

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

39 pp.

SUBMIT ALL ATTACHED MATERIALS ON PAPER AND IN ELECTRONIC FORM ON CD (MS WORD FORMAT)

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

Street address: 234 and 240 Hermitage Street

Postal code: 19127

Councilmanic District: Fifth (5th)

2. NAME OF HISTORIC RESOURCE

Historic Name: Church of the Holy Family

Common Name: Holy Family Roman Catholic Church

3. TYPE OF HISTORIC RESOURCE

Building       Structure       Site       Object  
Church (primary) with Rectory and School and old Convent

4. PROPERTY INFORMATION

needs painting

Condition:     excellent     good     fair     poor     ruins

Occupancy:     occupied     vacant     under construction     unknown

Current use: Active worship site.

Contributing properties in partial use.

5. BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

Please attach a plot plan and written description of the boundary.

6. DESCRIPTION

Please attach a description of the historic resource and supplement with current photographs.

7. SIGNIFICANCE

Please attach the Statement of Significance.

Period of Significance (from year to year): from 1897 to 1922

Date(s) of construction and/or alteration: 1897 to 1898 dedication; 1927.

Architect, engineer, and/or designer: Patrick C. KEELY/ Thos. Lonsdale (Superv.)

Builder, contractor, and/or artisan: Thomas REILLY

Original owner: Archdiocese of Philadelphia

Other significant persons: \_\_\_\_\_

**CRITERIA FOR DESIGNATION:**

The historic resource satisfies the following criteria for designation (check all that apply):

- (a) Has significant character, interest or value as part of the development, heritage or cultural characteristics of the City, Commonwealth or Nation or is associated with the life of a person significant in the past; or,
- (b) Is associated with an event of importance to the history of the City, Commonwealth or Nation; or,
- (c) Reflects the environment in an era characterized by a distinctive architectural style; or,
- (d) Embodies distinguishing characteristics of an architectural style or engineering specimen; or,
- (e) Is the work of a designer, architect, landscape architect or designer, or engineer whose work has significantly influenced the historical, architectural, economic, social, or cultural development of the City, Commonwealth or Nation; or,
- (f) Contains elements of design, detail, materials or craftsmanship which represent a significant innovation; or,
- (g) Is part of or related to a square, park or other distinctive area which should be preserved according to an historic, cultural or architectural motif; or,
- (h) Owing to its unique location or singular physical characteristic, represents an established and familiar visual feature of the neighborhood, community or City; or,
- (i) Has yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important in pre-history or history; or
- (j) Exemplifies the cultural, political, economic, social or historical heritage of the community.

**8. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES**

Please attach

**9. NOMINATOR**

Organization \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

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 19147-4820

Nominator  is  is not the property owner.

**PHC USE ONLY**

Date of Receipt: 19 April 2021

Correct-Complete  Incorrect-Incomplete Date: 28 July 2021

Date of Notice Issuance: 30 July 2021

Property Owner at Time of Notice

Name: OFFICE OF PROPERTY SERVICES ARCHDIOCESE OF PHILADELPHIA

Address: 222 N. 17TH ST

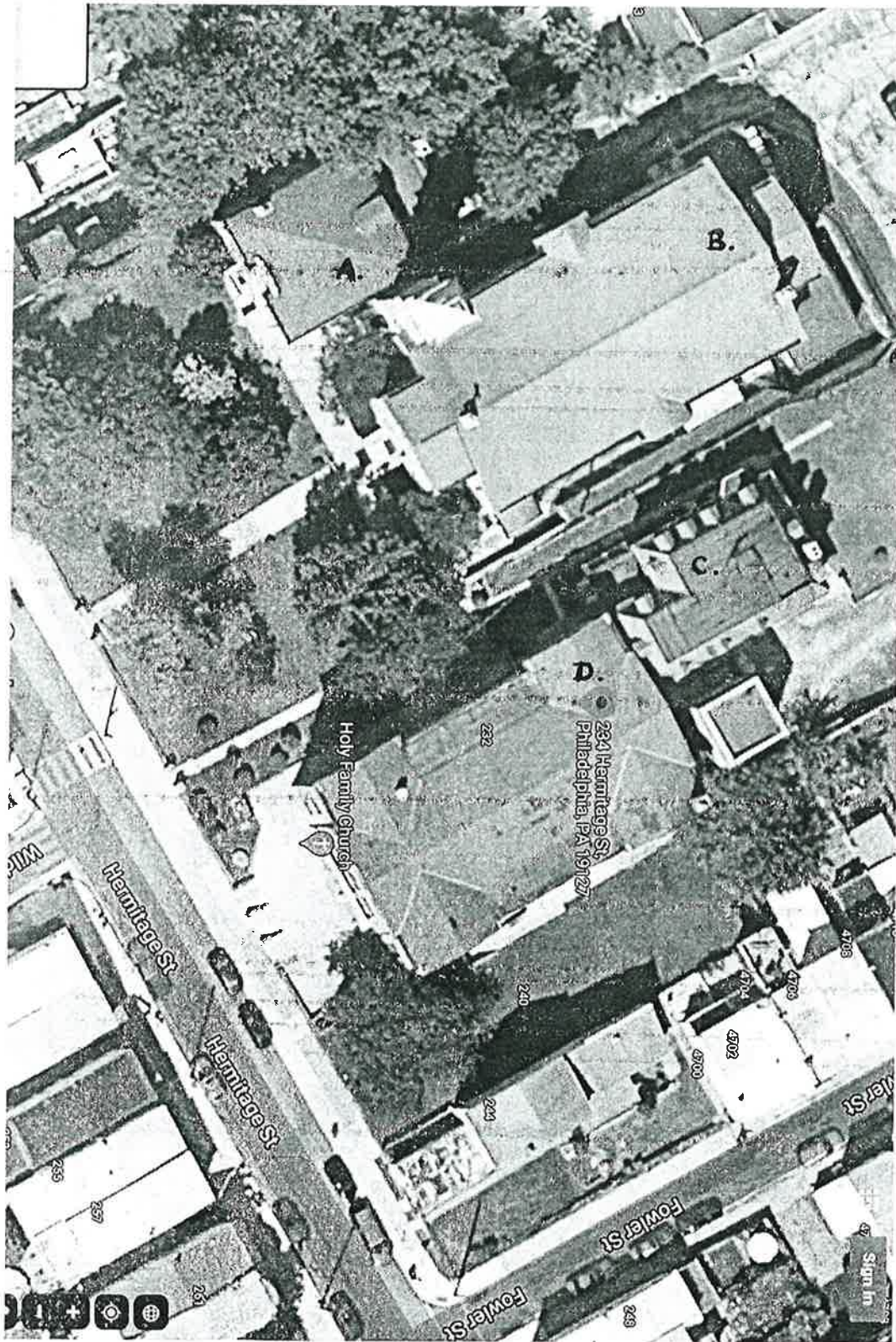
City: PHILADELPHIA State: PA Postal Code: 19103

Date(s) Reviewed by the Committee on Historic Designation: 30 August 2021 9/21/2022; Criteria D, E, H, period of significance to 1922

Date(s) Reviewed by the Historical Commission: 10/14/2022

Date of Final Action: 10/14/2022; Criteria D, E, H, period of sig. to 1922

Designated  Rejected



←A. Rectory  
39' X 62'  
(1921-1922)

←B. CHURCH  
60' X 160'  
(1897-1898)

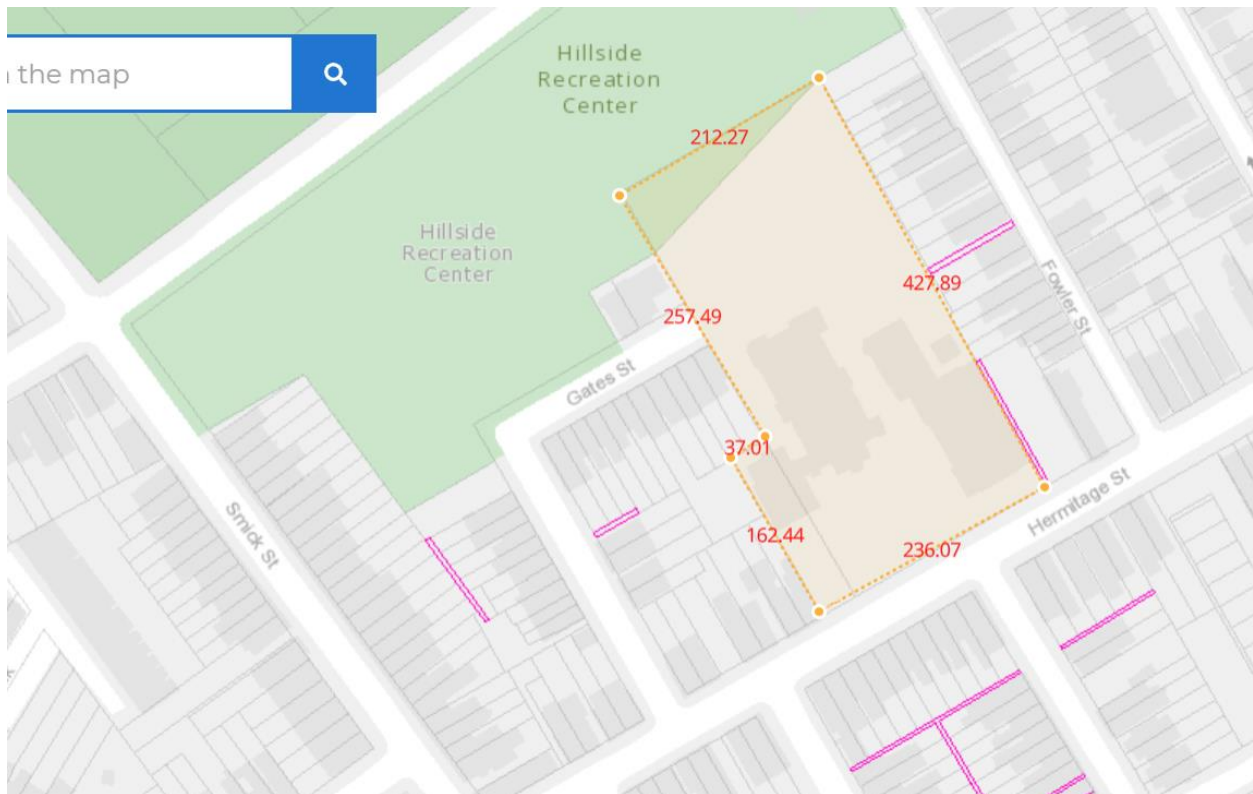
←C. Convent  
(1893)

←D. School  
65' X 124'  
(1910-1911)

Google Maps: Holy Family Church 234 Hermitage St.

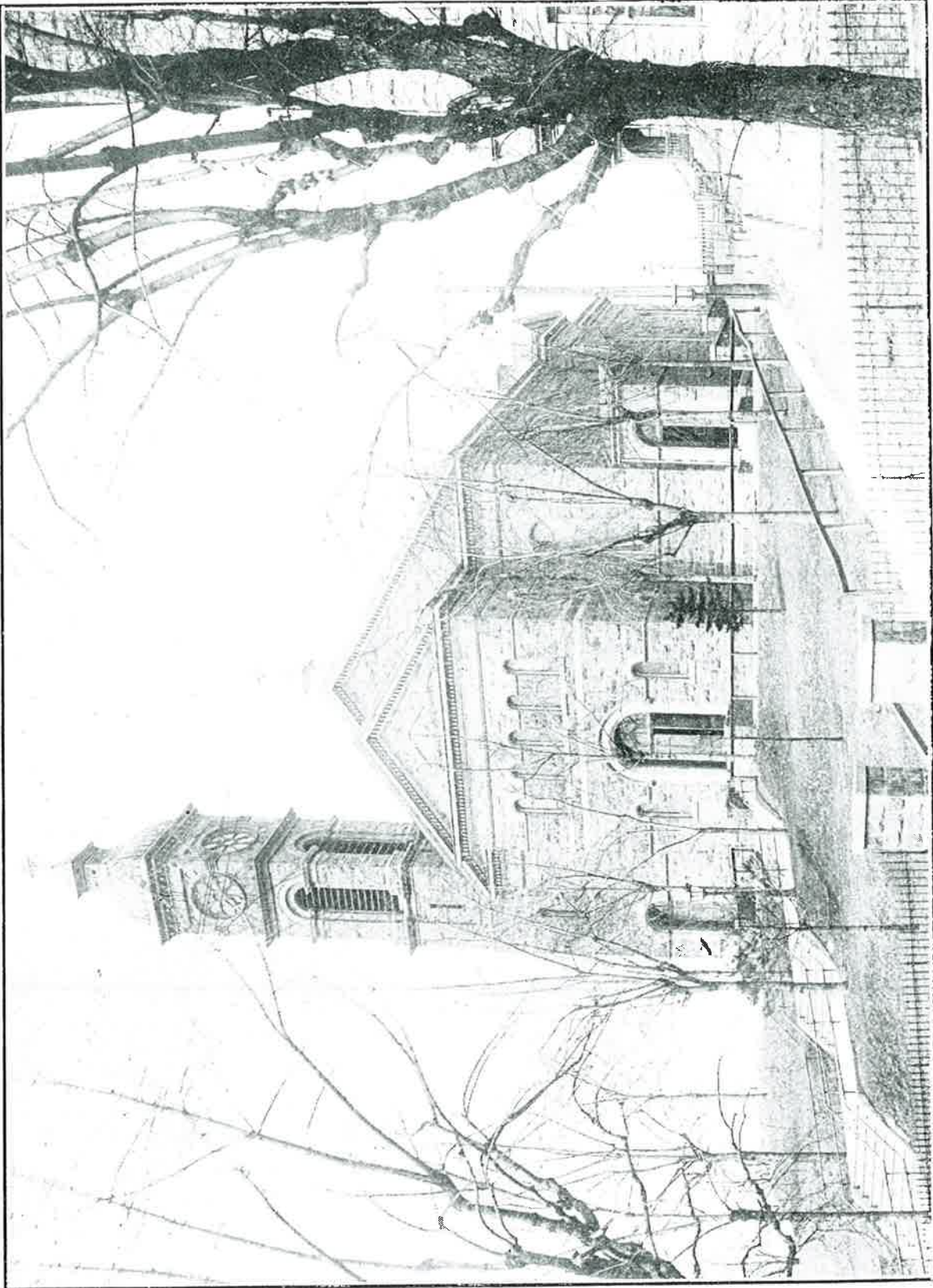
Deed of May 14, 1883 on lot size: 386.4 by 586.4.

