

**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: **48-60 West Logan Street**

Postal code: **19144**

**2. NAME OF HISTORIC RESOURCE**

Historic Name: **St. Francis of Assisi Roman Catholic Church**

Current Name: **Unknown**

**3. TYPE OF HISTORIC RESOURCE**

Building       Structure       Site       Object

**4. PROPERTY INFORMATION**

Condition:     excellent     good     fair     poor     ruins

Occupancy:     occupied     vacant     under construction     unknown

Current use:    Unknown

**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): **1910-1945, 1924-28**

Date(s) of construction: **ca.1910 (basement/foundation and rectory), ca.1924-28 (upper church)**

Architects: **F. Ferdinand Durang**

Builders: **John McShain (1910 basement/foundation and rectory); D. W. O'Dea (upper church)**

Original owners: **St. Francis of Assisi Roman Catholic Church**

Significant person: **Rev. Jeremiah Nevin and Rev. J. P. McGarrity**

**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: **SoLo/Germantown Civic Association**

Author: **Keeping Society of Philadelphia**

Date: **18 March 2025**

EMAIL: **KEEPER@KEEPINGPHILADELPHIA.ORG**

Nominator  is  is not the property owner.

**PHC USE ONLY**

Date of Receipt: March 18, 2026

Correct-Complete  Incorrect-Incomplete

Date: 4/16/2026

Date of Notice Issuance: 4/17/2026

Property Owner at Time of Notice:

Name: Philadelphia Independent Independence Mission Schools

Address: Independence Mission Schools

Suite 200, 120 S Warner Road

City: King of Prussia

State: PA

Postal Code: 19406

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

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

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

Designated

Rejected

# **NOMINATION**

## **FOR THE**

### **PHILADELPHIA REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES**

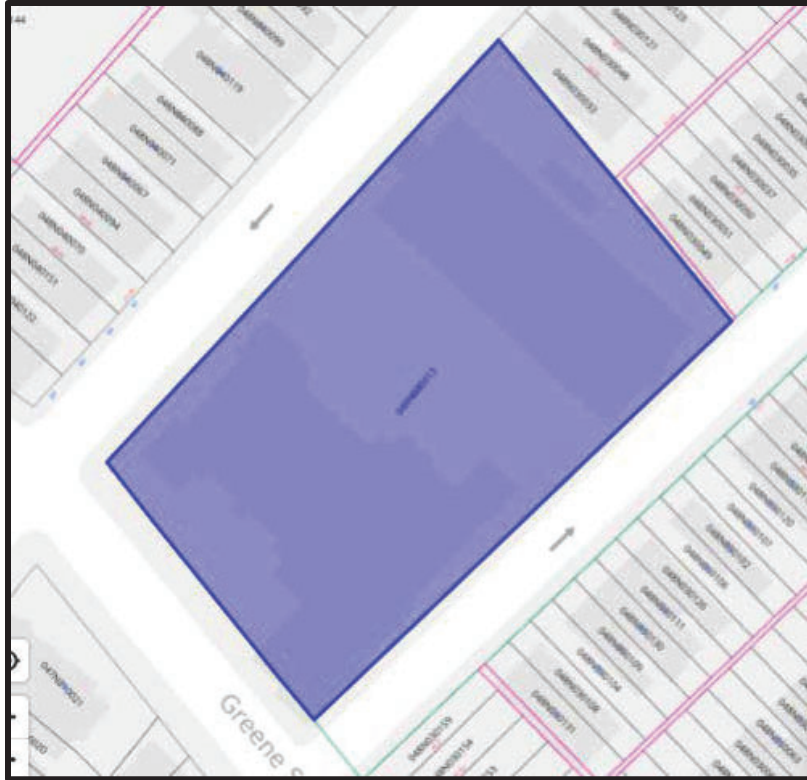


Figure 1. The primary (northwest) and side (southwest) elevations. Source: Oscar Beisert, 2026.

**ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI**  
**ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH**  
**BASEMENT ERECTED 1910**  
**UPPER CHURCH ERECTED 1924-28**  
**RECTORY ERECTED 1910**

■

**48-60 WEST LOGAN STREET**  
**GERMANTOWN**  
**PHILADELPHIA, PENNSYLVANIA 19144**



The subject designation is confined to the parcel delineated above in blue. Source: City of Philadelphia, Atlas, 2025.  
Note: the small building indicated immediately adjacent to the property's northeastern boundary no longer exists.

## 5. BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The boundary for the subject designation is as follows:

All that certain lot or piece of ground, situated on the northeasterly side of Greene Street and the southeasterly side of West Logan Street in the 12<sup>th</sup> Ward (formerly part of the 22<sup>nd</sup> Ward) of the City of Philadelphia. Containing in front or breadth on the said Greene Street (between the southeasterly line of West Logan Street and the middle of Rockland Street) one hundred and eighty-nine feet (189'), eight and three-quarters inches (8-3/4") extending in length or depth northeastwardly along the said southeasterly line of West Logan Street and the middle of said Rockland Street three hundred feet (300') to ground formerly of George M. Wagner and containing in breadth on the rear end thereof two hundred and six feet (206') more or less.

Tax Parcel No.: 776195000

Deed Registry No.: 048N030013



Figure 2. The primary (northwest) and side (southwest) elevations. Source: Oscar Beisert, 2026.

## 6. PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION

St. Francis of Assisi Roman Catholic Church is a monumental Romanesque Revival ecclesiastical building prominently situated at the east intersection of Greene and Logan Streets in the Germantown neighborhood of Philadelphia. Constructed of rusticated, random ashlar granite from Mount Airy, North Carolina, laid in irregular courses, with Vermont marble and terra cotta details, the church occupies a commanding corner site and presents a strongly massed, cruciform composition articulated by a dominant tower. The Rectory is attached to the south corner of the church, standing at the north corner of Greene and West Rockland Streets. The School is located to the northeast of the Church, facing onto West Logan Street and West Rockland Street; however, it is considered non-contributing. The Church and School are separated by a paved recreational area related to the School. The former campus of St. Francis of Assisi Roman Catholic Church stands in a densely built neighborhood of attached and semi-detached row houses and twins.

### THE CHURCH

The Church is organized on a cruciform plan consisting of a broad nave, transept, and chancel, featuring a center aisle, two side aisles, and seven exits. Structurally, the building features a clear span at the nave of 60 feet and a height of 55 feet to the crown of the ceiling arch. The length of the church is approximately 150 feet. The west tower is 118 feet high, standing as one of the tallest structures in the immediate vicinity. The building's wall surfaces are composed of rusticated, random ashlar granite blocks laid in irregular courses, giving the building a rugged texture that contrasts with the smoother marble and terra cotta used for openings, archivolt, columns, and decorative trim. Vertical buttress-like projections delineate the façade into bays and visually support the heavy masonry mass.

