

# 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: 6500-90 Old York Rd (aka 1400 66th Avenue)

Postal code: 19126

#### 2. NAME OF HISTORIC RESOURCE

Historic Name: The Carmelite Monastery

Current/Common Name: \_\_\_\_\_

#### 3. TYPE OF HISTORIC RESOURCE

☒ Building      ☐ Structure      ☐ Site      ☐ Object  
(Chapel only-- no other contributing property)

#### 4. PROPERTY INFORMATION

Condition:    ☐ excellent    ☒ good    ☐ fair    ☐ poor    ☐ ruins  
Occupancy:    ☒ occupied    ☐ vacant    ☐ under construction    ☐ unknown  
Current use: worship site for Carmelite nuns; occasionally open for public use

#### 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 1915 to \_\_\_\_\_

Date(s) of construction and/or alteration: 1915 to 1927 (dedication)

Architect, engineer, and/or designer: Maginnis & Walsh of Boston

Builder, contractor, and/or artisan: Melody & Keating

Original owner: Carmelite Community

Other significant persons: Therese Martin, OCD (St. Therese of the Child Jesus)

**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 April 2021

Name with Title Celeste A. Morello, MS, MA Email \_\_\_\_\_

Street Address 1234 South Sheridan Street 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: Received via email April 29, 2021

☒ Correct-Complete ☐ Incorrect-Incomplete Date: June 18, 2021

Date of Notice Issuance: June 21, 2021

Property Owner at Time of Notice:

Name: Carmelite Convent of Philadelphia

Address: 6500-90 Old York Rd

City: Philadelphia State: PA Postal Code: 19126

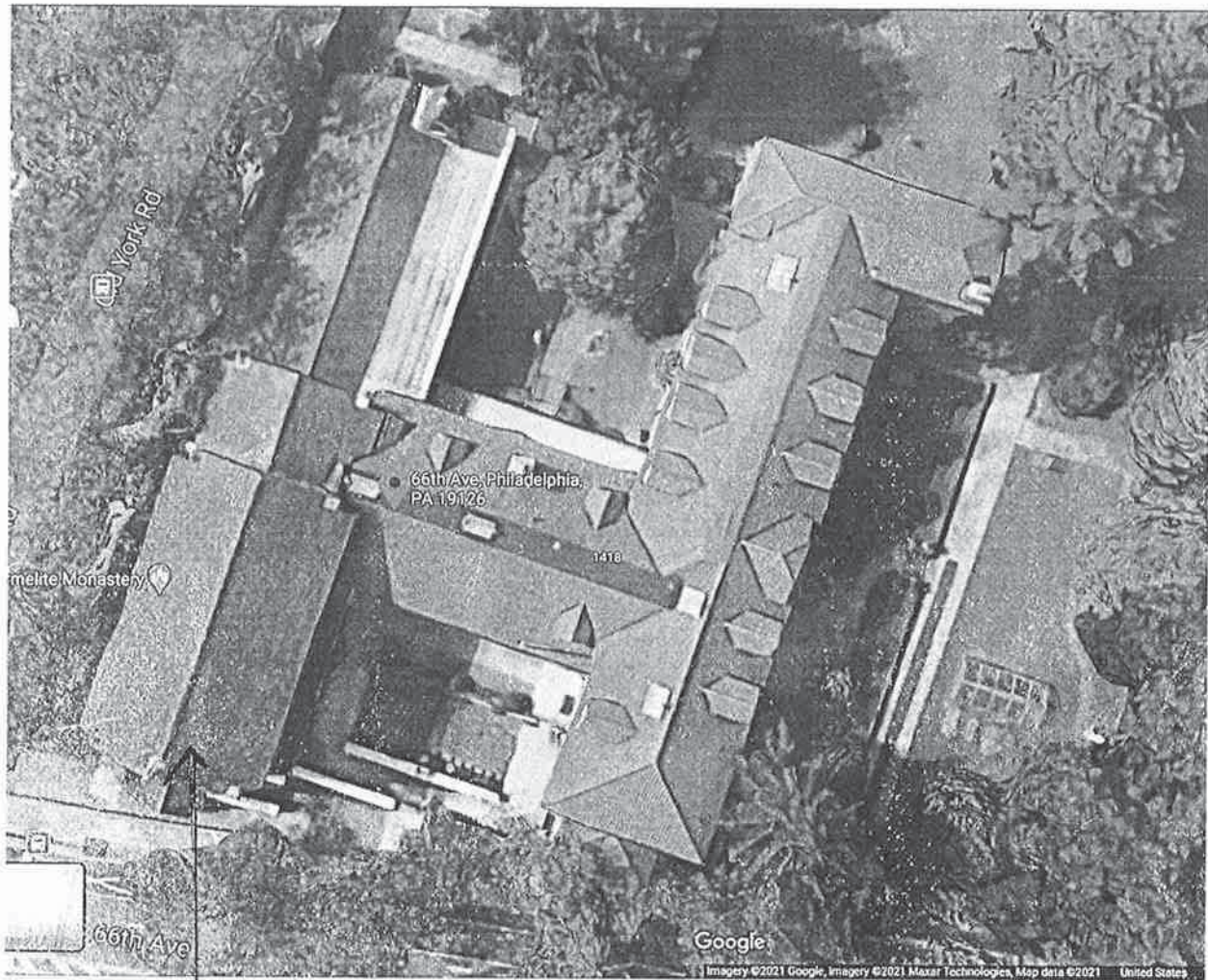
Date(s) Reviewed by the Committee on Historic Designation: 21 July 2021

Date(s) Reviewed by the Historical Commission: 13 August 2021

Date of Final Action: 13 August 2021

☒ Designated ☐ Rejected Designated under D, E and H, but not F, with a boundary amendment 12/7/18

# Carmelite Monastery



Chapel of Carmelite Monastery.(From northern perspective.)

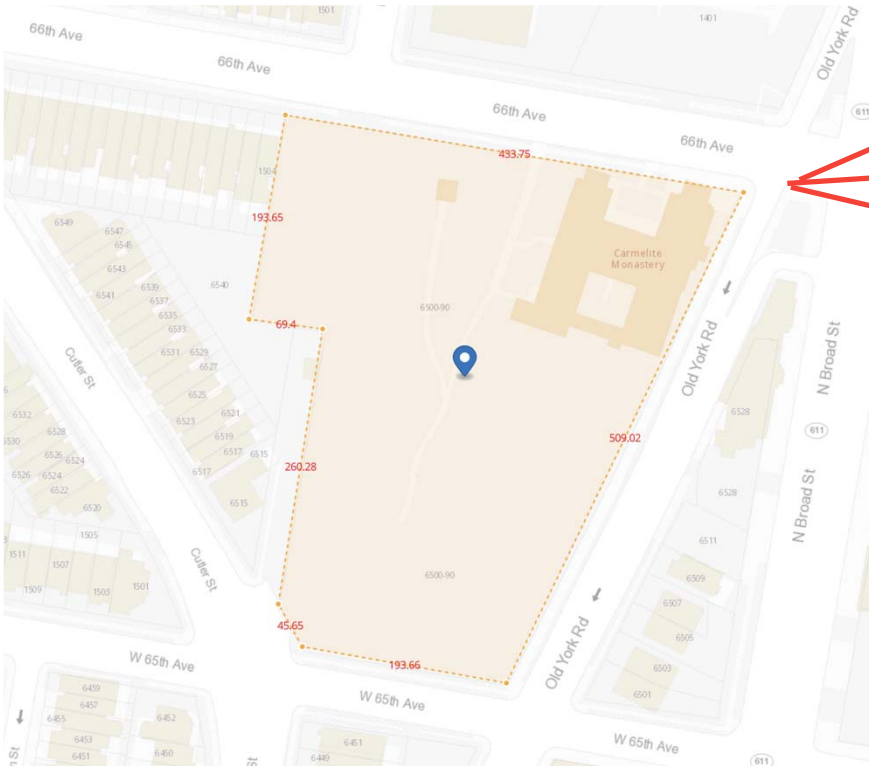
BOUNDARIES: The lot of this Monastery has been reduced from the original purchase.

The Historical Commission Staff is asked to provide the dimensions, with nominator's gratitude.

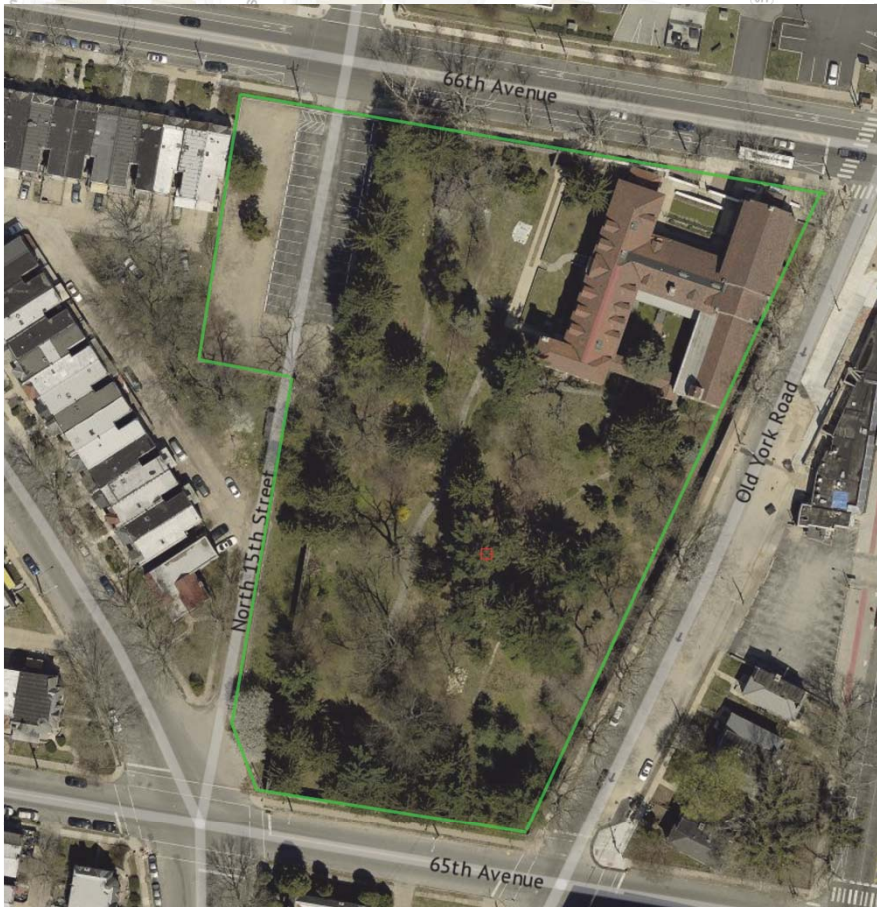


(staff supplemented)

## 5. BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION



Adopted boundary  
is the full parcel  
shown here



Boundary of parcel

THE CARMELITE MONASTERY CHAPEL



This photograph is from the Monastery's website: [discalcedcarmelitesphila.org](http://discalcedcarmelitesphila.org). The Chapel is in a Lombard Romanesque design, consistent with late 11th and early 12th century buildings. Nationally-known architects Maginnis & Walsh of Boston, along with local contractors Melody & Keating are responsible for the entire complex of the Monastery, dating from 1915 to 1925. The Chapel's design, architectural elements, architect and unique location will be discussed to qualify for the Register of Historic Buildings in Philadelphia.