## Boundary Description (PHC Staff Supplemented)



The combined boundary description for the properties at 234 and 240 Hermitage Street is as follows:

Beginning at a point approximately 96 feet west of the northwest corner of Fowler and Hermitage Streets; thence West along Hermitage Street approximately 236 feet; thence North approximately 162 feet; thence East approximately 37 feet; thence North approximately 257 feet; thence East approximately 212 feet; thence South approximately 428 feet to the point of beginning.

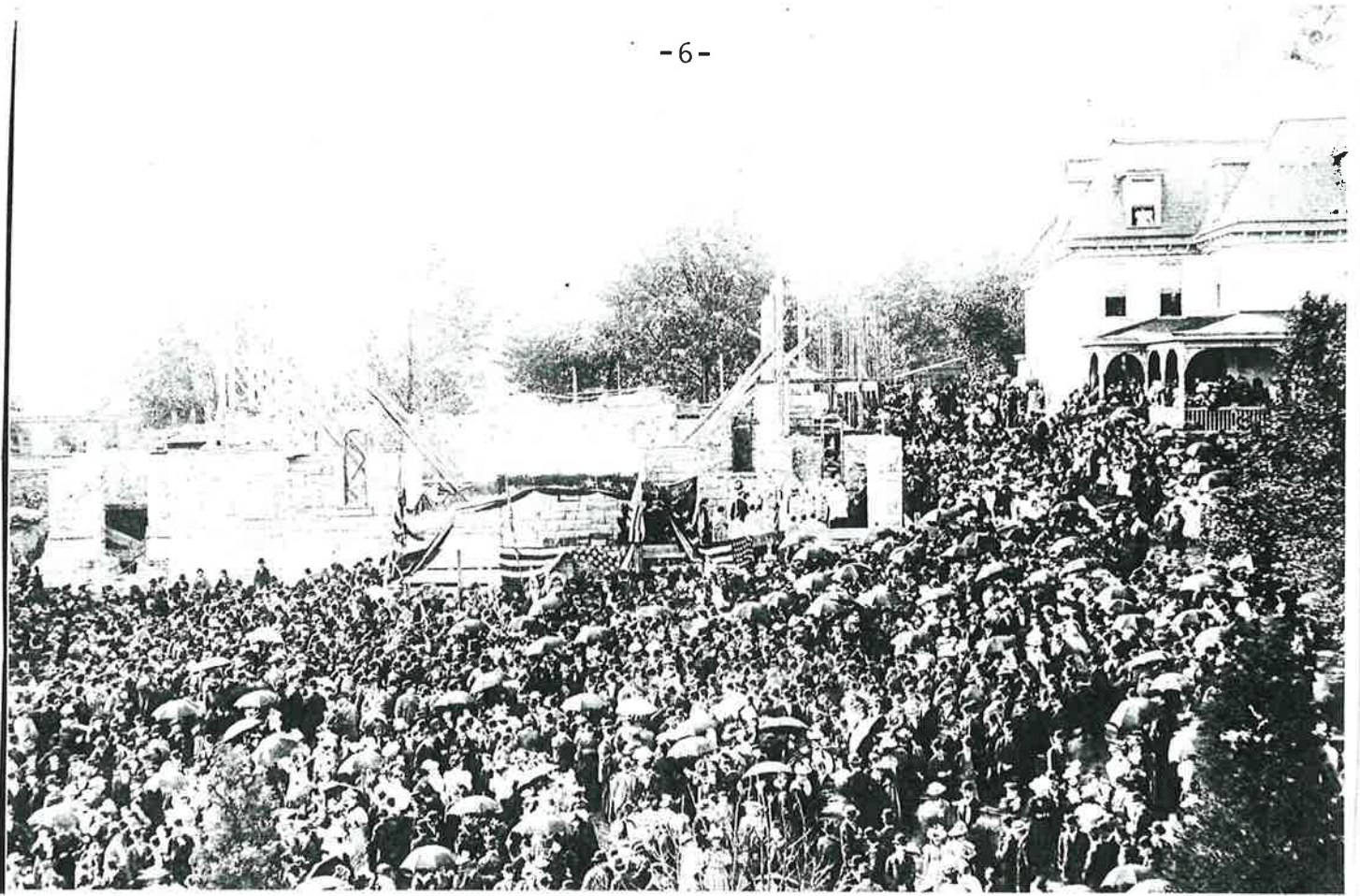


Church of The Holy Family, Manayunk

View of the Church of the Holy Family, Manayunk, Pa.

9-27-17





Archbishop Patrick J. Ryan performs the ceremony on June 6, 1897 supposedly for more than a "cornerstone laying"--the church's foundations were excavated, formed with stone and concrete and the walls were in the initial stages of construction. Thousands came to witness.

On the right is the rebuilt rectory, which appears today very similarly.

"The Catholic Standard & Times" reported that "the veterans of the Grand Army of the Republic" were to be part of the "parade" to celebrate Holy Family church's construction.

All of the details in the architect's plans, which were reported in 1897, were fulfilled except not in a "Gothic style."

DESCRIPTIONS:

Reference is made to pages 7 to 16 for photographs, original sources and logisticals in describing the four(4) buildings in this ensemble at the Holy Family compound on a summit in Roxborough.

All of the buildings are subject to the descending slope upon which they were constructed from 1893 to 1922. In chronological order, the buildings are described hereto:

1) The former Striffling Family farmhouse from the 1883 purchase of the property by Archbishop James Wood had been thoroughly rebuilt. (See p.11 in Mahony.) The mansard roof with dormers at the north and west sides, small porch with round arches supported by wood posts and rails are original. The bay window at the northwest corner was not present in 1897. (See p.6 .) Stucco covers the first and second levels. It is in good condition.(Pp.11-12)

This building was enlarged to be the priests' Rectory, then it became the Convent for the nuns, upon the construction of the new (and present) Rectory from 1921-1922.

This building is in partial use; no Sister is in residence.

2) Holy Family Church is a rectilinear basilican with many projections. The construction materials and dimensions were recorded in the June 5, 1897 newspaper on page 5 herein. The design is dominated by the gables over pediments at the facade, north (rear) side, shallow transepts at the east and west walls, the southeast (confessional) projection flanking the facade's center WESTWORK unit and sacristies at the northwest. Stained glass occupies the rounded arch above the main entry (south). Decorative details include the extensive use of dental molding outlining the gables, cornices, pediments; use of the Indiana limestone in the horizontals at the facade's projection, on the row of rounded arch windows, portal surrounds and tower. Modern doors and windows fill original frames. The architectural style will be discussed later.



3) Holy Family School (1910-1911) complements the Church in its construction materials, rectangular plan and use of gables at the facade and corners where the gables face the east and west sides. This design is more Neoclassical: projecting portico at the facade's center bay supporting a balustrade under (conventional) engaged and (free-standing) columns. The first and second levels have rectangular windows while the third level has rounded arch windows, to resemble those at the church. (Pages 13-15)

4) Holy Family Rectory (1921-1922) is Italianate, with its symmetrical front, three levels (with only the first level with rounded arch windows). The facade portal is the main feature: a limestone surround under a shallow eave supported by brackets. Windows are doubled at the facade. Unlike the other buildings, there is a hip roof and no gable anywhere. The center bay is surmounted with a base expanded for the cross. (Pages 9 and 16).

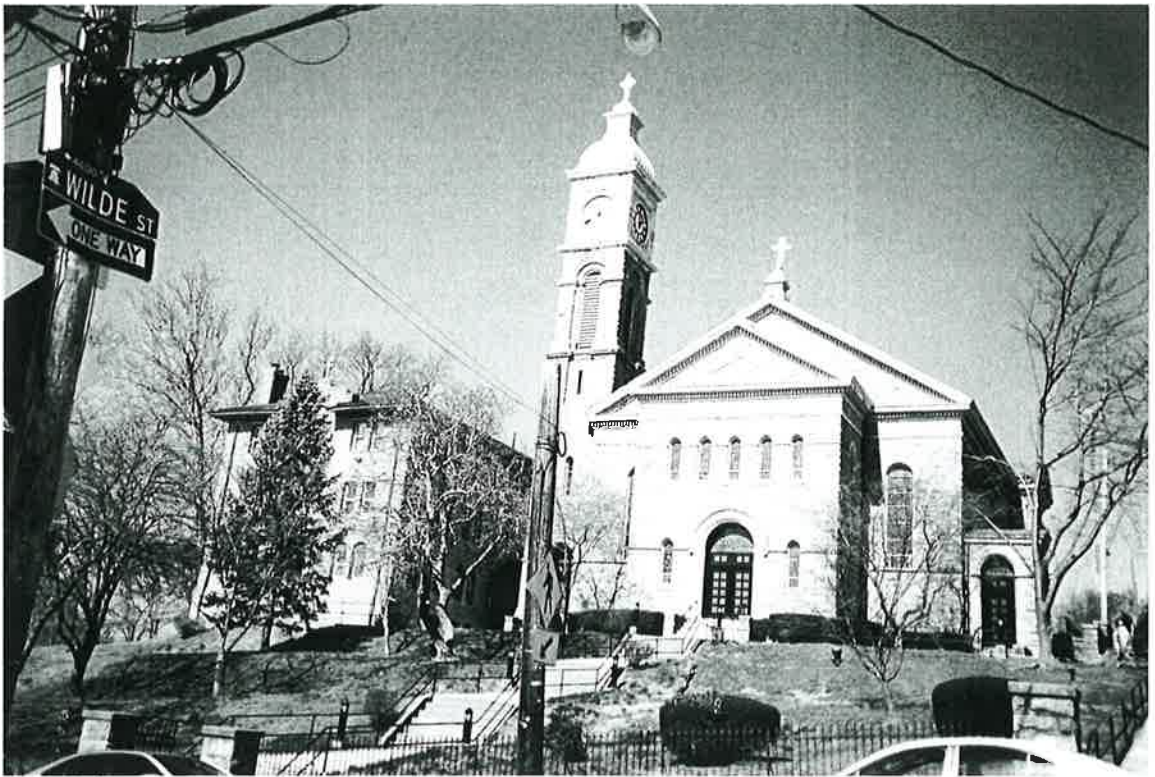
All of the buildings are in good condition, with the only remark that extensive painting on the church is due (and will probably be done soon.) The grounds are well-maintained and attended.



NEW CHURCH OF THE HOLY FAMILY.

This drawing for "The Catholic Standard and Times" newspaper was from Keely's proposed plan for Holy Family--it was in its early stages of construction when this drawing was published. (Also see page 6 photograph from June 6, 1897.)

