

ADDRESS: 2901 W ALLEGHENY AVE

Name of Resource: Catholic Home for Destitute Children

Proposed Action: Designation

Property Owner: Mercy Vocational High School

Nominator: Celeste Morello

Staff Contact: Laura DiPasquale, laura.dipasquale@phila.gov

OVERVIEW: This nomination proposes to designate the property at 2901 W. Allegheny Avenue as historic and list it on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places. The nomination contends that the former Catholic Home for Destitute Children, constructed in 1912 on a design by Edwin F. Durang, is significant under Criteria for Designation A, D, E, and H. Under Criterion A, the nomination argues that the Home's history is significant as part of the City and Commonwealth's response to the aftermath of catastrophic events that left children without parents or care. Under Criterion D, the nomination asserts that the building embodies distinguishing characteristics of the Tudor Gothic, and specifically that of King Henry VIII's sixteenth-century Hampton Hall. Under Criterion E, the nomination explains that the design is the work of Edwin F. Durang, a significant ecclesiastical architect. Under Criterion H, the nomination explains that the large T-shaped building is an established visual feature, situated on elevated ground and occupying an unusual triangular parcel at the confluence of several major thoroughfares.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: The staff recommends that the nomination demonstrates that the property at 2901 W. Allegheny Avenue satisfies Criteria for Designation A, D, E, and H.



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: 2901 W Allegheny Avenue (aka 2900 W. Hunting Park Ave)

Postal code: 19132

2. NAME OF HISTORIC RESOURCE

Historic Name: Catholic Home for Destitute Children

Current/Common Name: Mercy Career & Technical High School

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: Career and technical high school, administered by the Sisters of Mercy, a Roman Catholic order

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 1910 to present

Date(s) of construction and/or alteration: 1911-12

Architect, engineer, and/or designer: Edwin F. Durang (1829-1911)

Builder, contractor, and/or artisan: _____

Original owner: Archdiocese of Philadelphia

Other significant persons: Sisters of St. Joseph

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 Jan. 19th, 2021

Name with Title Celeste Morello, MS, MA Email n/a

Street Address 1234 South 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: 1/19/2021

☒ Correct-Complete ☐ Incorrect-Incomplete Date: 7/6/2021

Date of Notice Issuance: 7/30/2021

Property Owner at Time of Notice:

Name: Mercy Vocational High School

Address: 2900 W Hunting Park Ave

City: Philadelphia State: PA Postal Code: 19129

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

Date(s) Reviewed by the Historical Commission: _____

Date of Final Action: _____

☐ Designated ☐ Rejected

12/7/18

Boundary Description:

BEGINNING at the Northwest corner of Allegheny Avenue (One hundred and twenty feet wide) and Twenty-ninth Street, in the Thirty-eighth Ward of the said City of Philadelphia, thence extending Westward along the North side of the said Allegheny Avenue Three hundred and seventy-five feet to the East side of Thirtieth Street, thence extending Northward along the East side of the said Thirtieth Street One foot eight inches to the Southeast side of Hunting Park Avenue (One hundred feet wide) thence extending Northeastward-along the Southeast side of the said Hunting Park Avenue Five hundred and fifteen feet three and one-half inches to the West side of the said Twenty-ninth Street, and thence extending Southward along the West side of the said Twenty-ninth Street Three hundred and fifty-five feet and three-fourths of an inch to the North side of the said Allegheny Avenue and place of Beginning.

AND ALSO ALL THAT CERTAIN lot or piece of ground, SITUATE on the North side of Allegheny Avenue (Eighty feet wide) and West side of Twenty-ninth Street, in the Ward and City aforesaid, thence extending Northward along the West side of the said Twenty-ninth Street Twenty feet to the North side of the said Allegheny Avenue (One hundred and twenty feet wide) thence extending Westward along the North side of the said Allegheny Avenue to the East side of Thirtieth Street, thence extending Southward along the East side of the said Thirtieth Street Twenty feet to the North side of the said Allegheny Avenue (Eighty feet wide) and thence extending Eastward along the North side of the said Allegheny Avenue to the West side of the said Twenty-ninth Street and place of Beginning.

BEING Tax Parcel No. 775069000.

BEING known as No. 2901 W. Allegheny Avenue and also known as 2900 W. Hunting Park Avenue.





BUILDING DIMENSIONS:

HUNTING PARK AVENUE

29th STREET

209' in depth

285 feet

CHAPEL 85' X 40'w

Mercy Career & Technical High School

ALLEGHENY AVENUE

DESCRIPTION: T-shaped plan; 3 levels with basement. Constructed of "Holmesburg granite" with limestone trim; tracery on windows of chapel. Slate roof. ("Catholic Standard and Times" October 17, 1912.)

Supplemental Photographs (provided by PHC staff, from Cyclomedia April 2020, unless otherwise noted)

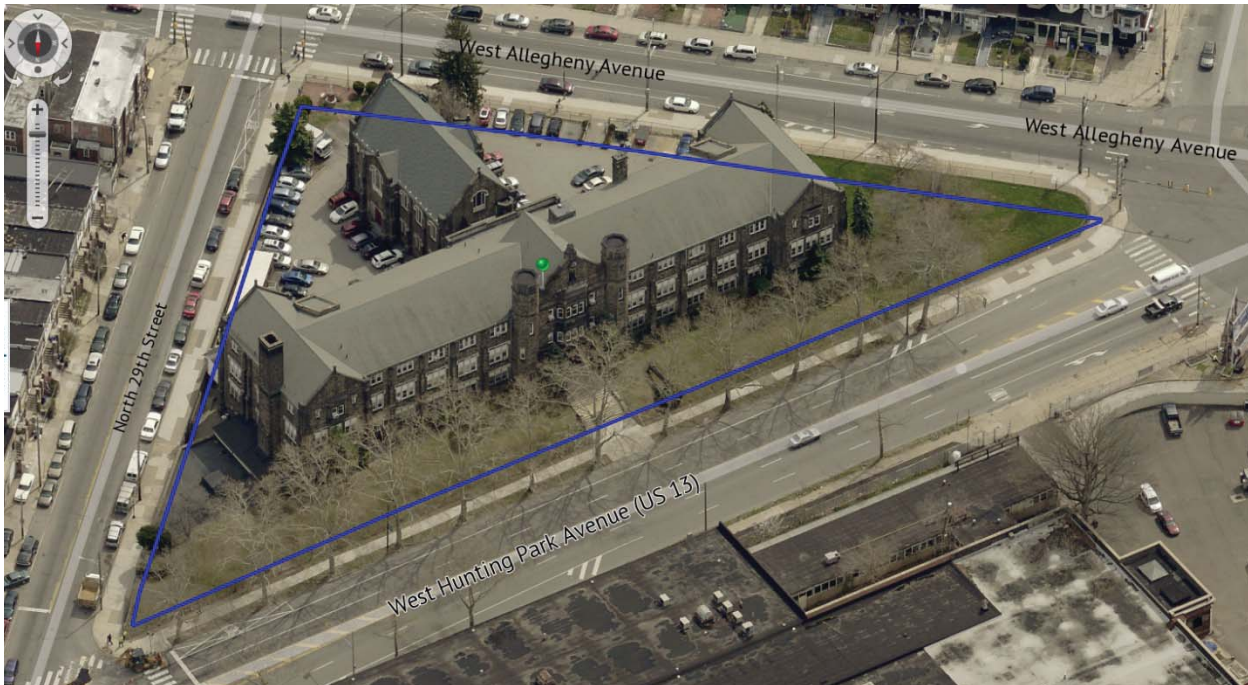


Figure 1: Birdseye view south at 2901 W. Allegheny Avenue. Source: Pictometry.



Figure 2: Primary (northwest) elevation along W. Hunting Park Avenue



Figure 3: Detail of primary entrance on W. Hunting Park Avenue.



Figure 4: Southwest elevation of southwestern wing, with southwest elevation of chapel in background, from W. Allegheny Avenue.



Figure 5: Southeast elevation of southwestern wing and southwest elevation of chapel, from W. Allegheny Avenue.



Figure 6: View northwest from intersection of 29th Street and Allegheny Avenue.