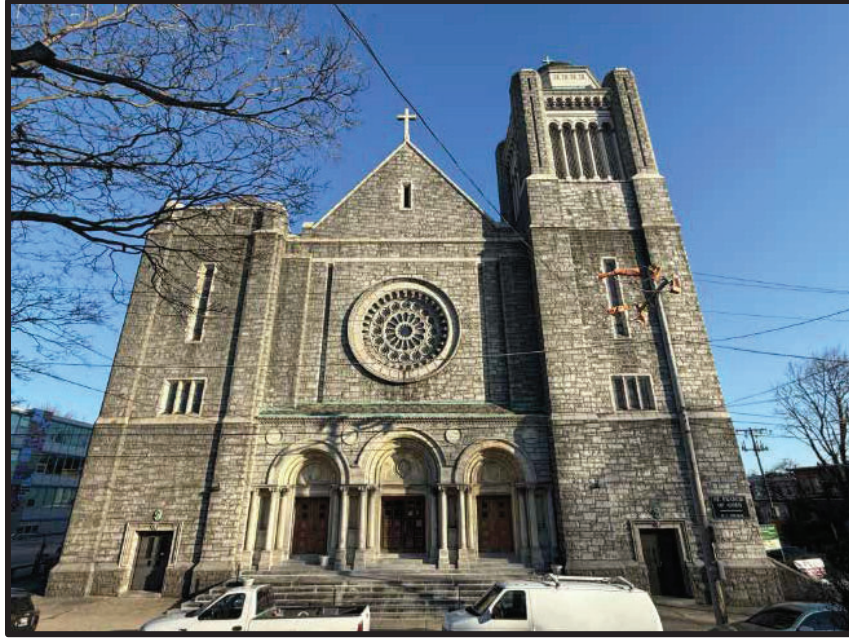


Figure 3. The primary (northwest) elevation. Source: Oscar Beisert, 2026.

### **THE CHURCH - PRIMARY (NORTHWEST) ELEVATION**

The primary (northwest) elevation of the Church is a monumental and symmetrical composition executed in rusticated granite, expressing a restrained Romanesque Revival style. The broad front elevation is organized into three principal sections dominated by a central gable serving the nave and flanked by massive square towers that anchor the composition.

The central section is defined by a moderately pitched front-gable capped with a stone cross. At its center is a large rose window, deeply recessed within a circular stone surrounding and filled with elaborate radiating tracery. Below the rose window is the principal entrance composition consisting of a triple-arched portal. Each doorway is set within a round-arched opening supported by engaged marble columns with carved capitals, forming a shallow arcaded porch. The archivolts are enriched with molded stone and terra cotta bands and decorative roundels. The porch is accessed by a broad flight of granite steps that extends across the width of the entrance terrace.

Flanking the nave are two square towers. The north tower is squat, articulated in two stages with a low-slung pyramidal roof. The west tower rises 118 feet in three stages, capped with a lantern, at the corner of Greene and West Logan Streets. Both towers are tapered, narrowing gradually at each stage. The first and second stages of both towers are solid granite structures with identical fenestrations. These stages are delineated by continuous horizontal coping. The first stage of each tower features single pedestrian doors delineated by masonry trim. In the second stage of the tower, the wall is pierced by a tall, narrow lancet-like opening with a pointed arch and a deep stone surround, while below it sits a small triple window composed of three narrow rectangular lights divided by slender stone mullions and set within a projecting frame. The third and upper stage of the west tower forms the belfry and is articulated by a central grouping of five slender round-arched openings separated by colonnettes and filled with decorative tracery screens, framed by massive corner buttress-like piers with narrow vertical slit openings; above the arcade is a corbelled arcaded cornice and parapet, which supports an octagonal lantern capped with a domed roof and cross. The primary (northwest) elevation of the north tower is repeated on the northeast

elevation and, in part, on the southwest and southeast elevations. The primary (northwest) elevation of the west tower is repeated on the southwest elevation, and, in part, on the southeast and northeast elevations. Near the base of the west tower is a cornerstone that reads “1924” with a cross at the center of the four numbers.

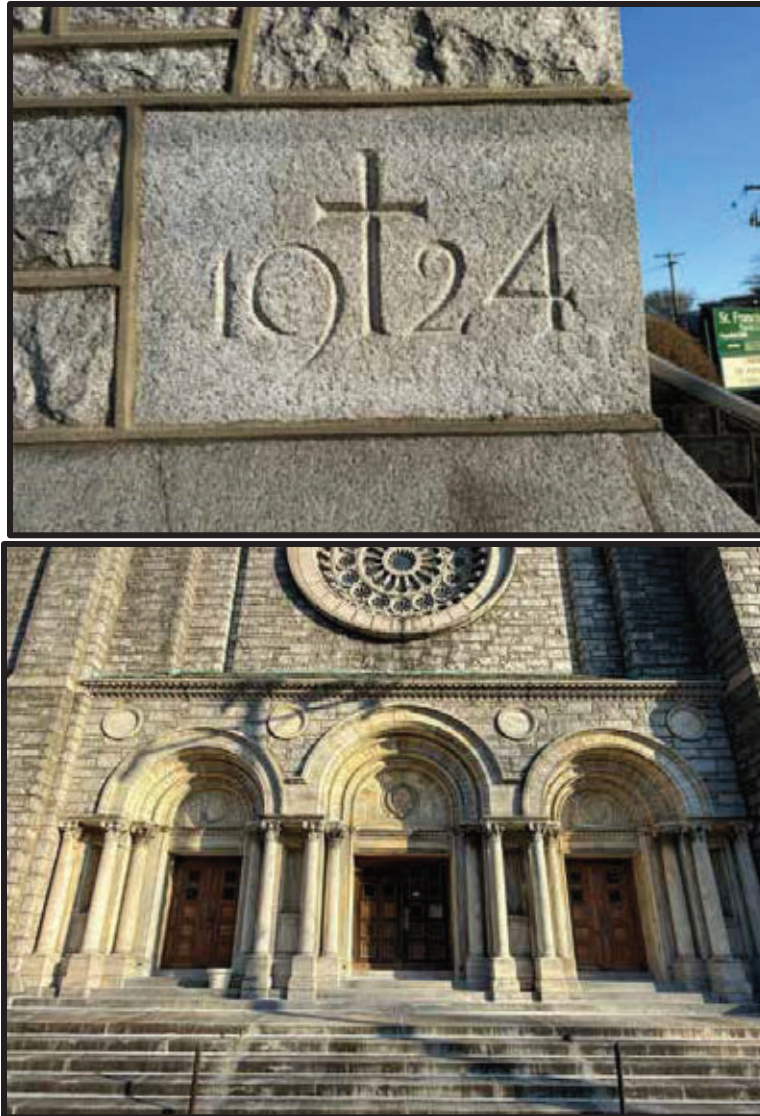


Figure 4. Top: The datestone within the primary (northwest) elevation and the west tower. Figure 5. Bottom: The arcaded entrance porch of the primary (northwest) elevation. Source: Oscar Beisert, 2026.

### **THE CHURCH – NORTHEAST ELEVATION**

Beyond the north tower, the side (northeast) elevation delineates the long expanse of the nave with the use of massive windows and shallow buttresses. The tall, round-arched Romanesque Revival mullion windows are defined by slender engaged colonnettes with foliated capitals, surmounted by a decorative tympanum, featuring a central oculus and blind round arches, framed by radiating stone arches. Towards the rear of the building, the transept protrudes from the larger volume, featuring a gabled roof. In the northeast elevation of the transept is another round-arched Romanesque Revival mullion window. A two-story addition fills the space at the rear created by the transept and the chancel.



Figure 6. Top: The side (northeast) elevation. Figure 7. Bottom: The side (northeast) and rear (southeast) elevations. Source: Oscar Beisert, 2026.