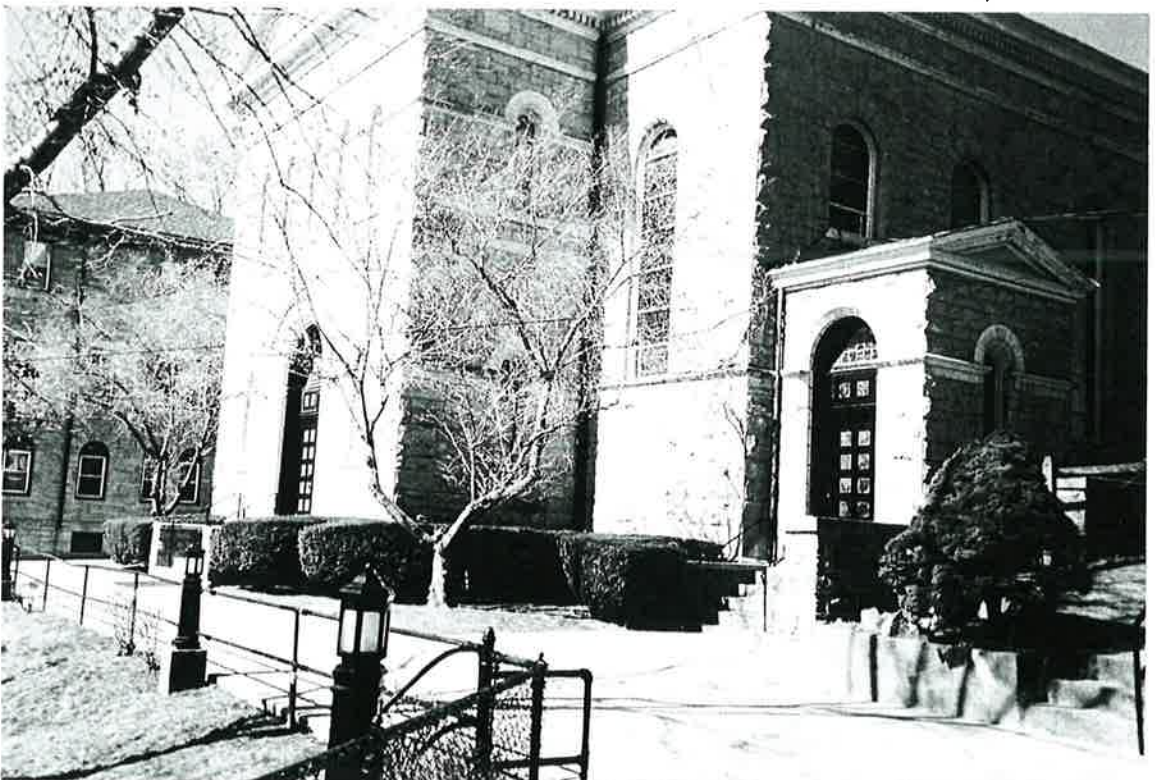
The actual church is true to this illustration.



Northward view from Hermitage Street.

Above and below, Holy Family's westwork (projection) is the most prominent element, with the focus and direction upward to this feature.

Note the extension of the "confessional" on right. This projection balances to the tower at the west. ↓





Projection for interior altar area.(above)

Thomas Reilly and his crew constructed this building with its masonry and decorative moldings. (See right, when Reilly awarded contract for the work.

Rev. M. C. McEntos, rector of the Church of the Holy Family, Manayunk, and Thom. Reilly, contractor; the latter agrees to erect a church building on Jefferson street, Manayunk, Philadelphia, for \$24,412, made April 12, 1897.

(PRERBG: 04/21/1897)

# THOMAS REILLY

Stone Mason

Contractor and

Builder . . . .

Residence  
1245 North 17th Street

1895 Ad.

1220 FILBERT STREET

PHILADELPHIA

### HOLY FAMILY, MANAYUNK, 1885.

IT was on January 20, 1885, that Rev. Michael C. McEnroe, who had for the previous nine years been pastor of St. Charles Borromeo's, Kellyville, was appointed to organize this parish. The ground, a comparatively large tract, near the summit of a hill, and stretching down to Jefferson Street, had been purchased three and a half years before by Archbishop Wood for \$9,557.50; and this debt, along with the accrued interest, the new pastor assumed. On the property was a small old-fashioned house, which Father McEnroe renovated to suit his purpose. The site, known as Mount Vernon, is the most elevated of any pastoral residence in the city.

On the northern side of the lot, between the house and the street, the pastor began the erection of a frame chapel in the middle of April. It is 70 feet long and 35 feet wide. In about two weeks from the time it was begun it was ready for use, though not plastered, and is so substantially built that it will long serve as a school after it will have been superseded by the permanent church. It was dedicated on Sunday morning, May 2d. Very Rev. Maurice A. Walsh, LL.D., V.G., officiated, and at the close of the ceremony expressed his congratulations. At the solemn Mass which followed, the sermon of the day was preached by Rev. F. X. McGowan, O.S.A., and at the close of the service Father McEnroe expressed his thanks. Especially fine music was rendered by a select choir from St. John's and St. Mary's, Manayunk, and some of the city churches.

The pastor performed the duties of the parish alone for several years, the congregation being comparatively small; and so was his house. But in 1893 he enlarged the residence by additions at the front and east, as well as in elevation, fully doubling its original size. Of late, too, he has had an assistant, the congregation growing considerably. It is his intention soon to begin the building of a permanent church, which will stand south of the chapel, and, on account of the elevation of the site, will be a conspicuous as well as a handsome edifice.

The 1883 purchase of the property included the old "farmhouse" of the Striffling family.

In 1893, the former residence, was enlarged for "seventeen rooms" for the founding pastor. (CS&T, 06/05/1897). As a rectory, not more than two priests occupied the premises.

When the new rectory was ready for occupancy in 1922, this building became the convent for the Sisters who taught at Holy Family School.

Compare the recent photo (below) to the 1897 photo (p. 6) where very little has been changed in the building's exterior.





Compare the old Convent building with the 1897 photo, p. 6, and there are minor changes; the bay window was installed after 1900.

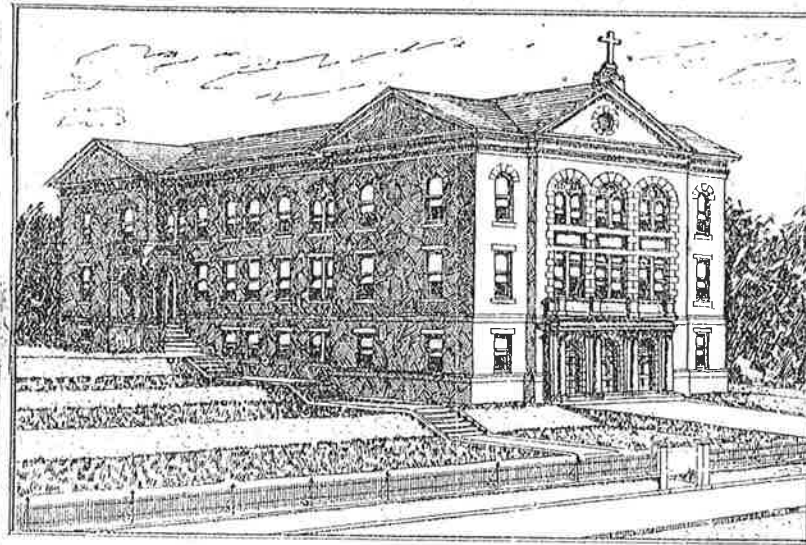
Below, the aspect of the north (rear) wall of the Convent. Stucco construction; mansard roof with dormers at north and west; 3 levels; original porch from 1893. Building on descending land.



New School of  
Holy Family Parish,  
Manayunk



Catholic Standard - May 13<sup>th</sup> 1911.



NEW HOLY FAMILY PARISH SCHOOL, MANAYUNK.

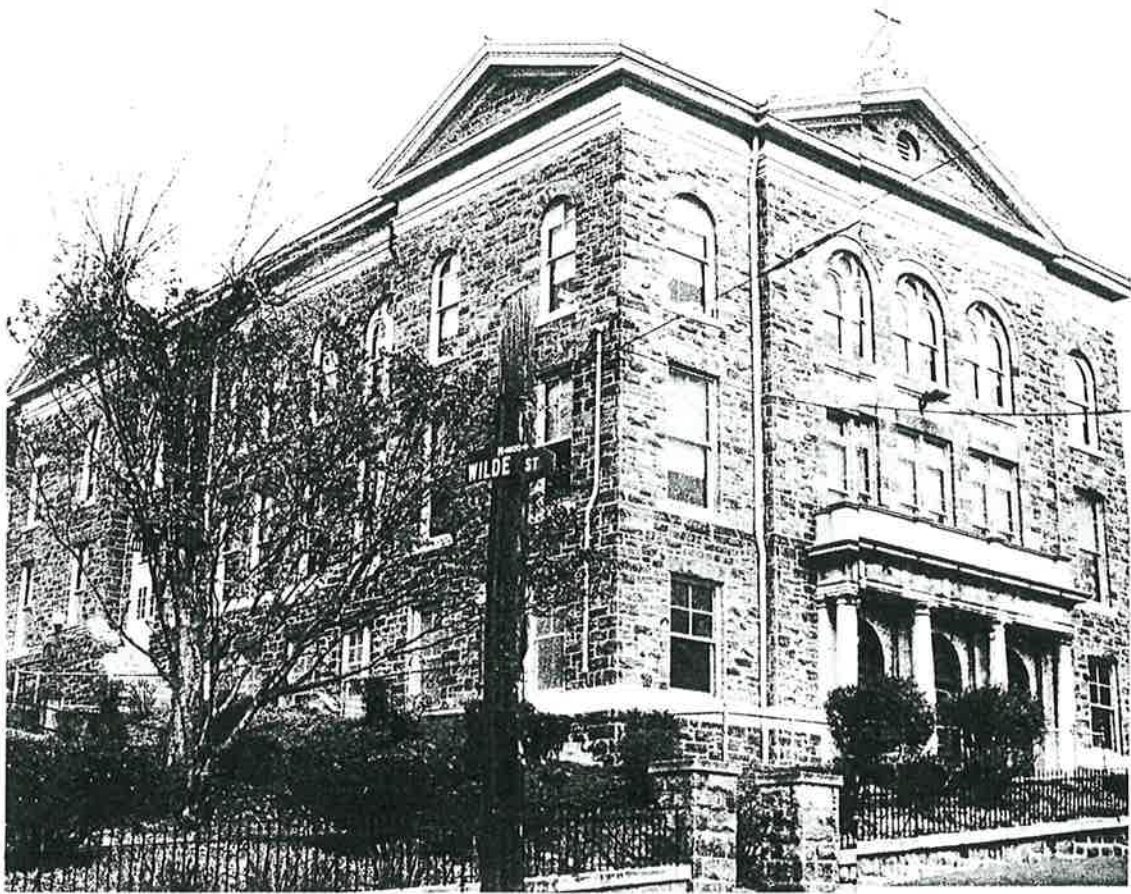
The corner-stone of the parish school of the Holy Family, Manayunk, will be laid on Sunday afternoon at 3 o'clock by Bishop Prendergast. The sermon will be delivered by Rev. William J. Garrigan, D. D., of St. Columba's. The deacon will be Rev. Eugene Murphy, rector of St. John the Baptist's; the sub-deacon, Rev. Daniel A. Morrissey, of the Church of the Holy Angels, Oak Lane, and the master of ceremonies, Rev. James J. McCloskey.

There will be a procession of societies, including St. Ann's Boys' Club and the Shanahan Club, and other societies of St. Ann's and Our Mother of Sorrows' parishes, where the rector was formerly stationed; the Holy Name and total abstinence societies of St. John the Baptist's and the Holy Family and other parishes, and a number of divisions of the A. O. H.

The new school, which is being erected on Hermitage street, will be an imposing granite building, so designed that it will keep within the architectural style of the present church building. The new structure will have a frontage of 65 feet, with a depth all over of 124 feet. It will be built entirely of dressed granite, trimmed with limestone. There will be three stories, the first to be occupied as a completely equipped auditorium, and the second and third floors to have twelve modernly appointed class-rooms accommodating 800 pupils.

The building will be completed and ready for use by September 15, 1911. George I. Lovatt is the architect.

Description of School and verification  
of architect: George I. Lovatt.



An early photograph of Holy Family School as it originally appeared to compare with 2021 photograph below.

Modern windows and doors replace multi-paned and wood ones.