DESCRIPTION:

The Carmelite Monastery's Chapel is the only nominated building in this unusual complex of buildings: extensions from the Chapel's south and west walls are not included. (See next page.)

The Chapel is a Lombard Romanesque basilican constructed of "stone," or "local rubble stone,"<sup>1</sup> set neatly in mortar with whitish terra cotta trim. A reddish terra cotta tile roof covers the whole nave and a lower level roof on the side aisles of the nave. The Chapel measures "60 feet" wide and "154 feet" deep<sup>2</sup> along Old York Road. The stone wall is not contributing. Inlaid sculptural reliefs are at the facade indicating the side aisles level. Other architectural sculpture is found on the windows at the lower level on the east and west walls of the Chapel; the tympanum above the portal on 66th Avenue and extending portico which has more elaborate decoration on all three sides. Corinthian columns support this portico which is raised above the ground/street level by about five steps (or about 30 inches) from double stairs. The stone staircase is part of the Chapel's architecture for nomination.

More modern additions refer to the security of the Chapel which is located on a busy intersection in the Oak Lane neighborhood, at the end of North Broad Street. Wrought iron bars are between the Corinthian columns and attached piers on the portal, as well as on the street level to impede entry to the entrances on the east and west sides.

The Chapel's stained glass windows are on the east side (five bays) and four bays on the west: the windows have "four layers" of glass and were designed by Alexander Locke, a student of LC Tiffany;<sup>3</sup>

Typical of cloisters, there are only certain areas open to the public, and this building has occasional openings for services.

The building and surroundings are in excellent condition.

<sup>1</sup> Philadelphia Real Estate Record and Builders' Guide (PRERBG) September 17, 1914; October 7, 1914, as "Carmelite Convent." And, Feeley, Daniel, A Story of Holy Angels Parish Philadelphia, 1900-1950.

<sup>2</sup> Catholic Historical Research Center (CHRC).

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

Dash, A., "Carmel in Philadelphia: The First Hundred Years." p.43. (Pamphlet) CHRC. This information had been unknown to the Census of Stained Glass Windows in America.

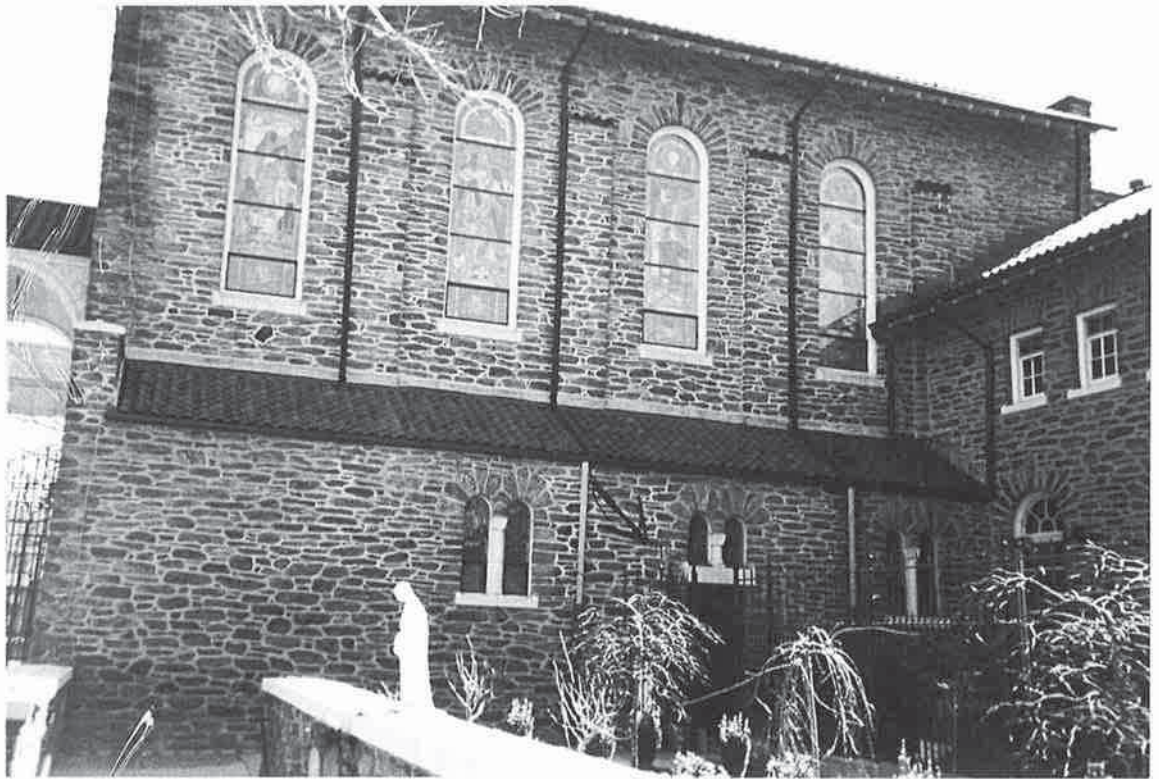


The Cloisters of Roman Catholic religious orders are not for the public's view, thus this aerial provides information on the Monastery's Chapel's plan and extensions therefrom. Note how expansive the Monastery's grounds are and where the cloistered area is for the Sisters' green space.

Originally, the Monastery had three acres; some acreage in the 1920s had been sold to the City to pave through 66th Avenue and 15th Street. The City paid the Sisters for this ground in 1925.

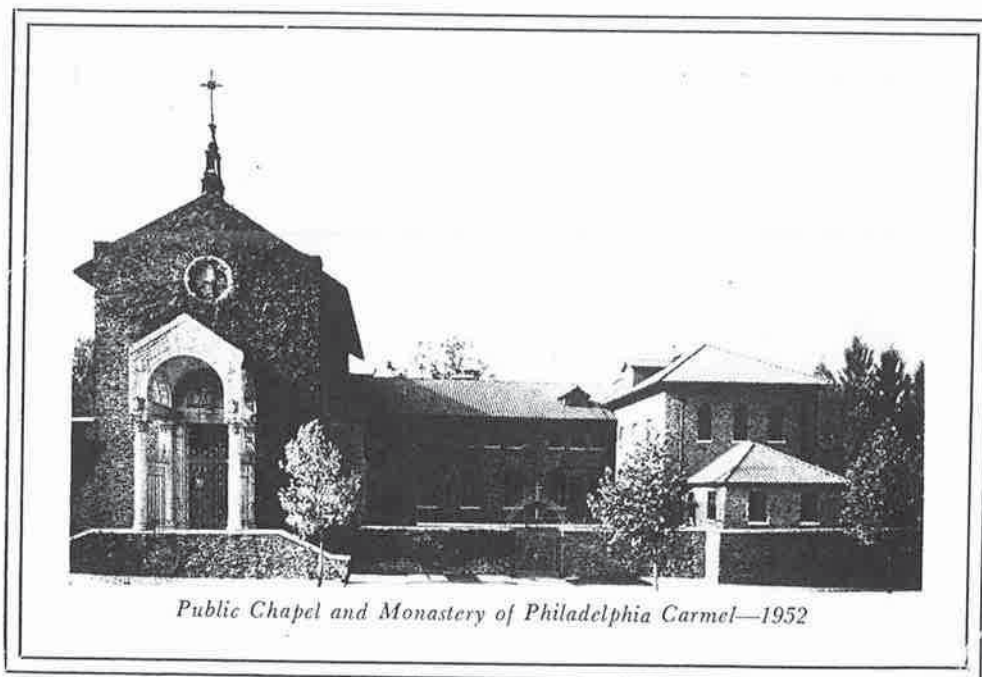






Recent (March, 2021) photograph (above) of west wall with public access to Chapel through meditation green space, on 66th Avenue. Note clerestory level above side aisles of nave.

Below is wider aspect of cloister emerging from Chapel's southwest corner. This extension bars public view of the cloister's garden. (See aerial.) The building on right (below) was the site of the old manor on the estate.



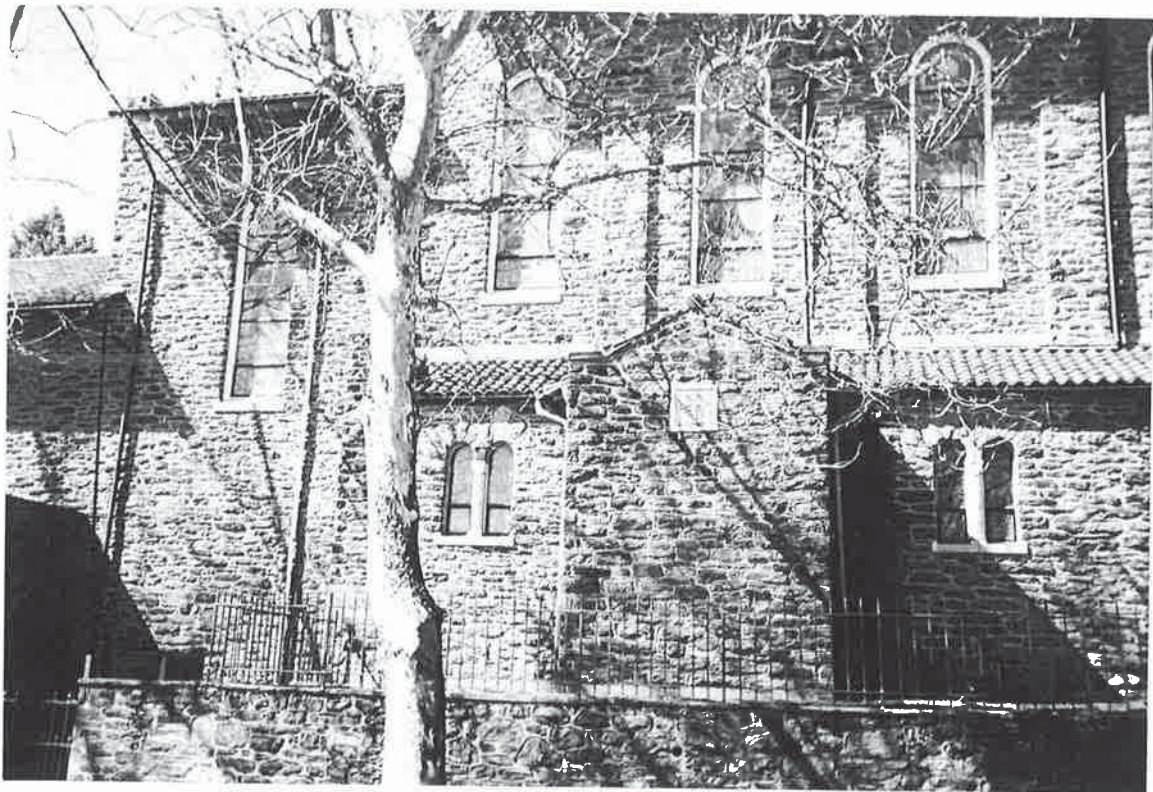


south extension  
↓

nominated building  
↓



Above, view from North Broad Street; closer view of Monastery's east wall from Old York Road in photograph below. (By nominator in March, 2021.)







