

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

FOR NPS USE ONLY
RECEIVED MAY 3 1982
DATE ENTERED JUN 3 1982

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

1 NAME

HISTORIC Church Missions House

AND/OR COMMON

Protestant Welfare Agencies Building

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER 281 Park Avenue South

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

New York

VICINITY OF

18

STATE

New York

CODE

036

COUNTY

New York

CODE

061

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE
<input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	PUBLIC ACQUISITION	ACCESSIBLE	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY
			<input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
			<input type="checkbox"/> PARK
			<input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
			<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
			<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
			<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER:

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME Federation of Protestant Welfare Agencies

STREET & NUMBER 281 Park Avenue South

CITY, TOWN

New York

VICINITY OF

STATE

New York

10010

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC. New York County Register's Office

STREET & NUMBER 31 Chambers Street

CITY, TOWN

New York

STATE

New York

10007

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE Landmarks Preservation Commission (LP-1044)

has this property been determined eligible? NO

DATE

September 11, 1979

FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS

New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission 20 Vesey Street

CITY, TOWN

New York

STATE

New York

10007

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		DATE <u>NA</u>

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Church Missions House takes its form from the great Medieval and Renaissance town halls and guild halls of Belgium and Holland.¹ Prominently occupying the entire nominated site at the southeast corner of Park Avenue South and 22nd Street, the Church Missions House extends 80 feet on the avenue and 70 feet on the street. Although flanked by a church (already listed on the National Register as part of the Gramercy Park Historic District) to the south and a twentieth-century apartment building to the east, the surrounding neighborhood is composed predominantly of twentieth-century commercial office and loft structures. Rising six stories to a picturesque, steeply pitched hipped roof and framed in steel, with terra-cotta and brick fireproofing, the building is sheathed on the ground floor by rock-faced granite and in the stories above by finely textured Indiana limestone. Although unexposed, the rectilinear framework plays an important role in the overall composition of the structure. The cube-like mass, which is bound at each corner by a decorative tourelle, is regularly divided by clustered columns which emphasize the strong vertical members joined together horizontally by panelled spandrels below the windows. The main entrance on Park Avenue South is emphasized by a central porch in the form of a pedimented archway. The tympanum of the porch is set with a bas-relief (photo 2) adapted from Hofmann's "Christus Consolator," which depicts Christ blessing the sick and the spandrels of the entrance arch are filled with foliate carving reminiscent of sixteenth-century prototypes. Above the large rectilinear storefront windows on the ground floor rests a broad, delicate arcade which originally called attention to the main offices and rooms of the Domestic and Foreign Missionary Society. Here too the spandrels are filled with foliate carving. Two stories of small-scaled rectilinear windows support a round-arched sequence of openings reminiscent of a medieval triforium below the eaves. A wide gabled central dormer ornamented with foliate carving and surmounted by a stone cross is flanked by two smaller dormers. Eyebrow windows and conventional skylights pierce the tile-covered roof, which is capped with copper cresting. The 22nd Street front, although asymmetrically weighted on the east, is handled in similar manner. The remaining two sides of the building are party walls, shared with the adjoining Calvary P.E. Church on Park Avenue South and the Gramercy Arms on East 22nd Street. The interior of the Church Missions House has been largely altered.

¹The text of this report was taken almost in its entirety from the New York Landmarks Preservation Commission Designation Report, Church Missions House/nw Protestant Welfare Agencies Building (LP-1044), September 11, 1979, by Ruth Selden-Sturgill.

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

ACREAGE NOT VERIFIED
UTM NOT VERIFIED

Landmarks Preservation Commission . Church Missions House/now Protestant Welfare Agencies Building (LP-1044), by Ruth Selden-Sturgill. New York: City of New York, 1979.
Austin, Texas. Historical Society of the Episcopal Church. Domestic and Foreign Missionary Society of the Episcopal Church. Papers. (cont'd)

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY less than 1 acre

UTM REFERENCES Quadrangle name: Brooklyn, N.Y. Quadrangle scale: 1:24,000

A	1,8	5,8,5	5,2,0	4,5,1,0	1,0,0	B					
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING				ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		
C						D					

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

Building occupies Borough of Manhattan Tax Map Block 877 Lot 89 which is 70' long on East 22nd Street and 80' long on Park Avenue South, at the southeast corner of their intersection, as outlined on the attached map.