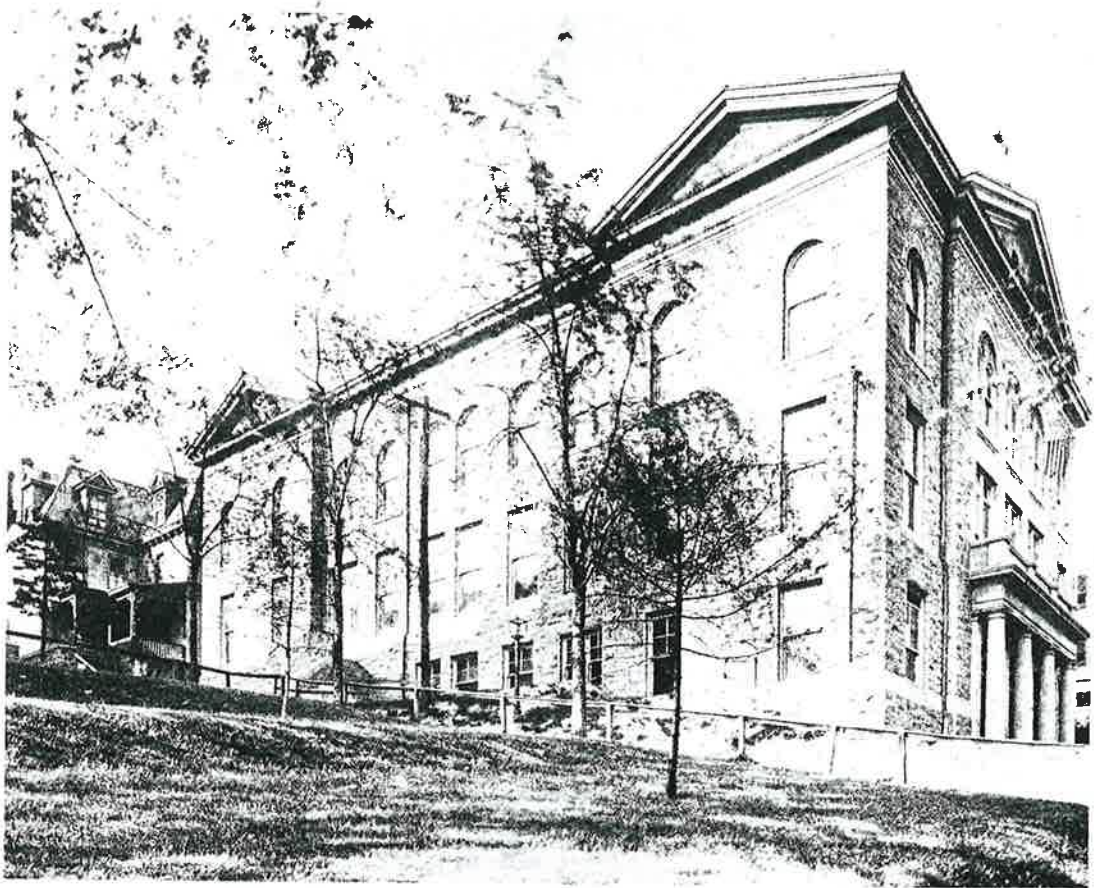




Vantage above shows how closely constructed the church is to the former convent (center) and school building (right).

Access to these buildings from Hermitage Street is by steep steps up the terrain.

Note the school's masonry and design to relate to the church.



ABOVE: Holy Family School building, opened September 1911.



Rectory, to left of tower, as it appeared c. 1950.

Clock had been installed in 1946.

Recent view of Rectory (below) shows its modern windows and "filler" in the rounded arch frames.



The Rectory was designed by J.J. Kennedy of Wilmington, Delaware, with T.J. and J.R. Whelan constructing it. (PRERBG, 11/23/1921). The Rectory was planned as "Stone, castone, steel and granite, 3 stories and basement, 39X62 feet, slate roof...stone foundation." (Ibid.) Work continued through 1922--finished in 9 months.

The structure connecting the Rectory with the Church is not contributing.



STATEMENT of SIGNIFICANCE:

The four buildings comprising Holy Family parish are located high on a summit in Roxborough/Manayunk, with the primary resource, Holy Family church and the three contributing properties.

Three award-winning, pioneering and nationally-known architects have been involved in Holy Family's buildings: Patrick C. Keely (1816-1896), Thomas P. Lonsdale (1855-1900) and George I. Lovatt (1872-1958). Keely has been called the "Patriarch of United States Roman Catholic Church architecture," with his first Gothic church (1848)<sup>1</sup> following Richard Upjohn's Trinity Church (1846) which standardized the "Gothic" or Gothic Revival in ecclesiastical buildings for Protestant and Roman Catholic churches. Keely was credited with upwards of "700" churches.<sup>2</sup> His design for Holy Family was the third church from his hand in Philadelphia. However, Keely's death in 1896 precluded his participation in the church's construction in 1897: Thomas P. Lonsdale would supervise, and carry out Keely's plans. Lonsdale was better known for his Protestant churches, such as the Baptist Temple which became the basis for Temple University. Lonsdale had only one Roman Catholic church constructed: Our Lady of Lourdes in Overbrook's Historic District. Later at Holy Family, the school was designed by Lovatt,<sup>3</sup> who had been working simultaneously on designing schools at Holy Child (whose church was an award-winning design for Lovatt), and Mount Airy's Holy Cross.

Holy Family church's design is a seldom-seen "German Romanesque" from the late 11th to early 12th centuries. The style combines Early Christian, Carolingian, Ottonian, Cluniac and some Lombard characteristics. The main feature is the westwork projecting and commanding attention on the hill.

<sup>1</sup> Cited from the Encyclopedia of Architects: "Patrick Charles Keely." NY: Macmillan Pub.Co., 1982, p.556. New Catholic Encyclopedia,

<sup>2</sup> "Catholic Architecture," NY: McGraw, 1967, Vol. III, p. 827. The earliest source found was Archbishop Patrick J. Ryan's "Address" given on April 1, 1894 in "The Catholic Standard and Times," April 7, 1894 on the dedication of St. John the Baptist church, a Keely design in Manayunk.

<sup>3</sup> See "The Catholic Standard and Times," May 13, 1911. This information was not reported in the Builders' Guide or in "pab.org."

Holy Family parish was founded in 1885, after St. John the Baptist parish's parishioner base increased to the farthest borders of Manayunk/Roxborough.<sup>4</sup> St. John the Baptist parish had been established in 1831 mainly for the textile mill workers along the Schuylkill River. The second and third generations from St. John's, with some from the German national parish, St. Mary of the Assumption (fd. 1849), formed Holy Family's first parishioners. Some parts of the Ridge Avenue Historic District are within the boundaries of Holy Family parish, which extends towards Montgomery County.

The location of these buildings on this summit overlooking the rooftops of the residences nearby, marks them as local, familiar sights. This majestic positioning of the church with the other buildings surrounding it is meaningful to the community: the visitor--whether Catholic or not--is offered a sense of comfort and solitude, with vistas across the river, or towards Manayunk. (That is, if one does not have acrophobia!) The clearing where Holy Family's parish buildings are may remind some of a European site.

Holy Family church, and its contributing properties have long deserved attention because of the great architects involved in creating wonderful buildings: approval is appropriate from the Historical Commission.

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

4

---

Mahony, Daniel, Historical Sketches of the Catholic Churches...  
Phila.: 1895, p. 142.

Holy Family church...

(d) Embodies distinguishing characteristics of an architectural style:

GERMAN ROMANESQUE

and,

(f) Contains elements of design, detail...a significant innovation:

WESTWORK

At first glance, Holy Family church's projecting facade element is striking. It is unusual, as are the many other, smaller projections from the church--all with their own gabled roofs. Upon closer look, horizontal bands separate the levels and define how the pediments in the gables span with dental moldings outlining the edges. At this facade projection, a series of rounded arch windows run across, but are balanced above the single portal with its own larger rounded arch. The projecting facade is the westwork and the prototype for Holy Family church apparently had been the St. Pantaleon Church in Cologne, Germany, dating from the late 10th century. (Refer to next page.) Likewise, this architectural characteristic, a "significant innovation" in its time, is closely related, if not identifiable with, German Romanesque designs from the 10th to 12th centuries. (Refer to page 9.)

The aforementioned architectural description (in brief) of Holy Family church would also apply to St. Pantaleon. Art historian Janson defined westwork as:

From the German word, Westwerk. In Carolingian, Ottonian, and German Romanesque architecture, a monumental western front of a church, treated as a tower or combination of towers, and containing an entrance and vestibule below, and a CHAPEL and GALLERIES above.<sup>5</sup>

St. Pantaleon was constructed during the reigns of the Holy Roman Emperors named Otto from their palaces in Germany. This line of royalty succeeded the descendants of Charlemagne, the first Holy Roman Emperor in 800 A.D. Building styles from his rule are termed

5

Janson, H.W., History of Art. NY: Abrams, 1977, p.257 (photo); p. 749 on definition.



This is believed to be the first or one of the first photographs of Holy Family church upon completion, in about 1898.

(Right: Janson photo, p. 257.)



342. Westwork, St. Pantaleon, Cologne. Consecrated 980. A.D.

Carolingian and are historically-based upon the Emperor's travels through Italy and observing how past rulers' palaces and their commissioned buildings were designed. Charlemagne's palace in Aachen was likened to San Vitale in Ravenna, (Emperor Justinian's church) on Italy's northeastern coast.<sup>6</sup> Projections emerged from San Vitale. However, the long basilican plan used by Emperor Constantine in the 4th century was preferred during the centuries afterwards.<sup>7</sup> What emerged in Germany was distinctly different in church design, with

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., pp. 250-251; 256-257. Also, Zarnecki, G., Art of the Medieval World. NY: Abrams, 1979, pp. 103-107.159-165.

<sup>7</sup> Zarnecki opined that the "majority of churches were...basilican" from the 9th century, on. Page 107.

the precedented (and approved) projections which originated in the San Vitale 6th century design, as well as the westwork.

The westwork is important: the component acted as a vestibule, a pre-entry before entering the building. It is called "westwork" because it appeared at the western side of church buildings, where the main entrance to churches was located--opposite to the altars at the eastern end. This was the traditional orientation of Roman Catholic churches. Charlemagne's architect, Odo of Metz, supposedly designed the Emperor's palace as an interpretation of San Vitale, incorporating the projections and westwork (although it is very small and shallow).<sup>8</sup> The westwork was suitable for a palace that restricted entry; likewise, westworks in German Romanesque churches were for the non-baptized. Janson noted Charlemagne's proto-westwork as a "monumental entrance structure" and how the apse at the east side of Carolingian churches (e.g., St.-Riquier, for one), near the France-Germany border was not semi-circular as in Early Christian basilican plans, but preceded by a square component.<sup>9</sup>

Holy Family church's plan balances the westwork (which is at the southern side of the church) with a squared projection for the altar at the north side. A shallow transept seems but a bulge at the mid-point of the sanctuary (nave). It is more at the south, where the German Romanesque westwork has more influence because of the tower (at the west side) and the confessional projection at the east. Their symmetry bolsters the westwork, seemingly acknowledging that it can be separated from the nave as a component. (p.9) (Also see aerial, p. 3.) Although there is only one tower at Holy Family, it suffices in affirming the German Romanesque style and

---

<sup>8</sup> Janson, p. 250.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid. Janson moves forward in how the westwork develops more to the St. Pantaleon church model by the next century on pp. 256-257. Zarnecki, the medievalist, meanwhile, saw no importance to the westwork at the palace of Aachen. (pp. 104-106)

in form, occupies space correlating to the confessional's, thus creating a "transept" that changed church architecture.

Zarnecki viewed the "western block" or "so-called westwork" on some Carolingian (9th century) churches as very significant in architectural history: with "an emphasis on the facade of a church," the westwork caused "the appearance of a medieval church (to be) so fundamentally different from that of an Early Christian basilica" which did not stress much importance to the facade. Zarnecki cited German churches which "passed from...Ottonian (10th century) to Romanesque" through use of the westwork, noting the Corvey Abbey (875-885), northeast of St. Pantaleon in Cologne, Germany.<sup>10</sup> (Refer to next page.)

---

German Romanesque relies upon the westwork in identifying this specialized style defined from 9th to 12th century churches in Germany and under the patronage of German (Holy) Emperors. The projecting application of the westwork as the prominent entry for the church, developed from the single-story at Charlemagne's palace in Aachen, to a high, shallow projection at Corvey, to the model of St. Pantaleon in Cologne, to which Holy Family church has many architectural characteristics in common.

