

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 ON CD (MS WORD FORMAT)

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

Street address: 2640-42 and 2644-58 E. Huntingdon Street _____

Postal code: 19147 _____ Councilmanic District: 1 _____

2. NAME OF HISTORIC RESOURCE

Historic Name: Protestant Episcopal Church of the Messiah, Port Richmond _____

Common Name: Adriatic Hall _____

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: Vacant _____

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 1847 to 1848

Date(s) of construction and/or alteration: Constructed 1847-48 _____

Architect, engineer, and/or designer: John Notman _____

Builder, contractor, and/or artisan: Hiram Miller (builder) and John Gibson (artisan) _____

Original owner: Vestry of the Protestant Episcopal Church of the Messiah _____

Other significant persons: NA _____

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

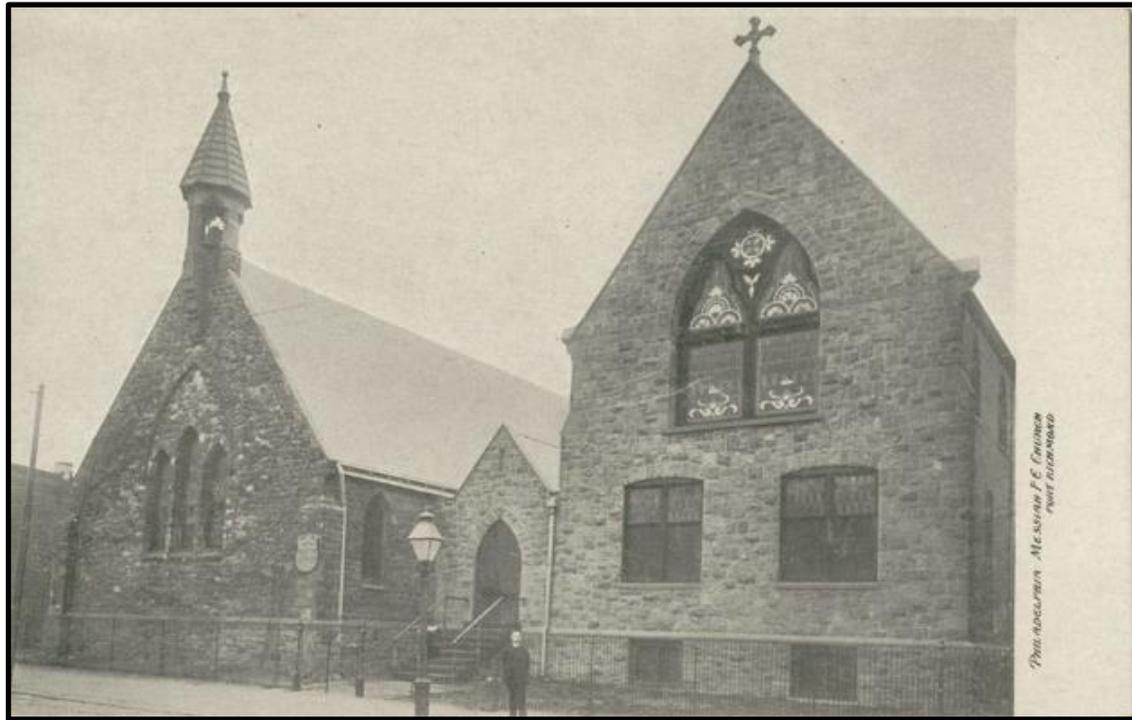
Name with Title Oscar Beisert, Architectural Historian Email Oscar.beisert@gmail.com
 Organization Rachel Hildebrandt, Architectural Historian Date September 15, 2015
 Street Address 257 S. 45th Street Telephone 717.602.5002
 City, State, and Postal Code Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19104
 Nominator is is not the property owner.

PHC USE ONLY

Date of Receipt: _____
 Correct-Complete Incorrect-Incomplete Date: _____
 Date of Notice Issuance: _____
 Property Owner at Time of Notice
 Name: _____
 Address: _____

 City: _____ State: _____ Postal Code: _____
 Date(s) Reviewed by the Committee on Historic Designation: _____
 Date(s) Reviewed by the Historical Commission: _____
 Date of Final Action: _____
 Designated Rejected

Proposed for Historic Designation in the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places



The Protestant Episcopal Church of the Messiah, Port Richmond, Circa 1910s. Courtesy the Library Company of Philadelphia.

**The Protestant Episcopal Church of the Messiah
2646 East Huntingdon Street
Port Richmond**



*The Protestant Episcopal Church of the Messiah, 2646 East Huntingdon Street, Port Richmond
Nomination to the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places, Fall 2015 - Page 1*

5. BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

ALL THOSE CERTAIN lots or pieces of ground with the building and improvement thereon erected, SITUATE in the 31st Ward of the City of Philadelphia.

ONE THEREOF SITUATE on the Southwesterly side of East Huntingdon Street at the distance of 64 feet Northwestwardly from the Northwest side of Edgement Street. CONTAINING in front or breadth on the said East Huntingdon Street 79 feet 7 inches and extending in length or depth Southwestwardly of that width between lines parallel to said Edgemont Street 100 feet, Know as 2646-58 East Huntingdon Street, Parcel #19N18-0046.

ANOTHER THEREOF SITUATE on the Southwesterly side of East Huntingdon Street at the distance of 32 feet Southeastwardly from the Southeasterly side of East Thompson Street. CONTAINING in front or breadth on said East Huntingdon Street 16 feet and extending of that width Southwestwardly between parallel lines to said East Thompson Street 100 feet, Know as 2644 East Huntingdon Street, Parcel #19N18-00144.

AND ANOTHER THEREOF SITUATE at the intersection of the Southeasterly corner of East Huntingdon and East Thompson Street. CONTAINING in front or breadth along the said side of East Huntingdon Street 32 feet and extending of that width Southwestwardly along the said East Thompson Street in length or depth 100 feet, Know as 2640-42 East Huntingdon Street, Parcel #19N18-0052.

BEING 2640-42 and 2644-58 East Huntingdon Street, OPA #314145400 and #882931270.

For the purposes of this nomination, the parcels at 2640-42 and 2644 E. Huntingdon Street and the structures thereon are deemed non-contributing to the significance of the site.



6. Building Description

Formerly the Protestant Episcopal Church of the Messiah, and more lately known as Adriatic Hall, the undesignated historic property at East Huntingdon Street, Port Richmond, is a stone and brick masonry building situated on a large corner lot in the Port Richmond neighborhood of Philadelphia. Designed almost entirely in the Gothic Revival style, the building consists of the following three sections: 1. The Chapel, completed in 1848, which retains its original form as a Latin Cross; 2. The 1892 Addition, a large three-story portion of the building, also in the Gothic Revival style; and 3. The Entrance Addition, which was added in the mid-twentieth century, obscuring part of the original entrance to the building.

Completed in 1848, The Chapel reflects an early American revivalist design in the First-Pointed Order of the Gothic Period of English Architecture, which dates to the thirteenth century. Appearing, out of context, as a small, but established rural church in both form and scale, The Chapel is built in the form of a Latin cross, which originally allowed for the chancel in the rear of the building, as well as a nave, and a transept porch (now obscured by later additions). The roof of the building features gables at each end of its Latin cross form, which is finished in slate that appears to be in fairly good condition. The Chapel is roughly ninety feet (90') in length by sixty-four feet (64') at the width of the transepts, and the highest point of the roofline is about fifty-six feet (56'). The entire building rests upon a full, original basement level, which was designed to hold an additional, but smaller meeting room, and two classrooms. Being of load bearing stone masonry construction, The Chapel is built entirely of rubble with rusticated and polished brown freestone that was quarried at Trenton, New Jersey. The cornices, copings, and etc. are of the same stone, as is all of the corbelling. The apertures that once contained the leaded, stained glass windows feature a mixture of vintage and modern infill and the original windows have been replaced at every elevation of The Chapel. At the center of The Chapel's primary, Huntingdon Street elevation is a large aperture within which is a triple-lancet window set beneath and within a larger Gothic arch recession. This aperture is set within a large gable-end, which once featured a small but prominent belfry. Single lancet windows are generally within each elevation created by the Latin cross form. The rear, northeast elevation, which faces onto Webb Street, is roughcast. The interior retains exposed collar beams and braces, designed to further emulate the rural architectural form.