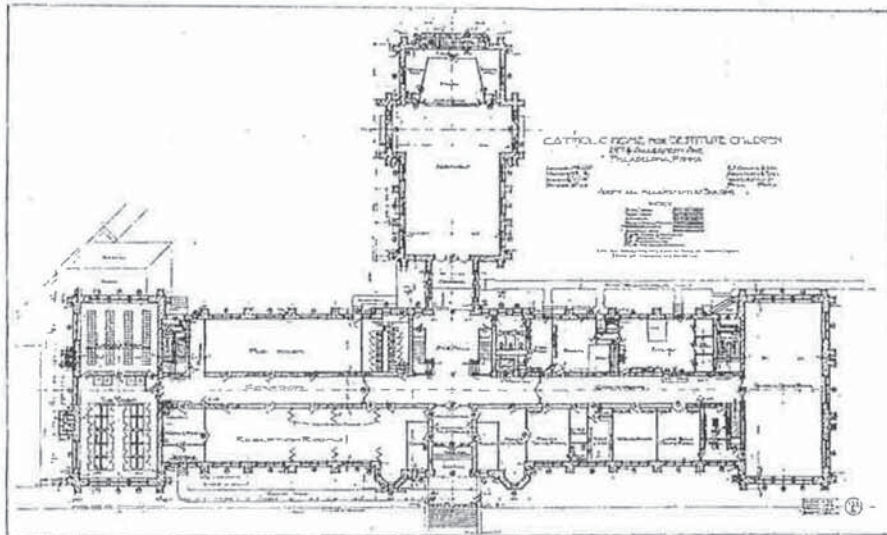
Figure 7: Northeast elevation of chapel and southeast elevation of northeastern wing, from N. 29th Street.



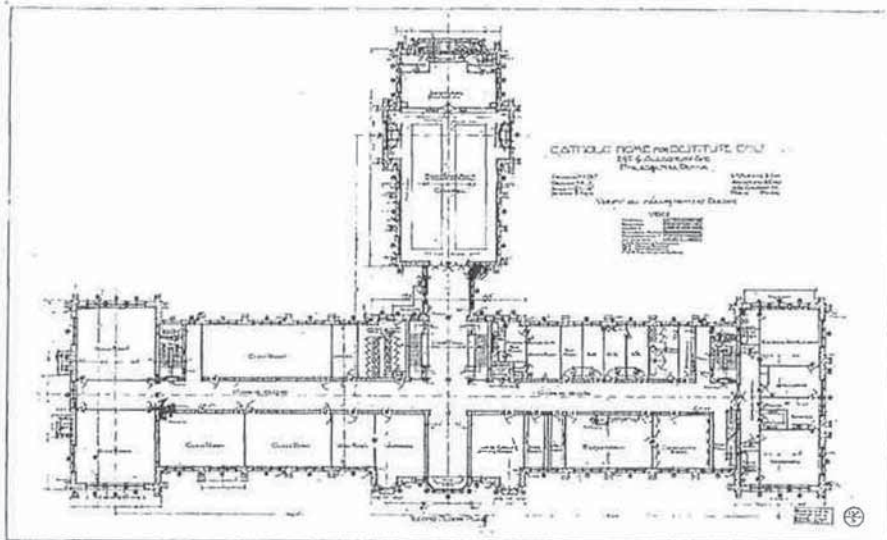
Figure 8: Northeast elevation of northeastern wing, from N. 29th Street.



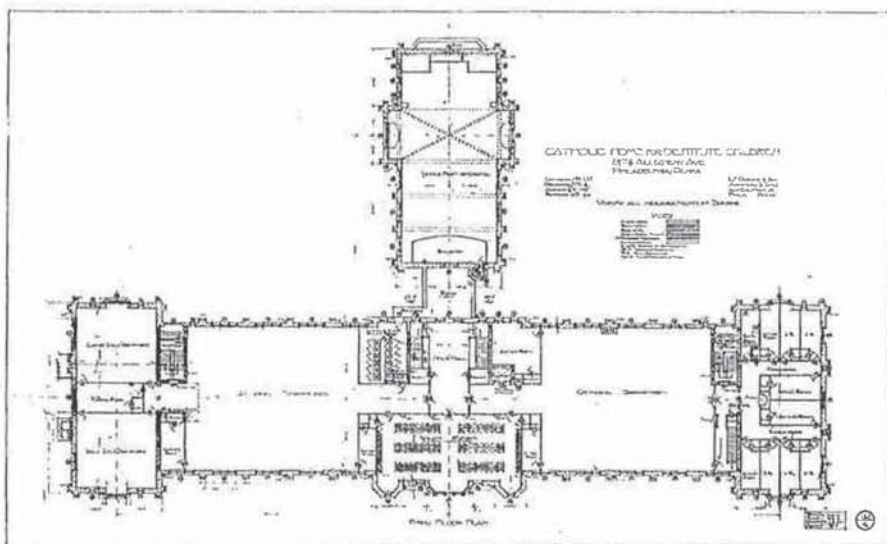
Figure 9: View southeast from termination of N. 29th Street with W. Allegheny Avenue.