Photograph at left is from the Carmelites' 2002 booklet.

The interior's design is consistent to Lombard Romanesque of the late 11th to early 12th century--which can be compared to the church of St. Ambrose (Sant' Ambrogio) in Milan, Italy of same period. (below, from Janson.)

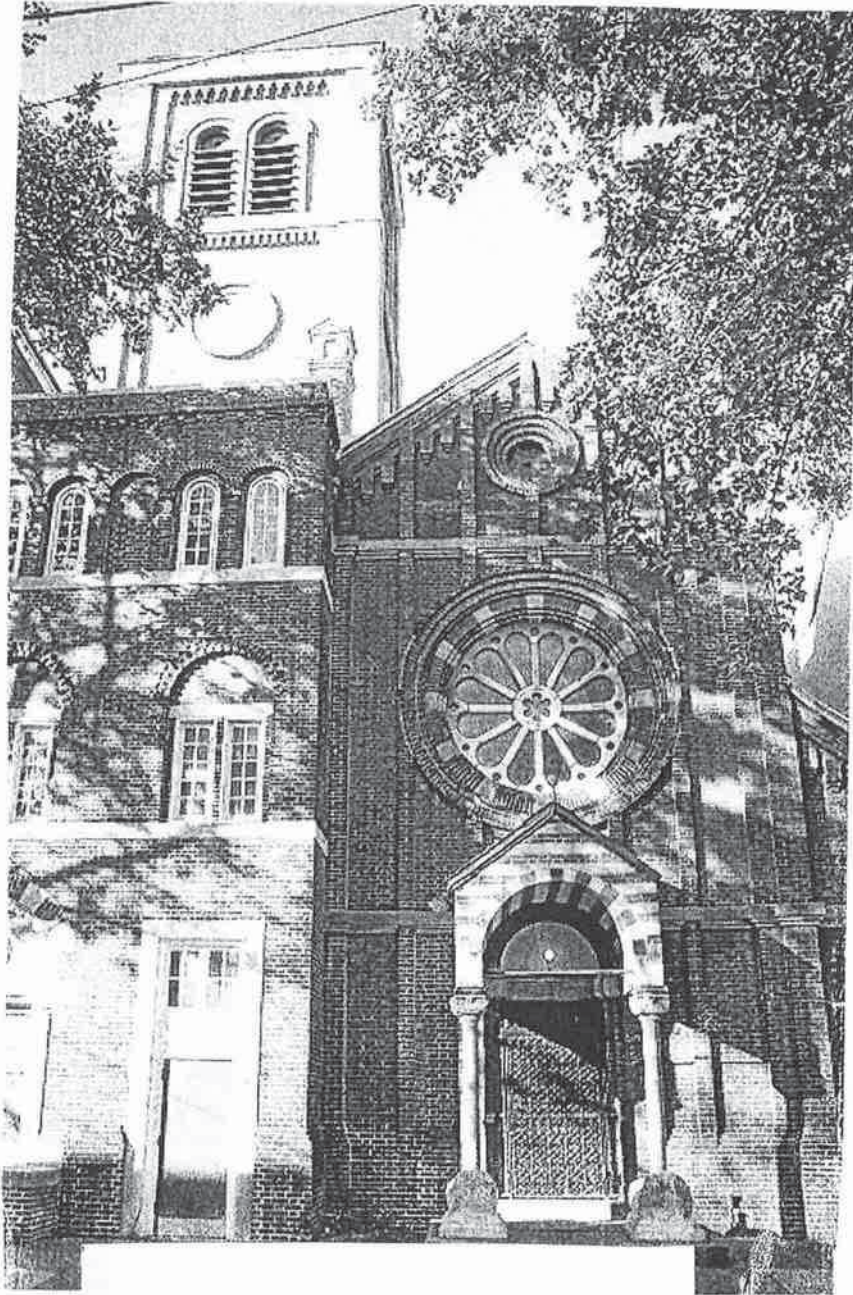
Lombard Romanesque details are in the architectural characteristics: rounded arch vault, a flat east (altar) wall, arcaded side aisles, the squared and sculpted capitals and rectangular plan (basilican).



Sant' Ambrogio is one prototype of Lombard Romanesque, which continued to develop through the 12th century, with more exterior decoration.

The Carmelites' Chapel is a reduced, simplified adaptation of the most prominent Lombard Romanesque architectural characteristics.





In Historic Sacred Places of Philadelphia, architectural historian Roger Moss included the Fleisher Art Memorial's building, the former Episcopal Church of the Evangelists, on the 700 block of Catharine Street in South Philadelphia.

The building's design was by Louis C. Baker, Jr., who was with the Furness and Evans firm in 1880; the plan of this "Romanesque" dates to "1886."

The Episcopal minister of this congregation asked Baker to incorporate into his design, architectural components from three(3) Roman Catholic churches in Italy. The portico, with its horizontal stripes, as well as the large circular window (with the 12 signs of the zodiac in each "petal"), and the "Lombard arches" under the gable align the design specifically to "Lombard Romanesque" of the late 11th to early 12th century. The facade mimics San Zeno in Verona (1120-1139). (See p. 19 herein.)



The Carmelite Monastery's portico, also Lombard Romanesque, carries the novel sculpted tympanum under the portico with its sculptural program.

STATEMENT of SIGNIFICANCE:

In the City of Philadelphia, there are many recreations and interpretations of architectural styles relating to the Golden Age of Greece, the Roman Empire, Islamic mosques, English manors, French Empire public buildings and Spanish missions among the modern and minimalists. Within this architectural scheme is a Roman Catholic Carmelite Monastery, a cloister and Chapel in the Olney neighborhood. This Carmelite Monastery's Chapel is the only nominated building in this complex. It is in a Lombard Romanesque Style, with a portico of architectural sculpture in front of a carved tympanum above the portal, friezes on some areas on the facade, east and west walls and other Lombard characteristics from the late 11th and early 12th centuries.

There is nothing like this in the City.

The Lombard Romanesque may have been used for this design by Boston-based architects Maginnis & Walsh<sup>4</sup> because the style coincided with the founding of the Carmelite Order by about 1150. Local contractors Melody & Keating,<sup>5</sup> who specialized in building medieval and traditional Catholic structures, won the bid to work with architects who would design the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in Washington, D.C. and win AIA awards, as well as other awards for institutional buildings on the campuses of Boston College and Notre Dame University. The architect of the Philadelphia Carmel was Charles D. Maginnis, AIA, once the president of this esteemed group and a Ph.D. in arts from Harvard University.<sup>6</sup> But it is his design at this Carmelite Monastery which is equally impressive.

The Lombard Romanesque cathedrals which art historians cite as prototypes of this style have certain characteristics which are present at the Philadelphia Carmelite Monastery: Architec-

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<sup>4</sup> PRERBG, op.cit.

<sup>5</sup> PRERBG, October 7, 1914; June 15, 1921 recorded the completion of the "Convent" with "Melody & Sons" as the buildings, succeeding "Melody & Keating."

<sup>6</sup> New Catholic Encyclopedia. NY: McGraw, 1967. Vol. IX.



tural sculpture in the tympanum and sides of the Portico extending from the center bay's portal; basilican plan; oculus under the roof gable at the facade.

The majority of this building complex is unseen to the public; the Chapel is occasionally open for services. Located on the corner of 66th Avenue at the end of North Broad Street, the Carmelite Monastery has been a fixture here in Olney before the development of residences and commercial buildings along Broad Street. The famous Oak Lane Diner is about 100 feet from the Monastery's walls on Old York Road where it merges with Broad Street. The sight of this Monastery is well-known--it is an anomaly at this intersection and cannot be avoided in the clearing.

This building has been a beloved sight in Olney, a visual of solace and peacefulness. There are currently thirteen Sisters praying and living in the cloister, with little contact but to the few who are the Sisters' agents with the outside and public.

The Chapel is a fine example of Lombard Romanesque, with the architectural sculpture intact; everything here is as it seemed to have been when completed by about 1925, including the green spaces. This place is part of the 34 Carmelite Monasteries which have been in the United States since the 1790s and have grown with the nation.<sup>7</sup> The criteria will provide more than sufficient reasons for listing on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Buildings.

Celeste A. Morello, MS, MA

April, 2021

(During COVID-19 limitations)

<sup>7</sup> There are Carmelite Monasteries (for females) in Flemington and Morristown, New Jersey; Schenectady, Rochester, Brooklyn and Buffalo, New York; Baltimore, Maryland; Santa Clara, California; Louisville, Kentucky; Mobile, Alabama; Wheeling, W. Virginia; Boston, Massachusetts; Jefferson City, Missouri; Erie, Penna.; Georgetown, California; Traverse City, Michigan; Springfield, Missouri; and Santa Fe, New Mexico; Durham, North Carolina; Savannah, Georgia; Barrington, Rhode Island. (As of 2002.)

(Below) Nominator's photograph of the ARCHITECTURAL SCULPTURE on the portal's tympanum and portico, all Lombard Romanesque in design, but dating c. 1920, as one of the City's earliest examples of art-with-architecture during the Art Deco movement in the United States.

The ARCHITECTURAL SCULPTURE is visible on 66th Avenue.



Our Lady of Mount Carmel with the Child Jesus stands at the tympanum's center, slightly outside of the semi-circular framework. Kneeling angels in profile are at Our Lady's flanks.



Aspect from the  
northeast of the  
Carmelites' Chapel,  
on 66th Avenue.

The sculptors of this  
work are unknown, but  
Daprato Studios of  
New York City had  
created many art works  
at archdiocesan churches.



Nominator's photograph (above) details the PORTICO, defined as  
"A porch supporting a roof or an entablature and pediment,  
often approached by a number of steps.

It provides a monumental covered entrance to a building  
and a link with the space surrounding it."

(Source: H.W. Janson, History of Art. NY: Abrams, 1977, p. 747.)

This portico has architectural sculpture.

The Chapel at the Carmelite Monastery...

- (d) Embodies distinguishing characteristics of an architectural style:

LOMBARD ROMANESQUE

and,

- (f) Contains elements of design, detail, materials or craftsmanship which represent a significant innovation:

#### ARCHITECTURAL SCULPTURE

These criteria are interrelated: Lombard Romanesque design includes architectural sculpture as one of its characteristics.