The 1892 Addition is connected to the northwestern elevation of the transept within the Latin cross of The Chapel entrance. The 1892 Addition is three-stories in height and is of loadbearing brick masonry construction, which is visible at the northeast and southeast elevations. The primary elevation of the 1892 Addition, facing onto East Huntingdon Street, is finished in like-brown freestone, which may have been quarried in Trenton. The gable front of the 1892 Addition is larger in size and scale than The Chapel, but is stylized in an almost identical manner. The northeast and southeast elevations give off the appearance of an administration building of an institution, but feature some minor stylistic details. This portion of the building is non-contributing to the proposed designation.

At the center of The Chapel and the 1892 Addition, the Entrance Addition obscures the lower portion of entrance, transept porch, the parapet and roofline of which rises above. A rolling garage door sheaths the double door entrance. This portion of the building is non-contributing to the proposed designation.



Looking southwest.



Looking southwest.



Looking southwest.



Looking southwest.



Looking northeast, the Latin Cross form being evident.



Looking southwest.



Looking northwest.



Looking south.



Looking southwest.



Looking south.



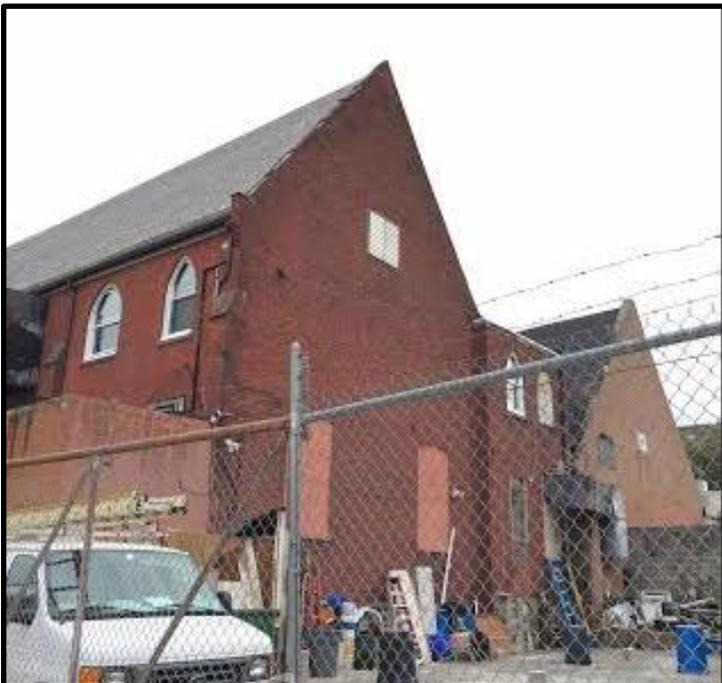
Looking southwest.



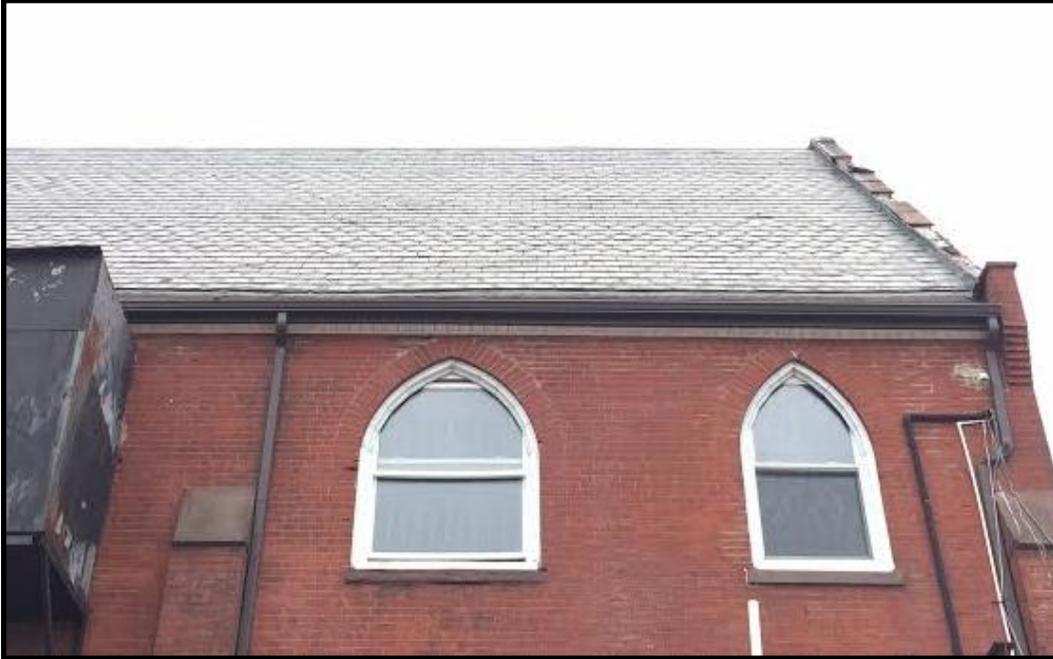
Looking southeast.



Looking south.



Looking southeast.



Looking southeast.



Remnants of the Belfry.

7. STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Protestant Episcopal Church of the Messiah at 2646 East Huntingdon Street is a significant historic resource that merits designation by the Philadelphia Historical Commission and inclusion on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places. The building satisfies Criteria for Designation c, d, and e of Section 14-1004 of the Philadelphia Code. The Protestant Episcopal Church of the Messiah, an undesignated historic property:

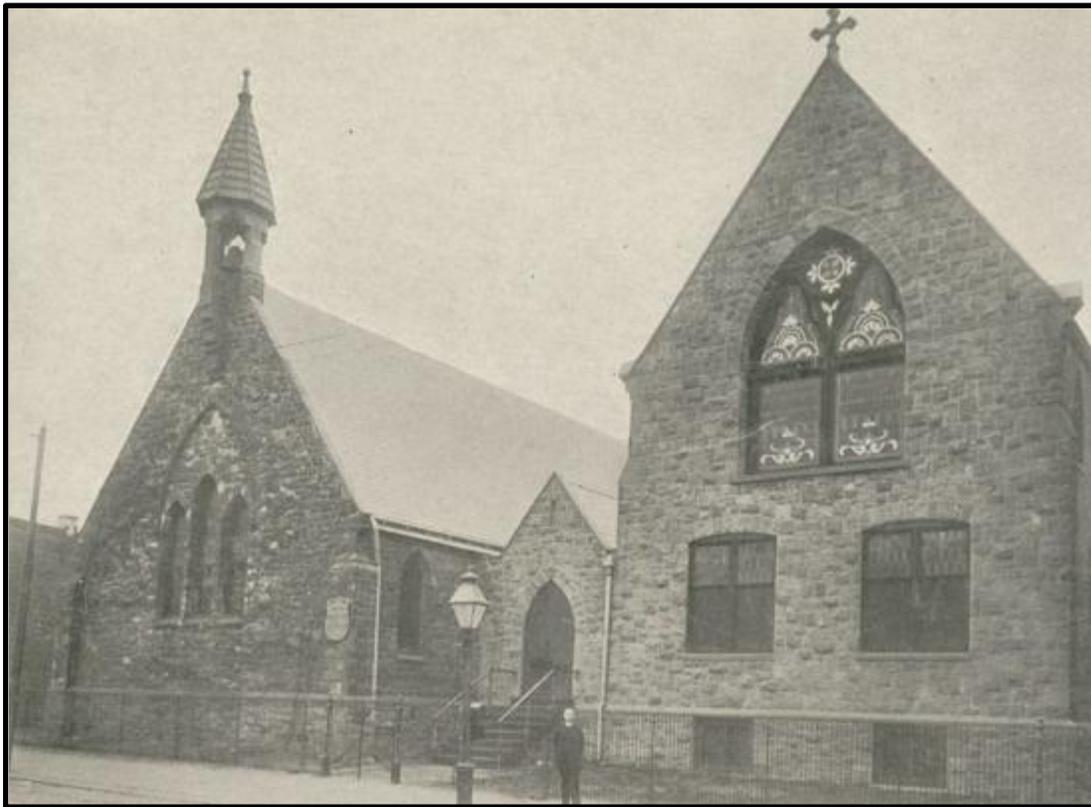
(c) Reflects the environment in an era characterized by a distinctive architectural style;

(d) Embodies distinguishing characteristics of an architectural style or engineering specimen; and

(e) Is the work of 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.