FIRST FLOOR PLAN



SECOND FLOOR PLAN

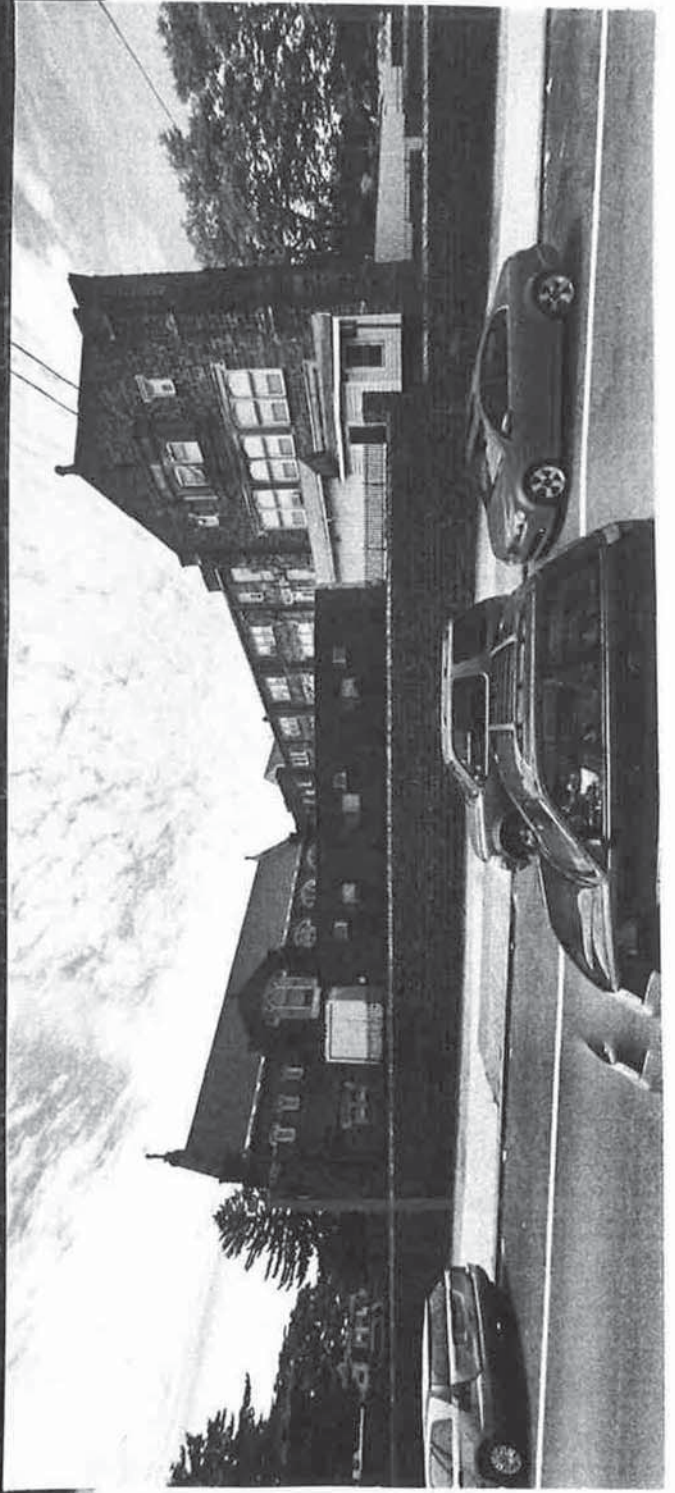


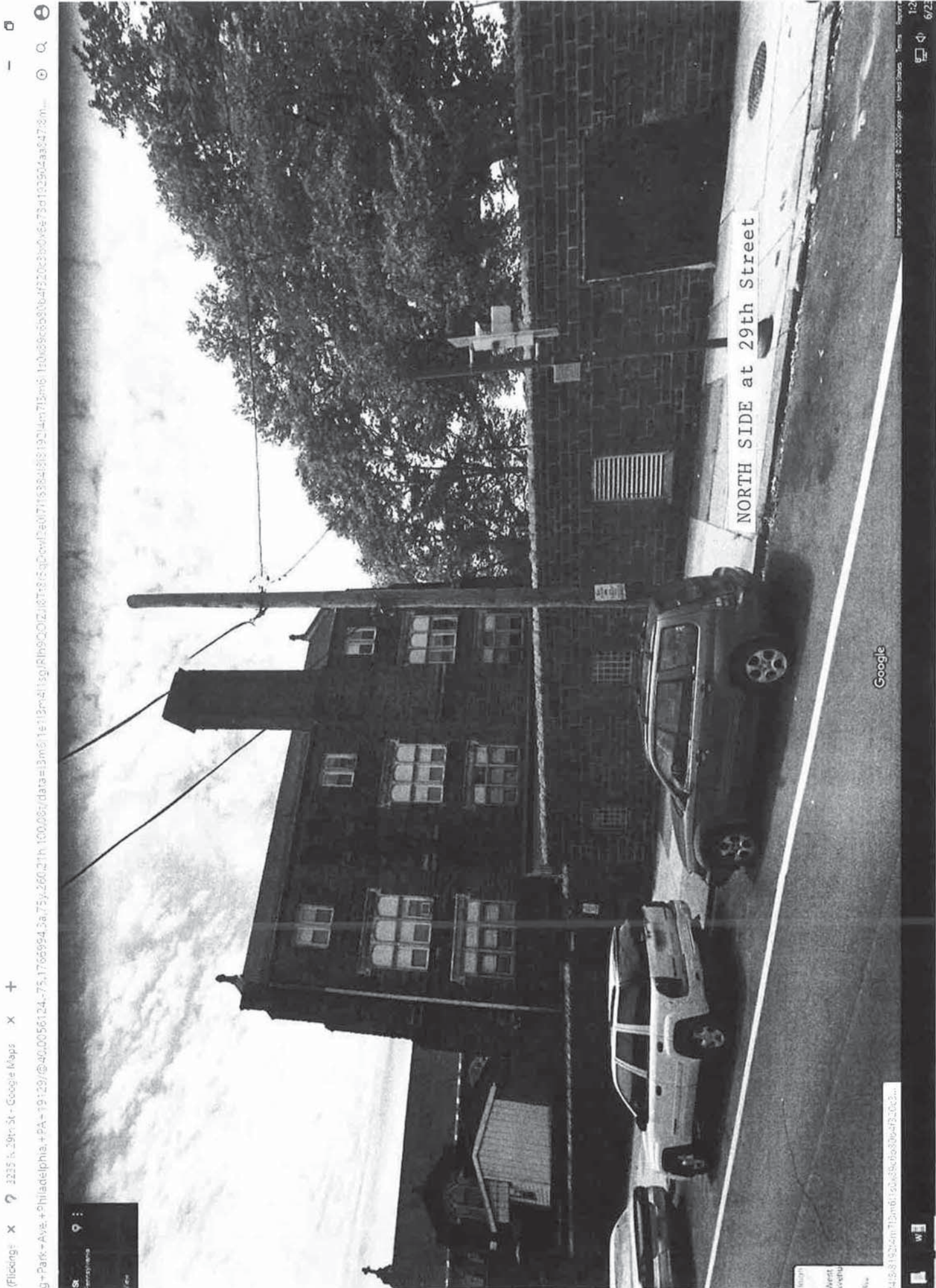
THIRD FLOOR PLAN

FLOOR PLANS OF CATHOLIC HOME FOR DESTITUTE CHILDREN
29TH STREET AND HUNTING PARK AVE., PHILADELPHIA

Recreat view from 29th Street.

Chapel





STATEMENT of SIGNIFICANCE:

The nominated building began at this location in 1912 as "The Catholic Home for Destitute Children,"(hereafter, "Home.") The T-shaped Tudor Gothic building occupies an entire triangular block in the Swampoodle neighborhood, with its facade on Hunting Park Avenue. The Home was an orphanage for the 6 to 12 year old daughters of Civil War veterans when founded in 1863.¹ Later, any girl recommended for care was admitted.² The Home's history is part of the City's and Commonwealth's responses to what occurred in the aftermath of dire and catastrophic events when children are left without parents or care. The Home's former location was 1720 Race Street, purchased by the City in the construction of the Benjamin Franklin Parkway which would run through the property.³ Then, as in the nomination, the Home was operated under the Sisters of St. Joseph, a religious order of nuns whose mission was in the education of children and medical services. Today, the Order is one of the few active ones in the City and throughout the United States.

The Archdiocese of Philadelphia's main architect, Edwin F. Durang designed this building, which resembles England's King Henry VIII's Hampton Hall (16th century), a Tudor Gothic. Durang had designed numerous churches and ancillary parish buildings, but the Home was one of Durang's few institutional plans.⁴ He already was familiar with conventions for this type of building and the accommodations for inmates: Durang's hospitals and other Homes held the latest conveniences for self-sufficiency. Durang's design for the Home placed it high on Hunting Park Avenue on lawns and greenery; it is a striking landmark today among the industrial complexes in the area.

Celeste A. Morello, MS, MA
January, 2021
(During COVID limitations.)

- ¹ _____
- ² Scharf and Westcott, History of Philadelphia. Phila.: 1884, p. 1484iii.
- ³ "A Directory of the Charitable, Social Improvement, Educational and Religious Assocs. and Churches in Phila." The Civic Club, 1903,p.79.
- ⁴ "Evening Bulletin," August 11, 1912.
- ⁴ Durang's "Album." Catholic Historical Research Center (CHRC), Phila.

The former "Catholic Home for Destitute Children"...

- (a) Has significant character, interest or value as part of the development, heritage or cultural characteristics of the City, Commonwealth or Nation.

Roman Catholic social institutions arose from discrimination, catastrophes and fear. Called "papists," "popish" and rudely marginalized until France and Spain sent aid to win the war of the Revolution, Philadelphia's Catholics in the late 1700s too often had to weigh the social and professional advantages of keeping Roman Catholicism. The yellow fever epidemic that repeatedly visited the city was the first instance where Catholics decided to take the matter of orphaned Catholic children into the care of the religious, rather than the laity. The Society of Jesus ("Jesuits") of (Old) St. Joseph's Church organized the St. Joseph's Female Orphan Asylum in 1797. The Sisters of Charity, under Mother (St.) Elizabeth Seton then took charge, procuring the property at the southwest corner of 7th and Spruce Streets. Lay participation in the early Catholic orphanages was necessary for donations and in recommending eligible children, as when in 1829, St. John's Orphan Asylum began.⁵ As with the former asylum, the Jesuit priests at (Old) St. Joseph's led, and again, the Sisters of Charity were assigned. By 1836, the Bishop removed the Sisters of Charity, and after a few years of relocating and reorganizing, the Sisters of St. Joseph assumed care in 1847.⁶ Circumstances then became serious with the unexpected, uncontrollable number of Irish and Germans coming into the City, with children who lost one or both parents en route to the city on the Atlantic voyage.

Historian J. Matthew Gallman, Ph.D.⁷ delved into the effects of Irish migration into Philadelphia as a result of the famine in the 1840s. He compared the number of Catholic social organizations

⁵ Scharf and Westcott, op.cit., pp. 1483-1484iii.

⁶ Mahony, D., Historical Sketches of the Catholic Churches and Institutions of Philadelphia. Phila.: 1895, pp.189-194.

⁷ Gallman's doctoral dissertation became Receiving Erin's Children. Chapel Hill: Univ. of N.Carolina Press, 2000.

to the City's almshouses and government-run asylums, as well as what the Quakers had founded. Gallman cited a number of sources where the rise of Catholic social institutions, such as orphanages, was to stem proselytizing.⁸ Consequently, not only Catholic orphanages, but Catholic asylums for the poor, elderly and St. Joseph's Hospital on Girard Avenue, ensured maintenance of the faith.