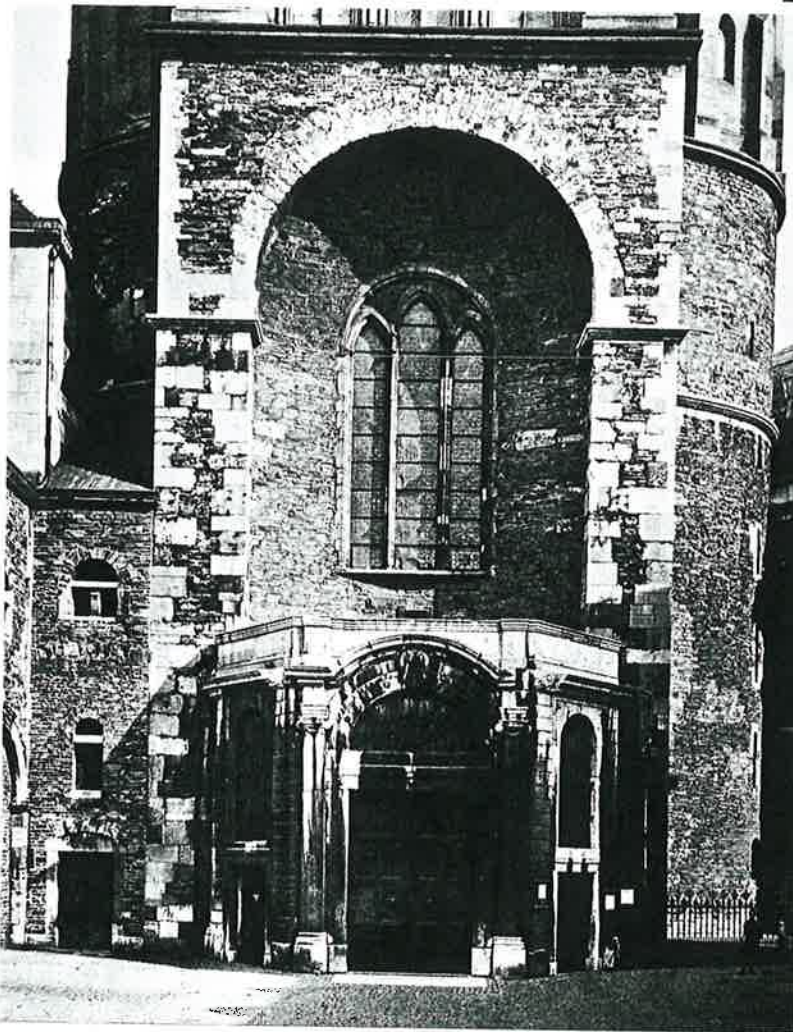
Based on the review of ecclesiastical prototypes which had the westwork and other relative architectural elements in the same buildings, it appeared that Holy Family church's design, with the innovative westwork, is in a German Romanesque.

---

<sup>10</sup>Zarnecki, op.cit., p. 109, with photograph of Corvey Abbey.

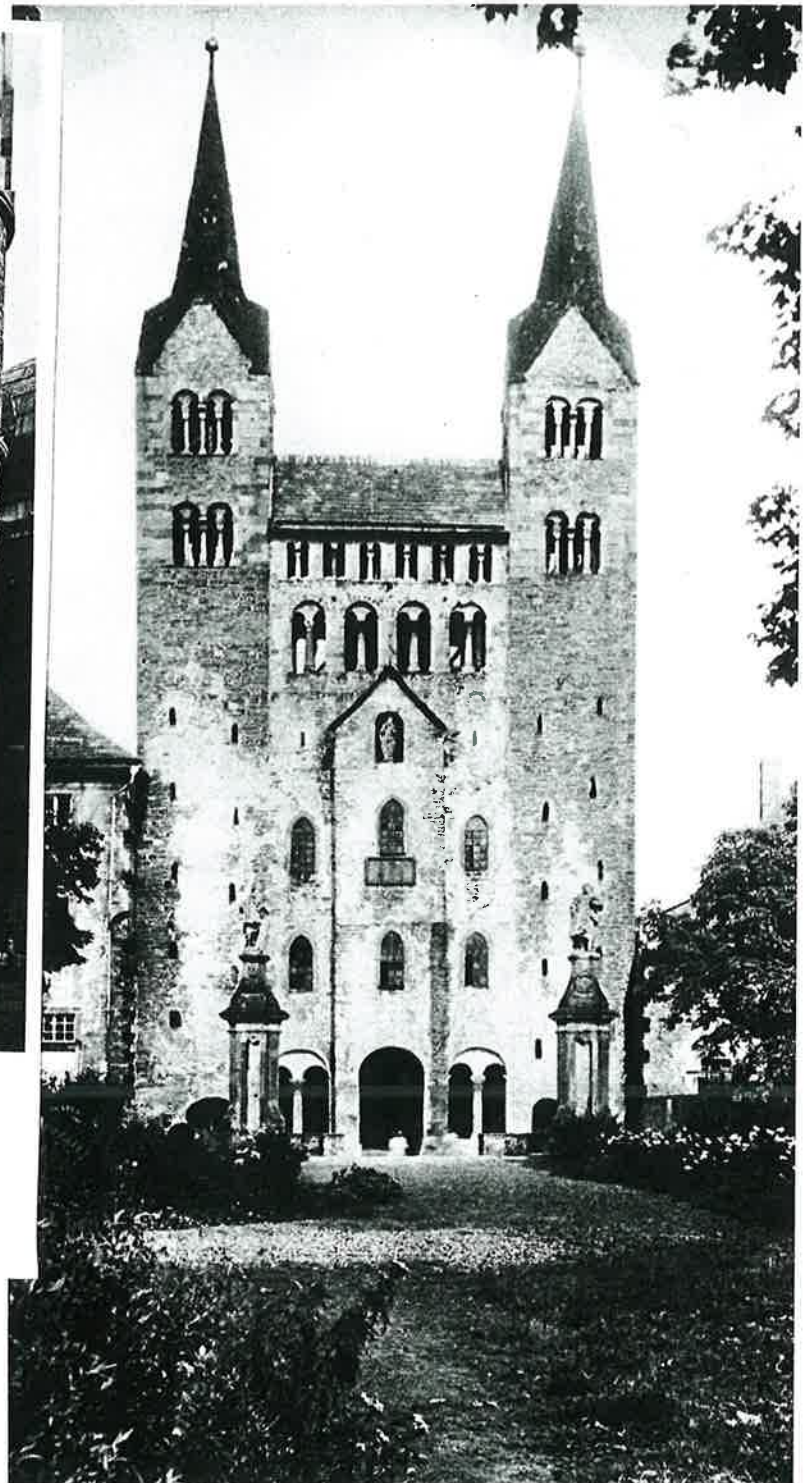
Origins of the WESTWORK: All in German sites (9th to 10th centuries).

Photographs from Zarnecki (pp.104 and 109.)



Above: Charlemagne's Palace Chapel's westwork. (9th cen.)

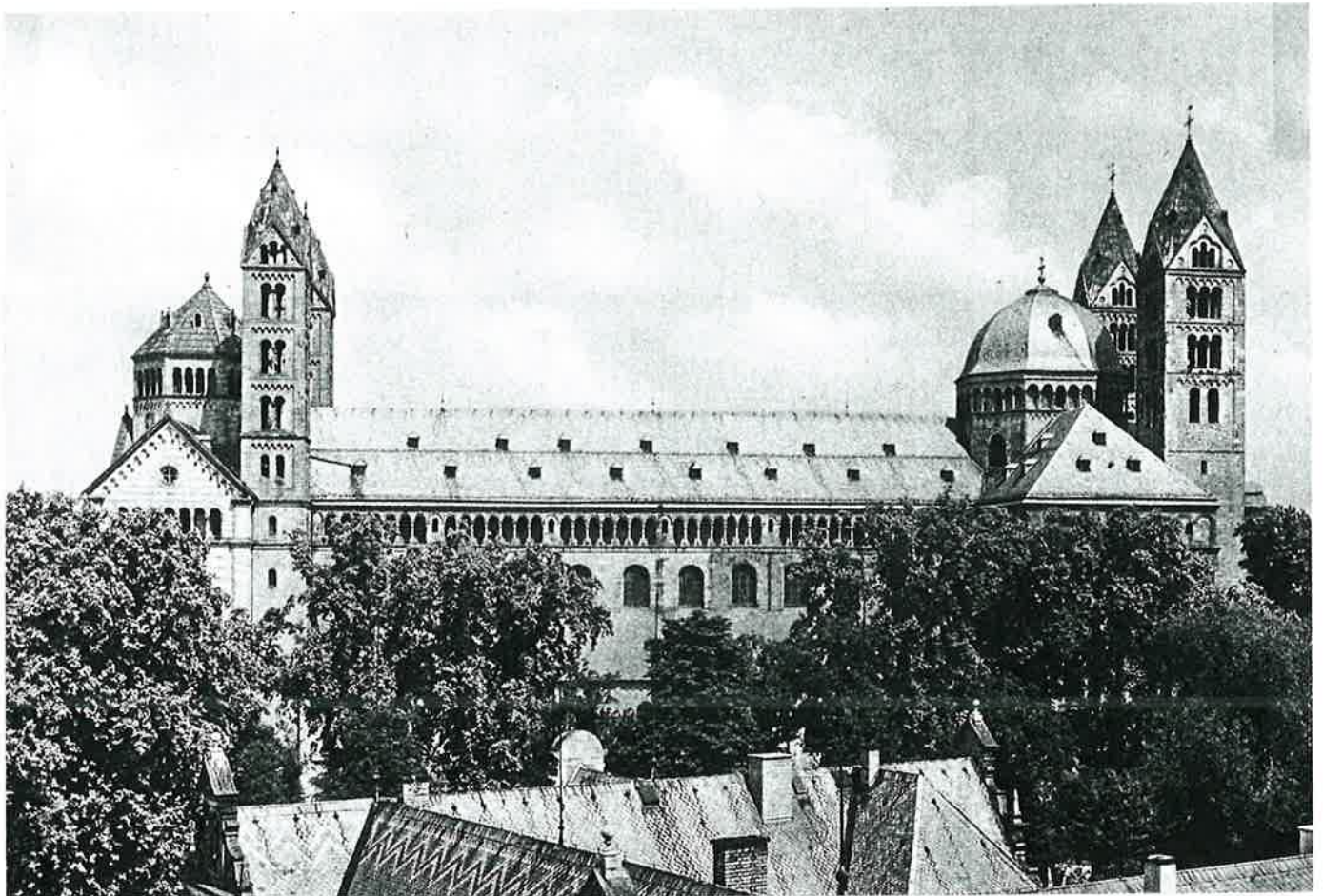
Right: Corvey (Germany) Abbey.



110. Exterior of Corvey Abbey, showing Westwork. 875-85



Holy Family church's tower rises at the western side; and up to the cornice of the nave, looks as if an extenuated part of the nave, balanced by the confessional projection at the east. Above the cornice height however, the stages differentiate the tower as a separate component. The dome is segmented into four parts merging as they curve towards the center where a base is formed for the cross. The dome's shape was not found in the 10th century St. Pantaleon church, but the 11th century dome at the Cathedral at Speyer, south of Cologne. (Below, from Zarnecki.)

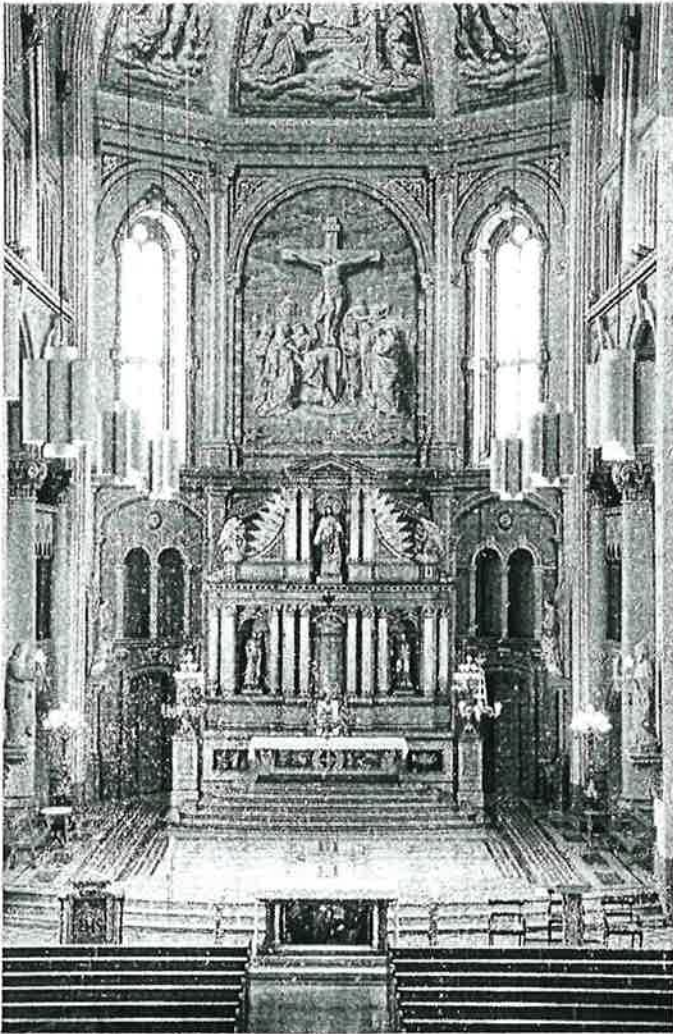


Lastly, with further reference to the German Romanesque, church interiors from the 10th to 12th centuries were decorated with paintings. Holy Family church's interior is not nominated, but notable in its conformity with the exterior's German Romanesque. Architect Patrick Keely knew this from previous projects where the architectural style on exteriors related directly to the interiors with the prevailing type of decoration. On the next page are two photographs of Keely-designed interiors. In his 1864 commission for the Jesuit priests' L'Église du Gesu in Montreal, Canada, Keely designed for the interior of the church to have geometrical "frames" on the ceilings and walls to fit certain frescoes. Art historian Ginette LaRoche's doctoral dissertation posited that the Canadian Gesu, along with the American "Jesuit church in Buffalo (1864) and in New York (1878)" were part of "(T)he marriage of architecture and wall decoration" in churches by "Patrick C. Kelley (1816-1896)". She added that the "wall decoration was executed by German painters...connected to the Dusseldorf Academy."<sup>11</sup>

Keely's plan for Holy Family included the sites for the paintings at the altar area, side altars, vaulting and ceiling where every vacant space seemed to be filled. (Refer to next page.) What is important is that from the beginning, Holy Family's church had been designed as consistent to the German Romanesque on its exterior, as well as its interior (although the interior had undergone extensive alterations in the 20th century.) Zarnecki wrote of German wall painting in Lower Rhineland, Westphalia, Bavaria, Lower Saxony and Moravia--all in Germany--since the 12th century.<sup>12</sup> Thus, Holy Family's church, with its westwork and design, are indisputedly German Romanesque.

