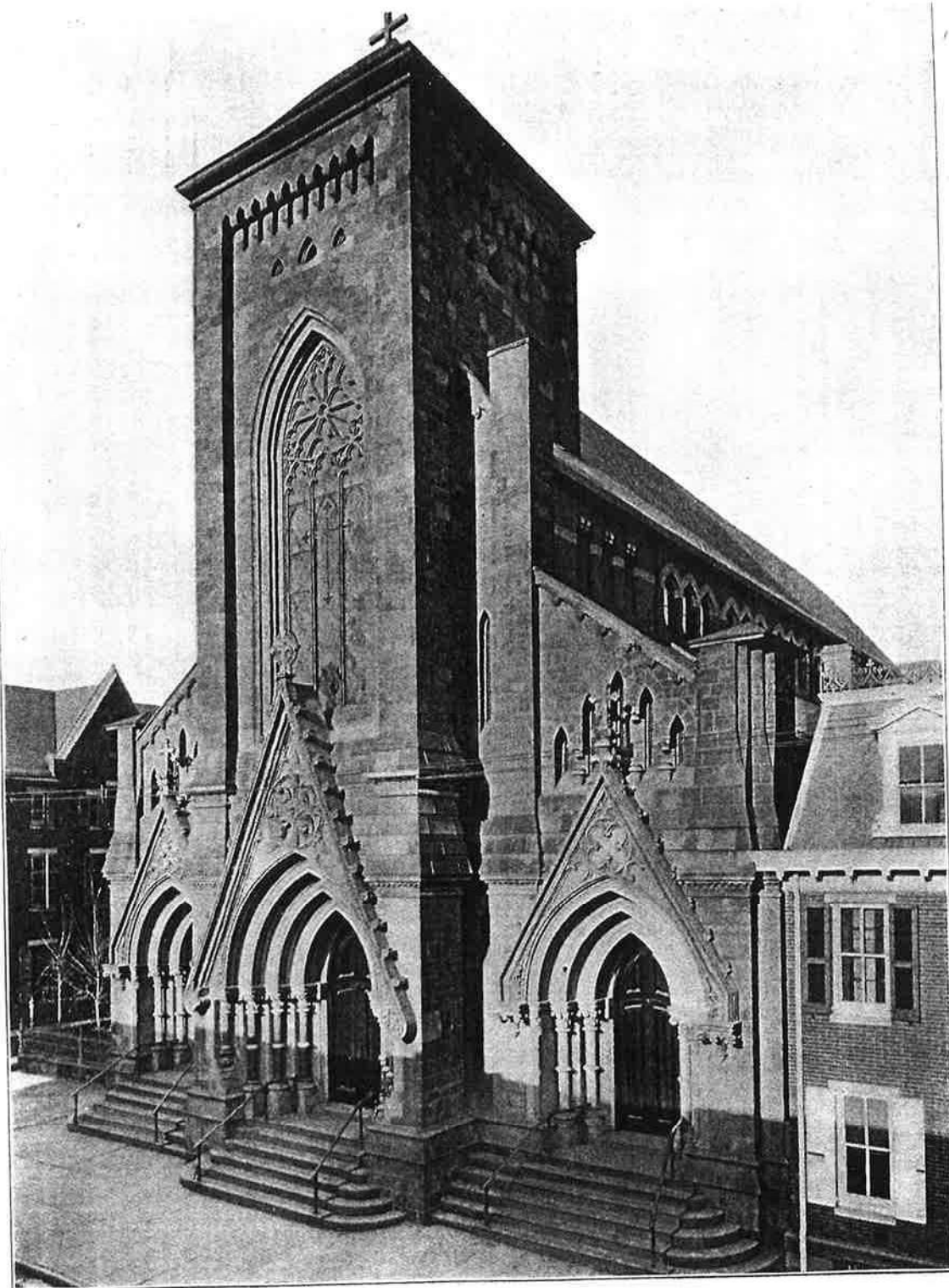
FATHER NASH, Rector



FRANK R. WATSON

Father Nash was called "The Little Church Builder" from when he oversaw the building of St. Joachim's in Frankford, Watson's birthplace. (St. Joachim's was designed by Watson's teacher, Edwin F. Durang.) Watson worked at Epiphany parish for about 15 years while developing other projects elsewhere.