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
NA			
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Anthony W. Robins

ORGANIZATION

Landmarks Preservation Commission

20 Vesey St.

CITY OR TOWN

New York

contact: Anne B. Covell

N.Y.S. Division for Historic Preservation 518-474-0479

DATE

February 1981

TELEPHONE

212-566-7577

STATE

New York

12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL ___ STATE ___ LOCAL x

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

TITLE

Commissioner

Orin Lehman

DATE

4/9/82

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

Entered in the National Register

DATE

6/3/82

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

ATTEST

DATE

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

For HCRS use only

received

date entered

Continuation sheet Church Missions House

Item number 8

Page 2

New York County, New York

the building as executed. In the spring of 1892, J. Pierpont Morgan purchased adjacent property and presented it to the Missions Society.⁴ Plans for a larger building with an 80-foot front were prepared by Stent and Gibson, who became associated on this project at the request of the building committee.⁵

How much each architect contributed to the final design is unclear. By 1892 Gibson had clearly established his reputation in New York State as an Episcopal Church architect. Born in Essex, England in 1851, and trained at the Royal Academy of Arts,⁶ Gibson came to the United States in 1880 and established an architectural practice in Albany, New York. There he entered the celebrated competition for the design of the Episcopal Cathedral. His design was selected over that of Henry Hobson Richardson. Religious structures seemed to be his particular specialty, and he designed Episcopal churches in Rochester, Olean, Ossining, Gloversville, Corning and Mechanicsville, New York. In 1888 Gibson moved to New York City, and during the four years prior to his design of the Church Missions House, he was awarded about ten important commissions in the city. Edward J.N. Stent is listed variously in New York City directories as an artist, architect, and decorator. In 1889, when Stent executed the first design for the Church Missions House, he was still listed in the directories as a decorator, but by 1892 he appears once again as an architect, who advertised "the interior decorations of churches (as) a specialty."⁷

With these facts in mind it appears that the more sophisticated Northern European-derived exterior design of the Church Missions House owes much of its success to Gibson.⁸ He was one of the few American architects during the 1890's to take his inspiration from Northern European prototypes. Described in the contemporary press as a "structure of the Flemish style,"⁹ the Church Missions House was joined by Gibson's West End Collegiate Church and School which Gibson described as having been "inspired generally by market buildings in Haarlem and Amsterdam."¹⁰ In addition, the correspondence of the building committee reveals that Gibson signed most of the correspondence with the major contractors and Gibson's office address is given on the architects' joint letterhead; Stent's name appears more often relating to the elaborate interior.

The use of steel-frame construction for this building as early as 1892 in New York City is of particular interest. Three inventions have been singled out in the development of the skyscraper: the elevator, the self-supporting metal frame, and fire-proofing.¹¹ New York led the country in the 1870's with its array of unusually tall buildings serviced by elevators, but Chicago took the lead in the development of the internal skeleton and the curtain wall. It was the change from iron to steel-frame construction that led to the spectacular structural feats of the twentieth century. Because of the high cost of steel, cast and wrought iron served as the early framing materials, but the drop in price of steel during the 1890's encouraged its general use. Steel had been used in Chicago as early as 1884 but did not establish itself in New York until 1894 when Bruce Price used it for his 20-story American Surety Building.¹² Two years before Price's American Surety Building, however, the Church Missions House, although only six stories high, exhibited all the technological components of the newly developing style: steel cage construction, curtain walls, terra-cotta fireproofing and an elevator. In addition, the Church Missions House pointed the way to a newly developing aesthetic.