<sup>11</sup>LaRoche, G., "Les Jesuites du Quebec et la diffusion de l'art chretien: l'eglise du Gesu de Montreal, une nouvelle perspective." Journal of Canadian Art History, 1991, Vol.14, #2 (Abstract).  
Sauve had relied upon LaRoche as his source on the frescoes at Gesu in his paper, cited herein.

<sup>12</sup>Zarnecki, op.cit., p.317.



ILL. 22. INTÉRIEUR DU GESÙ : MAÎTRE AUTEL DE J.-A. PIGEON. | © MARIANNE CHARLAND.

In Jean-Sebastien Sauve's paper, "Il y a déjà assez et trop de Gothique a Montreal: Patrick C. Keely et la construction de l'église du Gesu de Montreal" (2016), Keely's plan for the church's interior included designing architectural "frames" so that fresco artists could decorate. (The artists were German, arriving later, in the 1860s, after Nicola Monachesi came to paint frescoes in Philadelphia's St. John the Evangelist Church in 1831. Monachesi's existing frescoes at St. Augustine Church were historically designated by the PHC upon this nominator's submission. The frescoes date: 1848.) Holy Family's original interior also had the moldings to frame religious art, consistent to the Gesù's as well as its exterior architectural design.

(below, left).



Holy Family church(c.1900): This is one of the earliest photos of the interior. Stained glass windows were installed in 1898, with repairs made by Mayer of Munich in 1928, according to the 1985 parish history.

# THE PHILADELPHIA Real Estate Record AND BUILDERS' GUIDE.

DEVOTED TO REAL ESTATE, BUILDING, ARCHITECTURAL AND INSURANCE INTERESTS

[ENTERED AT THE PHILADELPHIA POST OFFICE AS SECOND CLASS MATTER.]

VOL. XI.—No. 50.

PHILADELPHIA, WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 9, 1896.

\$5.00 PER YEAR.

Architect J. O. Grasse, 202 Chestnut street, has awarded J. A. Clark, of Bar Harbor, Maine, the contract for a summer residence, which will be erected at that place for Dr. Frank H. Smith, of Philadelphia. This residence will be constructed of stone and frame, with a shingle roof. It will measure 60 x 45 feet, and when completed it will be three stories high. It will be finished in hard wood on first and second floors. All the modern improvements are included in contract, such as hot water heating, electrical work, sanitary plumbing and drainage, speaking tubes, mantels, wardrobes, tile and mosaic work and wood ornamented flooring for bath-rooms. It will cost about \$10,000. Formerly mentioned.

Architect T. F. Miller, 1221 Arch street, has finished plans for a store and residence that will be erected at Fort Washington, Pa., for Joseph L. Smith. It will be built of stone, with shingle and tin roof. It will have a frontage of 25 feet and a depth of 50 feet. It will be three stories high, with cellar under entire first floor. All the latest improvements and conveniences will be included in the general contract, including hot air heating, electrical work, including light, wiring, bells and combination gas fixtures, speaking tubes, mantels, wardrobes, tile and mosaic work, sanitary

Architect E. L. Aves, 613 Walnut street, has completed plans for a church which will be built at Manayunk, Pa., for the congregation of Holy Family Church, per E. P. Elkinton, of Manayunk. This church will be built of a local gray stone, with a slate roof, and will be one-story high, with a basement. When completed it will measure 65 x 150 feet. The following items will be included in the general contract when it is let: Steam heating, electric combination gas fixtures, electric wiring, etc., tile work, cement work, patent plastering, toilet-rooms, including the following latest improved appliances for fixtures: Urinals, flush closets, basins, etc., sanitary plumbing, interior decorative painting, stained glass, altar furnishings, such as altar rail and desk. The cost of this church will not exceed \$50,000, including all sub-contracts. Bids will not be taken until Spring.

### Building and Real Estate Notes.

W. J. Robinson, 4204 Germantown avenue and 641, Philadelphia House, has been awarded the following contracts for furnishing the Capital-Heater: Steam heating for residence

88 feet, with a wing running 83 feet north from Filbert street. It will be six stories in height, with basement, sub-cellar and attic. The street fronts will be of granite and limestone for the first two stories, and gray brick and terracotta above. The corridors and hall will be ornamented with mosaic and Terazza marble. The floors will be of Georgia marble, and there will be white marble stairways. There will be two hydraulic passenger elevators enclosed in the various stories, with electro-plated bronze and wrought iron enclosures. There will also be a ram elevator for hoisting ashes and freight from the sub-cellar to the pavement on Filbert street. A complete electric and boiler plant will heat light and operate the machinery throughout the building. Part of the first floor will be used for a public telephone office. The remainder, at present, is arranged for stores for renting. The second floor will be occupied by the General Manager's, Directors' and Treasurer's offices. The operating room will occupy the entire sixth floor, which has been provided with dining room, lunch, cloak rooms and toilet rooms for the operators. The other floors throughout the building will be used for offices for the general business of the company.

Why this notice appeared in December 9, 1896, attributing "E.L. Aves" as the assigned architect of Holy Family church is unknown. "The Catholic Standard and Times" on June 5, 1897 announced that the church--the proposed plan published--had been designed earlier by "Architect Keely of Brooklyn." Keely's name was never published in the PRERBG or that his plans had been submitted for the hiring of a contractor, Thomas Reilly. (See p. 10.)

Holy Cross Church...

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

PATRICK CHARLES KEELY (1816-1896)

Holy Family church's listing in the Philadelphia Real Estate Record and Builders' Guide does not name Patrick Charles Keely; however "The Catholic Standard and Times" newspaper named "Architect Keely of Brooklyn" and that he had died before the work could begin on the church.

The newspaper reported that Keely drew up the plans, but among other "delays" were the "business depression,"<sup>13</sup> but that in March of 1897, the "excavations were made..." When did Keely draw the design? And, how did he gain preference over Archbishop Ryan's favorite architect, Edwin F. Durang?

Keely had designed "an estimated 500 to 700 other churches" over the 16 Catholic cathedrals he had drawn "(B)etween 1847 and 1892."<sup>14</sup> One of his earliest churches was here in Philadelphia: The Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary church in 1848. This commission may have been obtained because of New York



1850

*Patrick Keely*

Above photograph from Francis W. Kervick's Patrick Charles Keely, Architect: A Record of His Life and Work. (1953)

<sup>13</sup>The Depression began in 1893 ended supposedly in 1897.

<sup>14</sup>New Catholic Encyclopedia, NY: McGraw, 1967, Vol. VIII, p. 143. Citations include research in the Master's thesis by Walter A. Daly, O.Carm, for the Catholic University of America, under Richard J. Purcell, Ph.D., LL.E. who also wrote a paper on Keely in 1943.

Archbishop John Hughes' relationships with many clergy with whom he was stationed or ministered with in Philadelphia in the 1830s. Hughes had approved of Keely's first church in Brooklyn, Saints Peter and Paul in 1848, called "(T)he first Catholic response"<sup>15</sup> to the Oxford Movement and the effect of architect Richard Upjohn's Trinity Church in New York City.<sup>16</sup> These would influence Keely's work and he would be commissioned in the burgeoning Irish Catholic communities forming as a result of the Great Famine in the mid- to late 1840s through the 1850s. The newcomers would save their meagre earnings to pay for these enormous and highly decorative churches designed by Keely. Keely's churches were constructed from Nova Scotia (Canada) and Maine, south to Mississippi, with urban Irish Catholic communities between. Father Daly in his Master's thesis (1934) and his professor, Richard Purcell, Ph.D., LL.E. (1943), then Kervick (1953) placed the number of Keely designs (overwhelmingly ecclesiastical over institutional architecture) at "500 to 700"<sup>17</sup> (but most other sources maintain the "700" number.) In Philadelphia, there are but three Keelys.

Assumption, BVM and St. John the Baptist churches are Gothic. (See p.30) In Philadelphia, Edwin F. Durang had been the most popular architect in archdiocesan projects. He designed in a Revived or Victorian or hybrid Gothic, and he was very busy in 1886 when St. John the Baptist parish wanted to hire an architect for a new church. In 1886, Durang was occupied in projects for the Little Sisters of the Poor here and in Chicago, at a Seminary in Lebanon, Pennsylvania and in Norristown (Montgomery County)<sup>18</sup> where a large Protectors for the "Magdalens" would be built. There were other

<sup>15</sup> New Catholic Encyclopedia, "Catholic Architecture." Vol. III, p. 827.

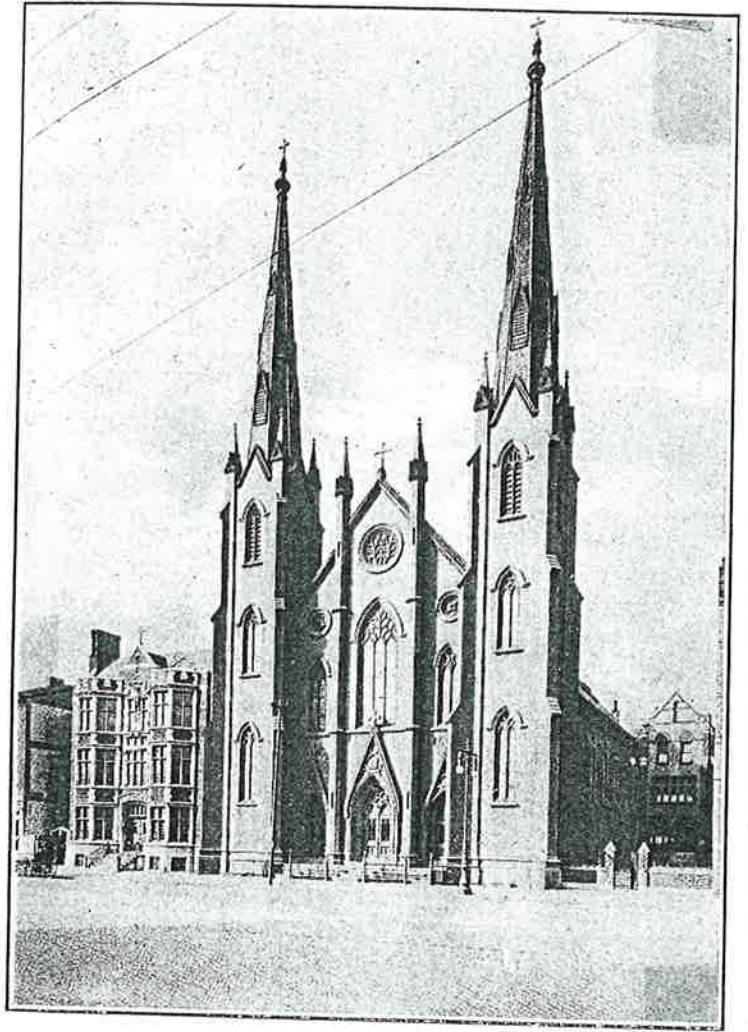
<sup>16</sup> Upjohn's Trinity Church (Anglican) reached nation-wide attention.

<sup>17</sup> Kervick, Francis W., Patrick Charles Keely, Architect: A Record of his Life and Work. South Bend, IN: 1953 (privately published.) pp. 33-35.