The Protestant Episcopal Church of the Messiah at 2646 East Huntingdon Street, Port Richmond, was designed and constructed between 1847 and 1848 and is significant as an early example of small, but dignified chapel of a newly formed congregation of the Protestant Episcopal Church in mid-nineteenth century Philadelphia. *Reflects the environment in an era characterized by a distinctive architectural style*, the said undesignated historic property is an early example of a small chapel designed in the Gothic Revival style. The original portion of the extant undesignated historic property is Gothic Revival in that it represents the early English Order of Gothic Architecture, which prevailed in the thirteenth century. The undesignated historic property *embodies distinguishing characteristics of an architectural style*, which includes simple, but dignified details of the Gothic Revival, including being constructed in the form of the Latin cross; the placement of the both the chancel and communion table, as important to the form of the building; stone architraves, mullions, and sills, etc.; the placement of the entrance within the transept porch; and the placement of the belfry at the extreme gable of the nave. The form of the original block was maintained further by placing additional, usable space within the basement and main block, which further denotes stylistic intent of the original design. The undesignated historic property *is the work of a designer, architect, landscape architect, and designer, whose work has significantly influenced the historical, architectural, economic, social, or cultural development of the City, Commonwealth and Nation*—John Notman (1810–1865), eminent Scottish-born, Philadelphia architect, designer, and landscape architect, which is verified by several period-sources within this nomination. Furthermore, the work is an example of Notman’s commitment to the ideals of Andrew Jackson Downing in that it an inexpensive commission suited to a congregation of limited means. The Period of Significance for aforementioned Criteria as related to this building is 1847–1848.

Criteria C and D: Designed and constructed between 1847 and 1848, the Protestant Episcopal Church of the Messiah at 2646 East Huntingdon Street, Port Richmond, is significant as an early example of small, but dignified chapel of a newly formed congregation of the Protestant Episcopal Church in mid-nineteenth century Philadelphia. Reflects the environment in an era characterized by a distinctive architectural style, the said undesignated historic property is an early example of a small chapel designed in the Gothic Revival style. The original portion of the extant undesignated historic property is Gothic Revival in that it represents the early English Order of Gothic Architecture, which prevailed in the thirteenth century. The undesignated historic property embodies distinguishing characteristics of an architectural style, which includes simple, but dignified details of the Gothic Revival, including being constructed in the form of the Latin cross; the placement of the both the chancel and communion table, as important to the form of the building; stone architraves, mullions, and sills, etc.; the placement of the entrance within the transept porch; and the placement of the belfry at the extreme gable of the nave. The form of the original block was maintained further by placing additional, usable space within the basement and main block, which further denotes stylistic intent of the original design.



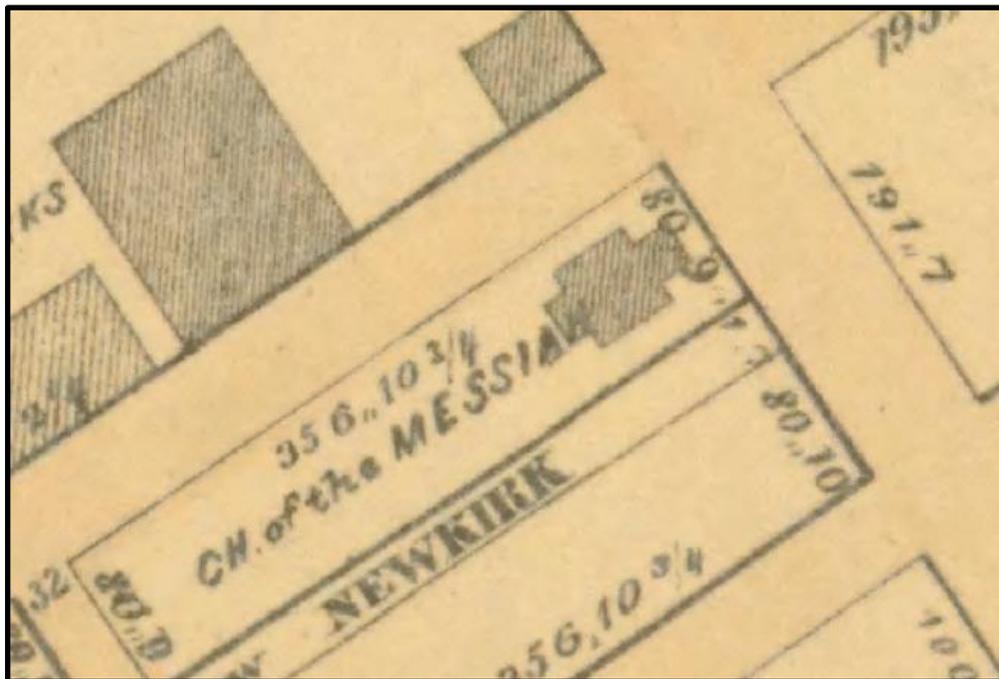
The Protestant Episcopal Church of the Messiah, Port Richmond, Circa 1910s. Courtesy the Library Company of Philadelphia.

The Protestant Episcopal Church of the Messiah, Port Richmond

The Protestant Episcopal Church of the Messiah was organized on October 27, 1846 at the suggestion of Rev. John Gordon Maxwell, a former rector of Emmanuel Church, which was located in the neighborhood now known as Holmesburg. Maxwell had observed that the

Richmond District of Philadelphia County lacked Episcopalian presence, unlike its neighboring municipalities to the north, south, and west.¹

According to the *Episcopal Recorder*, “It was not earlier than October 1846 that a few members of our Church had their attention directed to the growing borough of Port Richmond, as a place comparatively destitute of religious privileges... For once, Episcopalians were in advance of others.”² Though two congregations – St. Anne Roman Catholic Church (organized 1845) and Port Richmond Methodist Episcopal Church (organized 1846) – predate Church of the Messiah in Port Richmond, the building erected by the congregation is the oldest extant church in the former district.³



1862 Philadelphia Atlas. Courtesy the Philadelphia GeoHistory Network.

Protestant Episcopal Church of the Messiah was incorporated in 1847 and admitted to the convention of the Diocese of Pennsylvania on May 20, 1847. While awaiting the completion of its first house of worship, the congregation worshipped in a carpenter’s shop owned by J. C. Richardson located at the northwest corner of York and Salmon Streets.⁴

The cornerstone of the congregation’s building was laid June 28, 1847 at East Huntingdon and Thompson Streets.⁵ The property, which measured sixty-four feet (64’) by one hundred feet (100’), was donated by Dr. Benjamin S. Janney and wife Lynda O. to the leadership of Church of

¹ “Semi-Centennial: Church of the Messiah Celebrates its Fiftieth Anniversary,” *Philadelphia Inquirer*, 26 October 1896.

² “Consecration of the Church of the Messiah, Port Richmond,” *Episcopal Recorder*, 29 April 1848.

³ Joseph L.J. Kirlin, *Catholicity in Philadelphia: From the Earliest Missionaries Down to the Present Time* (Philadelphia: J.J. McVey, 1909), 342; Historical Society of Pennsylvania’s Hidden Collections Initiative for Pennsylvania Small Archival Repositories, *Port Richmond Methodist Church Records Finding Aid* (Philadelphia: 2015), 4.

⁴ “Semi-Centennial: Church of the Messiah Celebrates its Fiftieth Anniversary,” *Philadelphia Inquirer*, 26 October 1896.