While the stark skeletal frame of the skyscraper has become a much admired design feature of the twentieth century, it was regarded with far less enthusiasm by the nineteenth-century public. About 1890 there developed a greater

United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

For HCERS use only

received

date entered

Continuation sheet Church Missions House

Item number 8

Page 3

New York County, New York

demand for an architecture which was not only functional but which reflected the rich ornamental design tradition of the Continent. At this time the russet tones of the Romanesque style which prevailed in America during the 1880's gave way to the "chalky coloration of Paris" soon to be promoted at the Chicago Columbian Exposition of 1893.¹³ Irrespective of its modest scale, the Church Missions House is an important and early indicator of the subsequent direction of modern architecture.¹⁴ Not only did the building exhibit the most up-to-date technological inventions, but it also was a very early example of the use of the "pale Gothic wrap" which came to be popularized in such academically conceived skyscrapers of the twentieth century as the famed Woolworth Building (1911-13).¹⁵

FOOTNOTES

1. Julia C. Emery, A Century of Endeavor: 1821-1921 A Record of the First Hundred Years of the Domestic and Foreign Missionary Society of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States of America (New York: The Department of Missions, 1921), p. 351.
2. Ibid., p. 72.
3. Ibid., P. 372.
4. The Churchman, September 24, 1892, p.370.
5. Edward J.N. Stent to Rev. William S. Langford, April 5, 1892, Domestic and Foreign Missionary Society Papers.
6. Cornelia Brooke Gilder, ed., Albany Architects: The Present Looks at the Past (Albany, N.Y.: Historic Albany Foundation, 1978), p.10.
7. The Churchman, October 8, 1892, p. 436.
8. The Churchman, September 24, 1892, p. 370.
9. The Churchman, September 24, 1892, p. 369.
10. Jean Parker Waterbury, A History of Collegiate School, 1638-1963 (New York: Clarkson N. Potter, Inc., 1963), p. 116.
11. William H. Jordy, American Buildings and Their Architects: Progressive Ideals at the Turn of the Twentieth Century (Garden City, New York: Doubleday & Co. Inc., 1972), p.2 .
12. Carl W. Condit, American Building (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1969), p. 119.
13. Jordy, p. 57 .

**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

For HCRS use only
received
date entered

Continuation sheet Church Missions House

Item number 8

Page 4

New York County, New York

FOOTNOTES

14. Alan Burnham, ed., New York Landmarks (Middletown, Connecticut: Wesleyan University Press, 1963), p. 174.
15. Jordy, p. 57.

**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

For HCERS use only
received
date entered

Continuation sheet

Church Missions House

Item number 9

Page 2

New York County, New York

The Churchman, September 24, 1892, p. 369; October 1, 1892, p. 395; October 8, 1892 p. 430; December 17, 1892, p. 821; February 3, 1894, p. 136.

Condit, Carl W. American Building. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1969.

Emery, Julia C. A Century of Endeavor: 1821-1921 A Record of the First Hundred Years of the Domestic and Foreign Missionary Society of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States of America. New York: The Department of Missions, 1921.

Gilder, Cornelia Brooke, ed. Albany Architects: The Present Looks at the Past. Albany, N.Y.: Historic Albany Foundation, 1978.

Jordy, William H. American Buildings and Their Architects: Progressive Ideals at the Turn of the Twentieth Century. Garden City, New York: Doubleday & Co. Inc., 1972.