The Chapel in discussion is a Lombard Romanesque, maintaining Early Christian basilican conventions: rectangular plan; nave with sides aisles extending beyond the rectilinear outline; a clere-story level under a pitched roof; gable in roof terminating at the facade; portal centered in alignment with the gable at facade; and (east wall, ideally) rear wall with apse, or flattened wall for the altar. Bell towers are part of the plan in some eras and sites during the c. 500 to 1000 period in western Europe.

Significant changes in ecclesiastical architecture arose from the heightened religious spirit epitomized by "Pilgrimage church" architecture along the four routes leading to the Santiago, Spain shrine of St. James in the 1000s. The transept crossing the nave, along with elaborate sculptural programs on the buildings' exteriors to attract visitors to the churches holding relics spread from "The Pyrenean workshop" of sculptors. Their works on sculpting figures and motifs on portals, surrounds and in attaching friezes began simultaneously in Toulouse at St.-Sernin church, and at the churches in Santiago and Léon in Spain from the late 1000s to early 1100s.<sup>8</sup> These changes in the appearance of churches would eventually

<sup>8</sup> Janson, HW, History of Art, NY: Abrams, 1977, p.271. Zarnecki, Geo., Art of the Medieval World, NY: Abrams, 1979, pp.218-219;225;266-267; 270. Chastel, Andre, Italian Art. Harper & Row, 1963, p. 59.



be carried northward where architecture would undergo more significant conceptual changes at the Abbey of St.-Denis. There the pointed arch and the Abbott's zeal for height and light created the Gothic Style by the 1130s. In the interim, architectural sculpture in Lombardy, the area between France, Italy and Austria, would experience its own movement in exterior decoration. With its basic architecture derived from Romanesque and retention of the rounded arch, Lombard Romanesque was a distinctive style by and because of how its construction materials, along with stone sculptural ornamentation and architectural members carved into figures separated it from "Pilgrimage churches" of France and Spain. In fact, from the progress made contemporaneously in Lombardy, the sculpture and sculpted architectural units distinguished Lombard Romanesque and its art from its French and Spanish peers.

Lombard Romanesque architectural sculpture from the time of the Cathedral of Modena (1099-1128) to the Cathedral of Verona (1139) shows consistency as well as innovation in the portico extending from the main portal at the facade. It is thoroughly decorated, supported by Corinthian capitals on smooth shafts and with reclining animals (such as lions) as the bases. The fronts of the porticos have sculpture, leading to more carvings at the semi-circular tympana above panelled doors. The jambs on doorways usually have carvings, but may also be engaged Corinthian columns or piers. No sculpture on projecting architecture, such as porticoes (or portichi) were seen in French or Spanish prototypes of the same era, or after: it is a Lombard Romanesque characteristic.

The sculpture on the porticoes in Lombardy seemed to be known as an architectural and artistic feat at the time by the identi-

<sup>9</sup> Zarnecki, op.cit., pp. 270;272;274. Architectural sculpture on Pilgrimage churches on the four routes to Santiago, Spain, included Moissac, Vezelay and Modena from the early 12th century. This was first documented in Abbe Bouillett, Memoires de la Societe des Artistes de France. 1892, p. 117, cited in Spencer, Harold (Ed.), Readings in Art History, NY: Scribner's Sons, 1976, p. 249.





237. South portal in narthex; on tympanum,  
Scenes of the Virgin and Infant Christ. 1120-32.  
Abbey Church of Ste.-Madeleine, Vézelay

Contemporary to the Lombard Romanesque architectural sculpture is this example at the church of Ste.-Madeleine, Vézelay, France. (1129-1132). There are no porticoes in the French or Spanish Pilgrim churches as with the Lombard Romanesque churches.



cation of the sculptor-artist, "Wiligelmo" who inscribed his name on the portico of the Cathedral of Modena. (1099-1120). Also recorded is the architect of the cathedral with whom Wiligelmo collaborated.<sup>10</sup> The two would plan where Wiligelmo's friezes would be placed on the facade as well as where and what figures would be carved onto the portico. (Refer to page 20.)

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Art historian Henri Focillon wrote on architectural sculpture: "...it was architectural in that the figures were made to conform to their architectural setting and it was ornamental" for Romanesque buildings in general. For churches built prior to 1000, he noted that "...sculpture in architecture and for architecture demanded a much stricter economy" which included "capitals, tympana and archivolts...(but) not altogether abandon the friezes and the arcades..." He then added "trumeaux and doorjambs." Focillon's opinion was "...it was in the Corinthian capital that human figures first began to be inserted..." and, "architectural conformity and the use of geometric schemes...are the fundamental characteristics of Romanesque."<sup>11</sup> The Chapel at the Carmelite Monastery holds all of these elements and concepts, to the credit of its architect.

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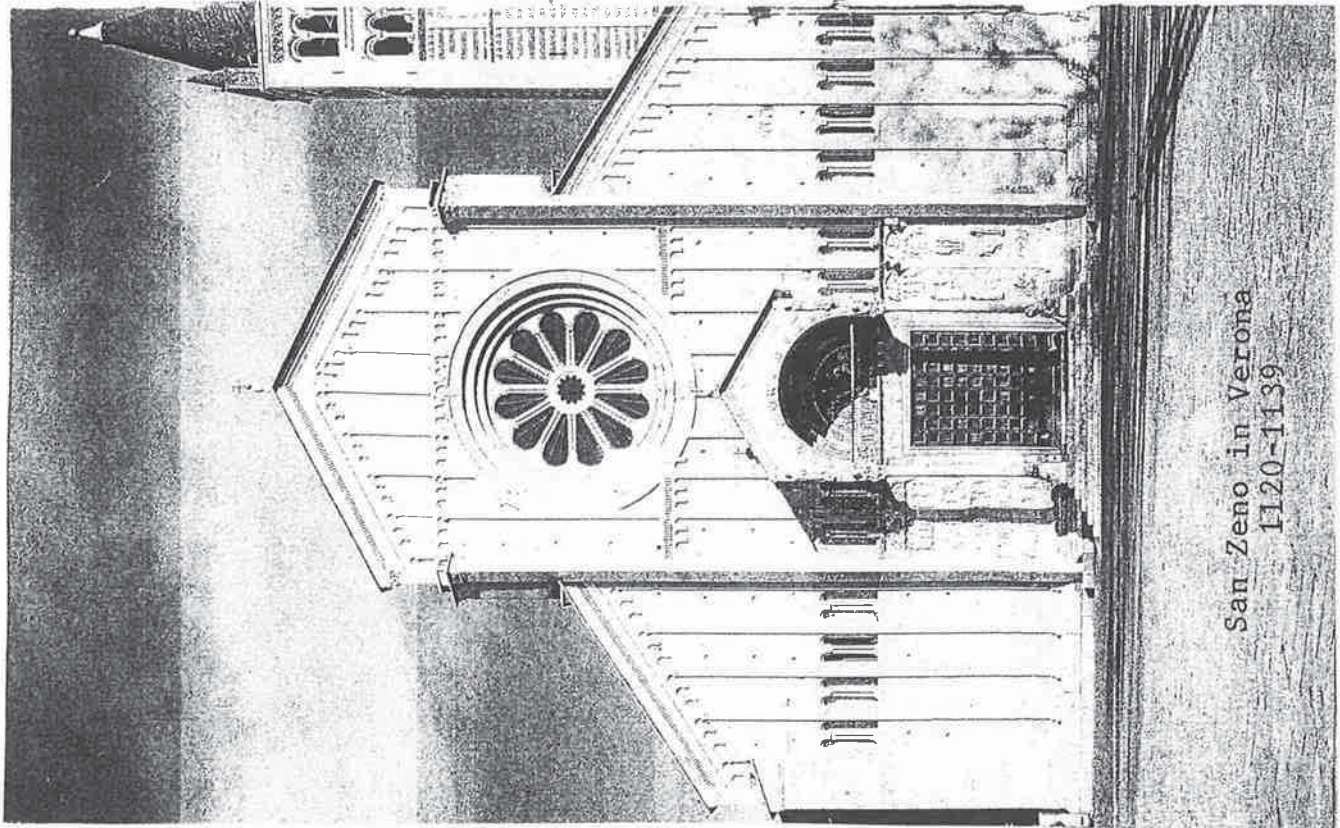
Lombard Romanesque architectural sculpture has its distinctions. Zarnecki held Wiligelmo's pupil, "Niccolo" as advancing beyond the master by carvings at the portal's tympanum and allowing the figures to project from their geometric frame. Niccolo also placed his sculpture on the spandrels and jambs, not overdoing the forms.<sup>12</sup>

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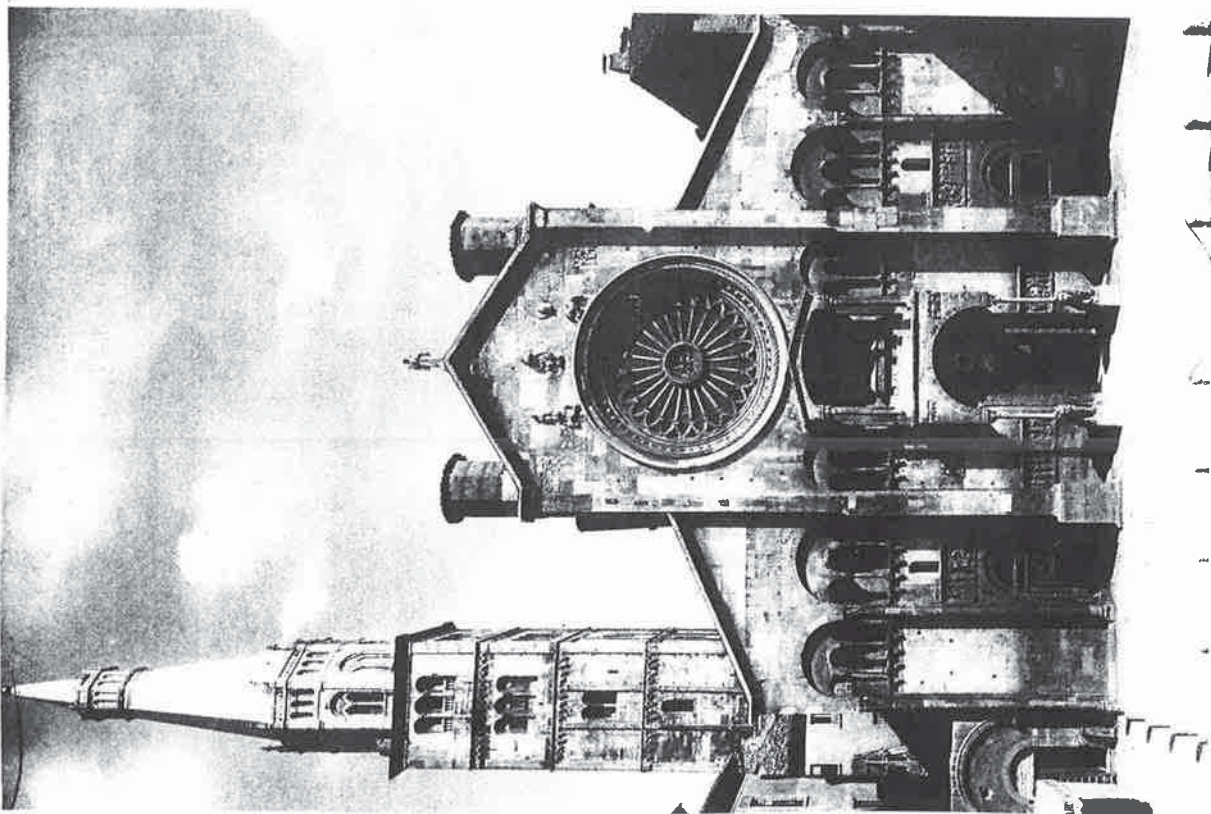
<sup>10</sup> Modena Cathedral's architect was Lanfranco (or "Lanfranc") and the construction year of the church was also recorded as "1099."