### **THE CHURCH – SOUTHWEST ELEVATION**

Beyond the west tower, the side (southwest) elevation faces onto Greene Street and connects to the Rectory at the rear of the building. This elevation delineates the long expanse of the nave with the use of massive windows and shallow buttresses. Aided by the buttresses, the round-arched Romanesque Revival mullion windows are repeated in this elevation. Deviating from the other windows, a tall, slender, round-arched opening is adjacent to the southeast elevation of the west tower. It is situated above a stone apsidal projection. At the rear of the building, the transept

protrudes from the larger volume. In the northeast elevation of the transept is another round-arched Romanesque Revival mullion window. The Rectory extends from the space at the rear created by the transept and the chancel.

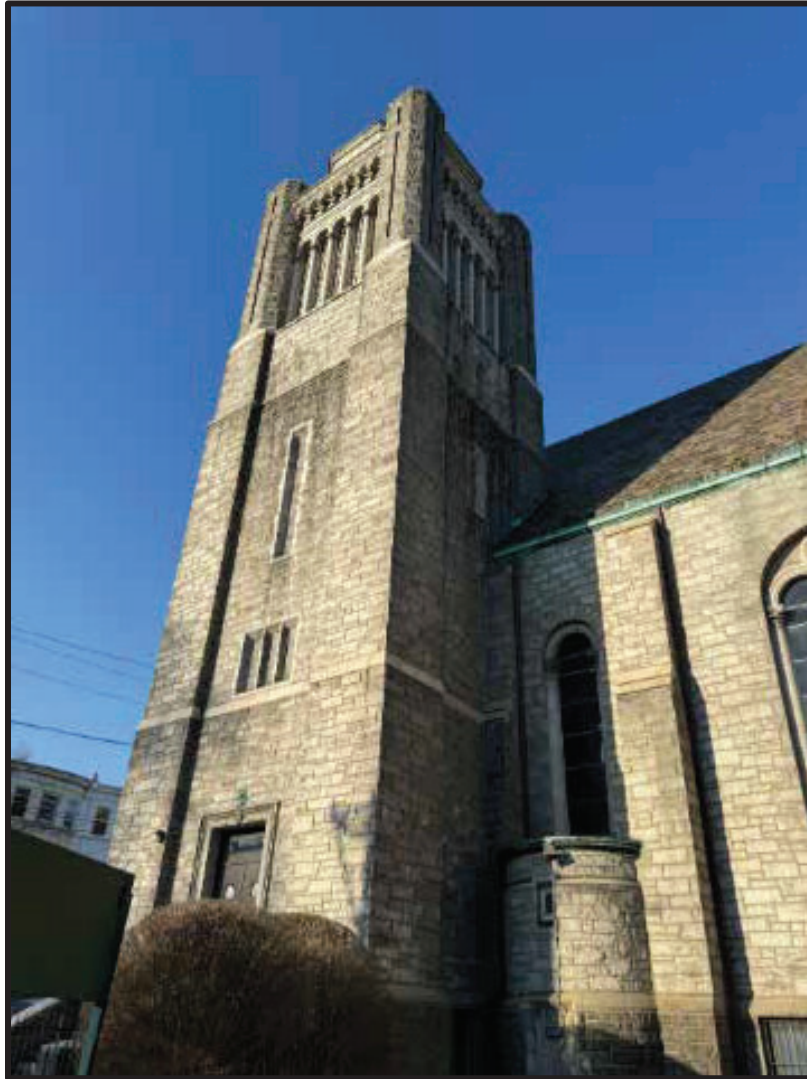


Figure 8. The side (southwest) and rear (southeast) elevations of the west tower. Source: Oscar Beisert, 2026.



Figure 9. Top: The side (southeast) elevation. Figure 10. Bottom: The side (southeast) elevation. Source: Oscar Beisert, 2026.

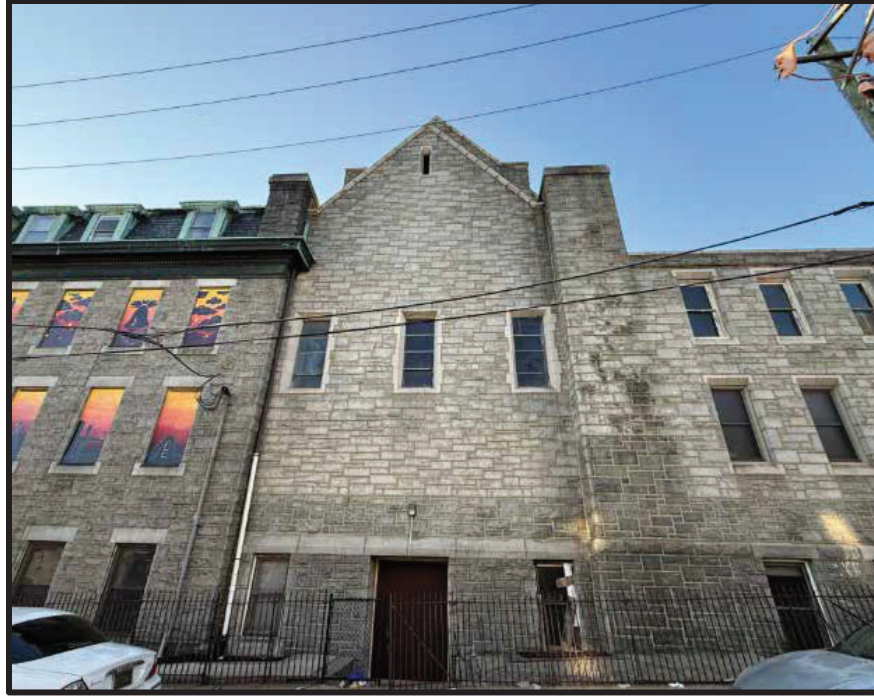


Figure 11. The rear (southeast) elevation, set between the Rectory and a two-story addition. Source: Oscar Beisert, 2026.

### **THE CHURCH - SOUTHEAST ELEVATION**

The rear (southeast) elevation is a gable front expanse that is set between the Rectory and a two-story addition. The first level features a basement entrance at the center flanked by two windows. A set of three windows rises above this level.



Figure 12. The southeast elevation of the Rectory. Source: Oscar Beisert, 2026.

### **THE RECTORY**

Standing at the north corner of Greene and West Rockland Streets, the Rectory is a four-story stone structure built on a rectangular plan. Constructed before the larger superstructure of the Church, the building is situated in the space created by the intersection of the transept and chancel. The walls of the Rectory are composed of rough-faced, cut stone for three continuous floors with a fourth floor in the form of a Mansard roof, referencing the Second Empire style. The Mansard roof is set off by a prominent cornice defined by a projecting overhang, cove and dentil moldings, and an unembellished entablature. The Mansard roof is clad in slate and features single and two-part dormer windows clad in copper. The distinct facades are independently articulated in fenestrations of symmetrically placed and semi-symmetrical groupings, including single openings and three-part mullion windows. These elevations also feature strong stone lintels and sills. The Rectory is accessed by a single pedestrian door within the northwest elevation through the side yard along Greene Street. An iron fence serves both the Church and the Rectory along Greene Street.



Figure 13. Top: The northwest and southeast elevations. Figure 14. Bottom: The southwest and southeast elevations. Source: Oscar Beisert, 2026.