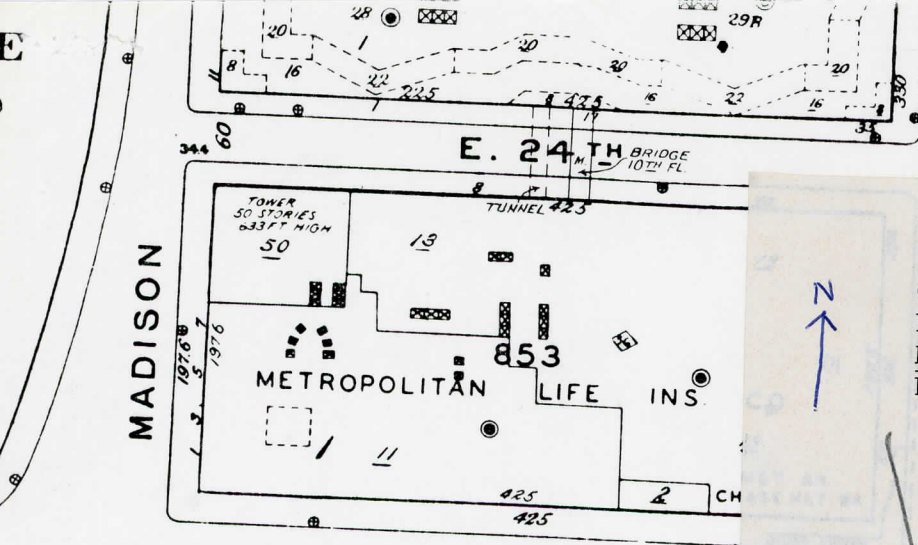
New York Times, July 10, 1893, p. 9; January 26, 1894, p.5.

The Spirit of Missions, 54 (1889), pp. 453, 458; 57 (1892), p. 416; 58 (1893), p.297; 59 (1894), p.1.