⁵ “Semi-Centennial: Church of the Messiah,” *Philadelphia Inquirer*, 1896.

the Messiah, Richmond on April 14, 1847. Janney, a medical doctor who lived in Spring Garden District, had acquired the land from Benjamin Rall on February 28, 1832. It was originally part of a Ball estate.⁶

The building, designed by architect John Notman (1810–1865), was consecrated on Easter Monday in 1848. The following day, the Gothic Revival style building was described in the *Episcopal Recorder*: “It is in the style of the early English order of Gothic architecture, which prevailed at the commencement of the 13th century; a style which well unites the elegant simplicity with economy... The church itself seats 605 persons, and can be made to accommodate more with ease; it is 60 feet high to the cap of the belfry, and the interior is 90 feet long along the chancel and nave and 64 feet along the transepts.”⁷ The article identifies John Notman as the architect and Hiram Miller as the builder. In addition, Notman’s brother-in-law, John Gibson (1813–1877), is identified as the stained glass artisan. The building was erected at a total cost of \$6,200 or \$5,800 (not including the bell, furnace, and furnishings).⁸

It was under the first rector, Rev. Samuel Hazlehurst, the church came to serve an industrial landscape.⁹ Two blocks east of the church were the Reading Railroad Coal Wharves on the Delaware River and one block west was Aramingo Canal. Also in the immediate vicinity were John T. Lewis & Brothers Lead Works, Jefferson Flint Glass Works, Port Richmond Drain Pipe Works, and Philadelphia Foraging Works. And nearby was William Cramp & Sons Shipbuilding Company, the leading shipbuilder in the United States during the nineteenth century.¹⁰

The church grew through its early years. In 1870 the church expanded its property with the purchase of a lot on the northwest side from Bernard O’Rourke.¹¹ In 1892, the church commissioned an addition by the firm of Hazlehurst & Huckel (fl. 1881–1900).¹² The firm designed a three-story parish house immediately north of the church of brick with a brown freestone front. The same Trentonian brown freestone composes the older section and works well to blend the addition into the original church building.¹³ The cornerstone, which contained “the names of the board of vestrymen, magazines, and daily papers of current date,”¹⁴ was laid on April 31, 1892. The building measuring twenty-nine feet by sixty-four feet included a gymnasium on the first floor, classrooms on the second floor, and an auditorium on the third floor. The building was erected at a total cost of \$10,500. Also in 1892, \$3,000 was spent to

⁶ Deed: Benjamin S. Janney, of the District of Spring Garden, doctor of medicine, and Lydia O., his wife, to The Rector, Church Warden and Vestrymen of the Church of the Messiah Port of Richmond, 14 April 1847, Philadelphia Deed Book A.W.M., No. 33, p. 71, City Archives of Philadelphia.

⁷ “Consecration of the Church of the Messiah, Port Richmond,” *Episcopal Recorder*, 29 April 1848.

⁸ “Consecration of the Church of the Messiah,” *Episcopal Recorder*, 1848.

⁹ “New Church of Messiah Dedicated Palm Sunday,” *Church News*, April 1932.

¹⁰ Samuel L. Smedley, *Atlas of the City of Philadelphia* (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott & Co., 1862).

¹¹ Deed: Bernard O’Rourke, of the City, contractor and Cicily, his wife, to The Rector, Church Warden and Vestrymen of the Church of the Messiah Port Richmond, 14 March 1870, Philadelphia Deed Book J.A.H., No. 27, p. 351, CAP.

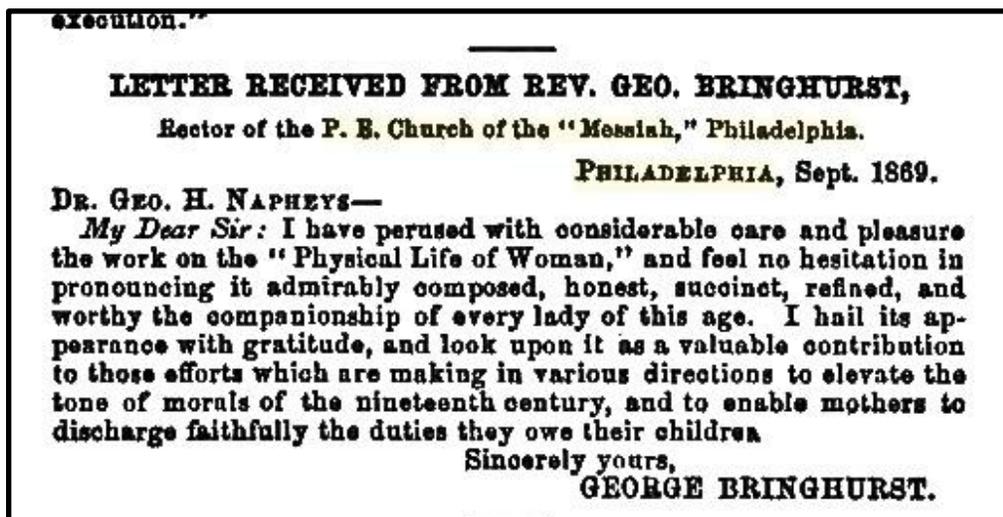
¹² *Philadelphia Real Estate Record and Builders’ Guide*, 7: 2 (13 January 1892), 875.

¹³ “Consecration of the Church of the Messiah, Port Richmond,” *Episcopal Recorder*, 29 April 1848.

¹⁴ “Laying of a Cornerstone: A New Parish House for the Church of the Messiah,” *Philadelphia Inquirer*, 1 May 1892.

improve the property according to Hazlehurst & Huckel's plans. This included the installation of a new organ.¹⁵

Four years later, the church celebrated its fiftieth anniversary. At that time, it was reported that the congregation had baptized 1,829 people and confirmed another 413. Rev. C. L. Fulforth presided over the anniversary celebration, which lasted a week.¹⁶ He served the congregation for thirty-nine years, from 1890 until its closure in 1929.¹⁷



Courtesy the Hathi Trust.

In 1929, Church of the Messiah merged with St. Matthew's Mission, which was organized by the Episcopal Diocese in September of 1928. According to *Church News*, "Changing neighborhood conditions which resulted in a dwindling congregation led to the decision to dispose of the Church of the Messiah property in Port Richmond."¹⁸ The neighborhood's ethnic makeup was in flux when the church was closed as Eastern European immigrants flooded Port Richmond. In fact, Church of the Messiah helped to incubate a Polish Episcopal congregation in 1917 by allowing the fledgling congregation to use its building.¹⁹

In 1932, the newly merged congregation, which retained the known Church of the Messiah name, dedicated a new building at 6000 Large Street in the Lower Northeast. Fifteen memorial windows, chancel furniture (including the altar, pulpit, lectern, and font), and the organ from Church of the Messiah, Richmond were incorporated into this building.²⁰

¹⁵ "Laying of a Cornerstone," *Philadelphia Inquirer*, 1892.

¹⁶ "Semi-Centennial: Church of the Messiah Celebrates its Fiftieth Anniversary," *Philadelphia Inquirer*, 26 October 1896.

¹⁷ "Mentions," *The Churchman*, 14 December 1907; "New Church of Messiah Dedicated Palm Sunday," *Church News*. April 1932.

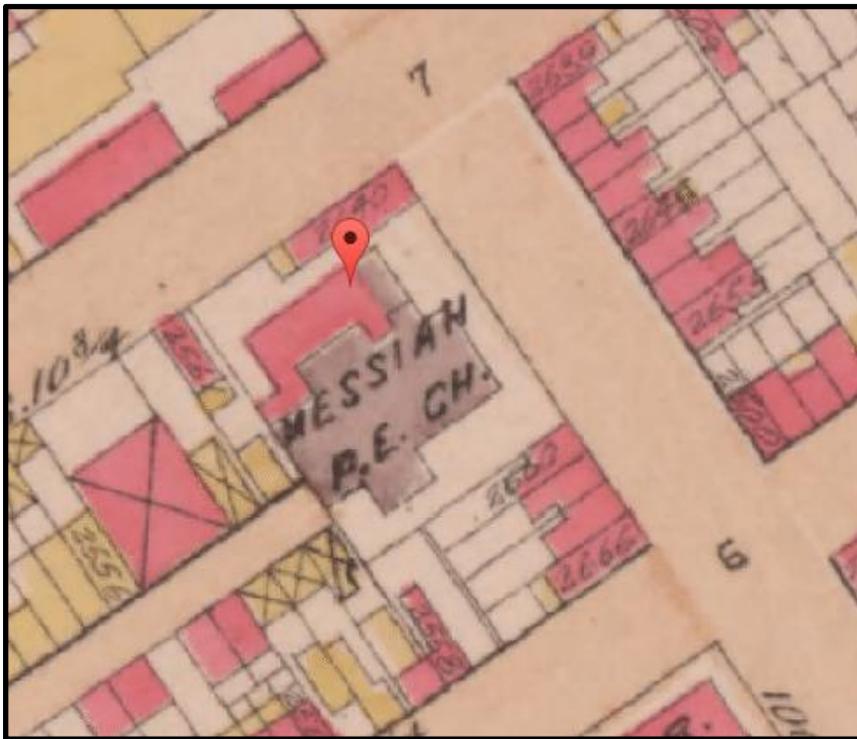
¹⁸ "St. Matthew's Mission And Church of Messiah, Port Richmond, Merge," *Church News*. October 1930.