German Catholics, whose forebearers in the 1780s broke from (Old) St. Mary's to found and to incorporate Holy Trinity likewise established an orphanage for German young: St. Vincent's. (Not to be confused with the St. Vincent's in southwest Philadelphia which was attached to the Catholic maternity hospital for unwed mothers.)⁹ The larger St. Vincent's would be located in Tacony by the 1850s.

By the mid-19th century, the formalized organization of social services in Philadelphia originated with the Conferences of the St. Vincent de Paul Society "for the relief of destitution."¹⁰ The Catholic Home for Destitute Children formed in 1863 was a direct product of this organization.

The St. Vincent de Paul Society was founded by French historian Frederic Ozanam (d. 1853) and his associates who were "reformers" in France. "The organization was the most important practical development in Catholic charity in the nineteenth century."¹¹ In 1863, a group of St. Vincent de Paul Society members in the City formed a "Particular Council" and "procured a charter for a temporary home, The Catholic Home..."¹² At first, boys and girls were to be cared, then sources noted that the Home was intended only for the "daughters" of Civil War veterans who died because of war service.¹³

⁸Gallman, pp. 159-60; sources, pp. 270-271, n70.

⁹Roth, OSA, Rev.F.X., History of St. Vincent's Orphan Asylum.1933.

¹⁰Scharf and Westcott, p. 1484iii.

¹¹Hitchcock, Jas., History of the Catholic Church. Ignatius Press, 2012, p. 355.

¹²Scharf and Westcott, op.cit.

¹³Scharf and Westcott have a separate listing for "Destitute Orphan Girls whose history coincides with the "Children" information.

By 1865, the Home was located at 1720 Race Street; girls aged 6 to 12 years whose fathers died in the Civil War were admitted, despite race or creed. "The State annually paid the Archbishop (James Wood) \$100 for the support of each child..."¹⁴ but this death insurance did not last and ceased when the last orphan of the Civil War left. Mostly by donations from the City's wealthy and not, the Home on Race Street maintained just over 200 girls¹⁵ until the move to the nominated building on Hunting Park Avenue in 1912.

The Home was operated by the Sisters of St. Joseph from the beginning. The Sisters' mission was in child education and medical care. The nuns of that order were nurses during the Civil War; locally, they worked at St. Joseph's Hospital with doctors and staff. The nuns also were still stationed at St. John's Orphan Asylum for Boys¹⁶ and St. Vincent Maternity Hospital and orphanage in Southwest Philadelphia. Their motherhouse and novitiate was then and is at Chestnut Hill,¹⁷ where they founded Mount St. Joseph Academy, then Norwood-Fontbonne Academy. (Chestnut Hill College's president is presently Sister Carol Jean Vale, SSJ.)

At the Home, the nuns and staff taught the girls sewing and other "needle" arts, home economics and everything they would need to know when "bonded" out of the Home at age 12. The Sisters' work did not end there with each girl: the nuns would visit the homes where each girl was placed to ensure their safety and welfare.

¹⁴ "Evening Bulletin," August 11, 1912.

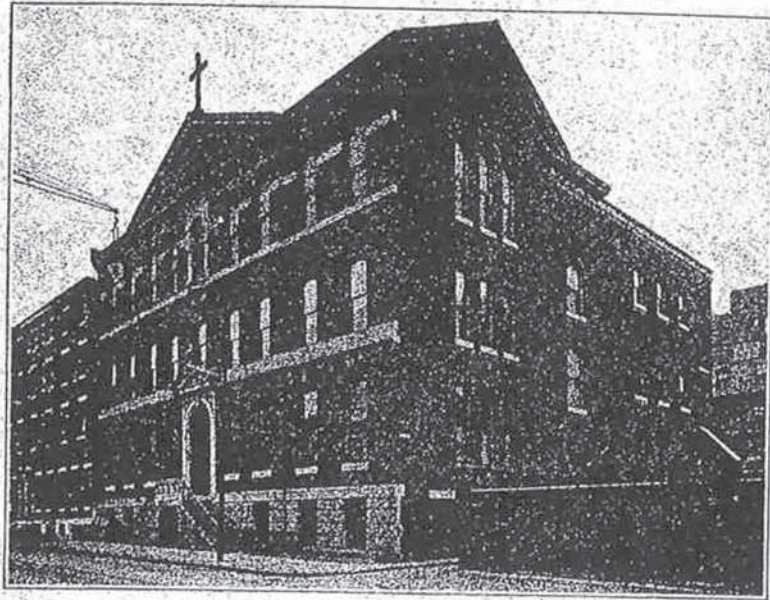
¹⁵ "A Dictionary of the Charitable, Social..."; "Catholic Standard,"

"Statement of the Catholic Home." April 29, 1911.

¹⁶ Mahony, pp. 192 and 194; Scharf and Westcott, p. 1483iii.

¹⁷ The Order was founded in LePuy, Auvergne, France in 1650 by Father J.P. Medalle, a Jesuit priest, but the charitable work of the Sisters ceased during the French Revolution. The Order was resurrected by Mother Fontbonne who was imprisoned and convicted to a death sentence, but spared because of developments during the Revolution's fall. The Sisters have a nationwide mission in the United States, first arriving in New Orleans in 1836. They came to Philadelphia in 1845. Perhaps the most famous Sister of St. Joseph is Helen Prejean, portrayed by actress Susan Sarandon in "Dead Man Walking," an award-winning movie featuring the nun's outreach to prison inmates.

Source: Archives,
Sisters of St. Joseph,
Philadelphia.



THE CATHOLIC HOME, 1720 RACE STREET

Architect Paul P. Cret submitted plans for a grand boulevard to cross in a diagonal from City Hall towards the site of the Art Museum in 1907.¹⁸ The plan included razing all buildings in its path, which included the Catholic Home. (above) Bach referred to this Parkway construction as part of the "City Beautiful Movement" conceived in 1893 during the Columbian Exposition in Chicago. The Parkway's work began in 1907 and ended in 1918.¹⁹

The Race Street property closed in 1910 after its purchase by the City: proceeds were advanced to the property in Swampoodle, an entire city block.²⁰ Archdiocesan architect Edwin F. Durang²¹ then began to design a larger, more "modern" building for the times, one for more girls who lost a parent or parents as the population in the City rose during that busy, prosperous era.

¹⁸ Webster, R., Philadelphia Preserved. Temple Univ. Press, p. 119.

¹⁹ Bach, Penny B., Public Art in Philadelphia. Temple Univ., 2002, p. 77.

²⁰ "Catholic Standard and Times," May 28, 1910; Sept. 24, 1910.

²¹ The news reported "Edwin F. Durang and Son" as the architects, the principal architect was Edwin F. Durang (1829-1911).

Location of "The Catholic Home for Destitute Children" in 1907.