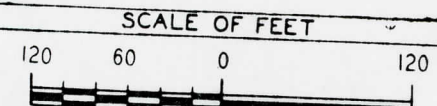
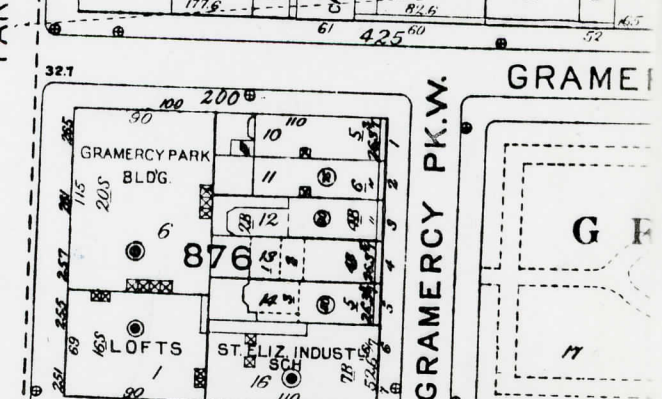
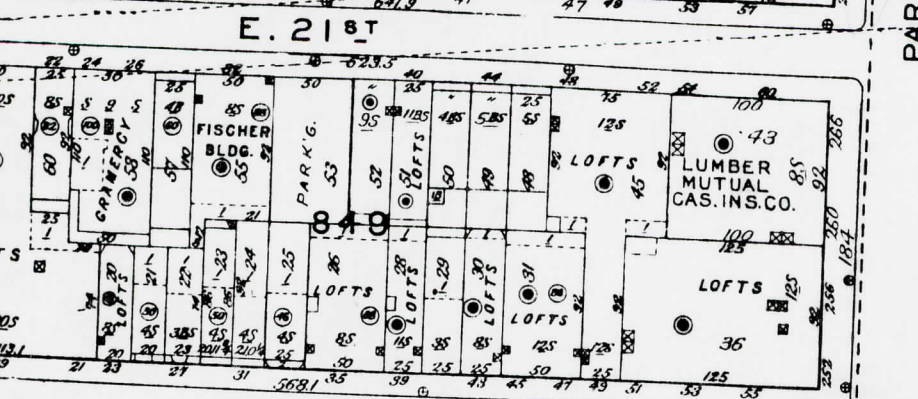
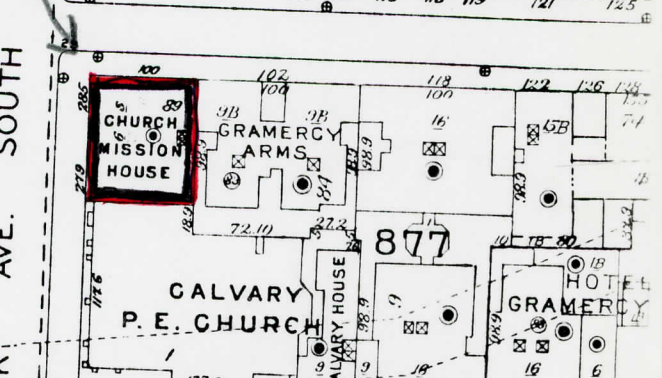
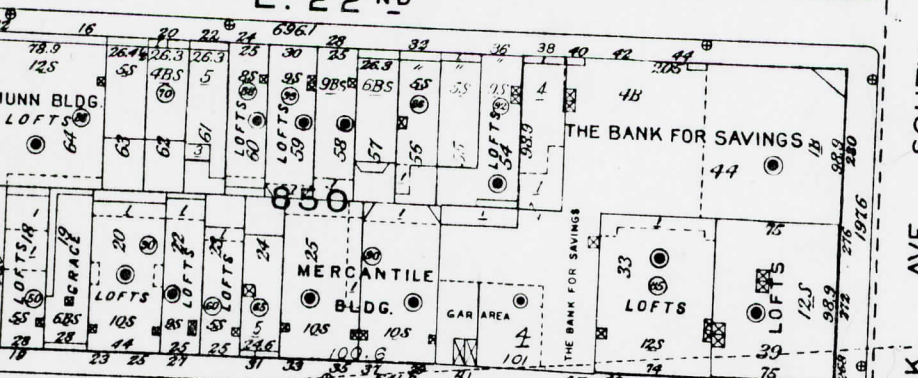
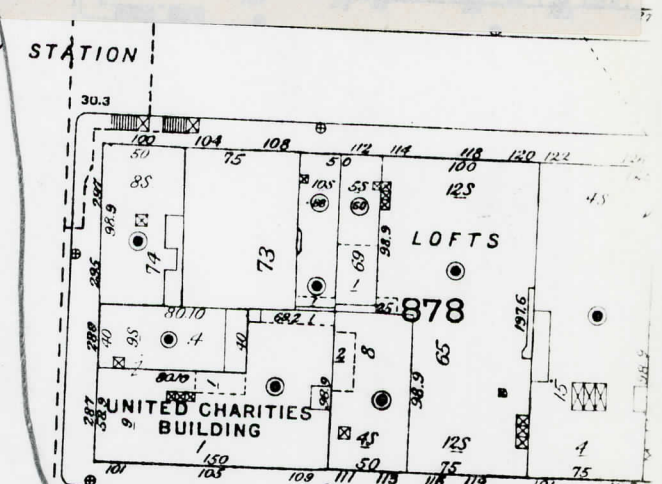
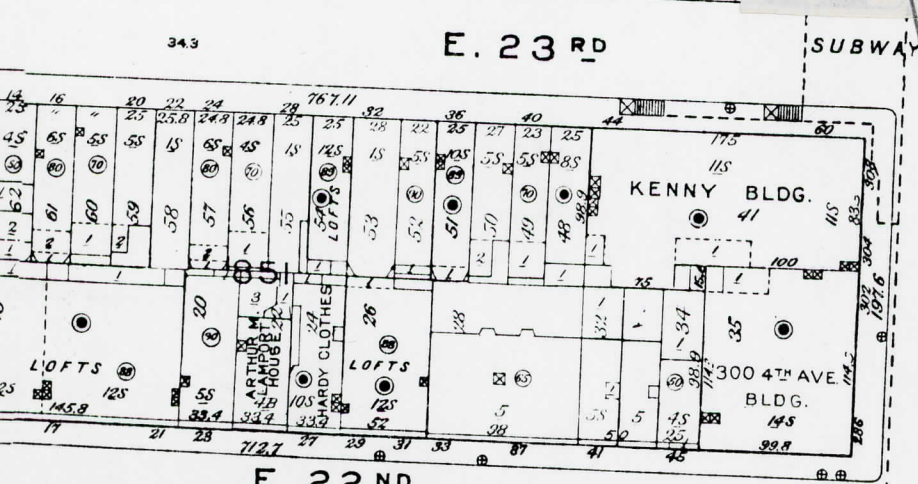
Stokes. I.N. Phelps. Iconography of Manhattan Island, vol. 5. New York: Robert H. Dodd, 1926.