¹⁹ "Our Polish Work," *Church News*. November 1919.

²⁰ "New Church of Messiah Dedicated Palm Sunday," *Church News*. April 1932.

In March of 1930, the rector, wardens, and vestrymen of Church of the Messiah transferred Church of the Messiah, Richmond to The Church Foundation to facilitate the sale of the site.²¹ In June, the Foundation was sold the site to the Austrian Seacoast Beneficial and Benevolent Society or Adriatic Club (Austrianskih Primorvec Društvo Zamjenite Pomoći I Dobročinstvo U Filadelfi) for \$15,500.²² Founded in 1890 by Serbo-Croatian speaking immigrants to Philadelphia, most club members worked in the maritime trades that once thrived along the Delaware River. The club provided modest insurance benefits to members who paid between \$1.25 and \$2.75 a month, which provided up to \$900 in death benefits and \$14 a week for thirteen weeks in unemployment benefits.²³

It was under the club's tenure that the interior of the former church saw installation of two bowling lanes, two bocce courts, and four bars. It persisted until 1990.²⁴



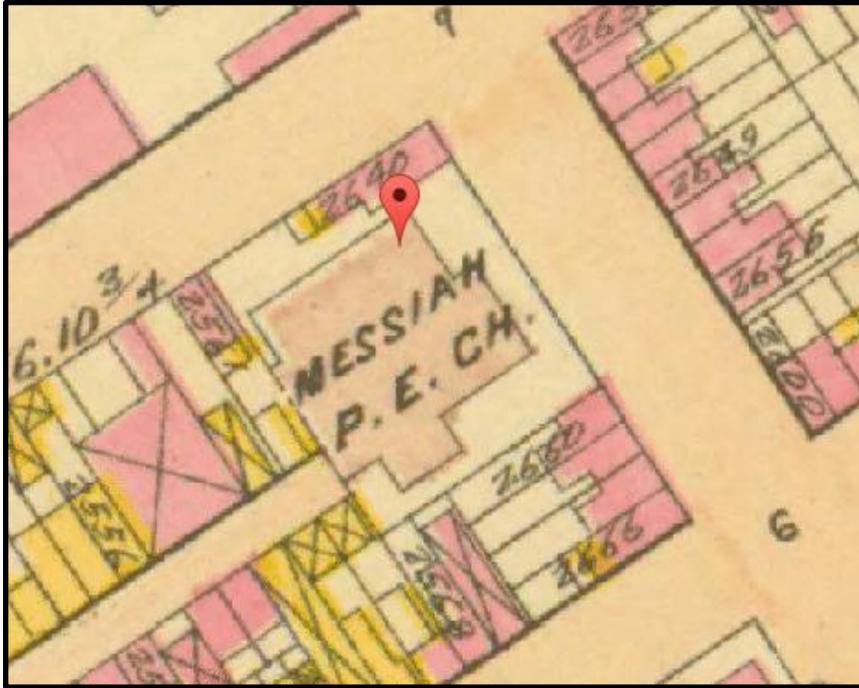
1895 Bromley Philadelphia Atlas. Courtesy the Philadelphia GeoHistory Network.

²¹ Deed: The Rector, Church Wardens and Vestrymen of the Church of the Messiah, Port Richmond, to the Church Foundation, 20 March 1930, Philadelphia Deed Book J.M.H., No. 3150, p. 369, CAP.

²² Deed: The Church Foundation to Austrianskih Primorvec Druzto Zamjenite Pomoci I Dobrocinstva U Filadelfi, 14 June 1930, Philadelphia Deed Book J.M.H., No. 3299, p. 89, CAP.

²³ "Fading Society Port Richmond Club Has Few Austrians," *Philadelphia Daily News*, 25 October 1988.

²⁴ "Fading Society Port Richmond Club Has Few Austrians," *Philadelphia Daily News*, 25 October 1988.



1910 Bromley Philadelphia Atlas. Courtesy the Philadelphia GeoHistory Network.

The “beautiful, convenient, and cheap” Chapel of the Church of the Messiah

At the 64th annual convention in 1849 of the Protestant Episcopal Church of the Diocese of Philadelphia, the bishop addressed the body of attendants on several matters, including “...the growing taste for expensive churches,” as not being beneficial to the cause of the church. The then gave a particular example:

...he felt gratified that more neatness and genuine improvement had been introduced into the churches and cited the Church of the Messiah at Port Richmond as a model of a church that was neat but not gaudy.²⁵

The Church of the Messiah was founded as a mission of sorts to serve the working population of Port Richmond. While many known architects and tastemakers of the ages have ignored the working population, the 1830s, 1840s, and 1850s was an incredibly progressive period in that American arbiter of taste, Andrew Jackson Downing, ascribed to a national approach to architecture. His books, journals, journals and projects largely catered to the upper classes, but they did not leave out the lower classes—and especially Downing recommended attractive, dignified, and inexpensive house types to suite people of less means.²⁶ As is very clear in every number published of Downing’s *Horticulturist and Journal of Rural Art and Rural Taste*, his correspondence with people of all class levels was comprehensive and voluminous.

There is evidence that Downing and John Notman, the subject architect of this nomination was influenced by Mr. D—if not, at least, Downing and Notman were like minded. As seen later in

²⁵“Episcopal Convention,” *North American and United States Gazette*, 18 May 1848.

²⁶ *Prophet With Honor: The Career of Andrew Jackson Downing: 1815-1852* (Philadelphia: The Athenaeum of Philadelphia and Washington, D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, 1989).

the document, a farm of limited means employed Notman to design a cottage for his farm and was amenable to designing simple, but dignified dwellings that were suited to the means of the customer.

The beautiful “Church of the Messiah,” Port Richmond, was consecrated to Almighty God, by the Rt. Bishop Potter, on East Monday, in presence of a large number of the clergy and a larger concourse of people...

The church is a substantial edifice, of the early-English Gothic, in the form of a cross, with a beautiful rural porch at the side, and a belfry. It is built of stone, the windows are painted elegantly, and it is entirely congruous throughout, reminding the English traveller very strongly of the beautiful parish churches of that country. It is built by the benevolence of the Episcopalians of the city, and is entirely free from debt. The pews are without doors, and free for all, and designed especially for the poor. It will hold from 6 to 700 persons, and 350 in the basement.²⁷

While this may sound crass or politically incorrect—a beautiful church for the poor, there is no question that the design was completed to suit the needs of the congregation and in a manner that paid homage to the likely-English forbearers of the congregants. Furthermore, and, most importantly, “the beautiful, convenient, and cheap” was within the principals established by Downing, as carried out in the designs of Notman.

²⁷ *Philadelphia Inquirer*, 25 April 1848.

Criterion E: The Protestant Episcopal Church of the Messiah at 2646 East Huntingdon Street, Port Richmond, was designed in 1847, constructed by 1848, and is the work of a designer, architect, landscape architect, and designer, whose work has significantly influenced the historical, architectural, economic, social, or cultural development of the City, Commonwealth and Nation—John Notman (1810–1865), eminent Scottish-born, Philadelphia architect, designer, and landscape architect, which is verified by several period-sources within this section of the nomination. Furthermore, the work is an example of Notman’s commitment to the ideals of Andrew Jackson Downing in that it an inexpensive commission suited to a congregation of limited means.

John Notman—Architect of the Protestant Episcopal Church of the Messiah, Port Richmond

The architectural practice of John Notman was perhaps the most prominent in Philadelphia in the mid-nineteenth century. Best known for the introduction of the Italianate style in America through the design of the Athenæum of Philadelphia, John Notman also produced designs for important early examples of the Gothic Revival style, reflecting that genre in a variety of motifs that suited the needs and/or limitations of his clients.²⁸

While the Protestant Episcopal Church of the Messiah appears to have taken root as early as January 1846, formal plans for a permanent house of worship were not underway until February of 1846, at which time the Rev. Samuel Hazlehurst was elected rector. At this time, congregational leadership and its members began a subscription “...for the creation of the Church edifice.”