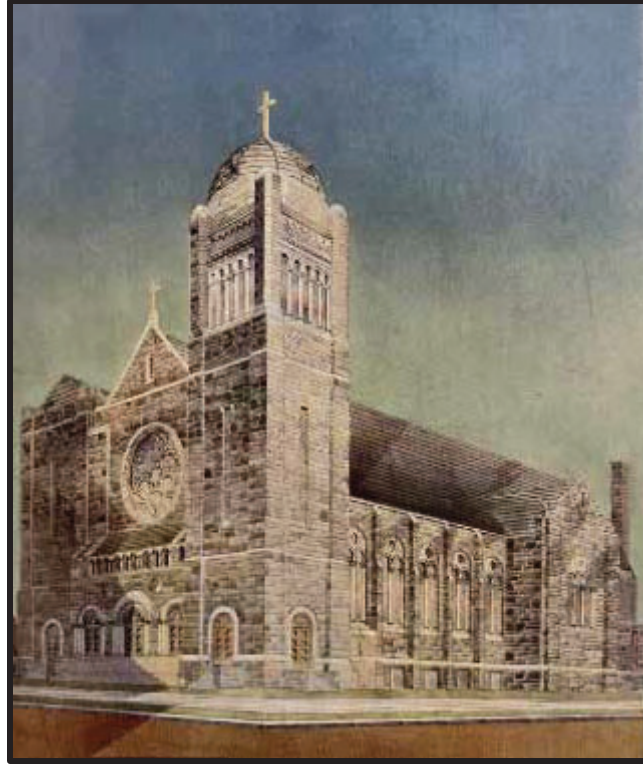


Figure 15. A rendering of the Church, including the primary (northwest) and side (southwest) elevation. Source: Golden Jubilee: 1899-1949. St. Francis of Assisi Parish, 1949. Pamphlet. Source: Catholic Historical Research Center of the Archdiocese of Philadelphia (CHCR)

## **7. STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE**

St. Francis of Assisi Roman Catholic Church at 48-60 West Logan Street in the Germantown neighborhood of Philadelphia is a significant historic resource that merits designation by the Philadelphia Historical Commission and inclusion on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places. The subject building satisfies the following Criteria for Designation, as enumerated in Section 14-1004 of the Philadelphia Code:

- (d) Embodies distinguishing characteristics of an architectural style or engineering specimen;
- (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; and
- (j) Exemplifies the cultural, political, economic, social, and historical heritage of the community.

The period of significance for Criterion J is from 1910 to 1945, representing the history of the Irish Catholic community near Wayne Junction and in Lower Germantown. The period of significance for Criterion D for architectural style and Criterion E for its architect is 1924-28, the period in which the upper portion of the Church was completed.

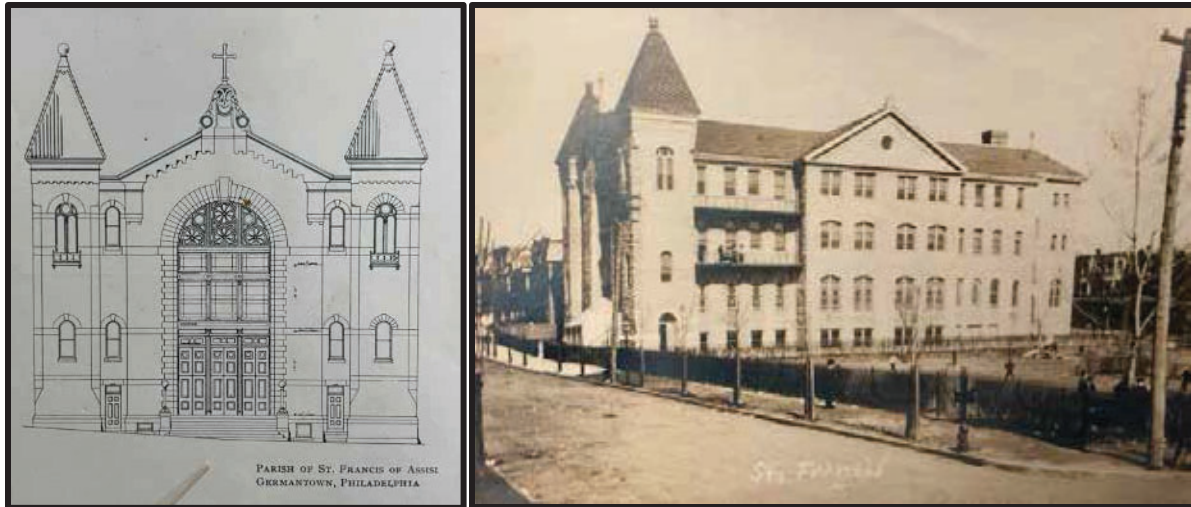


Figure 16. Left: A rendering of the original school building of St. Francis of Assisi, published in 1900. Source: Figure 17. Right: A photograph of the completed original school building on West Logan Street in ca.1909. Source: Germantown Historical Society.

### **A BRIEF HISTORIC OVERVIEW OF THE PARISH, THE SITE, AND ITS BUILDINGS**

The Parish of St. Francis of Assisi was established on October 7, 1899, when Archbishop Patrick J. Ryan announced the creation of a new Roman Catholic parish in the rapidly developing Germantown neighborhood of Northwest Philadelphia. At the time, the surrounding area—once part of the independent community of Germantown—was growing due to the expanding industry at nearby Wayne Junction, along with residential development. The founding pastor, Father Jeremiah Nevin, led the new congregation during its formative years. Born in Leyhlinbridt, County Carlow, Ireland, he studied at St. Kieran’s, Kilkenny; St. Patrick’s, Carlow; and, finally, at Saint Charles Borromeo Seminary near Philadelphia. Before the subject site at the intersection of Greene and West Logan Streets was selected for the church complex, parishioners gathered for mass in temporary locations such as Taylor’s Hall at 5132 Wakefield Street.<sup>1</sup>



Figure 18. Father Nevin in 1900. Source: CHCR.

<sup>1</sup> *Golden Jubilee: 1899-1949. St. Francis of Assisi Parish*, 1949. Pamphlet. Source: Catholic Historical Research Center of the Archdiocese of Philadelphia (CHCR); “3 Rectors Named For Philadelphia and Minersville,” Unknown Publication, 1926. Source: CHCR; “Philadelphia Churches Affected by Transfers,” *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, 22 May 1926, 15.

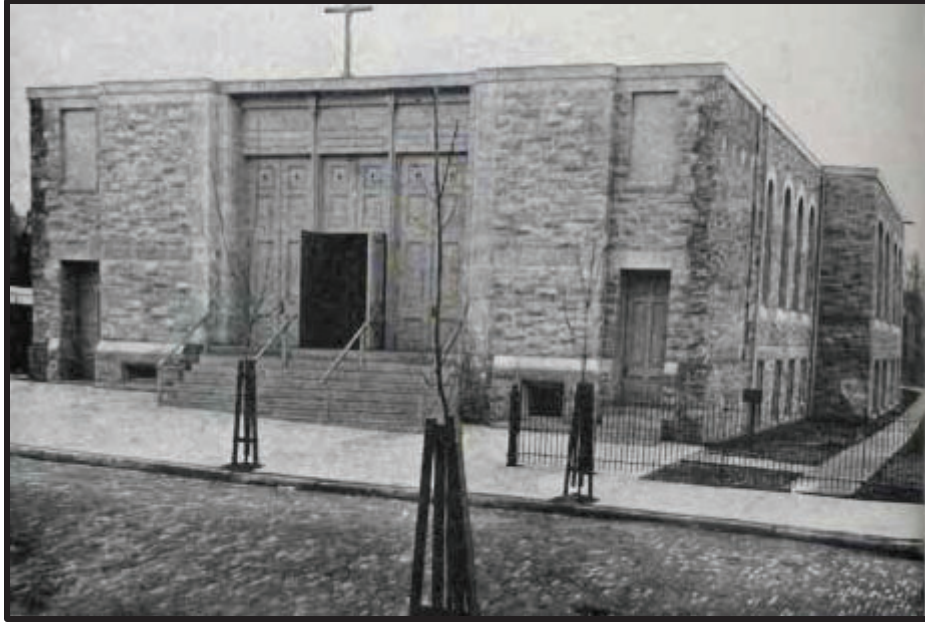


Figure 19. The basement and first floor of the parish school building, ca. 1910. Source: *St. Francis of Assisi, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania*. (White Plains, New York: Monarch Publishing, Inc., 1974). Source: CHCR.