Father Nash became experienced in the planning and construction of Roman Catholic churches while at St. Joachim's in Frankford. Below is the former church, designed by Frank Watson's teacher, Edwin F. Durang in the 1870s. Here, the strong Gothic elements were applied, but with the symmetry of the Romanesque.



Source of photo:
Durang's "Album."
Catholic Historical
Research Center,
Philadelphia.

ST. JOACHIM'S CHURCH, FRANKFORD, PHILADELPHIA

Tatman's biographical sketch of Watson listed his memberships as well as his lengthy career which included "technical advisor" to the Philadelphia Housing "Association" (now, "Authority") from 1929 to 1932. Samuel Huckel had become Watson's partner by 1902 when Epiphany church was in construction, and remained as the firm's co-principal until his death in 1917. Thereafter, Watson took on other partners, but the firm dissolved upon Watson's death in 1940.

This Commission has approved many other Watson churches, such as St. Leo's and St. Anthony's ("Rosary" remains in limbo; the Christian Street Baptist Church was denied for demolition) and the West Philadelphia Borean Baptist Church, with more Protestant churches designated than Roman Catholic. What is significant is that Watson's designs were original and not derived from European buildings (as Durang was oft to do, with his own interpretations). There are not many Watson churches existing, but Epiphany's design, as a model for the Episcopal Diocese's Cathedral, should matter greatly and be regarded as one of Watson's successes in Gothic Revival.

Celeste A. Morello, MS, MA
September, 2020
(During COVID-19 quarantine)

BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES: (Primary and Secondary):

Brown, M., American Art. NY: Abrams.

Clark, Dennis, The Irish in Philadelphia. Temple Univ. Press.

Janson, HW, History of Art. NY: Abrams.

Mahony, D., Historical Sketches of the Catholic Churches... 1895.

Minardi, J., Historic Architecture in West Philadelphia, Schiffer.

Nash, Rev. James, "Souvenir," Phila., 1905.

Tatman, S. and Moss, R., Biographical Dictionary of Philadelphia Architects. Boston: Hall, 1985.

Webster, R., Philadelphia Preserved. Temple Univ. Press, 1981.

Zarnecki, G., Art of the Medieval World. NY: Abrams.

Free Library of Philadelphia Map Collection

Catholic Historical Research Center, Phila.: "Souvenir" and information in "Epiphany of Our Lord" parish file; Durang Album.

On-line information on St. Mark's Episcopal Church, Frankford.

Special thanks to:

Mr. Shawn Weldon, Chief Archivist, CHRC, Phila.

Councilman Mark Squilla and Staff (for scanning.)

199-102

P-0037

~~277.4811~~

~~EP4.6~~

102.84.1

8-4.05 EPH

EPIPHANY DEDICATION SOUVENIR



DESCRIPTION

OF THE

Church of the Epiphany

Eleventh and Jackson Streets

PHILADELPHIA

AND

HISTORY OF THE PARISH

From the Formation to the
Present Date

JAMES NASH, RECTOR

October 1, 1905

taken in each family to be made in partial payments. It was made in partial payments in another sense than that intended, for only a part of those who subscribed paid.

June 2, 1901—Trinity Sunday—Rev. Hugh J. Bowen, who had been ordained the day before celebrated his first Mass in the Epiphany, in which parish he and his family belong.

June 7, 1903—Trinity Sunday—Rev. Stephen P. Dever and Joseph A. Hughes, whose families live in the parish, for the first time celebrated Holy Mass, having been ordained the day before.