The church will be a handsome gothic structure, built of Trenton stone, after a designed furnished by John Notman, in the early English style of architecture, with transepts.²⁹

The above-referenced quote is from the local *Episcopal Recorder*, published July 3, 1847, just after the “laying of the corner stone” had been celebrated. Notman is again referenced in completing the design of the church in the following letter:

Dear Sirs,

I send you a sketch of “Font” suited to Richmond Church—only it is something smaller than I will make seeing you have augmented the price.

Please return it this evening with approved or not as it must be hurried to get it done—it will be made most substantially.

Your Most Obedt Servt,

John Notman

April 11th, 1848³⁰

²⁸ Jonathan L. Fairbanks, *John Notman, Church Architect* (University of Delaware, 1961).

²⁹ “Church of the Messiah, Port Richmond,” *The Episcopal Recorder*, 25 (3 July 1847), 16.

³⁰ Constance M. Greiff, *John Notman, Architect, 1810–1865* (Philadelphia: The Athenæum of Philadelphia, 1979), 237.

Almost a year later, on April 29, 1848, the *Episcopal Recorder* announced the “Consecration of the Church of the Messiah, Port Richmond,” indicating its formal completion. The publication again reveals that the completed church was designed by John Notman.

The architect is John Notman, – John Gibson painted the window, and the builder and contractor with him the vestry is entirely pleased, and whom they warmly recommend to others, is Hiram Miller.³¹

In May 1848, the Bishop of the Diocese of Pennsylvania recognizes the economic efficiency, yet attractiveness of Notman’s design for the Church of the Messiah, Port Richmond, which is publicly recognized at the 64th Convention of the Diocese.³² No doubt akin to the theories and practices of Andrew Jackson Downing and his recommendations for architectural taste and beauty for all levels of society, Notman creates a church based on historic precedence and modern convenience in the Gothic Revival style, employing, quite specifically, the “First-Pointed” style, which suits the needs of a small congregation with limited funds, but creates an attractive, noteworthy architectural work.

The final primary source reference to John Notman’s constructed design of the Church of the Messiah, Port Richmond was published in another period journal related to Protestant Episcopal concerns:

The Church of the Messiah, Port Richmond, Philadelphia, is a very unsatisfactory First-Pointed church by Mr. Notman, finished about 1847.³³

While this last reference is rather critical or, at the least, unimpressed in terms of Notman’s completed work, this certainly does not undermine its local importance at the time of this nomination. Rather it is inserted to further prove that this building is not merely attributed to Notman, but that all of the above reference’s show that the Church of the Messiah was, in fact, designed by Notman.

The Church of the Messiah was first and correctly attributed to Notman by John Coolidge in his unpublished honors thesis “Gothic Revival Churches in New England and New York,” completed in 1935.³⁴ And, more recently, this accreditation is correctly upheld by Constance M. Greiff in her book, *John Notman, Architect, 1810–1865*.³⁵ However, neither historian was blessed with digital search engines that have allowed us to more completely document that, in fact, the building was designed by John Notman.

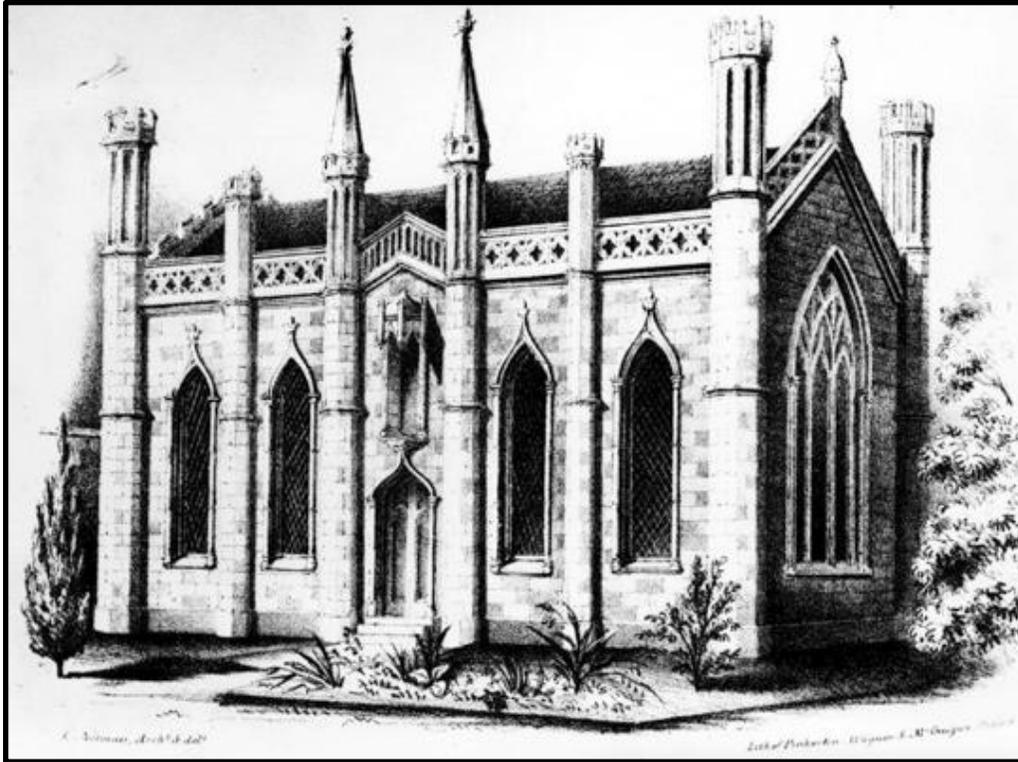
³¹ “Consecration of the Church of the Messiah, Port Richmond,” *The Episcopal Recorder*, 26 (29 April 1848), 7.

³² “Episcopal Convention,” *North American and United States Gazette*, 18 May 1848.

³³ *The Ecclesiologist*, n.s. vol. 10, 1852.

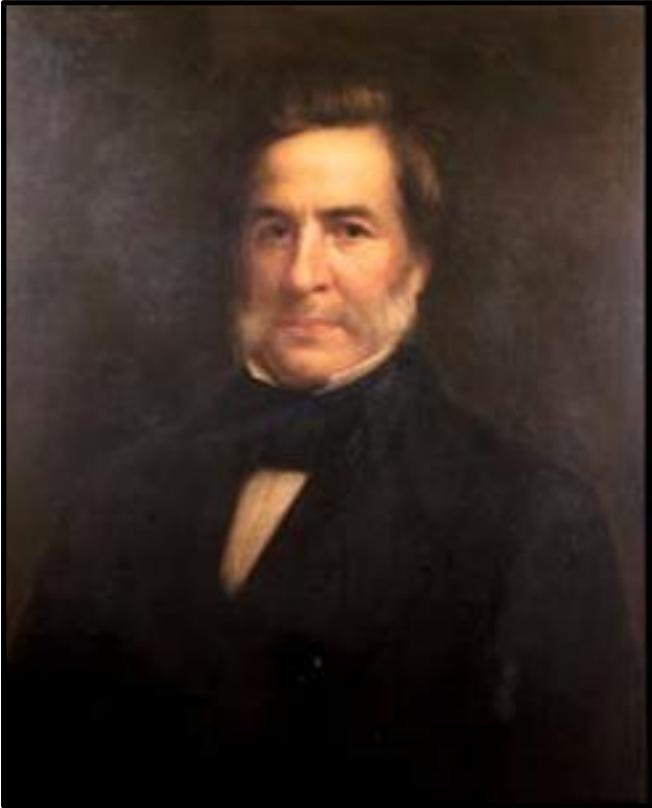
³⁴ John Coolidge, “Gothic Revival Churches in New England and New York.” Unpublished Honors Thesis, Department of Fine Arts, Harvard University, 1935.

³⁵ Greiff, *John Notman, Architect*, 237.



Design for a Chapel by John Notman. Courtesy the Library Company of Philadelphia.

John Notman (1810–1865)



Portrait of John Notman. Courtesy Ancestry.com.

John Notman was born on July 22, 1810 in Edinburgh, Scotland and educated at the Royal Scottish Academy.³⁶ He was an apprentice to a builder and one of his first jobs was in the Edinburgh office of the great Scottish architect William Henry Playfair designer of many of Edinburgh's neo-classical buildings.³⁷ However, in 1831, Notman immigrated to America.