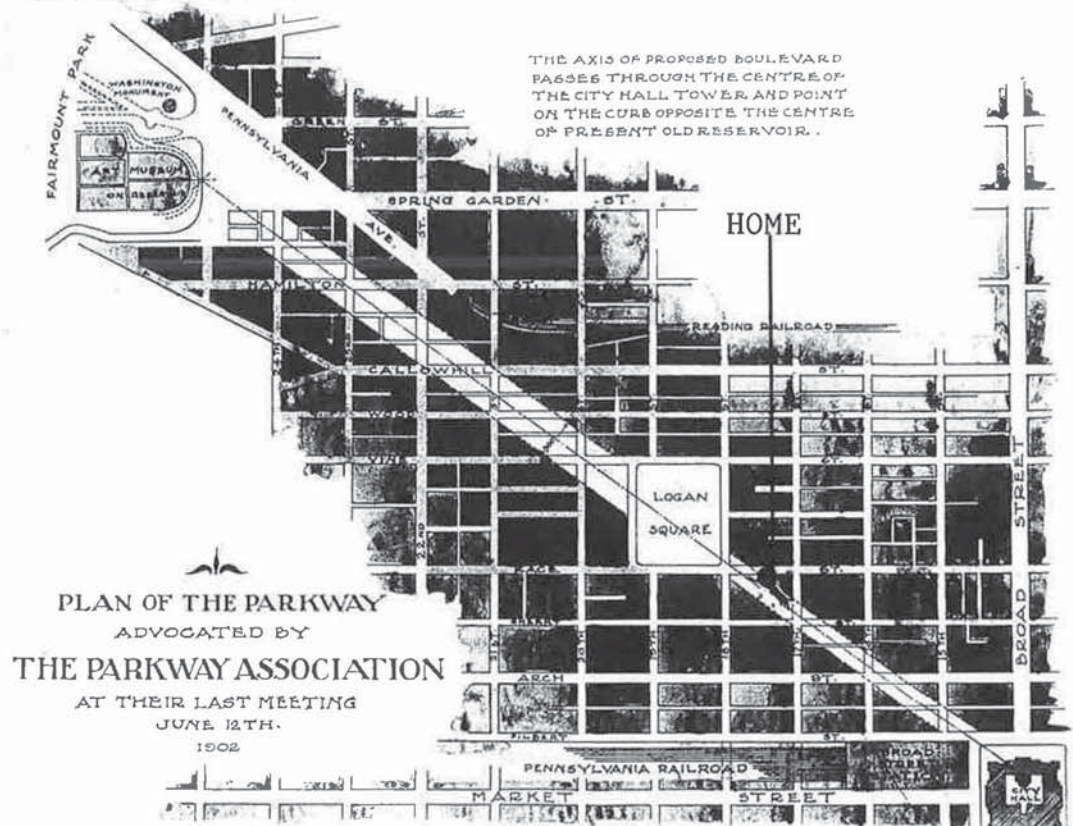
HOME

(Source: Fairmount Park Art Assn. Archives.)



Prior to moving to 2900 Hunting Park Avenue, the "Home" was at 1720 Race Street, around from the Cathedral Basilica of Saints Peter and Paul. The City purchased the Home's property on Race Street for the proposed Benjamin Franklin Parkway. It was razed in 1912. The plan submitted in 1907 (below) has the diagonal direction of the Parkway crossing into 1720 Race, forcing the Home's relocation.

(Source of plan: University of Pennsylvania Fine Arts Library.)



The Catholic Home for Destitute Children...

(d) Embodies distinguishing characteristics of an architectural style:

THE ENGLISH GOTHIC (15-16th centuries)

The English Gothic derived from French Gothic in "1175" when the choir at Canterbury Cathedral in England²² modified the conventions created at the Abbey St.-Denis by Abbott Suger between 1137 and 1144.²³ Canterbury Cathedral's renovation was overseen by the Cistercians, a religious order of monks founded by St. Bernard of Clairvaux (1091-1153), a critic of his contemporary Suger. Bernard's Rules for his order emphasized work and prayer, abjuring the material and sensual.²⁴ The Cistercians opposed Suger's French Gothic's directives achieved with the pointed arch to attain great height and allow more illumination for colored glass in large windows to portray scenes from the Bible or lives of saints. As ornate as the French Gothic cathedrals became in each succeeding century, the Cistercians restrained the decorative statuary, the height and anything overly ornate. Over the centuries, the "low...and sprawling"²⁵ English Gothic changed. The Tudor Gothic, so-called as it arose during the reign of English King Henry VII (1485-1509) describes the instant nomination rather than the English Gothic from the 12th to 14th centuries. But the basic concept for the English Gothic was maintained.

Hampton Hall, constructed by Henry VII's son, Henry VIII is the model for the Hunting Park Avenue building, with its turrets flanking the main portal. The bowed window above the the subtle "point" of the modified Gothic arch was also an influence for the Durang plan. What characteristics the Tudor Gothic has, as from the traditional English Gothic is the wideness of the building and how two "wings" emerge independent from the center bay. The build-

²²Janson, HW, History of Art. NY: Abrams, 1977, p. 300.(See attached.)

²³Also, Zarnecki, G., Art of the Medieval World, NY:Abrams, 1979,p.352.

²⁴Janson, p. 283.

²⁵Ibid., p. 300. (See attached.)

ing in Swampoodle recognized that "Cistercian architects put special emphasis on harmonious proportions and exact craftsmanship"²⁶ to differentiate English Gothic from the French. That "sprawling"²⁷ feature in English Gothic was also seen at Hampton Hall, along with the clustering of windows. (Refer to image.) The Durang design, however, takes these concepts and puts them in an orderly sequence, moving the eye more horizontally across the building and around the Home to the Chapel. At the Home's Chapel, windows have limestone capping the arches which seem half-rounded and half-pointed. (Refer to p. 6 herein.) Hampton Hall's arches show the same reluctance to create strong points to make the French Gothic arch of Suger.

Consistent also to Hampton Hall (which is an example of Tudor Gothic for its elements), the Durang Home plan called for dressed stone masonry, and the orderly levels are defined more with the rows of lintels and careful spacing of the bays between the projecting buttresses which graduate in depth towards the slate roof. There was no information on any additions to Hampton Hall to alter the facade's center bay. (Note lighter-colored brick at top level.) But Durang noticed that the tops of Hampton's turrets were secured to where the crenellations began and placed his gable (with a niche for a statue). And like Hampton, the Home's turrets are octagonal. Hampton Hall did not set any precedential architectural element, or establish anything novel at its time. It was famous as the last residence for the first of Henry VIII's wives who was beheaded; it was also supervised in construction by the king, thus its importance. And it foreshadowed Henry's descendants' Elizabethan and Jacobean styles.²⁸

²⁶Ibid.

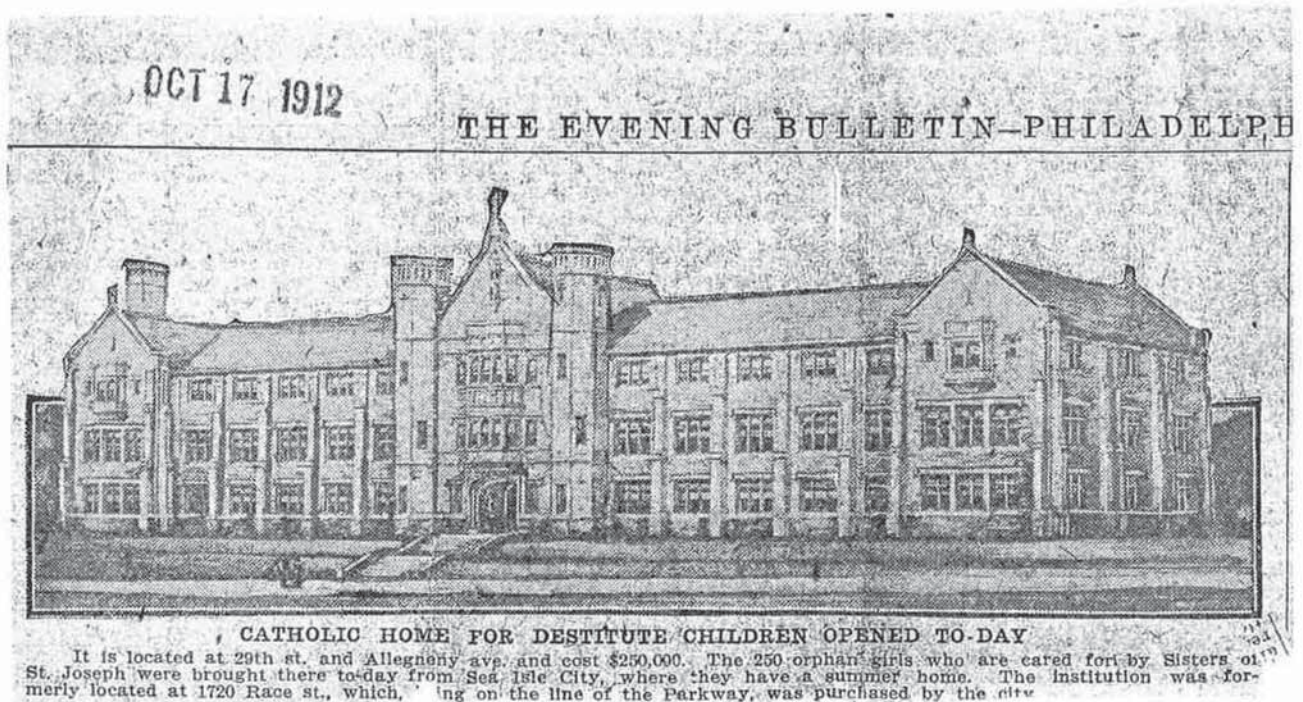
²⁷"

²⁸Elizabeth was Henry and Boleyn's daughter who had one of the longest reigns. The 17th century Jacobean was named after King James, descended from Henry's sister.