<sup>11</sup> Focillon, Henri, "The Eleventh Century and the Romanesque Church," pp. 242;243; 245 in Spencer, op.cit.

<sup>12</sup> Zarnecki, op.cit., p. 271. Niccolo also carved his name on the porticoes he sculpted in Sagrada San Michele in Turin, Cathedral of Ferrara and Cathedral of Verona.



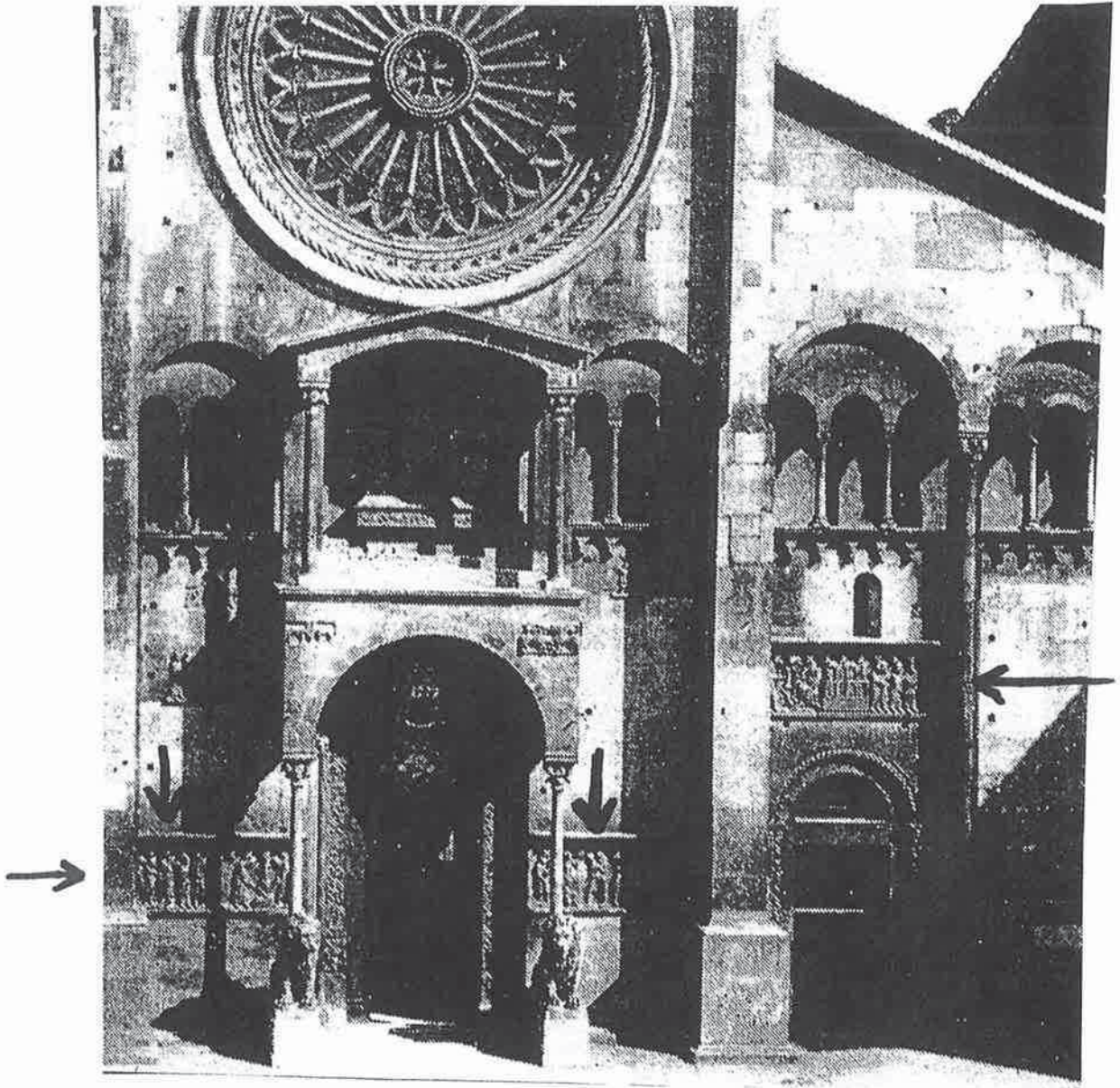
San Zeno in Verona  
1120-1139



11 Modena, Cathedral: façade  
1099-1120

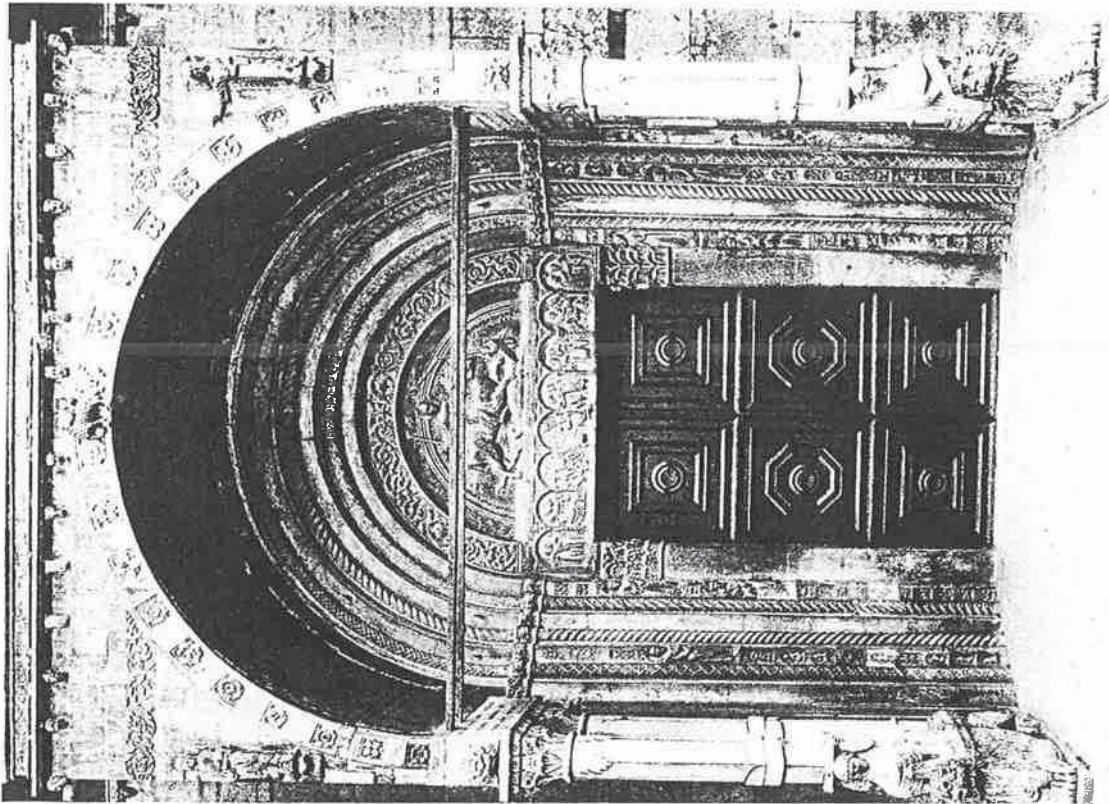
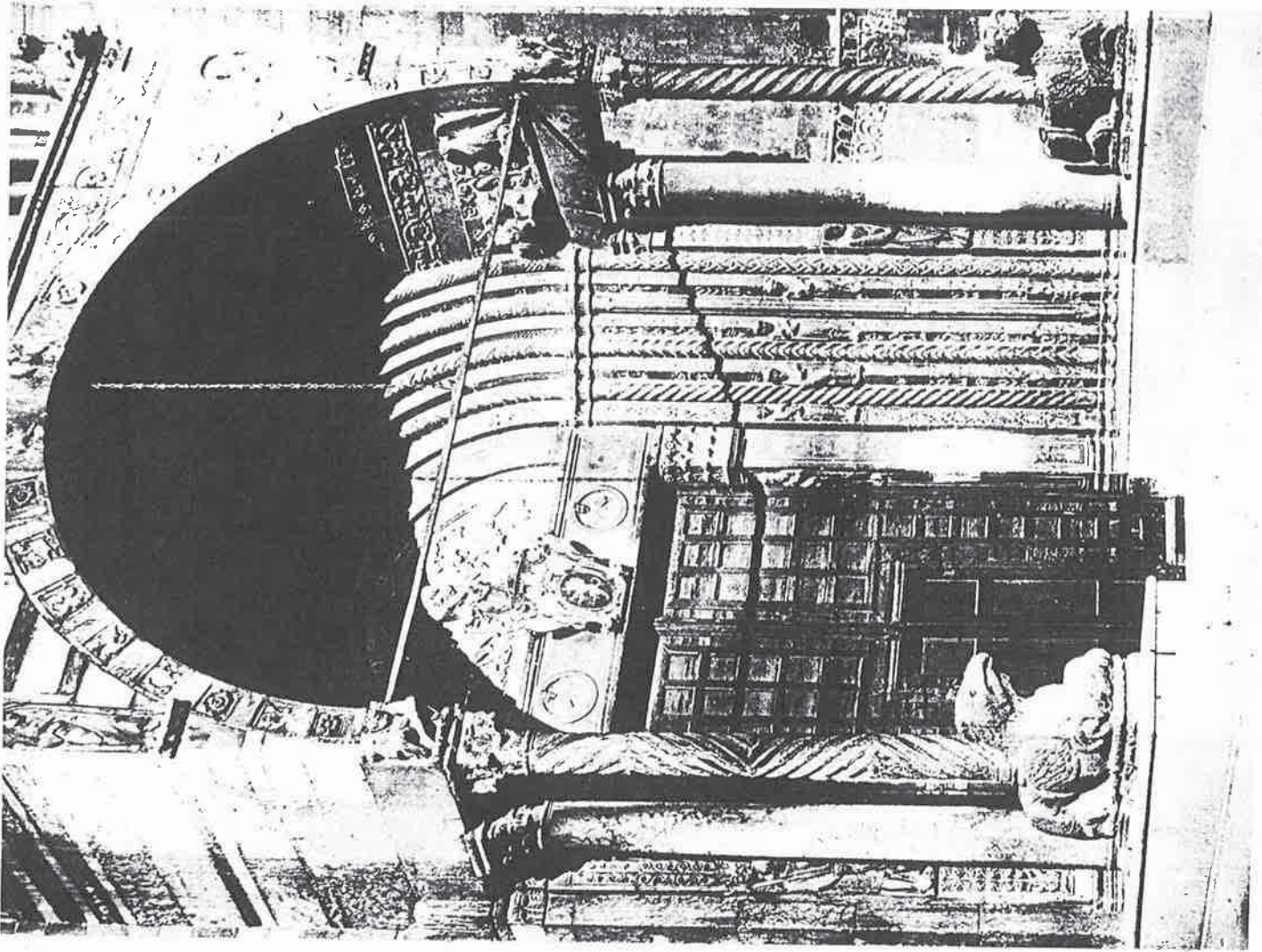
Willigermo's carved porticoes.