In 1900, the subject site, known as “the Schumacher property,” was purchased to accommodate the Parish’s future church, school, etc.<sup>2</sup> The parish first began constructing the school building (on the site of the existing school building). By October of 1900, the basement and first floor were completed which contained classrooms and a chapel. In the following years, funds were raised for the construction of the new Church and Rectory.<sup>3</sup> In 1909, Edwin F. Durang & Son Architects were commissioned to design the basement and first story of the new church and the three-story rectory, while builder John McShain began construction in late 1909 or early 1910. On October 16, 1910, Father Nevin dedicated this first portion of the Church, thereafter known as the “Basement Chapel” by parishioners.<sup>4</sup> The Rectory was also built at this time; however, by 1917, this building was used as a convent for the Sisters of St. Joseph.<sup>5</sup> The Rectory is an important ancillary building that served the Parish for various purposes during the period of significance. By this time, the Parish offered a Roman Catholic education for all ages, including high school, under the direction of Mother St. Pierre, two sisters, and five lay teachers.

In 1923, Father Nevin “set his sights on the completion of the upper structure” of the Church to house the growing congregation, then numbering in the thousands of members. F. Ferdinand Durang, architect and son of Edwin Forrest Durang, was commissioned to design the upper

<sup>2</sup> *History of the Parish of St. Francis of Assisi, Germantown, Pennsylvania*. (Philadelphia: St. Francis of Assisi Parish, 1900). Source: CHCR; 10 January 1900, *Philadelphia Real Estate Record and Builders’ Guide (PRERBG)* 15, no. 2, p. 17.

<sup>3</sup> 31 January 1900, *PRERBG* 15, no. 5, p. 72; 14 March 1900, *PRERBG* 15, no. 11, p. 161.

<sup>4</sup> “Church Basement Dedicated,” Unknown Publication, October 1910. Source: Germantown Historical Society; “Pastor Dedicates Church Basement,” *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, 17 October 1910, 4; 17 February 1909, *PRERBG* 24, no. 7, p. 97; 11 August 1909, *PRERBG* 23, no. 32, p. 507; *Golden Jubilee: 1899-1949. St. Francis of Assisi Parish, 1949*. Pamphlet. CHCR.

<sup>5</sup> *History of St. Francis of Assisi Parish, Germantown, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania*. (Unpublished Manuscript, ca.1967). Source: CHCR.; and *St. Francis of Assisi, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania*. (White Plains, New York: Monarch Publishing, Inc., 1974). Source: CHCR.

structure in the Romanesque Revival style. It is possible that this design was completed as early as 1910; however, some sources state that the design was commissioned in 1920. In May 1924, Durang filed plans to erect the subject building with the Bureau of Building Inspection with a projected cost of \$274,000. The contract was awarded to D. W. O’Dea, contractor and builder, who operated at 420 Duncannon Street in Philadelphia. When construction began on the Church, there were twenty-three religious structures under erection in 1924 with an aggregate cost of \$2.5 million.<sup>6</sup> Construction appears to have been completed between May 1924 and the dedication in April 1928. Despite his long tenure with the Parish and his zeal for constructing the upper part of the church, Father Nevin was reassigned to a new parish in May 1926; however, he soon suffered a breakdown in health and retired.<sup>7</sup> He was replaced by Rev. Peter J. McGarrity, who administered the completion of the upper church for the Parish.<sup>8</sup> Father McGarrity was born in Carrickmore, County Tyrone, Ireland, and studied at St. Patrick’s Academy in Armagh and at Dublin. Afterwards, he went to Saint Charles Borromeo Seminary near Philadelphia, where he was ordained in 1905.<sup>9</sup>

Upon completion of the Church, the dedication included important leaders in the Archdiocese of Philadelphia, including the Very Right Rev. Joseph M. Corrigan, D.D., rector of the Seminary of Saint Charles Borromeo; Cardinal Dennis Joseph Dougherty; and Bishop Michael J. Crane. According to *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, the “new edifice is [was] one of the largest in the archdiocese...”<sup>10</sup> Newspapers estimated a total cost of \$500,000; however, this has not been corroborated by additional evidence. By that time, the Parish included the Church, the Rectory, and the adjacent School on the subject site; the Convent at 41 W. Logan Street; the Convent at 47-51 West Logan Street; and the Day Nursery at 4940 Germantown Avenue.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> “Church Building For Year is Record,” *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, 2 November 1924, 50; 21 May 1924, *PRERBG* 39, n 21, p. 326.

<sup>7</sup> *St. Francis of Assisi, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania*. (White Plains, New York: Monarch Publishing, Inc., 1974). Source: CHCR.; and “Rev. Jeremiah Nevin,” *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, 27 May 1928, 14.

<sup>8</sup> “Cardinal Assists At Church Opening,” Unknown Publication, 29 April 1928.

<sup>9</sup> “Father Nevin Transferred,” Unknown Publication, May 1926; “Philadelphia Churches Affected by Transfers,” *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, 22 May 1926, 15.

<sup>10</sup> “Declares Catholics Want Church Unity,” *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, 30 April 1928, 4.

<sup>11</sup> D.W. O’Dea to Rev. P. J. McGarrity. 1 July 1927. D. W. O’Dea, Contractor and Builder, Philadelphia. Source: CHCR.