Described as "Tudor Gothic" in "The Evening Bulletin" (August 11, 1912), the Catholic Home seemed to have derived from "Hampton Court," constructed under English King Henry VIII, c.1520s. The Durang plan used the same quasi-Gothic arch as the portal under the projecting bay window atop, turrets at the end of this bay in segments and wide construction. (Part of photo by Michael Holford in 1973.)

Below is the final plan of the Home.



The former Catholic Home for Destitute Children...

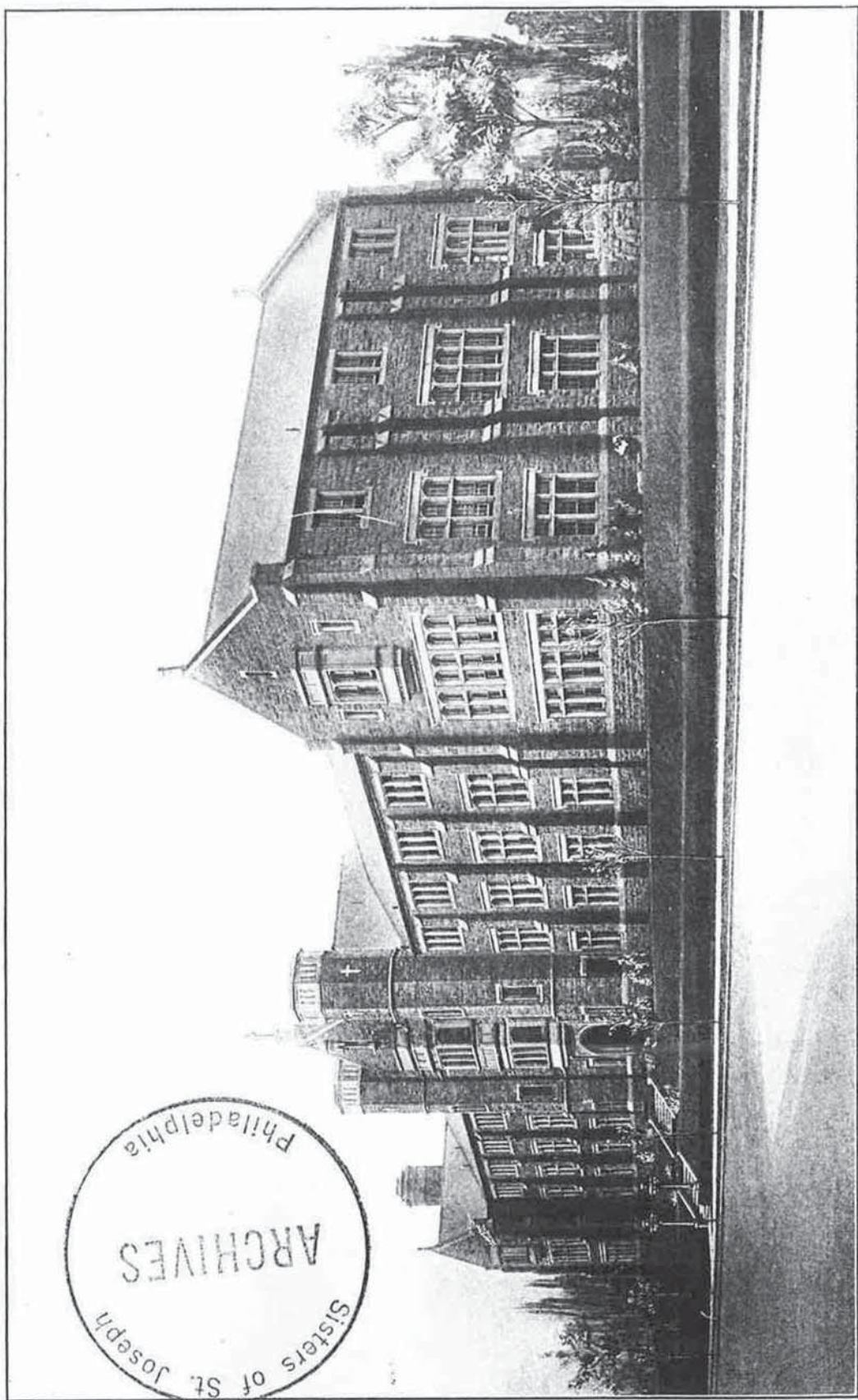
- (e) Is the work of a designer, architect...whose work has significantly influenced the historical, architectural, economic... of the City, Commonwealth or Nation:

EDWIN F. DURANG, principal of
"EDWIN F. DURANG & SON"

Sources on "The Catholic Home for Destitute Children" (or Girls) attributed the building's design to "Edwin F. Durang & Son," the name of the firm in 1910 when the plan was drafted. Edwin F. Durang (1829-1911) was the Archdiocese of Philadelphia's most commissioned architect for ecclesiastical (church/religious) architecture from the 1870s to his death in 1911. Prior to that year, Durang's son, F. Ferdinand (1884-1966) "joined the firm" with the name changed to indicate same. For the nominated building, the Durang & Son company photographed the exterior and interior to demonstrate the latest in institutional design, at least within a Catholic environment. (The Home's design was a feature story in the journal, "Ecclesiastical Architecture" Vol.1, April, 1915.)²⁹

Review of the elder Durang's life's-work as he evolved as an architect for the Archdiocese had a number of institutional projects requiring specialized knowledge of what the interiors were to include. Durang's 1880 commission for St. Agnes Hospital in South Philadelphia (with assistant Frank R. Watson) was for the Franciscan Sisters to provide "modern" medical care competitively with the non-Catholic hospitals in Center City. Although Durang was retained in later years to upgrade or add more at St. Agnes, then at the nuns' other hospital, St. Mary's in Fishtown, the architect almost reversed his focus from the emphasis on the exterior, to the interior's requirements: This was the character of institutional work.

²⁹ Tatman, S. and Moss, R., Biographical Dictionary of Philadelphia Architects. Boston: Hall, 1985, p. 234.
³⁰ Photographs, blueprints and journal, Sisters of St. Joseph, Archives.
³¹ Tatman, op.cit., p.230.
³² Ibid., p. 231, in the year "1890."