Arrows point to the architectural sculpture attached onto the Modena Cathedral, as planned by sculptor Wiligelmo with architect Lanfranco. The friezes draw attention to the interior's design, here, to the nave's side aisles--this was also seen at the Carmelite Monastery where inset sculptural reliefs denoted the side aisles on the east and west walls. (Refer to page 4 herein.)





270. Niccolò. Main portal with jamb figures  
of Prophets in niches, and *Annunciation*. 1135.  
Cathedral, Ferrara

Niccolo's work in Verona (1139)  
(Photos: Zarnecki.)





Nominator's recent photograph, looking eastward at the Chapel's elaborate carvings on the portico. Corinthian capitals are on the supporting columns and the piers along the portal.

This photograph shows the carved spandrels and sides of the portal's arch with arabesques set within defined borders.

Inscriptions are on both sides of the arches' spans.

This portico, like its Lombard Romanesque examples, has a pitched roof, here with terra cotta tiles, which are a color contrast with the light-colored material (stone or terra cotta) of the architectural sculpture. The small carved plaques inset at the facade recall Wiligelmo's larger friezes at Modena Cathedral.

Lastly, Lombard Romanesque architectural sculpture that was "innovative" at the Carmelite Monastery was found also at the Chapel's east and west wall's lower level windows: they are rounded arch windows in doubles, separated by an engaged column. (Refer to pages 7 and 8.) These decorative elements are an abbreviated version of the "Lombard arcade" found on the church of San Zeno in Verona. (See page 19.)

The aforementioned features of Lombard Romanesque architectural sculpture were not only novel and distinguishable from the exterior ornamentation in southern France and Spain, but contributing to the Gothic, then Renaissance. Zarnecki claimed that "Of all the Italian schools of Romanesque Art, the most influential was that of Lombardy." He called the Lombard Romanesque "experimental" because of the "distinctive external decoration" of buildings in the late 11th and early 12th century.<sup>13</sup> It was the time of the Crusades, when Christians went to the Middle East to save the holy sites from marauding non-Christians. One Crusader, Berthold, had left the sieges in Jerusalem and with some followers, retreating to Mount Carmel (now in Israel) where they began lives as hermits. The Carmelite Order for men was founded by 1150;<sup>14</sup> the female Carmelites arose from Saint Teresa of Avila, a nun of Spanish-Jewish ancestry in the 17th century. The Carmelite Monastery relates to the origins of the Order in the 12th century, and the Chapel's design, along with its architectural sculpture, is consistent to Lombard Romanesque.

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<sup>13</sup>Zarnecki, op.cit., pp. 185-186.

<sup>14</sup>There is disagreement on the year of founding: The Catholic Encyclopedia (1908) wrote that the Carmelite Order's foundation was "in or about the year 1155." Vol. III, p. 354; Jesuit scholar, Rev. Herbert Thurston, SJ, in Butler's Lives of the Saints (1981) had reckoned Berthold's death in 1195 was after "45 years on Carmel." Vol.1, (March 29 feast day); more recently, Father Clifford Stevens stated same as Thurston in "The One Year Book of Saints," published by Our Sunday Visitor, Inc.



The Carmelite Chapel....

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

CHARLES D. MAGINNIS  
of  
MAGINNIS & WALSH (1905-1934)

Charles Donagh Maginnis, AIA (1867-1955) was the Irish-born lead architect of this firm in Boston upon his partnership with Timothy Walsh in about 1905. Maginnis' early application of architectural sculpture, from his first church, St. Patrick's in Whitinsville, Massachusetts, in 1898) seemed to set the course of his church designs and of his use of sculpture on tympana, porticoes, panelled doors, friezes and entablatures on building exteriors, from 1898 through the 1950s.<sup>15</sup> (Refer to page 26 herein.)

At the 1898 design of St. Patrick's, the Lombard Romanesque was applied to correlate the late 11th and early 12th century use of architectural sculpture on specifically, Lombard Romanesque buildings quite differently than the contemporaneous southern French ones. Sixteen years later, at the Philadelphia Carmelite Monastery, Maginnis would try the same type of style, but further the architectural sculpture with the portico. This might be a "first" in Philadelphia, but it has been long in practice with the Maginnis & Walsh firm.

Maginnis was elected president of the American Institute of Architects (AIA), and received the Laetare Award from Notre Dame Univeristy for his positive promotion of Catholicism in the United States.<sup>16</sup> Previously, architect Patrick C. Keely (1816-1896) had received this award for the "700" churches<sup>17</sup> he designed throughout the nation, mainly for Irish Catholics who settled during and after

<sup>15</sup> Maginnis, Walsh & Sullivan, "Recent Catholic Architecture." Pamphlet. Boston: The Everett Press, 1900. (unpaginated).

<sup>16</sup> The New Catholic Encyclopedia. Vol. IX. 1967.

<sup>17</sup> Encyclopedia of Architects. NY: Macmillan, 1982. "Keely, Patrick Charles."

the Irish Famine of the 1840s and 1850s. Maginnis was very familiar with Keely's work, chiding Keely (the second recipient of Notre Dame's Laetare Award), in writing as "a man of lesser gifts."<sup>18</sup> Quantitatively, Maginnis was the successor of Keely in accommodating Irish enclaves with many churches in traditional styles, albeit ones that were interpretations, or "revived" versions of medieval styles. Keely had done this on a massive level, and without the negative criticisms of his countryman, Maginnis. But each had brought to the United States the legacy of Catholic building which dominates architectural history. At a time when modern architecture tended towards the linear, or abstract, or minimal, Catholic church design in the United States remained in a retrospect of centuries' old ones from Europe, not American-made.<sup>19</sup> However, Maginnis' incorporation of the architectural sculpture during the brief Art Deco period may have redeemed his work, and he continued to apply sculpture within and onto exteriors of his church designs, regardless of whether the art work had been used originally when the style originated. One example is the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in Washington, D.C., called "Italian Byzantine," but of what era or prototype? The carvings at the portal (and inscriptions in the English language) were not Byzantine, the architectural style mostly resembling Hagia Sophia church in Istanbul, Turkey (6th-7th century). The dome, was merged within Lombard Romanesque, as other elements. (See page 30 herein.)

Maginnis' work at Boston College (where Keely had worked in 1859), brought him acclaim for his English Gothic designs,<sup>20</sup> which some may attribute to the type of "Collegiate" design associated with the iconic appearances of many East Coast universities.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

<sup>19</sup> The New Catholic Encyclopedia credits non-Catholic church design as moving forward in the 20th century. See "Church Architecture," p. 827, Vol. III.

<sup>20</sup> The Boston College projects date from c. 1912 through the 1920s. Maginnis gained exceptional recognition for these buildings.





TERRA-COTTA PANEL OVER MAIN ENTRANCE

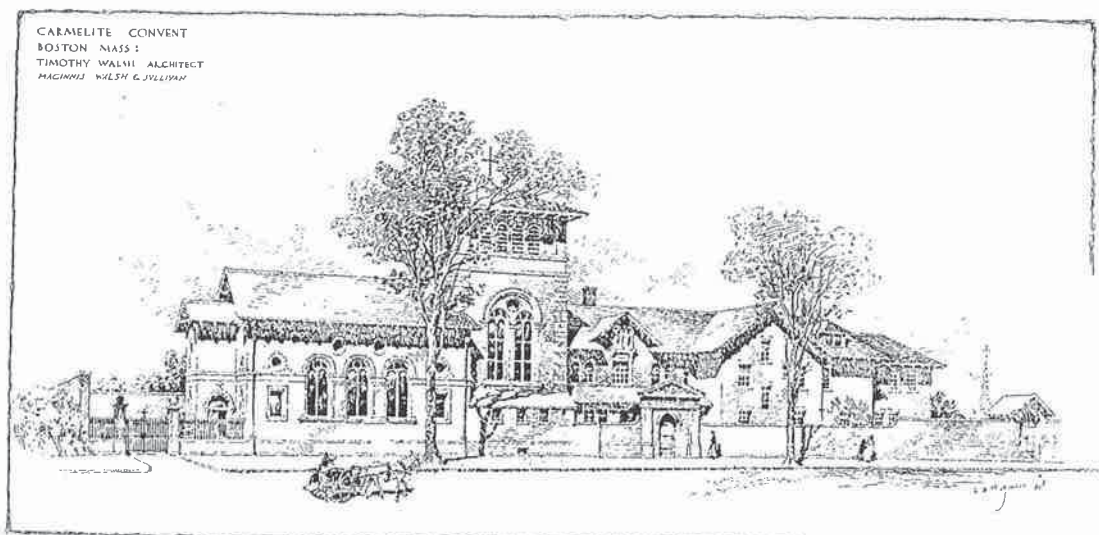
(Above) Tympanum over portal at St. Patrick's.



VIEW OF ST. PATRICK'S FROM CROSS STREET  
By kind permission of *The Architectural Review*

Among the numerous designs for churches and related parish and Catholic institutional buildings in Boston and environs, the first church by Maginnis was St. Patrick's. (above).

The Lombard Romanesque was not commonly used in churches where the Gothic still remained strong. Maginnis was one of the few pioneering architects to break into other medieval styles, such as the Lombard Romanesque, and a Romanesque used for the Boston Carmelite Monastery below. Sisters from this monastery came to Philadelphia in the early 1900s, so the local monastery would be designed by the same architectural firm as in Boston, not any Philadelphia architect.