Waterbury, Jean Parker. A History of Collegiate School, 1638-1963. New York: Clarkson N. Potter, Inc., 1963.

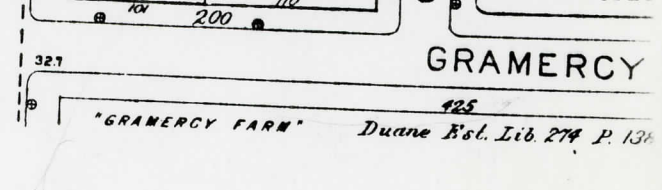
Woman's Cathedral League, Albany, New York. Historical and Architectural Guide to the Cathedral of All Saints, Albany. Albany, N.Y.: 1889.



CHURCH MISSIONS HOUSE
 New York County, New York
 Manhattan Land Book, Plate 50
 New York: Sanborn Map Company, 1981



COPYRIGHT SANBORN MAP COMPANY, INC.



EVALUATION / RETURN SHEET

Property: Church Missions House
State, County: NY, New York
Federal Agency: _____

Working No. 5/3/82-1312
Fed. Reg. Date: FEB 1 1983
Date Due: 6/3/82 - 6/17/82

Action: ACCEPT 6/3/82
 RETURN _____
 REJECT _____
Entered in the National Register _____
photos _____
maps _____

- resubmission
- nomination by person or local government
- owner objection
- appeal

Substantive Review: sample request appeal NR decision

Reviewer's comments:

Recom. / Criteria _____
Reviewer _____
Discipline _____
Date _____
 see continuation sheet

Nomination returned for: technical corrections cited below
 substantive reasons discussed below

1. Name

2. Location

3. Classification

Category _____ Ownership _____ Status _____ Present Use _____
Public Acquisition _____ Accessible _____

4. Owner of Property

5. Location of Legal Description

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

has this property been determined eligible? yes no

7. Description

Condition _____
 excellent deteriorated good ruins fair unexposed
Check one unaltered altered
Check one original site moved date _____

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

- summary paragraph
- completeness
- clarity
- alterations/integrity
- dates
- boundary selection

for NPS use only

8. Significance

Period _____ Area of Significance—Check and justify below

Specific dates _____ Builder/Architect _____

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

- _____ summary paragraph
- _____ completeness
- _____ clarity
- _____ applicable criteria
- _____ justification of areas checked
- _____ relating significance to the resource
- _____ context
- _____ relationship of integrity to significance
- _____ justification of exception
- _____ other