Thomas — do —	17	Male		do.	do.
✓ John Notman —	21	do.	Carpenter	Scotland	Pennsylvania
✓ Margaret do —	18	Female		do.	do.
✓ Robert Brist —	26	Male	Nurseman	Scotland	Pennsylvania

Record of John Notman's immigration to America aboard the Ship Thames in 1831.

Notman boarded the Ship Thames in the Port of London to make his way to the United States, arriving in the Port of Philadelphia on November 2, 1831.³⁸ Whether he knew it or not, Philadelphia would be his home for more than three decades and the city in which he would become one of the great architects of the Victorian America.³⁹ Within a few years of his arrival, Notman was an active designer. In fact, one of his first major commissions was in designing and laying out Laurel Hill Cemetery in 1835. The completion of this successful commission, Notman

³⁶ Headstone: Laurel Hill Cemetery, Philadelphia, Plot: Section M Lot 163.

³⁷ UNESCO World Heritage website, as viewed on 13 Sept 2015 at <http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/728>

³⁸ *Selected Passenger and Crew Lists and Manifests*. The National Archives at Washington, D.C

³⁹ *Dictionary of Scottish Architects*, 2014, as viewed on 13 Sept 2015 at http://www.scottisharchitects.org.uk/architect_full.php?id=202344

was hired by the managers of the Pennsylvania Hospital to design and supervise the construction of the site of the Pennsylvania Hospital for the Insane, then located in West Philadelphia.

The general plan and the form of the building, which I suggested were subsequently adopted, and will be found embraced in the designs by John Notman, Esq., of Philadelphia, the accomplished architect of the hospital, and who is superintending its erection.⁴⁰

This commission began in the late 1830s, but would not come to fruition in any real way until the early 1840s.

In turn, through the backers of the Laurel Hill scheme, Notman met and secured commissions from Nathan Dunn (1837) and Bishop George Washington Doane (1839) -- both projects were published in Downing's *A Treatise on the Theory and Practice of Landscape Gardening* (1841). From that point Notman became one of the leading architects working from a Philadelphia base; by 1854, Thomas U. Walter would write from Washington, "you wish me to recommend someone to you in whose taste I have confidence. My own impression is that Mr. Notman (Spruce above Broad) is the best Archt in Philada. I am not personally acquainted with him, but his works, as The Athenaeum, St. Mark's Church, and other things I have seen of his, indicate taste, genius, and practical skill." Like Walter, Notman worked all of his career to establish the profession of architect, and he was one of the two Philadelphians invited to be among the founders of the American Institute of Architects.⁹

On May 11, 1841 Notman married Martha Pullen at the Protestant Episcopal Church of the Epiphany, which was then located in a Greek Revival building at 1501–15 Chestnut Street.⁴¹

While Notman had gotten his start with Laurel Hill and the Pennsylvania Hospital for the Insane in the 1830s, his architectural firm boomed during the 1840s. Notman was also recognized by the father of American landscape architecture, Andrew Jackson Downing (1815–1852), as one of the America's most "skillful practitioners in that vein." Downing was a prominent advocate of the Gothic Revival in the United States, corresponding with Notman on a regular basis in the 1840s.⁴²

But, Mr. Editor, my purpose to-night is not to give your readers a lecture on this important subject. I design building a cheap cottage on my farm, and, my means being limited, I feel at a loss about the construction of my dwelling.—I desire to build a plain, comfortable and pretty cottage—such a dwelling as would both suit my purposes and at the same time embellish my farm. The perusal of the most valuable and entertaining works on landscape, gardening and cottage residences, by Mr. Downing, (works which every man ought to have,) called my attention to

⁴⁰ Kirkbride, Thomas S. "Remarks on the Construction and Arrangements of Hospitals for the Insane," *The American Journal of Medical Sciences*. January 1847, Vol. 13, pg. 40.

⁴¹ *Historic Pennsylvania Church and Town Records*. Philadelphia, Pennsylvania: Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

⁴² *Philadelphia Architects and Buildings*, s.v. "John Notman (1810-1865)," by Robert W. Moss and Sandra L. Tatman, accessed 13 September 2015, https://www.philadelphiabuildings.org/pab/app/ar_display.cfm/26273 (hereafter PAB, "John Notman," by Moss and Tatman)

the name of an accomplished architect. I corresponded with him—told him my wants—limited him in the sum to be expended; and the result of my application was the receipt of designs for one of the most comfortable, convenient, and elegant cottages I have ever seen. He met my wishes in a most satisfactory manner—and has really given me a building with a great number of rooms and closets than I imagined could be constructed in the space included in the walls and for the small sum to be expended. I never saw the architect, but have the pleasure of a very agreeable correspondence with him. He is a gentleman of intelligence and taste and a superior man in his profession.

With no desire to interest or make a *puff*, allow me, Mr. Editor, to bring to notice of my brother farmers the gentleman to whom I have referred. I allude to Mr. John Notman, Architect, Philadelphia. I can cheerfully and with unaffected sincerity recommend Mr. Notman—I feel assured that those who may have occasion to obtain the very valuable aid of Mr. Notman will not regret that they have done so.⁴³

This ode to the care and concern of Notman as an architect for buildings of all sizes and scale is an important note related to his work on the Church of the Messiah, Port Richmond, and other small buildings that he completed that have passed away from existence. Downing's recognition of Notman is an important period reference in *Cottage Residences*, which show that Notman's designs both large and small in scale were recognized by the tastemaker of the day.

In 1845, Notman designed the Athenæum of Philadelphia, which is said to be the first Italianate building in the city.⁴⁴ According to Moss and Tatman, Notman "...designed an innovative Renaissance Revival building, a stylistic prototype for clubhouses for decades afterwards."

In January 1846, Notman's work for the Pennsylvania Hospital for the Insane led him to another similar commission in New Jersey—the New Jersey State Asylum, which he designed at the recommendation of Kirkbride to state officials. This complex appears to have been completed by 1849.⁴⁵

The New Jersey Asylum is one of the most recently built institutions. Its plan is peculiar, having a most striking and beautiful elevation, although rather too ornamental and imposing for its purposes. Its style would be better fitted for the capitol of a State, than for the home of the pauper insane. Its elevated basement, its immense stucco pillars, its heavy dome and Italian campaniles, its projecting Tuscan roof, all indicate the first taste for external beauty in its architect Mr. Notman, of Philadelphia.⁴⁶

In July 1847, the corner stone of the Church of the Messiah was laid and Notman was the architect, which is the subject of this nomination. In November 1847, the cornerstone of the

⁴³ Junior. "Architecture," *Southern Planter*. May 1844.

⁴⁴ Roger W. Moss, *Philadelphia Victorian: the Building of the Athenaeum* (Philadelphia, 1998).

⁴⁵ "Art V.—the New Jersey State Asylum," *Journal of Prison Discipline and Philanthropy*, 2 (January 1846), 57.

⁴⁶ "Remarks on the Conclusions of the Joint Committee of the Legislature," *The Boston Medical and Surgical Journal*, 40 (14 February 1849), 1.

Green Hill Presbyterian Church was laid, which was in view of Girard College, just north of Girard Avenue.

The Hon. A. Naudain, M.D., (who is one of the Elders of the Church,) then read a statement of the plan of the edifice, presented by John Notman, Esq., the Architect.

The plan of the Church contemplates an elegant structure a hundred and twenty feet, by fifty-two in breadth, to be built of stone, in the Gothic style, with a tower and spire a hundred and twenty-five feet high, and with accommodations for a congregation of 7 or 8 hundred people, and a lecture, school, and session-rooms in the basement story. The edifice when finished, will be an ornament to that section of the city.⁴⁷

By 1850, John and Martha Notman were living in a house together with two servants—Sarah Coffey and Sarah McGarvey.⁴⁸ That same year another commission was completed by Notman—the Church of the Ascension. The building appears to have been entirely redesigned by Notman. John Gibson was the artist who completed the windows for this church as he did for several other of Notman’s houses of worship.

The whole external and internal appearance of the Church has been changed. Great skill has been shown by the Architect, and those who have carried out his design, in removing the deformities of the original building.⁴⁹

In 1846 Napoleon Le Brun had been hired by the Roman Catholic Church of Philadelphia—the Archdiocese to design and supervise construction of the Cathedral of Saints Peter and Paul. However, this relationship appears to have been severed in 1851.

A disagreement between myself and clients then caused a suspension of my connection with the building for several years, during which time the present façade was erected (and very poorly too, as numerous fissures testify) according to an amended design by Mr. John Notman. This was his sole connection with the work.