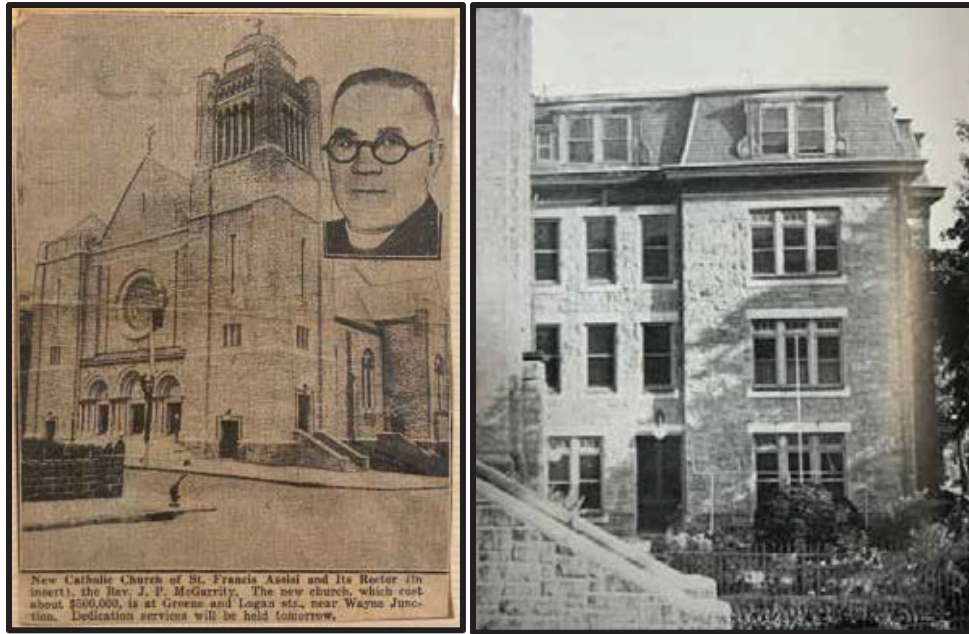
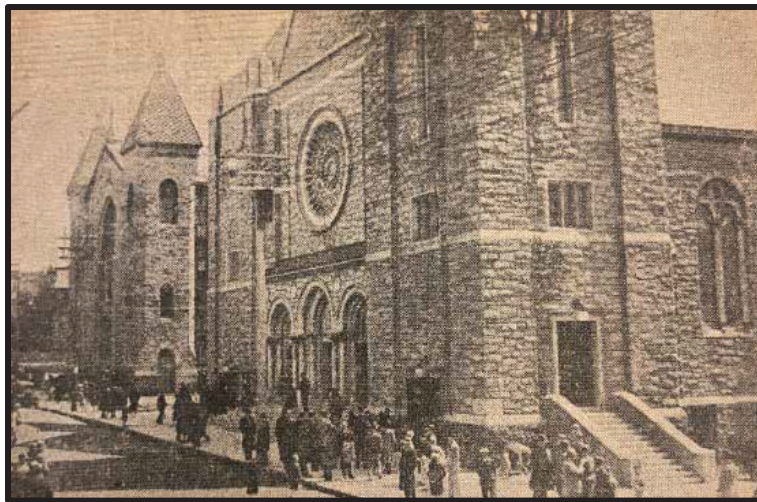


Figure 20. Left: A newspaper announcement for the dedication of the Church in 1928. Source: Unknown Publication, April 1928. Figure 21. Right: The northwest elevation of the Rectory. Source: CHCR.



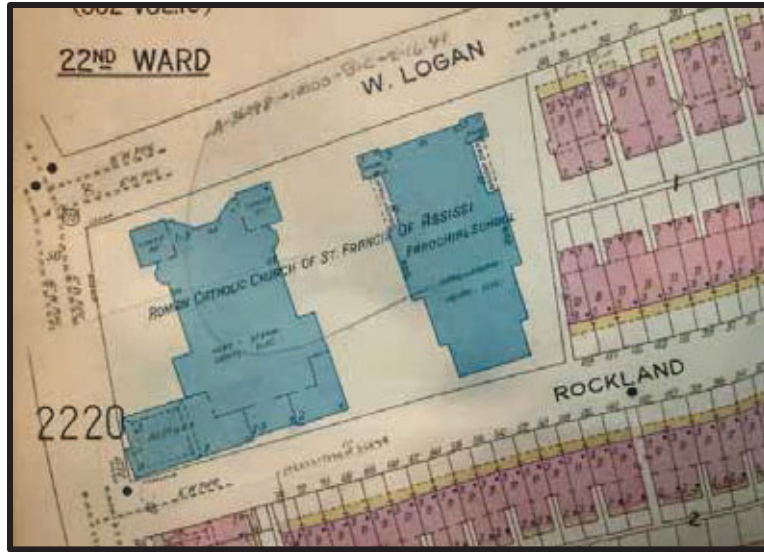


Figure 22. Top: Scene at the Dedication of the Church in 1928. Source: CHCR. Figure 23. Bottom: A real estate atlas showing the subject property as updated through 1935. Source: Keeping Society Collection.

The erection of the Church also included an extensive program of stained-glass windows that depicted the life of St. Francis of Assisi, which were custom-made by Edwin J. Sharkey of the Nicola D’Ascenzo Studios.<sup>12</sup> The interior featured elaborate finishes, including marble and woodwork. There was also a program of murals and other features dedicated to the life of St. Francis of Assisi, including an “exquisite painting, [also] executed by D’Ascenzo Studios, of St. Francis of Assisi receiving the stigmata from the crucified Christ.”<sup>13</sup> All the windows have been removed, as well as the interior details; however, the extensive efforts to create this incredible church interior demonstrate the historic importance of the congregation.

<sup>12</sup> Pamphlet: *Church of St. Francis of Assisi, Germantown, PA, 1899-1999*. (Philadelphia: St. Francis of Assisi Parish, 3 October 1999).

<sup>13</sup> Sister Consuelo Maria Aherne, SSJ. *St. Francis Parish, Father Jeremiah D. Nevin*. (Philadelphia: Unpublished Manuscript, n.d.).



Figure 24. Leaders and members of the Parish are seen here in front of the Church. Source: CHCR.

### **CRITERION J**

The Church and Rectory of St. Francis of Assisi is significant under Criterion J for the sustained and profound importance to the religious, social, educational, and cultural life of Germantown and Northwest Philadelphia. Founded at the turn of the twentieth century during a period of rapid Catholic expansion, the parish emerged as one of the principal Irish American Catholic institutions in the Germantown and Wayne Junction areas. Though not formally designated a national parish, St. Francis functioned in practice as a distinctly Irish parish in its early decades, shaped by Irish clergy, Irish devotional culture, and a largely Irish immigrant and second-generation congregation.

At a moment when Irish Catholics were consolidating institutional strength in Philadelphia, St. Francis of Assisi embodied that ascent through its ambitious building campaigns, expansive parochial school system, and highly organized Parish societies. The Parish offered not merely sacramental life but also cultural continuity, social mobility, and educational advancement for Irish immigrant families and their descendants. Its growth from a basement chapel to a monumental upper church demonstrates the Parish's development to become one of the largest in the Archdiocese. It ultimately encompassed nearly 3,000 families and approximately 1,200 pupils.<sup>14</sup> Through the Great Depression and World War II—when nearly nine hundred parishioners entered military service—the church functioned as a stabilizing civic and spiritual anchor. The parish's successful retirement of construction debt in 1945 further demonstrates the disciplined collective effort characteristic of upwardly mobile Irish Catholic communities of the era.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> *History of St. Francis of Assisi Parish, Germantown, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania*. (Unpublished Manuscript, ca.1967). Source: CHCR.

<sup>15</sup> Pamphlet: *Golden Jubilee: 1899-1949. St. Francis of Assisi Parish, 1949*. Source: CHCR.



Figure 25. Top: The Parish and the interior of the Church, ca. 1940-50.; and Figure 26. Bottom: The St. Francis of Assisi Choir in 1936. Source: CRCR.