9. Major Bibliographical References

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property _____

Quadrangle name _____

UNIT References _____

Verbal boundary description and justification _____

11. Form Prepared By

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

_____ national _____ state _____ local

State Historic Preservation Officer signature _____

Site _____

date _____

13. Other

- _____ Maps
- _____ Photographs
- _____ Other

Questions concerning this nomination may be directed to _____

Signed _____ Date _____ Phone: 202 272-35

Comments for any item may be continued on an attached sheet



1. CHURCH MISSIONS HOUSE
New York County, New York

Photo: Michael Stein, 1979
Neg. at: New York Landmarks
Preservation Commission

View from northwest



2. CHURCH MISSIONS HOUSE
New York County, New York

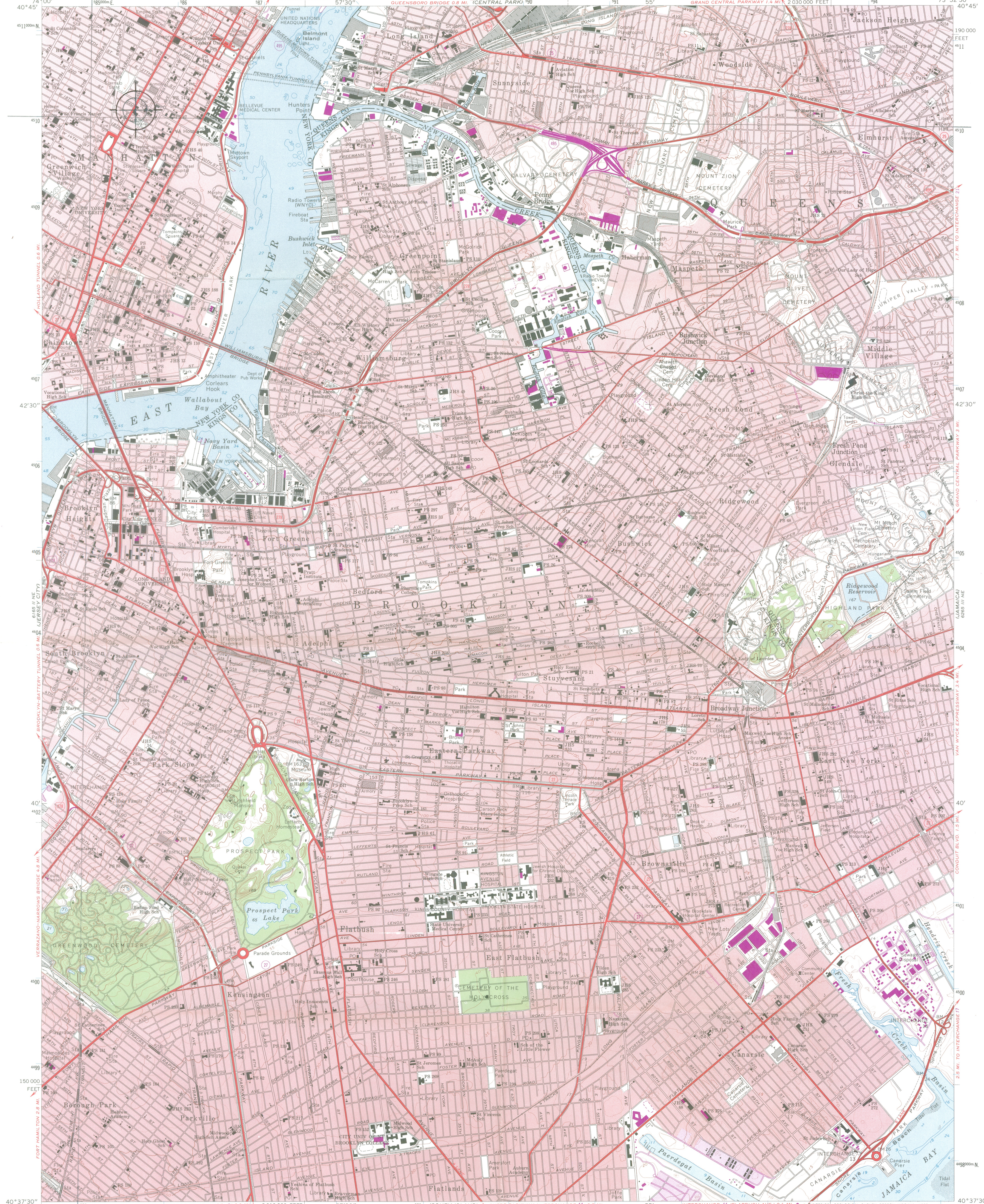
Photo: Michael Stein, 1979

Neg. at: New York Landmarks
Preservation Commission

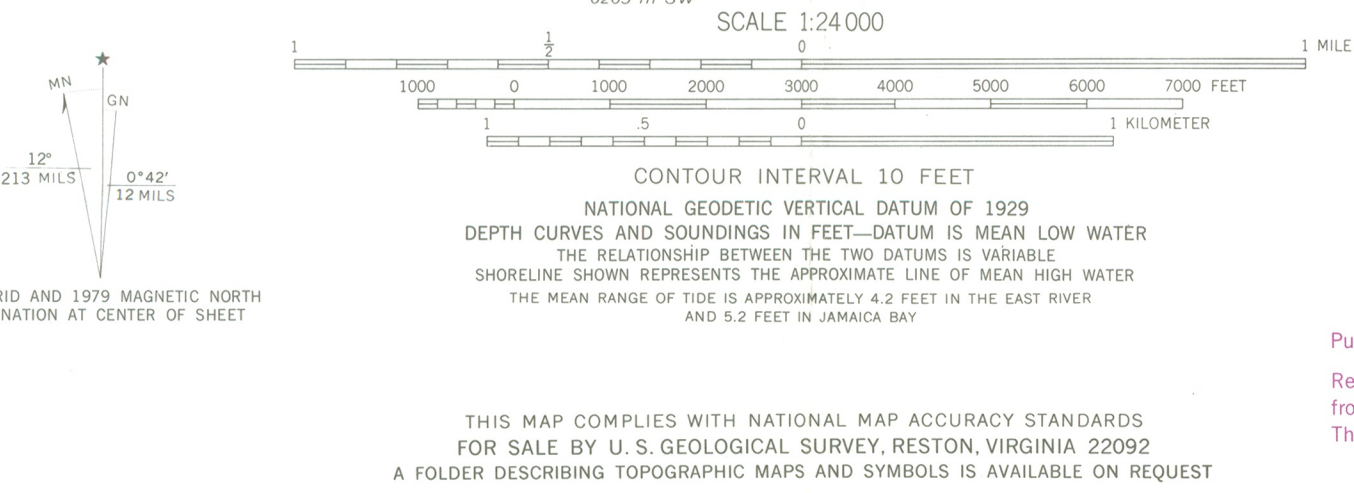
View from west, entrance



Church Missions House
New York County, New York
UTM Reference:
18 585520 451040
Brooklyn, N.Y. Quadrangle



Mapped, edited, and published by the Geological Survey
Revised in cooperation with New York Department of Transportation
Control by USGS, USC&GS, USCE, and City of New York Board of
Estimate and Apportionment