EXTERIOR VIEW OF THE CARMELITE CONVENT, BOSTON

# RECENT CATHOLIC ARCHITECTURE

A FEW EXAMPLES FROM DESIGNS BY  
MAGINNIS, WALSH & SULLIVAN  
BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS



BOSTON  
PRINTED AT THE EVERETT PRESS  
1900

IN merging our several interests some two years ago, with the purpose of devoting ourselves in an especial way to ecclesiastical work, it was our hope to reach and sustain a high standard in the Catholic architecture of this country, to which end we equipped ourselves by the personal study of the celebrated churches of Europe. We take pleasure in acknowledging the generous patronage which we have since received, the character and extent of which is fairly indicated by the general scope of our Brochure.

We rejoice also in the kindly and favorable criticisms which our efforts have met in the architectural profession. Our drawings have been chosen for exhibition at the Architectural League of New York, The T Square Club of Philadelphia, Wellesley College and St. Botolph Club, Boston, and the Architectural Clubs of Boston, Baltimore, St. Louis, Detroit, Pittsburg, and Chicago.

Many of our designs have likewise appeared, with favorable comment, in the more prominent professional journals, such as *The Architectural Review*, *The American Architect*, and *The Brickbuilder*.

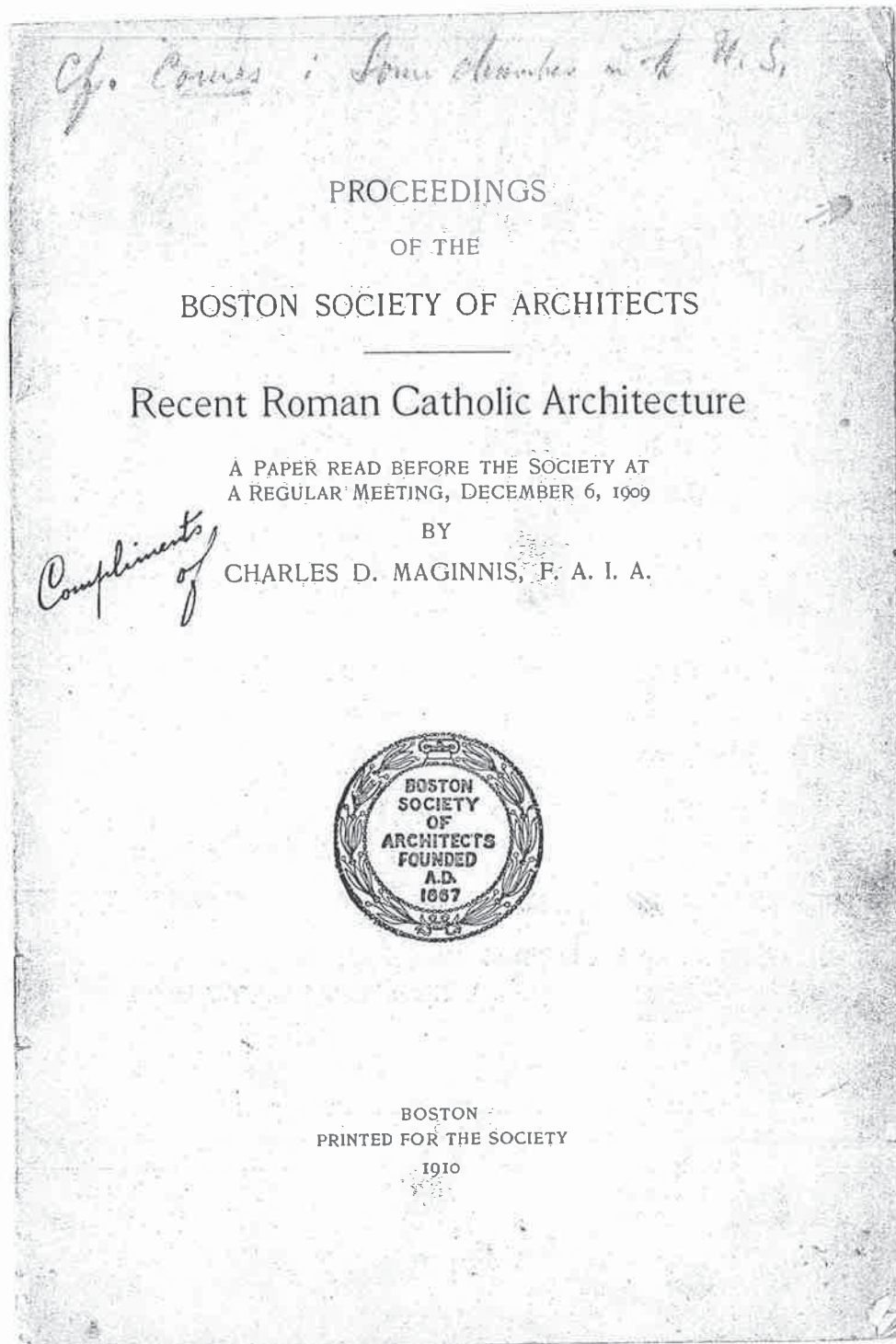
We will be much pleased to welcome further inspection of the plans here illustrated at our offices, Tremont Building, Boston, Massachusetts.

Respectfully,

MAGINNIS, WALSH & SULLIVAN.

One of Maginnis' early publications listed the Philadelphia "T Square Club" as an exhibition venue of his designs. It was appropriate: The T Square Club encouraged art-with-architecture on buildings.





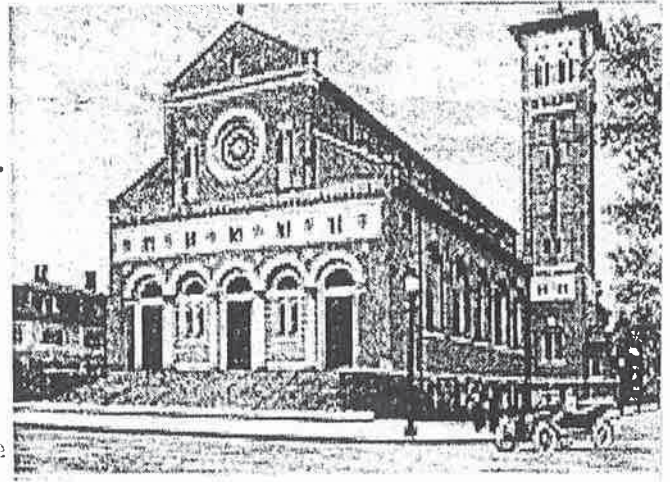
Maginnis' participation and his published writings did much to bring attention to Roman Catholic churches. He would win medals from the AIA for the Carmelite Monastery in Santa Clara (California) and Trinity College's Chapel in Washington, D.C.



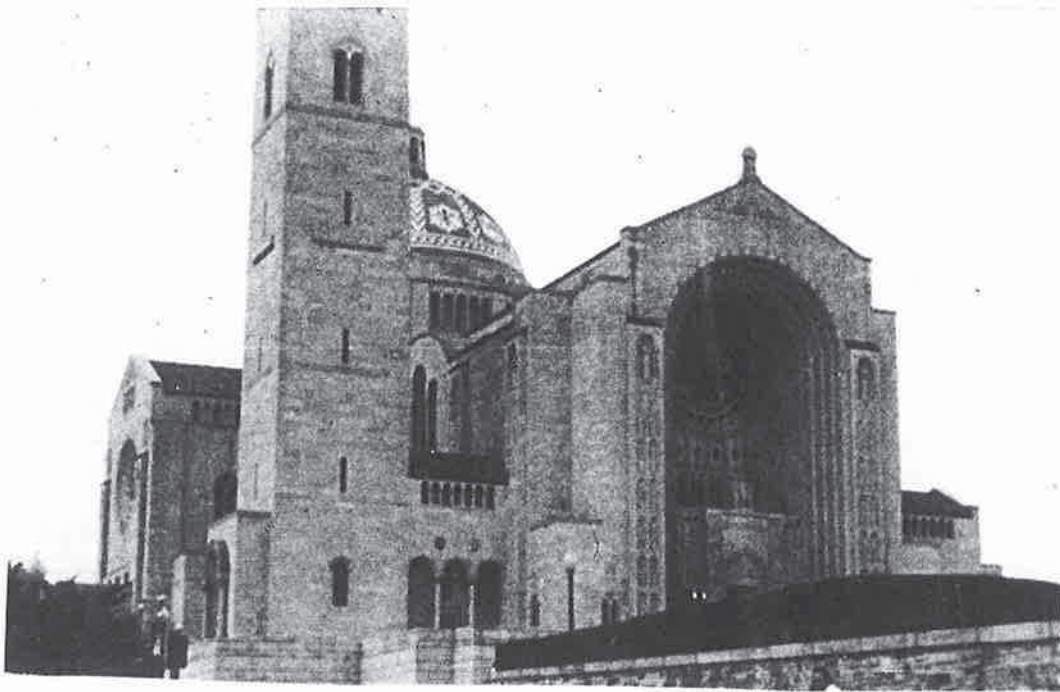
Maginnis & Walsh's experience in interpreting the Lombard Romanesque dated at least to the 1903-1904 church of St. John the Evangelist in Cambridge, Massachusetts. (right)

The church is on the National Register of History Places (1983).

The prototype for St. John's may have been the same one (partly) for the Carmelite Monastery: San Zeno in Verona (1120-1139) (below) an early Lombard Romanesque



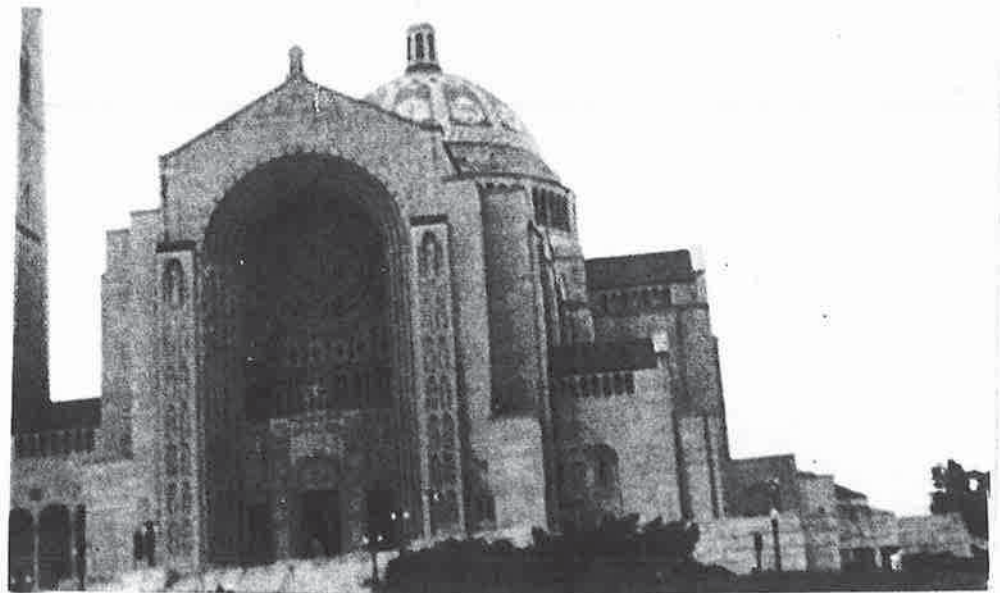




Chronicler Joseph Jackson wrote in his History of Holy Angels Parish that the Carmelite Monastery's design was "Italian Byzantine,"(p.71). He knew that the Monastery was designed by Maginnis & Walsh, the firm which also designed the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in Washington, D.C. (above and below)--this may have confused the writer to misidentify the Carmelite's building. Or perhaps Jackson (writing in 1945) did not see any source that the Monastery is in a Lombard Romanesque styling. The "Italian Byzantine" misnomer was later repeated in the Carmelite Sisters' 1950 pamphlet.