EXTERIOR OF CATHOLIC HOME FOR DESTITUTE CHILDREN, 29TH STREET AND HUNTING PARK AVENUE, PHILADELPHIA

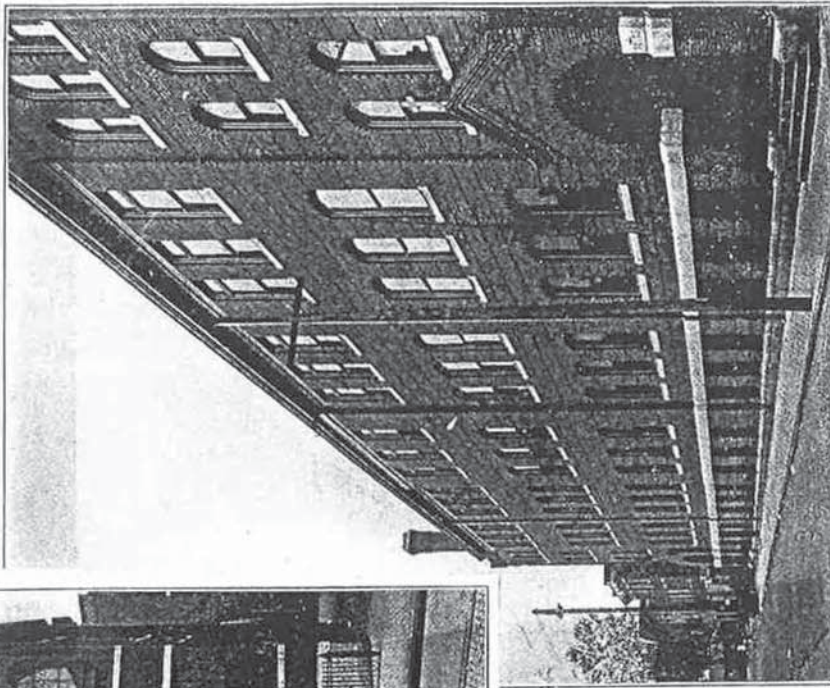
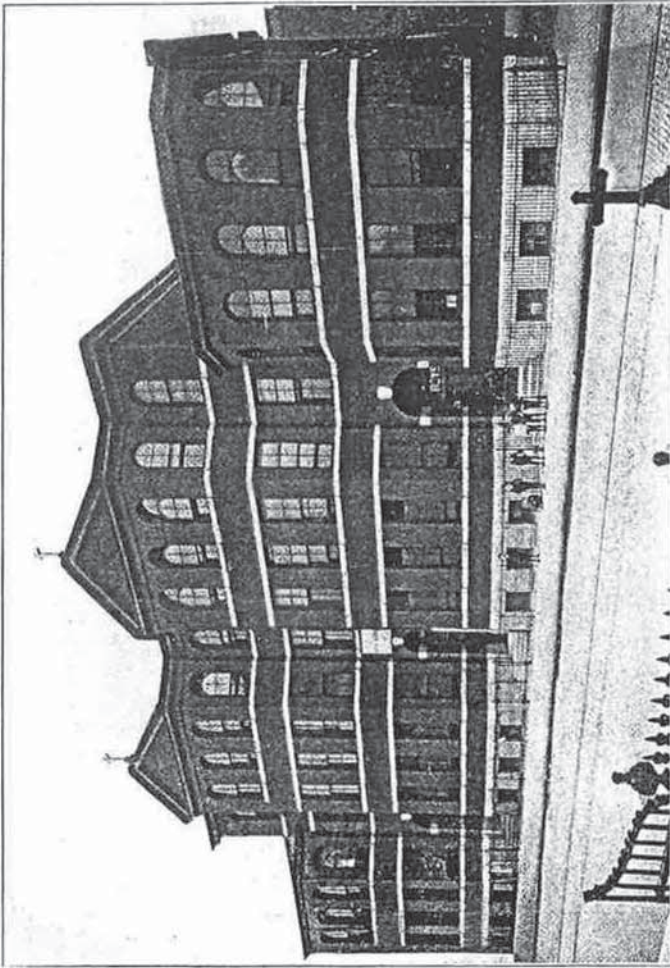
*Edwin F. Durang & Son, Architects
Philadelphia*

Examples of Edwin Durang's institutional architecture while he was working independently also included two schools for the ever-growing St. Paul's Roman Catholic parish. The school facing Christian Street was dated to "1898," according to Tatman and Moss. But by "1905" another St. Paul's School arose behind the former. (The Christian Street building eventually became Southeast Catholic High School for Boys for awhile.) Both buildings took advantage of the width of the lot upon which they were constructed. Furthermore, Durang kept the heights of both schools even; the width of the buildings distributed the interiors' purposes. For both, Durang focussed on the uses of the interior spaces, then planned the exteriors. This required more work, interaction with the premises' managers/operators and knowledge of the activities therein.

The next page has photographs of the two St. Paul's school buildings which were attached for how the Catholic Home similarly followed the manner in which Durang (or his son) manipulated the exterior of the Home's architecture with the projections at the center bay and the ends. Durang also carried the symmetrical balance of his earlier projects to the Catholic Home, improving what Hampton Hall lacked or failed to correct.

This Commission has approved numerous churches by Durang, and the father's hand is unmistakably acknowledged by the Catholic Home's relationship to past institutional buildings by Durang. The firm had done several orphanages and "Homes" for the Sisters of the Good Shepherd, all mindful that these buildings were not mere residences, but where they prepared for life. The list³³ of Durang, and "Edwin F. Durang & Son" projects is attached for reference.

³³The list is from the "Edwin F. Durang & Son" "Album," CHRC, along with the photographs on the next page.)



Durang's institutional architecture.

The architect's Album has two aspects of St. Paul's Academy and School at 920 Christian Street (above) and rear on Montrose Street (right) to compare with his c.1910 design of the Catholic Home for Destitute Children's new building (below, in Google image.) Durang repeated basic elements in the latter, one of his last designs.



CHURCHES

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

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

COLLEGES AND SCHOOLS

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

HOMES AND ASYLUMS

Catholic Home for Destitute Children, Philadelphia

St. Vincent's Home, West Philadelphia
 St. Mary Magdalen de Pazzi, Philadelphia
 Asylum for Italian Orphan Girls, Philadelphia
 St. Joseph's Protectory, Norristown, Pa.
 St. Catharine's Female, Philadelphia
 Orphan Asylum, Reading, Pa.
 Home of the Good Shepherd, Philadelphia
 Home of the Good Shepherd, Norristown, Pa.
 Home of the Good Shepherd, Scranton, Pa.

HOSPITALS

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

RESIDENCES

St. Mary's, Lancaster, Pa.
 St. Anne's, Philadelphia
 Visitation, Philadelphia
 St. Veronica's, Philadelphia
 St. Gabriel's, Philadelphia
 St. Patrick's, McAdoo, Pa.
 Sacred Heart, Chester, Pa.
 Gesu, Philadelphia
 Transfiguration, Philadelphia
 Our Lady of Good Counsel, Philadelphia
 Our Lady of Good Counsel, Bryn Mawr, Pa.
 Immaculate Conception, Bryn Mawr, Pa.
 Our Lady of Mercy, Bryn Mawr, Pa.
 Our Mother of Consolation, Chestnut Hill, Pa.
 St. Bonaventura's, Philadelphia
 St. Charles', Philadelphia
 St. Laurentius', Philadelphia
 St. Francis Xavier's, Philadelphia
 St. James', Philadelphia
 St. John the Evangelist, Philadelphia
 St. Mary's, Philadelphia
 St. Mary Magdalen, Philadelphia
 St. Michael's, Philadelphia
 St. Peter Clavier's, Philadelphia
 St. Teresa's, Philadelphia
 St. Thomas Aquinas, Philadelphia
 Nativity B. V. M., Philadelphia
 St. John's, Pittston, Pa.
 Catholic Home, Philadelphia
 St. Lewis, Philadelphia
 St. Nicholas, Atlantic City, N. J.
 St. Mary's, Providence, R. I.

St. Anthony's, Lancaster, Pa.
 St. Denis, Ardmore, Pa.
 St. Peter's, Philadelphia
 St. Francis de Sale, Lenni, Pa.
 St. Joseph's, Ashland, Pa.
 J. McHose, Reading, Pa.
 G. Griscom, Reading, Pa.
 W. Mellvain, Reading, Pa.
 Geo. Boas, Reading, Pa.
 Albert Disston's residence, Philadelphia
 Geo. F. Baer's, Reading, Pa.

THEATRES

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

BUILDINGS

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

SPIRES AND CUPOLAS

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

The former Catholic Home for Destitute Children....

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

The nominated building is on elevated ground, some 14 feet above street level.³⁴ Occupying an entire city block--one that is triangular in shape--the Home's position is obvious to the neighborhood called "Swampoodle" since development. Moreover, the topography of that area is a gradual upward to Allegheny Avenue from the main, most traffic-heavy road, Hunting Park Avenue.

The Archdiocese purchased the property in March of 1910 when Laurel Hill Cemetery was the only notable "landmark" close (by about two blocks southward) to where the Home would be constructed. The expanding Catholic population in that area had been to the southeast, to St. Columba's at 24th and Lehigh Avenue, founded in 1895, and to the east at St. Elizabeth of Hungary parish (1872), at 23rd Street and Berks Street.³⁵ When the Home's cornerstone was laid on May 7, 1911, the area still had not been the interest of most residential home builders. Vacant acreage around the Home drove on-lookers to it, with green lawns and trees embellishing the streetscape.

Signage does not direct the visitor to present-day "Mercy Vocational High School," which has been at this location since 1972.³⁶ The building's masonry extends from Allegheny Avenue down to where 29th Street intersects with Hunting Park, and a stone wall almost encircles the property. The building takes one to another era, another environment that's not urban but rural.

³⁴"Catholic Standard and Times," October 19, 1912.

³⁵Archdiocesan Staff, *Our Faith-Filled Heritage*. Strasbourg, 2007, 162.

³⁶"Evening Bulletin," February 26, 1976.

June 19, 1980

Catholic Home for Girls is Closing

By JOSEPH RYAN

Catholic Home for Girls, an Archdiocesan facility in southwest Philadelphia for dependent girls, will be closed as of July 1, according to Randolph J. Wise, executive administrator of Catholic Social Services (CSS).