June 18, 1905—Trinity Sunday—Rev. Martin Coleman, of this parish, said his first Mass in the Epiphany. He was ordained the day before.

February 19, 1902—A meeting was held in the School Hall to begin work to raise a fund for the furnishing of the new church. The meeting was largely attended and much enthusiasm was shown. It was determined to raise, by means of a fair, \$10,000. Diligent preparation for the fair was made by the earnest workers of the parish. It opened in the School Hall, April 7, 1902, and lasted three weeks. It was very successful, netting in the neighborhood of \$10,000. The pastors' contest, which continued until August 15, brought in an additional \$4,320, and placed the finances of the church in such condition that the pastor was warranted in having the architect, Mr. Frank R. Watson, draw up the plans and specifications and call for bids. These were opened on Saturday, August 2, 1902, and the contract awarded to the lowest bidder, Cornelius Kiely, carpenter and general contractor. Work was at once begun. It has taken three years to build and finish the superstructure. Frank A. Colgan was the stone mason; Thomas Kane the plasterer; John McCann supplied the steam heating; Harry C. Mellon the plumbing; the electric piping and



THE NORMANDIE

Chestnut and 36th Streets

A few bright commodious apartments for lease. Cuisine unexcelled. Service faultless. Crystal Spring Water used throughout the building. Call and let us have the pleasure of showing you around.



GEO. W. ROLETTER

Dealer in

Honey Cured Hams, Rose Flavor

2117 South Thirteenth Street

THE BEST HAM IN THE WORLD

wiring was done by Albert Gentel; Wilt & Son made the mill work; Martin Callanan placed the outside glass; Mayer & Co., of Munich, made the stained glass and the stations of the Cross; Horn & Brannen the gas and electric fixtures; Giese & Goodyear the altar candelabra and brass work; Ledig & Son the tabernacle doors and altar gates; John Maene the stone carving inside and outside; Lorenzo C. Scattaglia, decorative frescoing, and J. Franklin Whitman Co. the altars, sanctuary railing and sanctuary floor.

While we think the whole church is beautiful and that it does honor to its designer, Frank R. Watson, we call especial attention to the entrance steps, to the front gable, to the stone tracery of the windows, to the great stone chancel arch, to the stained glass windows, the unique Caen stone Stations of the Cross, and to our glorious altars and sanctuary. Much thought and care as well as money has been spent on the church, and there it stands an offering to God, from the faith and hearts of his people.

The judgments of men may differ about its beauty, or the taste shown in its color or form, but about its acceptability before God there is no doubt.

The High Altar and the sanctuary floor are from the offerings of all the people. The Blessed Virgin's Altar from the Sodality of the Blessed Virgin, St. Joseph's Altar from the T. A. B. societies and the sanctuary rail largely from the offerings of the Children of Mary. During the progress of the work the Sodality and the Temperance Societies held a series of entertainments which brought them the money for their altars and the two great transept windows. In the same way the Children of Mary did their work. And greatest of all was the fair and drawing for a house on Porter Street, which brought \$16,000 and ensured the finishing of the church.

The Altar Society as its special office and reason provided the altar candelabra and furnishings from designs especially drawn for our church. It will be noticed that inside the church and outside, in tower, gable, transept, door, window, altar or candlestick there is a complete unity of design. The color scheme is somewhat unusual but harmonious and pleasing.

In the sanctuary five different stones are seen: The arch of Indiana limestone, the floor and steps of Vermont marble, the top and base and tile dots of Sienna marble, the altar table of a pinkish Italian marble, and the altars, screen and reredos of Caen stone.

The use of the latter stone is somewhat new to the Catholic churches of Philadelphia, but is quite frequent in Europe and is justified here over marble by its warmth of tone, its easy working and its cheapness. The pews are from the Josephine Church Furniture Company, of Columbus, Ohio, an ecclesiastical institution. The tile work of the vestibules and aisles from Sharpless & Watts.