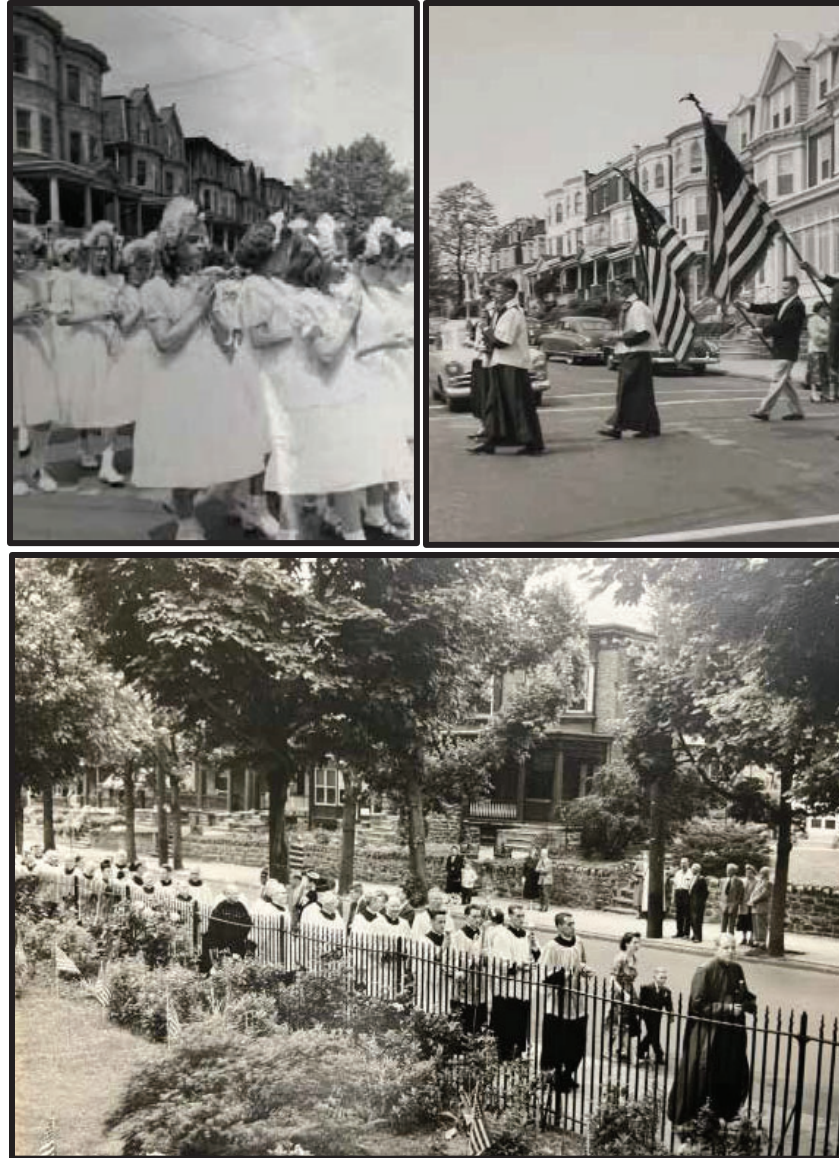


Figure 27., Figure 28., and Figure 29. Religious ceremony in the immediate neighborhood of the church, ca. 1940-50. Source: CHCR.

As Germantown's demographic composition changed in the mid-twentieth century, the parish remained an institutional constant, even as its ethnic composition evolved.<sup>16</sup> Its significance rests not only in its architecture, but in its central role as a foundational Irish Catholic community institution that helped define the religious and social identity of this section of Philadelphia for more than half a century.

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<sup>16</sup> *History of St. Francis of Assisi Parish, Germantown, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.* (Unpublished Manuscript, ca.1967). Source: CHCR.



Figure 30. Left: F. Ferdinand Durang as a child in 1886. Source: Mary Lou Newborg, via Ancestry.com. Figure 31. Middle: F. Ferdinand Durang. Source: *Who's who in Philadelphia at the time of the sesquicentennial, 1776-1926*. Figure 32. Right: F. Ferdinand Durang at St. Joseph's University in 1926-27. Source: St. Joseph's University.

### CRITERION E

The Church of St. Francis of Assisi is a significant ecclesiastical and institutional design that is representative of the life and career of Francis Ferdinand Durang, Sr. (1884–1966), an American architect whose work influenced the City of Philadelphia and the Mid-Atlantic region. F. Ferdinand Durang was an important architect whose career represents the continuation and evolution of one of Philadelphia's most significant architectural dynasties associated with Roman Catholic ecclesiastical design. Born in Philadelphia, he was the son of the prominent church architect Edwin Forrest Durang (1826-1911), whose prolific nineteenth-century practice established a significant professional legacy within the region. F. Ferdinand Durang was educated at the Notre Dame Academy in Philadelphia, the Collegiate Military Academy, and the Drexel Institute, with supplemental courses at the Pennsylvania Museum and School of Industrial Art.<sup>17</sup> He ultimately joined his father's firm in November 1909, at which time the practice became Edwin F. Durang & Son.<sup>18</sup> After his father died in 1911, he continued the office under his own name, sustaining the firm's long-standing role in designing churches, schools (Figure 32), convents, and other institutional buildings (Figure 33) for Catholic congregations throughout Pennsylvania, New Jersey, New York, and beyond.<sup>19</sup>



Figure 33. A view of the Waldron Academy in Merion, Pennsylvania. Source: *The American Architect*, May 1926.

<sup>17</sup> Sandra L. Tatman, Ph.D. "Durang, Francis Ferdinand, Sr., 1884-1966," *Philadelphia Architects and Buildings*, Athenaeum of Philadelphia.

<sup>18</sup> "E.F. Durang Dead; Daughter Marries," *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, 13 June 1911, 1.

<sup>19</sup> *Who's who in Philadelphia at the time of the sesquicentennial, 1776-1926*.



Figure 34. Misericordia Hospital in West Philadelphia, designed by F. Ferdinand Durang. Source: *The Architectural Forum*, February 1921.

Durang's significance lies in his leadership of this specialized architectural practice during the 1910s, 1920s, and 1930s, a period when the Catholic Church was rapidly expanding its presence in American cities. Many of his commissions continued the tradition established by his father, employing revivalist styles—particularly Gothic and other historicist idioms—that were popular for church architecture during that time. Through these projects, he extended the influence of the Durang firm well into the twentieth century, designing and completing numerous churches, chapels, and educational buildings (Figure 32) linked to Catholic institutions. Notable works include Barbelin Hall at St. Joseph's University (1927), buildings at Mercyhurst University (ca. 1926) in Erie, Pennsylvania, and commissions for Mercy Hall (ca. 1924) at College Misericordia in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, which demonstrate the geographic reach and importance of his work within Catholic educational architecture. F. Ferdinand Durang also designed many parish churches, including the subject building. In fact, in 1924, St. Francis of Assisi was said to be the largest church built among twenty-four houses of worship being built across the city. Generally, during the 1920s, he designed numerous impressive Catholic churches following a similar plan to St. Francis of Assisi, though the style and material composition varied. Examples of F. Ferdinand Durang's work include St. Donato Roman Catholic Church (c. 1920-21) in Overbrook; St. Clare's Roman Catholic Church (ca. 1921-22) at Collegeville, Pennsylvania; the Church of the Incarnation of Our Lord (1923-24) at Fifth Street and Lindley Avenue in Olney; the Resurrection of Our Lord Roman Catholic Church (c. 1925) in northeast Philadelphia; the Church of Corpus Christi (1927) at Twenty-ninth Street and West Allegheny Avenue in Allegheny West; and St. Joseph's Roman Catholic Church in Onedia, New York.<sup>20</sup> This reflects the firm's lasting legacy and F. Ferdinand

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<sup>20</sup> *The Catholic Standard and Times*, 4 June 1921.; "Will Lay Corner-Stone of New Italian Church," *The Catholic Standard and Times*, 6 August 1921.; "Corner-Stone To Be Laid of Incarnation Church," *The Catholic Standard and Times*, 12 May 1923; "Will Solemnly Dedicate New Church in Olney," *The Catholic Standard and Times*, 25 October 1924; "Corner-Stone Laid of Corpus Cristi New Parish Church," *The Catholic Standard and Times*, 2 July 1927

Durang's versatility in designing large institutional structures to meet his clients' needs, creating modern buildings of stone and steel, yet within the context of historicist styles.