In an announcement last week, Wise also said St. Vincent's Home for Single Parents, 30th and Woodland ave., is under consideration for possible

closing. He said a final decision on the future of the home would probably be made by September.

Wise emphasized that while Catholic Home is closing and St. Vincent's Home for Single Parents might be closed, "at no time will the Archdiocese of Philadelphia ever forsake a young lady in need."

The CSS administrator called a news report that inferred the Archdiocese would not replace the Catholic Home

program with alternative care "extremely unfortunate."

When Catholic Home closes at the end of the month, the 35 girls currently in residence there will be transferred to group homes for girls in the Archdiocese or to St. Joseph's Hall for Girls in Germantown, according to Wise. He said the group home care for girls is in line with current social service trends that emphasize programs in community based centers rather than in large institutions, such as Catholic Home.

Increasingly large deficits were cited as the reason for closing Catholic Home and the prospect of shutting down the single parents' residence. Wise said Catholic Home was operating at a \$200,000 loss this year, and St. Vincent's Home for Single Parents is running \$300,000 in the red.

The average number of residents at St. Vincent's has recently been running at eight to 12 girls. Wise said the facility is designed to "break even" with

30 residents. A school program at St. Vincent's for unwed mothers has already been dis-

solved, according to Wise, because education is now handled in community schools.

"Catholic Standard and Times"
June 19, 1980.

This discussion had applied the Preservation Code's criteria from four(4) directives when the former Catholic Home for Destitute Children, now Mercy Vocational High School, had deserved recognition decades ago. Outside of the "Catholic" association in its purpose as one of the orphanages arising from the deaths of Philadelphians in the Civil War, the work there by the Sisters of St. Joseph spanned over 100 years. The nuns had been nurses, social workers, teachers and religious servants, and these nuns continue in same capacity today in the City and nation. What occurred within the walls of the Home, and now with the exemplary Mercy students should be acknowledged.

Of course, the architectural designs by Edwin F. Durang have contributed to Philadelphia's architectural history during the last quarter of the 19th century, into the 20th. The architect's work left reminders not only of the traditions of medieval western Europe, but here, at the former Home, which incorporated the conveniences for self-sufficiency while providing comfort to residents. The Home's design, based on the Tudor Hampton Hall, demonstrated how a 16th century design could be used for a 20th century building in a city.

For all of these reasons, the building with the Mercy Vocational High School's proud students and Sisters of Mercy and faculty merits historical designation by this Commission.

Celeste A. Morello, MS, MA
January, 2021
(During COVID limitations.)

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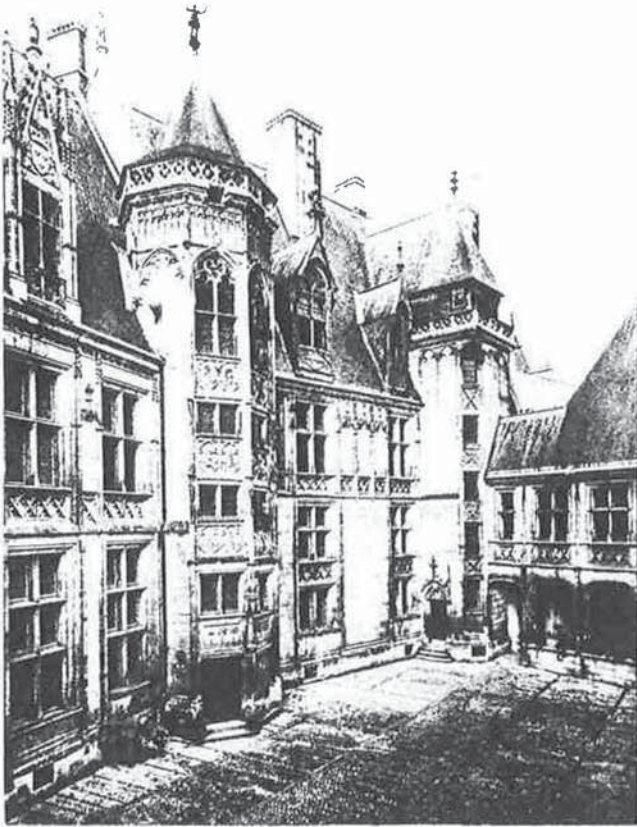
- Archives, Sisters of St. Joseph, Phila.: all "Catholic Home" published records; photographs.
- Catholic Historical Research Center, Philadelphia:
Catholic Social Services history; newspapers; Durang Album.
- Temple University, Special Collections Research Center, Phila.

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Janson 300

CITATIONS' SOURCE: JANSON, p. 300



398. Court, House of Jacques Coeur, Bourges. 1443-51

1440s. We speak of it as a house only because Jacques Coeur was a silversmith and merchant, rather than a nobleman. Since, however, he also was one of the richest men of his day, he could well afford an establishment obviously modeled on the mansions of the aristocracy. The courtyard (fig. 398), with its high-pitched roofs, its pinnacles and decorative carvings, suggests the picturesque qualities familiar to us from Flamboyant church architecture (fig. 397). That we should find an echo of the Louvre court in a merchant's residence is striking proof of the importance attained by the urban middle class during the later Middle Ages.

ENGLAND

Among the astonishing things about Gothic art is the enthusiastic response this "royal French style of the Paris region" evoked abroad. Even more remarkable was its ability to acclimate itself to a variety of local conditions—so much so, in fact, that the Gothic monuments of England and Germany have become objects of intense national pride in modern times, and critics in both countries have acclaimed Gothic as a peculiarly "native" style. How are we to account for the rapid spread of Gothic art? A number of factors might be cited, singly or in combination: the superior skill of French architects and stone carvers; the vast intellectual prestige of French centers of learning, such as the Cathedral School of Chartres and the University of Paris; and the influence of the Cistercians, the reformed monastic order founded

by St. Bernard of Clairvaux. He, we recall, had violently denounced the flights of fancy of Romanesque sculpture. In conformity with his ascetic ideals, Cistercian abbey churches were a distinctive, severe type—decoration of any sort was held to a minimum, and a square choir took the place of apse, ambulatory, and radiating chapels. For that very reason, however, Cistercian architects put special emphasis on harmonious proportions and exact craftsmanship; and their "anti-Romanesque" outlook prompted them to adopt certain basic features of the Gothic style. During the latter half of the twelfth century, as the reform movement gathered momentum, this austere Cistercian Gothic came to be known throughout western Europe. Still, one wonders whether any of the explanations we have mentioned really go to the heart of the matter. The ultimate reason for the international victory of Gothic art seems to have been the extraordinary persuasive power of the style itself, its ability to kindle the imagination and to arouse religious feeling even among people far removed from the cultural climate of the Île-de-France.

That England should have proved particularly receptive to the new style is hardly surprising. Yet English Gothic did not grow directly from Anglo-Norman Romanesque but from the Gothic of the Île-de-France (introduced in 1175 by the French architect who rebuilt the choir of Canterbury Cathedral) and from that of the Cistercians. Within less than fifty years, it developed a well-defined character of its own, known as the Early English style, which dominated the second quarter of the thirteenth century. Although there was a great deal of building activity during those decades, it consisted mostly of additions to Anglo-Norman structures. A great many English cathedrals had been begun about the same time as Durham (see figs. 355-57) but remained unfinished; they were now completed or enlarged. As a consequence, we find few churches that are designed in the Early English style throughout. Among cathedrals, only Salisbury meets this requirement (figs. 399-401). Viewing the exterior, we realize immediately how different it is from its counterparts in France—and how futile it would be to judge it by French Gothic standards.

Compactness and verticality have given way to a long, low, sprawling look (the great crossing tower, which provides a dramatic unifying accent, was built a century later than the rest and is much taller than originally planned). Since there is no straining after height, flying buttresses have been introduced only as an afterthought. Characteristically enough, the west façade has become a screen wall, wider than the church itself and stratified by emphatic horizontal bands of ornament and statuary, while the towers have shrunk to stubby turrets. The plan, with its strongly projecting double transept, retains the segmented quality of Romanesque structures; the square east end derives from Cistercian architecture. As we enter the nave, we recognize the same elements familiar to us from French interiors of the time, such as Chartres (see

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1220s

QUOTE

200

-TAKAHASHI (1971)