Upon the dismissal of Mr. Notman in 1857, when the walls of the balance of the building—continued under the supervision of a man whose name I do not recall—were not yet brought up to the roof level, I was engaged to resume charge of the work, and carried it to completion in 1864, entirely according to my own designs and original plan, as any Philadelphian professing to be conversant with the matter should know.⁵⁰

While it appears that Notman was involved in part of the design of the Cathedral in Philadelphia, this was clearly disputed in some regards at the time, and now simply considered in part a work

⁴⁷ “Another Corner Stone Laid,” *Christian Observe*, 26 (19 November 1847), 2.

⁴⁸ Seventh Census of the United States, 1850; (National Archives Microfilm Publication M432, 1009 rolls); Records of the Bureau of the Census, Record Group 29; National Archives, Washington, D.C.

⁴⁹ “Church of the Ascension,” *The Episcopal Recorder*, 28 (16 November 1850), 135.

⁵⁰ N, Le Brun, “Cathedral of Sts. Peter and Paul,” *The American Architect and Building News*, 2 (3 February 1877), 37.

of the architect. Among Notman's early works, he is credited with introducing the Italianate villa to the United States with "Riverside," Burlington, New Jersey for Bishop G. W. Doane. He also designed a number of residences in the Philadelphia area, as well as in parts of New Jersey.

Woodlawn, the residence of Richard Stockton Field, Esq., near Princeton, N.J., presents many attractions...

Mr. Field has been the proprietor of Woodlawn only about thirteen years. Before the elegant and tasteful mansion was even planned, he began to plant. The house was commenced in the fall of 1854, and completed in the fall of 1856, by Mr. John Notman (Architect), of Philadelphia, and much esteemed as the renovator of Princeton College, to whose judgment in planning and exquisite taste in finish, it is a noble monument.⁵¹



A small chapel, in the form of the Latin cross, designed by Notman at Princeton University. Courtesy Princeton University.

By 1860, Notman was living at 1460 Spruce Street, which was yet another sign of his success, being within the realm of Rittenhouse Square, the newly fashionable neighborhood. That same year the 1860 United States Federal Census recorded the Notman house, as having the following: John Notman, age 49; Martha Notman, age 48; and two young domestics—Bridget and Mary Allwich. The census recorded that Notman's total assets were worth roughly \$60,000.⁵² Following Notman's death on March 3, 1865, the firm continued for a couple years under his

⁵¹ "Visits to Country Places, No. 13. New Jersey," *Horticulturist and Journal of Rural Art and Rural Taste*. 8 (February 1858), 83.

⁵² 1860 U.S. census, population schedule. NARA microfilm publication M653, 1,438 rolls. Washington, D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration, n.d.

protégé George Hewitt.⁵³ At one point the noted Philadelphia architect James Hamilton Windrim (1840–1919) studied under Notman for several years. Windrim worked for Notman on Holy Trinity Church on Rittenhouse Square and later on his own designed the Masonic Temple and the Academy of Natural Sciences, both in Philadelphia.¹⁰

Notman's successful architectural operated it until his death on March 2, 1865. He also became a founding member of the American Institute of Architects and was a leader in establishing "professionalism" in the practice of architecture in the United States. Notman also designed a number of suburban villas and country houses, including "Ogontz" (1863) for financier Jay Cooke. Many of his designs for churches were dictated by the ideas of the Cambridge Camden Society who suggested that Anglican churches of the Low church variety should be built in the Romanesque style, while those of the High church variety be built in the Gothic style.

Notman planned America's first architect-designed, park-like rural cemetery at Laurel Hill, Philadelphia, and, in Richmond, Virginia, the first psychiatric hospital embodying the advanced ideas of Dr. Thomas Kirkbride for the treatment of the mentally ill. Notman was, in sum, one of America's most innovative architects in the second quarter of the nineteenth century. Although not stylistically an originator, he was an importer of sophisticated design ideas from Britain, translating them skillfully for his American clientele. He also was quick to utilize the technological developments that transformed the art of building in the nineteenth century, and he was alert to the availability of new materials and new techniques.⁵⁴



The Signature of John Notman. Courtesy the City of Philadelphia.

At the time of Notman's death, his estate was settled by his good friend John Clay, which included the sale of his library for \$827.13. However, other details regarding his estate were unclear; although, his entire estate was left to his wife Martha Notman.⁵⁵

Some of Notman's notable commissions for the Episcopal Church include:⁵⁶

Chapel of the Holy Innocents, Saint Mary's Hall, Burlington, New Jersey (1845).

St. Thomas Episcopal Church, Glassboro, New Jersey (1846).

St. Paul's Episcopal Church, Trenton, New Jersey (1848). Attributed to Notman.

⁵³ *Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, Death Certificates Index, 1803-1915*; Headstone: Laurel Hill Cemetery, Philadelphia, Philadelphia County, Pennsylvania, USA, Plot: Section M Lot 163.; and *Pennsylvania and New Jersey, Church and Town Records, 1708-1985*

⁵⁴ PAB, "John Notman," by Moss and Tatman

⁵⁵ Will No. 95-145 of 1865, Philadelphia Register of Wills.

⁵⁶ Greiff, *John Notman, Architect*.

St. Mark's Church, 1625 Locust Street, Philadelphia (1849). Tower completed by George Hewitt (1865). Lady Chapel by Cope & Stewardson (1899–1902).
Emmanuel Church, Cumberland, Maryland (1851).
St. Peter's Church, Pittsburgh (1851).
St. Clement's Church, Philadelphia (1855–59)⁵⁷
Church of the Holy Trinity, Rittenhouse Square, Philadelphia (1856–59).
St. John's Episcopal Church, Wilmington, Delaware (1857–1858); located in the Brandywine Village Historic District.
Cathedral Church of St. John the Evangelist, Concord Ave. and Market St., Wilmington, Delaware (1858)



St. Clément's Protestant Episcopal Church, southwest corner of 20th and Cherry Streets, Philadelphia. This is an example of smaller chapels designed by John Notman in Philadelphia. Courtesy the Library Company of Philadelphia.

⁵⁷ *St. Clement's Quarterly*, Spring 1952.

Conclusion

The Protestant Episcopal Church of the Messiah at 2646 East Huntingdon Street was designed and constructed between 1847 and 1848, and is significant as an early example of small, but dignified chapel of a newly formed congregation of the Protestant Episcopal Church in mid-nineteenth century Philadelphia. *Reflects the environment in an era characterized by a distinctive architectural style*, the said undesignated historic property is an early example of a small chapel designed in the Gothic Revival style. The original portion of the extant undesignated historic property is Gothic Revival in that it represents the early English Order of Gothic Architecture, which prevailed in the thirteenth century. The undesignated historic property *embodies distinguishing characteristics of an architectural style*, which includes simple, but dignified details of the Gothic Revival, including being constructed in the form of the Latin cross; the placement of the both the chancel and communion table, as important to the form of the building; stone architraves, mullions, and sills, etc.; the placement of the entrance within the transept porch; and the placement of the belfry at the extreme gable of the nave. The form of the The Chapel was maintained further by placing additional, usable space within the basement and main block, which further denotes stylistic intent of the original design. The undesignated historic property *is the work of a designer, architect, landscape architect, and designer, whose work has significantly influenced the historical, architectural, economic, social, or cultural development of the City, Commonwealth and Nation*—John Notman (1810–1865), eminent Scottish-born, Philadelphia architect, designer, and landscape architect. Furthermore, the work is an example of Notman’s commitment to the ideals of Andrew Jackson Downing in that it an inexpensive commission suited to a congregation of limited means.

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Contributors.

Upon hearing about plans that include the demolition of this undesignated historic property, this nomination was assembled in roughly a few days and submitted by a group of concerned citizens, including the following contributors, who took time out of their lives without notice to assist in protecting Philadelphia's important, and continually endangered built environment:

Oscar Beisert, Architectural Historian and Historic Preservationist
J.M. Duffin, Archivist and Historian
Rachel Hildebrandt, Architectural Historian and Historic Preservationist
Kenneth Milano, Historian and Kensington Extraordinaire
Aaron Wunsch, Architectural Historian and Historic Preservationist

Despite being marketed as a building designed by John Notman for potential reuse, the owners of the undesignated historic property plan to demolish this building for a row of townhomes.

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