There is no architectural similarity between the Shrine and Monastery but for the rounded arch; the Shrine's complexity dismisses any comparison. However, Maginnis & Walsh's expertise justified the success of both designs.

(Both photos from nominator's family trip in 1971.)





Maginnis & Walsh were skillful and knowledgeable to distinguish sculptural traditions in Italian Byzantine, (seen in the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in Washington, D.C.) dating from 1919 to 1959, from the Lombard Romanesque applied to the Carmelite Monastery's portico (1915-1925) below. Even the type of lettering in both structures correlates to the respective styles, as do the kinds of motifs.

(Both photographs from nominator.)

The Carmelite Monastery's scripting is in Latin--the correct language for Lombard Romanesque.  
The National Shrine's use of the English language was for universality.





Cognizant of the impact of his work from his earliest designs, Maginnis left a record of references, as well as many published articles in professional journals. The Boston Public Library holds decades of Maginnis & Walsh designs. The New Catholic Encyclopedia entry (below) had been written by one of Maginnis' last partners, Eugene Kennedy. Omitted was that the Laetare Medal was given to Maginnis in 1942--after he designed at least ten(10) buildings on the campus and the honorary academic degrees from Boston College and Holy Cross College were after he designed buildings at their grounds.

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The Maginnis & Walsh office held national attention by not only the American Church but also by peers in architecture. The firm chose (by bidding) Melody & Keating for the Carmelite Monastery's building, which seemed well within the contractors' capabilities. (Refer to list on advertisement on next page.) Melody & Keating, it should be noted, had experience in working with terra cotta from the St. Rita church construction. (1907-08) Terra cotta was used in lieu of the Indiana limestone in many churches in the City.

It should also be mentioned that Maginnis & Walsh had also paired with Melody & Keating in 1921 at Holy Name Church.

**MAGINNIS, CHARLES DONAGH**, prominent church architect; b. Londonderry, Ireland, Jan. 7, 1867; d. Brookline, Mass., Feb. 15, 1955. In 1884 his widowed mother settled in Boston, Mass., with her six children. Although his background indicates little or no formal schooling in art or architecture, his ability to draw and design brought him work in several Boston architectural firms, and in 1898 he and Timothy Walsh formed the firm of Maginnis and Walsh. St. Patrick's Church, Whitinsville, Mass., was the first of a long series of structures he designed in the U.S. and Europe. Among his works were the \*National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception, Washington, D.C. (original plans); Trinity College chapel, Washington, D.C., and Carmelite Convent, Santa Clara, Calif. (both awarded the American Institute of Architects' Gold Medal for ecclesiastical architecture); Cathedral of Mary Our Queen, Baltimore, Md.; Maryknoll Seminary, Ossining, N.Y.; and buildings at the University of \*Notre Dame, Ind. He was wary of the "modern" philosophy of art and architecture and called for what he considered a reasonable, fresh, honest approach to ecclesiastical design. His own style was derived from ancient idioms, notably the Romanesque-Byzantine; yet his buildings were never mere copies or archeological reconstructions.

An effective writer and speaker, Maginnis published the self-illustrated *Pen Drawing* (7 editions from 1899), and many delightful essays. He was president of the American Institute of Architects and first president of the \*Liturgical Arts Society. Among honors accorded him were: Laetare Medal, University of Notre Dame, 1942; honorary LL.D. degrees, Boston College and College of the Holy Cross, Worcester, Mass.; doctor of humane letters, Tufts University, Medford, Mass.; doctor of arts, Harvard University; and membership in the Knights of Malta, 1954. He was married to Amy Brooks in 1908 and had four children.

See also CHURCH ARCHITECTURE, 11. AMERICAN.

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[E. KENNEDY, JR.]

The advertizement below dates from about 1915, to list the clients in buildings constructed by the firm. Melody & Keating worked with Edwin F. Durang, Henry D. Dagit George I. Lovatt--all described as "ecclesiastical architects" mainly designing properties within the City of Philadelphia. The styles of these buildings were medieval to hybrid 17th century.

## MELODY & KEATING

### *Building Contractors*

BAILEY BUILDING

118 Chestnut Street

Philadelphia, Pa.

*Contractors for the following:*

ST. EDWARD'S CHURCH  
8th and York Sts.

ST. ELIZABETH'S SCHOOL  
23d and Montgomery Ave.

ST. AGNES' HOSPITAL  
Broad and McKean Sts.

ST. RITA'S CHURCH  
Broad and Ellsworth Sts.

BLESSED SACRAMENT SCHOOL  
56th St. and Chester Ave.

ST. COLUMBA'S CHURCH AND RECTORY  
24th St. and Lehigh Ave.

ST. VINCENT'S SEMINARY  
Germantown

HOLY SPIRIT CHURCH  
Atlantic City, N. J.

ST. FRANCIS DE SALES CHURCH  
47th St. and Springfield Ave.

ST. BRIDGET'S RECTORY  
Falls of Schuylkill



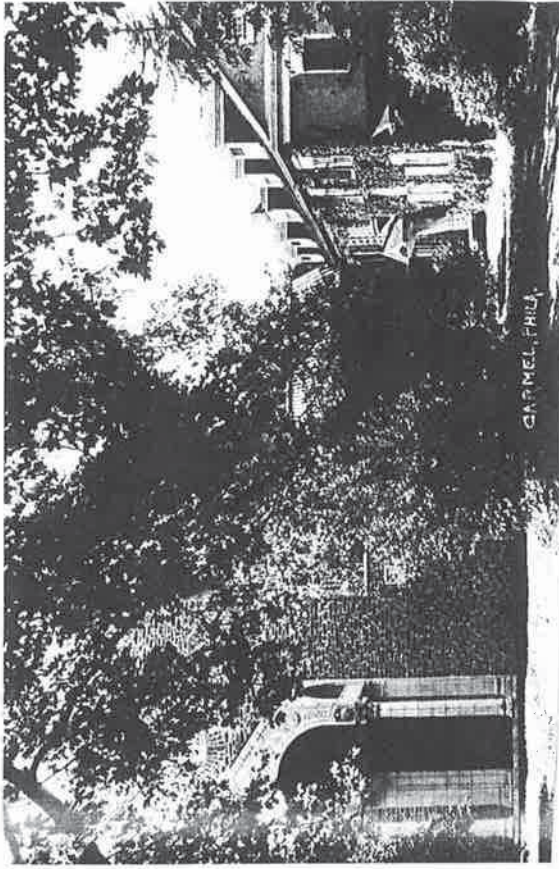
# The Carmelite Monastery and its Chapel...

- (h) Owing to their unique location...represent an established and familiar visual feature in the Olney neighborhood.

Since the Carmelite Sisters took possession of the "Hill Top" estate in 1910, their presence has contributed to the development of the Oak Lane community. The photograph below, taken in March, 2021, was from a business across the 66th Avenue (north) side of the Chapel. In the photo at left (arrows) is the Oak Lane Diner, another "landmark," but mainly because the Chapel (to the diner's west) and Diner are where Old York Road merges with the end of North Broad Street at 66th Avenue. This is a busy intersection with traffic from all directions. There are businesses on Broad Street, very near to the Monastery complex.

The Chapel is seen clearly at this intersection--an oddity in its medieval design amidst 20th century buildings. The artistic work on the building also makes for the unusual here. Nevertheless, the Carmelite Monastery pre-dates other buildings--development began after the Sisters moved to the mansion, then began the construction of the Monastery. Streets also were paved.





Where North Broad Street intersects with Old York Road had not been yet paved when the Carmelite Monastery was in construction from 1915 to 1925.

These photographs are a history of when "Hill Top" was sold to the Carmelites in 1910, then was incorporated into the Monastery until it was razed for the present addition. Note that the Chapel was on level ground originally; by about 1925, the City paid the Sisters to cut into the grounds for 66th Avenue to be created. The ground was also lowered several feet, thus the double stairs to the portico. The stone in the stairs is the same as the monastery walls.



Source of photographs: 2002 pamphlet.CHRC.





View from Broad Street in winter

The photo above of the Chapel's east side shows the slight upward tilt of North Broad Street in the 1920s, with "Jack's Curb Market" and a Texaco gas station. The Chapel seems as the only and highest building in this area.

Below is a photographic copy of the September 26, 1915 dedication of the yet-unfinished Chapel. The interior was not completed. The "Hill Top" mansion with its shutters, is in the background.

The popularity of Carmelite nuns, such as the then-Blessed Thérèse Martin (whose writings were translated and published by the Philadelphia Sisters) brought attention to this Monastery.



The Carmelite Monastery's Chapel is an exceptional building. Art history students would be fascinated by its adaptations of architectural sculpture and the building's design from Lombard Romanesque cathedrals abroad. The Chapel is didactic as well: constructed from 1915 through the 1920s, it is relevant to the Art Deco movement and what many Philadelphia architects were doing in designing buildings to incorporate some form of art. One not informed about Lombard Romanesque architecture would find the Carmelites' Chapel interesting in why sculpture was only in certain areas, as well as what figures were depicted. It's a more imaginative building in addition to highlighting that more 20th century Roman Catholic churches were beginning to bear architectural sculpture at the facades, rather than rely on statues in the courtyards.

The architectural firm of Maginnis & Walsh was at work on several other projects in the country, notably the National Shrine in Washington, D.C. when the Philadelphia Carmel was in construction. However, the Sisters here were busy advocating the canonization of Thérèse Martin while another Carmelite Sister, Teresa of Chile became a saint. Philadelphia's first Cardinal, Dennis Dougherty, would become the Carmelites strongest supporter nationally, while causing the Order and Sisters here more popularity and a following up to the Olney Chapel. The Carmelites still have presence, with thirteen Sisters in residence, and an occasional exhibit or event. The Chapel merits historical designation on the criteria discussed.

Celeste A. Morello, MS, MA  
April, 2021  
(During COVID-19 limitations)



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