Before mentioning the individual donors of windows, stations, or articles for the furnishing of the Altars, we must speak some words of praise for the workers of the parish, some since departed out of this life, some grown old in the service of the church, and letting the work to younger hands, and some still with us, untiring and faithful. How helpless in the work of building up a parish would be a priest without these true souls. They are in every parish, the main support, the sure reliance and chief encouragement of the pastor. They are in the Epiphany parish, have been with us from the beginning, and in the Providence of God, with due recognition of the zeal of the clergy and the generosity of the laity, the success of the upbuilding of the parish has been due to these "Parish Workers." They work and they give. To them and to the faithful who patiently and with trust in their clergy gave mostly out of small means week after week for years, this church is a monument and fountain of grace. They have erected an enduring testimony of their faith, and with many sacrifices have endeavored to make it an acceptable dwelling place for the Lamb of God.

expediency in building; of getting effects at the expense of good and durable construction; of masquerading, as it were, in architecture.

If the Church stands for any one thing it is for truth and the development of character, and she should stand for this in her building as well. With this high ideal in view the Church of the Epiphany has been designed and executed, and stands today a pure example of its style—the late decorated Gothic—and a fitting dwelling place, it is hoped, for the Spirit and the Presence of our Blessed Lord.

The building consists of two distinct churches, the ground floor or basement being complete in every respect, having a large sanctuary containing a high altar and two small altars dedicated to St. Joseph and the Blessed Virgin. There are two sacristies, one being most commodious, and four confessionals.

The heating apparatus occupies the west end of the basement, a large coal storage vault extending under the yard space between the church and the rectory. The entrance to this basement chapel are ample in size and are at the eastern end of the building on Jackson and Winton Streets, and are entirely independent of the main approach to the church.

The main floor is approached by a broad concourse on which open three doorways. The central door is treated richly with recessed jambs flanked with buttresses which finish in pinnacles. The central doorway leads up to and joins the fine east window (a rich specimen of decorated tracery); the whole forming the most important feature of the east gable.

There are two minor entrances, one on the north of the central door and the other on the south, the latter being through the tower which stands on the southeast corner of the building and forms its most imposing exterior feature. It is one hundred and twenty-seven feet high from grade to the top of the stone cross, and twenty-two feet square at the base. The three entrances open into a fine vestibule the entire width of the church and containing stairways at each end which lead to the choir and organ loft.

* The main church consists of nave, transepts, sanctuary and two commodious sacristies.

The aisles and vestibule are tiled with encaustic tile. The walls are wainscotted five feet high, or to the level of the window sills, with brick in color to match the stone trimmings and tracery of all windows and the fine sanctuary arches. Above the wainscotted the walls are plastered on brick work and treated in plain strong color which forms a beautiful background for the stations and windows, etc.

The roof is in one span, with rafters exposed, the ceiling being paneled in plaster divided by wood mouldings and decorated in tints to match the walls, ornamented with flat stencil work in symbolic design.

* The pews, confessionals and all interior furnishings are of white oak and are richly carved and moulded and stained in rich antique stain, forming a fine color contrast to the lighter colorings of the stone trimmings and walls. The windows are all set in stone tracery and were imported from Munich by Mayer & Company and have been especially studied from suggestions and sketches by the architects with a view to rich and well distributed colorings and properly scaled figures. They contain scenes from the life of our Blessed Lord and the Saints, those in the north and south transepts telling the story of the mission of the Apostles and the Epiphany, respectively.

The Stations of the Cross form another example of the truthfulness of the treatment of Epiphany Church, being in Caen stone, set in frames of Indiana stone. They are beautifully modeled and executed and are among the finest in this country. These were also imported by Mayer & Company.

As should be the case, the crowning feature of the Epiphany Church is the sanctuary. This can well be regarded as a fine specimen of pure Gothic design.