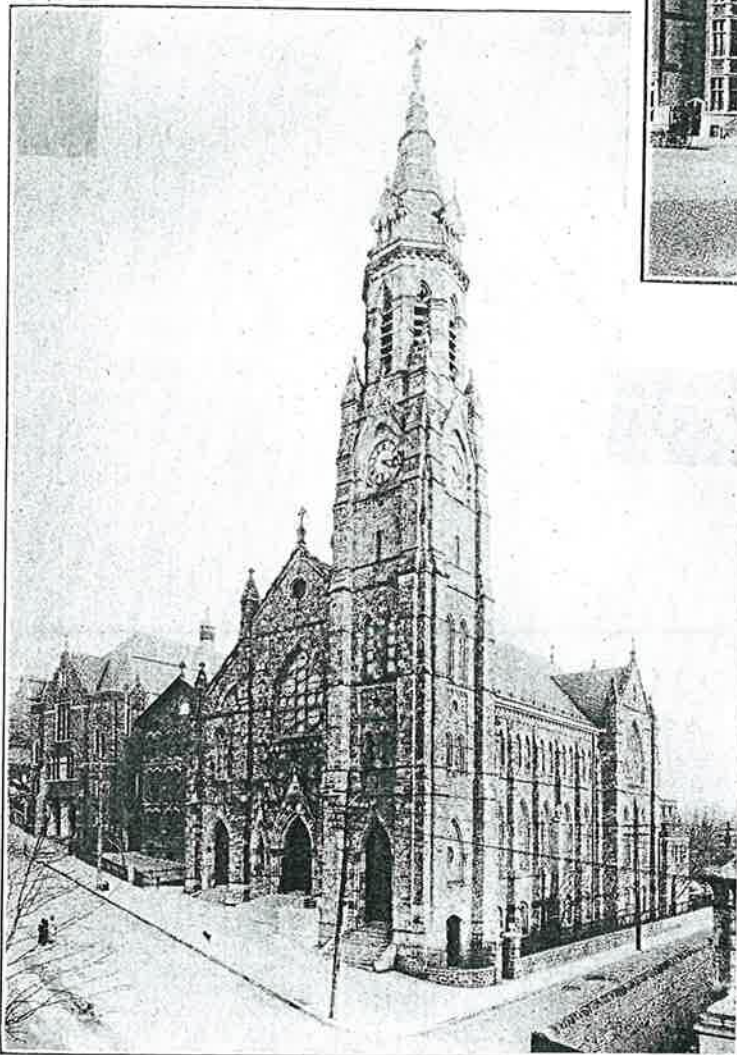
<sup>18</sup> Tatman, S. and Moss, R., Biographical Dictionary of Philadelphia Architects. Boston: Hall, 1985, pp.

Of the approximate "700" Roman Catholic and other buildings designed by Keely from c. 1847 to c. 1895, all over the United States, and Canada, there are only three (3) churches in Philadelphia designed by this architect.

Keely's first churches were approved by Archbishop John Hughes of New York City, who had come to New York from Philadelphia.



CHURCH OF THE ASSUMPTION, B. V. M.  
Philadelphia

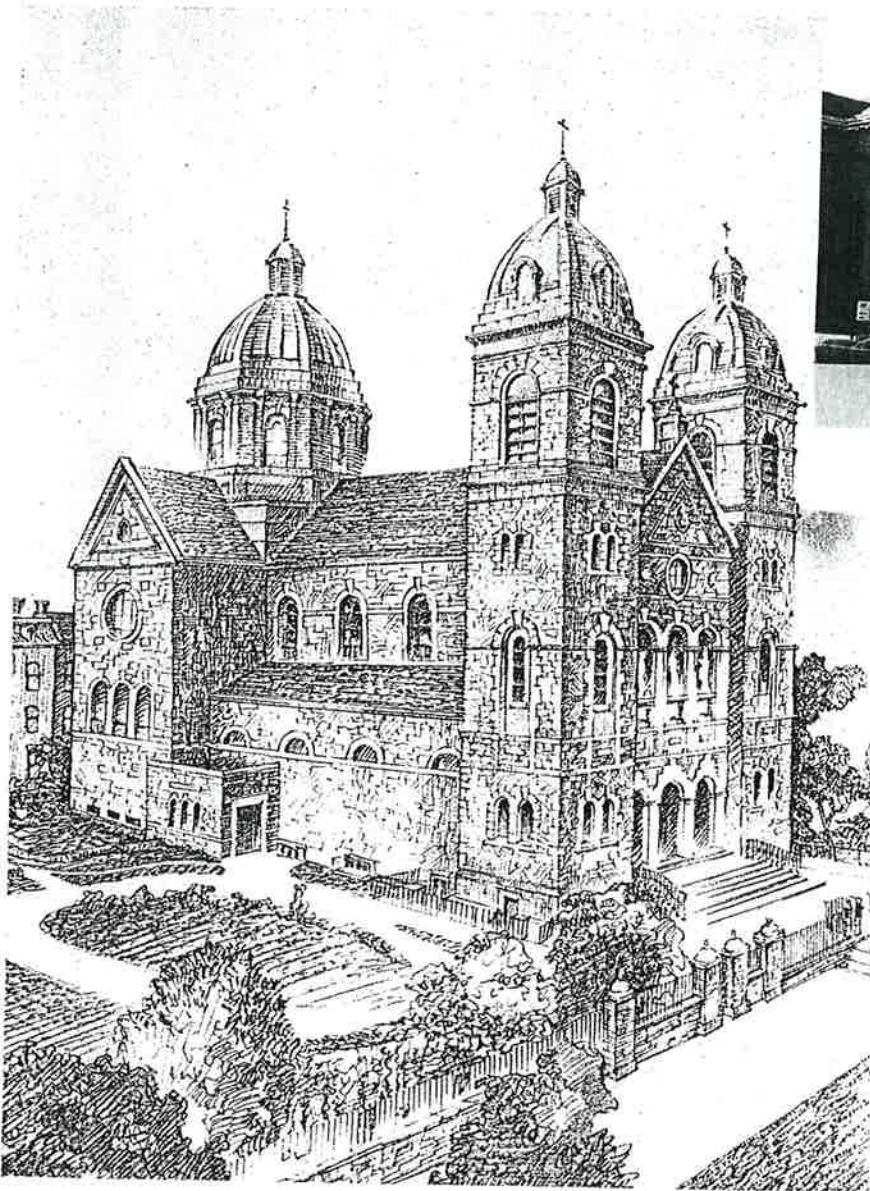


CHURCH OF ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST, MANAYUNK

The two Keely-designed churches in Philadelphia prior to the Holy Family church are pictured here (above) from 1849 (in a 1919 "History") and (left) and (in a 1917 "History" and "Souvenir"), from 1886 plans; completed in 1894.

Holy Family's plans seemed to have been done by Keely prior to succumbing to a stroke in 1890.

A coincidence in designing? Philadelphia architect Edwin F. Durang (1829-1911) may have been competing with Keely for Roman Catholic projects, but these churches raise some questions.



Church at the Passionist Monastery  
Union City, New Jersey



Saint Thomas Aquinas

c. 1900

(Archdiocesan photo.)

Durang's design (above) is PHC-approved and was constructed almost 40 years after Keely drew his plans for the church on left in 1863.

(Image from Kervick, p. 56.)

Durang was as mobile as Keely in out-of-state commissions; both architects also were friendly with Philadelphia Archbishop Patrick C. Ryan, (from Keely's hometown in Ireland.)



large-scale projects also awaiting: Visitation, BVM's complex; the Neoclassical Beneficial Bank building at 12th and Chestnut Streets; and St. James Church in West Philadelphia. According to Kervick's compilation of Keely projects, the architect seemed to be available to design St. John the Baptist in 1886, and he could have gone up to see where Holy Family's site is to observe the sloping terrain and how the church building would be oriented. On-site observation of the project's positioning is important; Keely would not be able to draw the plans for Holy Family without seeing the obstacle of how steep the summit is and how the church building's dimensions would fit into the site.

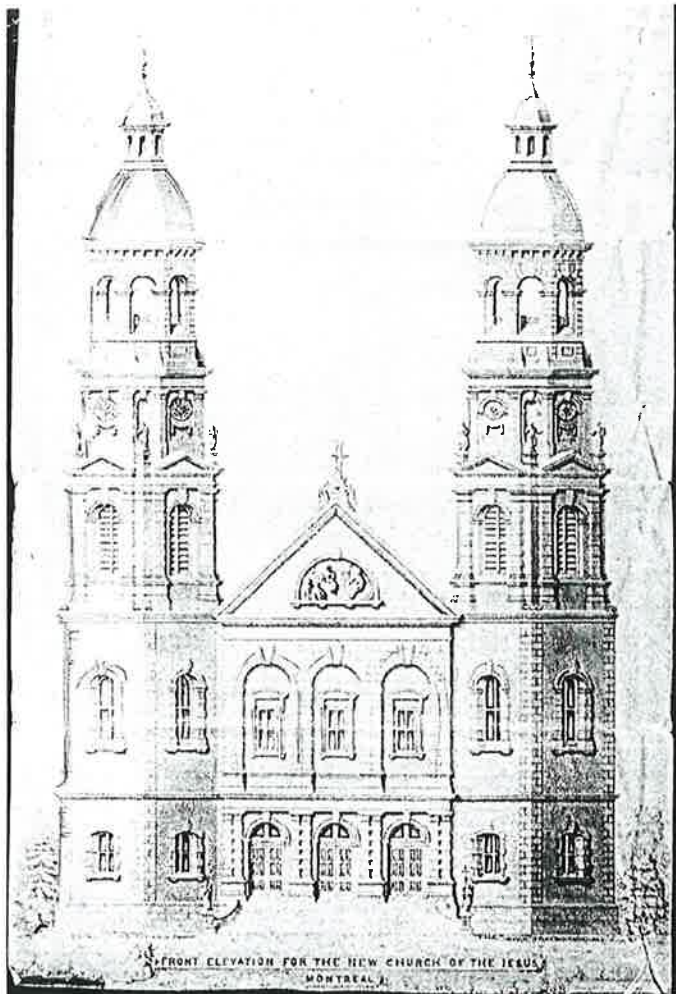
It is possible that Keely drew Holy Family church's plans prior to 1890 when he "became incapacitated following a stroke."<sup>19</sup> Archbishop Patrick J. Ryan of Philadelphia spoke at St. John the Baptist Church's dedication on April 1, 1894 of the church as Keely's "last" and that "Patrick Keely" was "the greatest church architect in the United States."<sup>20</sup> However, Keely's work and name were rarely noted in Philadelphia records, except in the Catholic newspaper. (See p.5) Keely had designed St. John the Baptist church just after receiving the Laetare Medal from Notre Dame University in 1884, the second recipient honored for "distinction for his services to the Catholic Church in the United States."<sup>21</sup>

Keely's work in ecclesiastical architecture for Roman Catholics was timely in how those of the faith, as well as the Irish ethnicity, would integrate into "Anglo-Saxon Protestant" America. As the first major and highly significant migration to this nation, the social dilemmas caused unexpectedly by the Irish migrations forced changes in legal, civic, and institutional matters. How-

<sup>19</sup>Encyclopedia of Architects. Macmillan, 1982, p. 556.

<sup>20</sup>"The Catholic Standard and Times," April 7, 1894.

<sup>21</sup>Purcell, Richard, "P.C. Keely: Builder of Churches in the United States." Records, American Catholic Historical Society, #54,1943. pages 222-224.

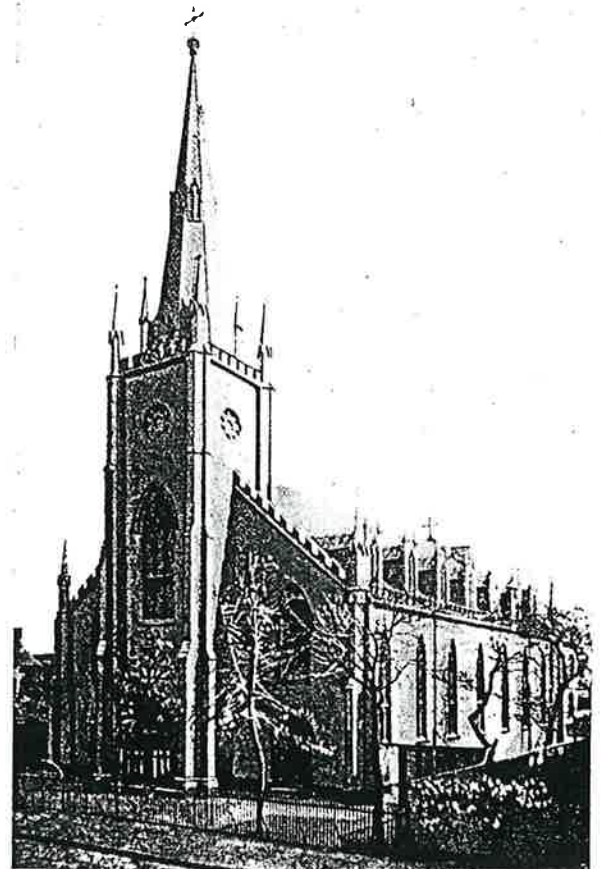


ILL. 14. ÉLÉVATION DÉFINITIVE DE LA FAÇADE DU GESÙ. DESSIN : PATRICK C. KEELY. | © ARCHIVUM ROMANUM SOCIETATIS IESU, ROME, MISSIO CANADENSIS 1002 VIII, 4.