Figure 35. Top: Joseph C. Trainer, F. Ferdinand Durang, Albert G. Brown, St. Joseph's College President in 1927. Source: St. Joseph's University. Figure 36. Bottom: View of Barbelin Hall at St. Joseph's University in 1926-27. Source: St. Joseph's University.



Figure 37. Left: St. Donato Roman Catholic Church (c.1920-21) in Overbrook. Figure 38. Right: Church of the Incarnation of Our Lord (1923-24) at Fifth Street and Lindley Avenue. Source: Google.

Beyond his architectural commissions, Durang contributed to the professional culture of architecture during the mid-twentieth century. After relocating to New Jersey in the 1940s, he founded and published *Architects' Exchange*, a quarterly professional periodical that facilitated dialogue within the architectural community. Durang remained active in the profession for decades, eventually achieving emeritus status in the American Institute of Architects in 1957.<sup>21</sup> Through both his built work and his professional engagement, Francis Ferdinand Durang, Sr. played a key role in advancing a major ecclesiastical architectural practice into the twentieth century and represents an important figure in the continuity of Catholic institutional architecture in Philadelphia and the larger Mid-Atlantic region. The subject building is a particularly important specimen of his larger oeuvre, satisfying Criterion E.

F. FERDINAND DURANG, ARCHT.		100 SOUTH STREET PHILADELPHIA	
OFFICE OF CH. FRANKLIN DE FELICE, OWNER & N. LINDLEY AVENUE, 1922.			
F. F. DURANG'S CONTRACTS -			
Building of 700 sq. ft. at corner of Belmont Street			\$1,000.00
22 N. Logan Street (Little Flower Church)			\$2,000.00
Plan job - 2700-31 N. Logan Street			\$1,000.00
15 N. Logan Street - new High School			\$1,000.00
1800 Chestnut Street -			\$100.00
100 N. Logan Street			\$100.00
			\$100,000.00
Balance	Sept. 1, 1925	\$1,000.00	
	Dec. 31, 1925	1,000.00	
	Mar. 31, 1926	1,000.00	
	Jun. 30, 1926	1,000.00	
			\$117,000.00
Paid in account of above work:			
Insurance during on time job	12,000.00		
	1,000.00		
	1,000.00		
Site - 2000 N. 13th	1,000.00		
Site - 2000 N. 13th	1,000.00		
Materials on property used	1,000.00		
Wages for High School Project	1,000.00		
Site on Mar. 1, 1926	1,000.00		
			\$10,000.00
Balance For Month Account		\$10,000.00	
Balance carried on account		\$10,000.00	
			\$10,000.00

Figure 39. A statement of accounts from the Architectural Office of F. Ferdinand Durang, ca.1926. Source: CHCR.

<sup>21</sup> Sandra L. Tatman, Ph.D. "Durang, Francis Ferdinand, Sr., 1884-1966," Philadelphia Architects and Buildings, Athenaeum of Philadelphia.



Figure 40. The primary (northwest) and side (southwest) elevations in ca. 1945. Source: CHCR.

#### **CRITERION D**

The Church of St. Francis of Assisi is a distinguished example of the Romanesque Revival style, as articulated in the context of ecclesiastical Catholic architecture of the 1920s. Romanesque Revival church architecture in the interwar years represents a late but meaningful continuation of a style that had gained prominence in the late nineteenth century, adapted to suit modern building techniques and evolving liturgical needs. Characterized by its use of round arches, massive masonry walls—often in stone or brick—deeply recessed openings, and prominent towers or campaniles, the style conveyed a sense of permanence, gravity, and historical continuity that appealed to growing urban congregations in the early twentieth century.<sup>22</sup> In the 1920s, architects often simplified earlier precedents, incorporating more restrained ornament, clearer geometric massing, and occasionally blending Romanesque forms with elements of other revival styles, such as Gothic or Byzantine influences.<sup>23</sup> Advances in structural systems, including steel framing, allowed for larger interior spans while maintaining the heavy, fortress-like exterior appearance. These churches frequently served expanding Catholic and Protestant communities in rapidly developing neighborhoods, where their imposing forms and textured materials reinforced both spiritual authority and neighborhood identity within the broader context of early twentieth-century suburban and urban growth.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> Virginia Savage McAlester. *A Field Guide to American Houses*. Revised ed., Alfred A. Knopf, 2013.; and Leland M. Roth and Amanda C. Roth Clark. *American Architecture: A History*. 3rd ed., Westview Press, 2018.

<sup>23</sup> Dell Upton. *Architecture in the United States*. Oxford University Press, 1998.

<sup>24</sup> David Gebhard. *The Architecture of the United States: A Survey of American Architecture from Colonial Times to the Present*. Thames & Hudson, 1985.

In the subject building, the Romanesque Revival style is expressed through monumental massing, restrained ornament, and reliance on characteristic medieval forms. The primary (northwest) elevation is dominated by a large central rose window, set within a deeply recessed round arch, a hallmark of Romanesque composition that emphasizes solidity and depth. Below, the triple-arched entrance portal—with heavy, rounded archivolts and clustered columns—creates a rhythmic and hierarchical entry sequence typical of the style. The use of rusticated granite reinforces the sense of weight and permanence associated with Romanesque precedents, while the relatively planar wall surfaces reflect twentieth-century simplification. Flanking the façade, the square form of the west tower with round-arched openings and minimal ornament evokes the fortress-like campaniles of medieval Europe, yet its crisp geometry and reduced detailing suggest modern construction sensibilities. Overall, the building demonstrates how Romanesque Revival forms—round arches, thick walls, and sculptural massing—were adapted in the 1920s into a more disciplined and monumental expression suited to an urban ecclesiastical setting.

The side (northeast and southwest) elevations further reinforce the building’s Romanesque Revival character through its emphasis on mass, rhythm, and restrained detailing. The long walls of the nave are both articulated by a series of round-arched window openings, which create a steady visual cadence while maintaining the thick, load-bearing appearance typical of the style. These openings are set deep within the wall plane, accentuating the sense of solidity and shadow that is central to Romanesque design. The buttress-like vertical piers dividing the bays are broad and only slightly projecting, suggesting structural support while avoiding the more elaborate articulation of earlier nineteenth-century examples. The continuation of rock-faced stone masonry unifies the composition, while the relatively unornamented wall surfaces reflect the simplified aesthetic common in 1920s interpretations. The west tower’s verticality contrasts with the horizontal sweep of the nave, yet both elements share the same vocabulary of rounded openings and minimal ornament, demonstrating how traditional Romanesque forms were adapted into a cohesive, modern ecclesiastical composition.

The subject building is a distinctive example of the Romanesque Revival style, as articulated in the Roman Catholic context of Philadelphia in the 1920s, satisfying Criterion D.



Figure 41. The northeast elevation of the Church. Source: CHCR.

## 7. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHIC SOURCES

This nomination was authored by Oscar Beisert, Architectural Historian, with the Keeping Society of Philadelphia, on behalf of SoLo/Germantown Civic Association.

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