Planimetry by photogrammetric methods from aerial photographs
taken 1954, and from USC&GS Charts T-5094, T-5335, T-5454
T-5459, T-5460, and T-8449
Topography by planimetric methods from aerial photographs
taken 1954, and from USC&GS Charts T-5094, T-5335, T-5454
T-5459, T-5460, and T-8449
Selected hydrographic data compiled from USC&GS Charts
275 (1964), 542 (1967), and 745 (1966). This information is
not intended for navigational purposes
Polyconic projection. 1927 North American datum
10,000-foot grid based on New York coordinate system, Long Island zone
100-meter Universal Transverse Mercator grid ticks, zone 18, shown in blue
Red tint indicates areas in which only landmark buildings are shown
Entire area lies within New York City



ROAD CLASSIFICATION

- Heavy-duty
- Light-duty
- Unimproved dirt
- Interstate Route
- State Route

CONTOUR INTERVAL 10 FEET
NATIONAL GEODETIC VERTICAL DATUM OF 1929
DEPTH CURVES AND SOUNDINGS IN FEET—DATUM IS MEAN LOW WATER
THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE TWO DATUMS IS VARIABLE
SHORELINE SHOWN REPRESENTS THE APPROXIMATE LINE OF MEAN HIGH WATER
THE MEAN RANGE OF TIDE IS APPROXIMATELY 4.2 FEET IN THE EAST RIVER
AND 5.2 FEET IN JAMAICA BAY

QUADRANGLE LOCATION

BROOKLYN, N. Y.
N4037.5—W7352.5/7.5
1967
PHOTOREVISED 1979
AMS 6265 III NW—SERIES V821