The photograph on right is from Kervick (p. 56). Keely was 31 years old when he designed this church, later approved by Archbishop Hughes. Both churches on this page show the extent of Keely's skills and knowledge of different architectural styles.

Recent scholarship on Keely's work in Montreal, Canada focussed on a project for the Society of Jesus (Jesuits). The Order tended to prefer the Baroque Style which arose at the time of the Order's founding during and part of the Counter Reformation. The church at left was described as "ni l'architecture medievale, ni meme l'architecture baroque..." Some architectural relationship to Holy Family church's design may be noted.

(Quote from Sauve, p. 42.)



ever, American history has a substantial number of contributions in all areas, by those of Irish ethnicity, and Patrick C. Keely had a solid role in designing Roman Catholic churches at a time when Roman Catholicism provided a "network," according to historian Dennis Clark.<sup>22</sup> The stability of the Church, and the social advancement in becoming a religious (male or female) allowed Catholicism to attain significant status with additional migrations of Catholics from eastern and southern Europe: they would occupy the pews of Keely's churches after the Irish Americans mobilized from the urban to the suburban areas.

Keely's design for Holy Family church was wisely kept for years, although "E.L. Aves" saw to the publication of his name as the church's architect. Nevertheless, Keely's prestige nationwide, his Laetare Award from Notre Dame University and the number of cathedrals (the seats of the bishops) he designed put him far ahead of Durang or any other ecclesiastical architect of his time.

---

"The Catholic Standard and Times" (June 5, 1897) reported that "Thomas P. Lonsdale...as supervising architect" would succeed in Holy Family church's construction. Lonsdale (1855-1900) was an orphan in Norristown, his hometown, who had been sent to Girard College in Philadelphia, a boarding school. Tatman's biographical research found Lonsdale with architect James H. Windrim when he was but 16 years old.<sup>23</sup> Lonsdale later worked alone, gaining notoriety in 1888 with a building that Webster called an "early Philadelphia skyscraper,"<sup>24</sup> (later demolished). Lonsdale also taught "architectural design at the Spring Garden Institute" (1880-1884)<sup>25</sup> before drawing his most memorable buildings: Temple University's

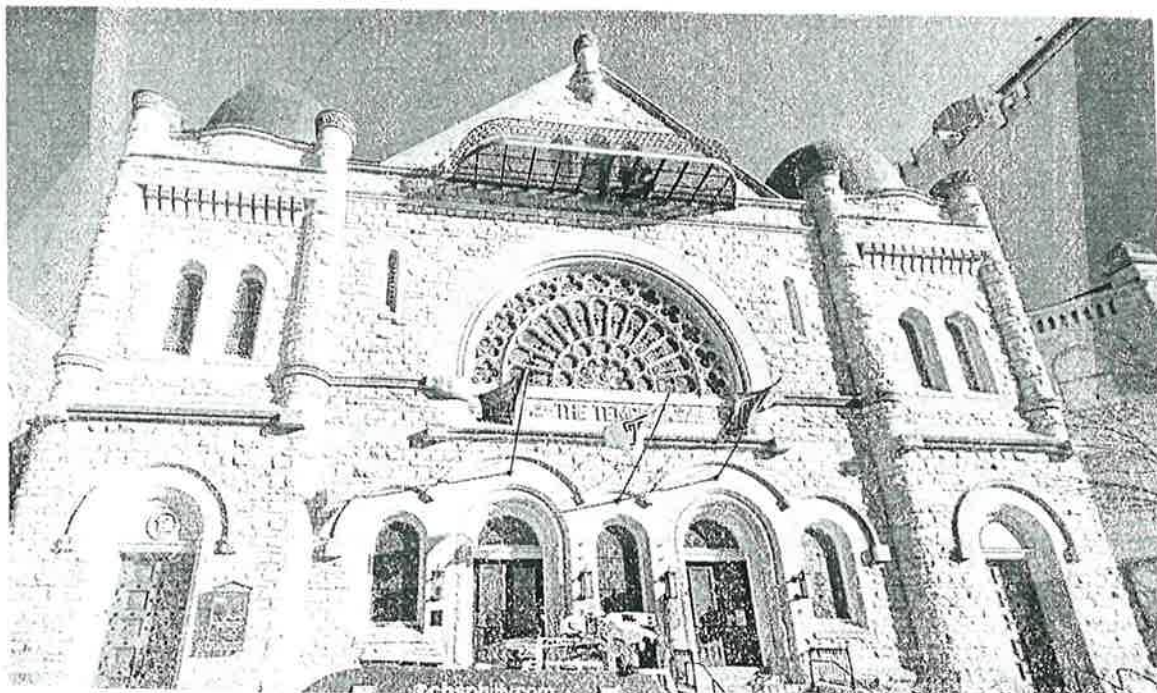
<sup>22</sup>Clark, D., The Irish in Philadelphia. Temple Univ. Press, p.138.

<sup>23</sup>"pab.org." site repeated in Tatman and Moss, op.cit.

<sup>24</sup>Webster, R., Philadelphia Preserved. Temple Univ., p.59.

<sup>25</sup>Tatman, op.cit.

iconic "Temple" on North Broad Street (1889); Methodist Hospital (now, a Jefferson Hospital property) (1892); Our Lady of Lourdes Roman Catholic church (1894); and what seems as commissions that were influenced by the Vare family of local and federal politicians, such as the Abigail Vare Methodist Church (1892) the matriarch of the sons whose names are on schools, a playground and avenue; a number of Protestant (Methodist and Baptist) churches all over the city. In these projects, Lonsdale gained experience in designing in Romanesque (as at Temple), Gothic (Lourdes) and hybrids. In 1895, Lonsdale was overseeing Our Lady of Lourdes' church in Overbrook, which had to be completed within a year.<sup>26</sup> The contractor was Thomas Reilly. Lonsdale and Reilly would be together again in 1897 at Holy Family parish, for the church's construction.



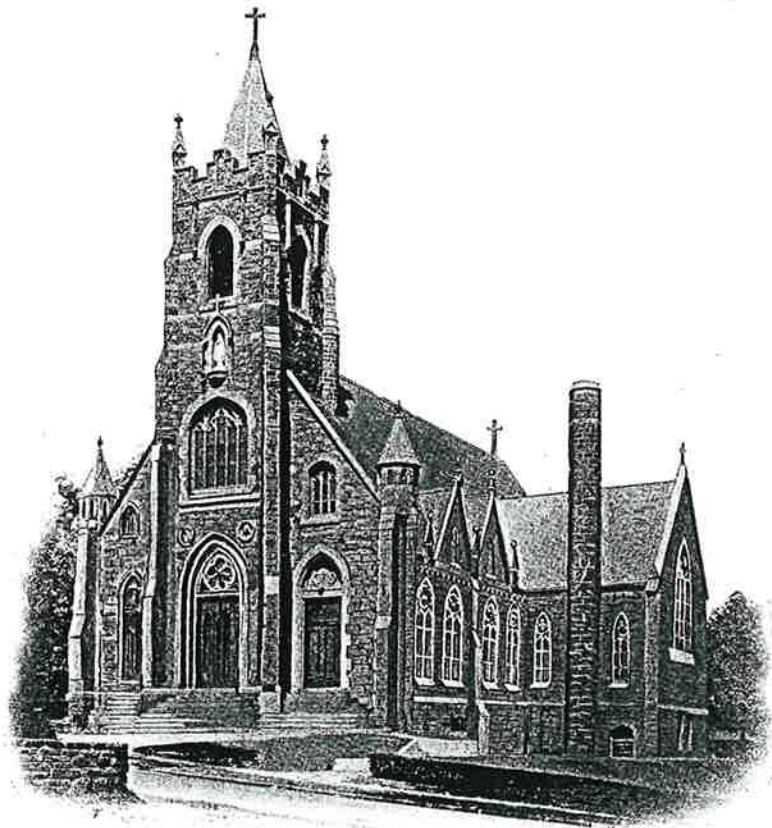
Above is the grand Baptist Temple at the center of Temple University's campus, facing North Broad Street. It is now an auditorium. Lonsdale designed this Romanesque with Byzantine domes.

<sup>26</sup> Our Lady of Lourdes' parish history stated that the gift of land for this parish in Overbrook Farms was stipulated that the church had to be constructed within a year. It was! Reilly was noted as the contractor for Lonsdale's design.

Architect Thomas P. Lonsdale designed many churches, mostly Protestant--which makes the Church of Our Lady of Lourdes in Overbrook, a Roman Catholic one, the sole church of this faith by Lonsdale--unique in the requirements for a Roman Catholic worship site.

On land donated by the partnership (and friends) G.W. Childs and Anthony Drexel for the "Overbrook Farms" development, the pastor was to erect a church within one year. Lonsdale was hired in 1894 for this "13th century English Gothic" design, and ground was broken by the spring of 1895 for Thomas Reilly and his laborers to begin construction.

Our Lady of Lourdes Church was dedicated in 1895; the next year, Lonsdale and Reilly would coordinate again in the construction of Holy Family church, when Patrick C. Keely's death in August of 1896 ceased any hope in his plans materializing.



THE CHURCH OF OUR LADY OF LOURDES

Again, relying upon "The Catholic Standard and Times" newspaper as a source, George I. Lovatt was identified as the architect of Holy Family's school. (See p. 13.) W.R. Dougherty was the contractor.

Lovatt won local and international awards in architectural design. He drew several buildings that this Commission had approved in the past submitted by this nominator (St. Edmond's Catholic church and Rectory; St. Rita of Cascia church). Lovatt's medals for his designs were also on Roman Catholic churches: Most Precious Blood (International Exhibition award in Barcelona, Spain); and on his Holy Child church on North Broad Street (Philadelphia Chapter of the AIA award). Thus, Lovatt is the only architect whose designs for Philadelphia Catholic churches won awards by local and international peers. Below is Lovatt's St. Rita's, a Roman Baroque on South Broad Street.



Lovatt was the third extraordinary architect working at Holy Family parish. He planned the school to coordinate with Keely's church design with the essentials: rounded arch windows; rectangular form; prominent center bay of the facade; and the same construction materials. However, Lovatt's design is more Neoclassical with the columns, shallow portico under the balustrade. The school building is closer to Hermitage Street, but within the slope: at the rear, the workers built into the earth. Conscious of the site, Lovatt's school attracts in a pleasant manner, allowing the church building seem aloof, but no less reverent. This is what every architect had to consider here at the Holy Family summit: how to make each building relevant to the land, yet noticeable to those passing by: the perspectives had to be natural.

---

Holy Family parish's buildings hold a wealth of information and historical value. Each building and its architect and contractors labored to create a structure to relate to the unusual surface of the ground, as well as present a visual for an emotional feeling. The church sits high, with views to the hills across the river and over the old millworkers' homes and factories. Village-like. Thus, Holy Family's buildings are appropriate for criterion (h) with no further explanation than their locations.

Holy Family's buildings merit this Commission's approval.

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

BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES (Primary and Secondary):

Clark, Dennis, The Irish in Philadelphia. 1973.

Janson, HW, History of Art. 1977.

Kervick, Francis W., Patrick Charles Keely, Architect.... 1953.

LaRoche, Ginette, "Les Jesuites du Quebec..." Journal of Canadian Art History. 1991.

Mahony, D., Historical Sketches....1895.

Purcell, Richard, "P.C. Keely: Builder of Churches..."  
Records, American Catholic Historical Society. 1943.

Sauve, Jean-Sebastien, "Il y a Deja Assez et Trop de Gothique a  
Montreal: Patrick C. Keely et la construction de l'eglise..."  
Journal of the Society for the Study of Architecture in  
Canada. No.2, 2016.

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

Webster, R., Philadelphia Preserved. 1981.

Zarnecki, G., Art of the Medieval World. 1979.

---

Other sources:

Parish histories: Assumption, BVM; Holy Family; Our Lady of Lourdes;  
St. John the Baptist churches.

Catholic Standard and Times newspaper

Philadelphia Real Estate Record and Builders' Guide

"pab.org." site

Catholic Encyclopedia (1908-1910);  
Encyclopedia of Architects (1982);  
New Catholic Encyclopedia (1967).