

**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: 1018-20 and 1032 N Front St

Postal code: 19123

**2. NAME OF HISTORIC RESOURCE**

Historic Name: Immaculate Conception Church and Rectory

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

**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): from 1870 to 1909

Date(s) of construction and/or alteration: 1870-71 (church); 1881-85, 1909 (rectory)

Architect, engineer, and/or designer: Edwin Forrest Durang (church); George I. Lovatt, Sr. (rectory)

Builder, contractor, and/or artisan: \_\_\_\_\_

Original owner: Archdiocese of Philadelphia, Roman Catholic Church of the Immaculate Conception

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

**CRITERIA FOR DESIGNATION:**

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

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

**8. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES**

*Please attach a bibliography.*

**9. NOMINATOR**

Keeping Society of Philadelphia

Organization (edited/supplemented by Historical Commission staff) Date 24 September 2018

Name with Title Oscar Beisert, architectural historian Email keeper@keepingphiladelphia.org

Street Address 1315 Walnut Street, Suite 320 Telephone 717-602-5002

City, State, and Postal Code Philadelphia, PA 19107

Nominator  is  is not the property owner.

**PHC USE ONLY**

Date of Receipt: 9/25/2018

Correct-Complete  Incorrect-Incomplete Date: 2/6/2019

Date of Notice Issuance: 2/6/2019

Property Owner at Time of Notice:

Name: Archdiocese of Philadelphia

Address: 1723 Race Street

City: Philadelphia State: PA Postal Code: 19103

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**



Looking south at the primary elevation of the Church of the Immaculate Conception.  
Source: Oscar Beisert, 2018.

## **Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary Church & Rectory**

**1018-20 and 1032 N. Front Street**

**Philadelphia, Pennsylvania**

## 5. BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The proposed designation includes both the Church of the Immaculate Conception, constructed in 1870-71, and its Rectory, the northwestern portion of which was constructed in the early 1880s, and the southeastern portion of which was constructed in 1909. The proposed designation includes two parcels, known as 1018-20 and 1032 N Front Street, but the nominated buildings do not fully conform to the boundaries of the parcels. Portions of the Rectory are contained in both parcels.

### 1032 N Front Street:

Beginning at the southwesterly corner of N Front Street and Allen Street and extending northwesterly along the southerly side of Allen Street 89 feet 2 inches to a point, thence southwesterly 110 feet to a point, thence southeasterly in a line parallel with Pollard Street 7 feet to a point, thence southwesterly in a line parallel with Front Street 100 feet to the north side of Pollard Street, thence easterly along the north side of Pollard Street 20 feet, thence northerly in a line parallel with Front Street 20 feet, thence extending easterly in a line parallel with Pollard Street 90 feet to the west side of Front Street, thence northward along the west side of Front Street 159 feet 9 inches to the corner, the place of beginning.

### 1018-20 N Front Street:

Beginning at the northwest corner of N Front Street and Pollard Street, and containing in front or width on N Front Street 20 feet, and extending of that width in length or depth westward between parallel lines 90 feet.

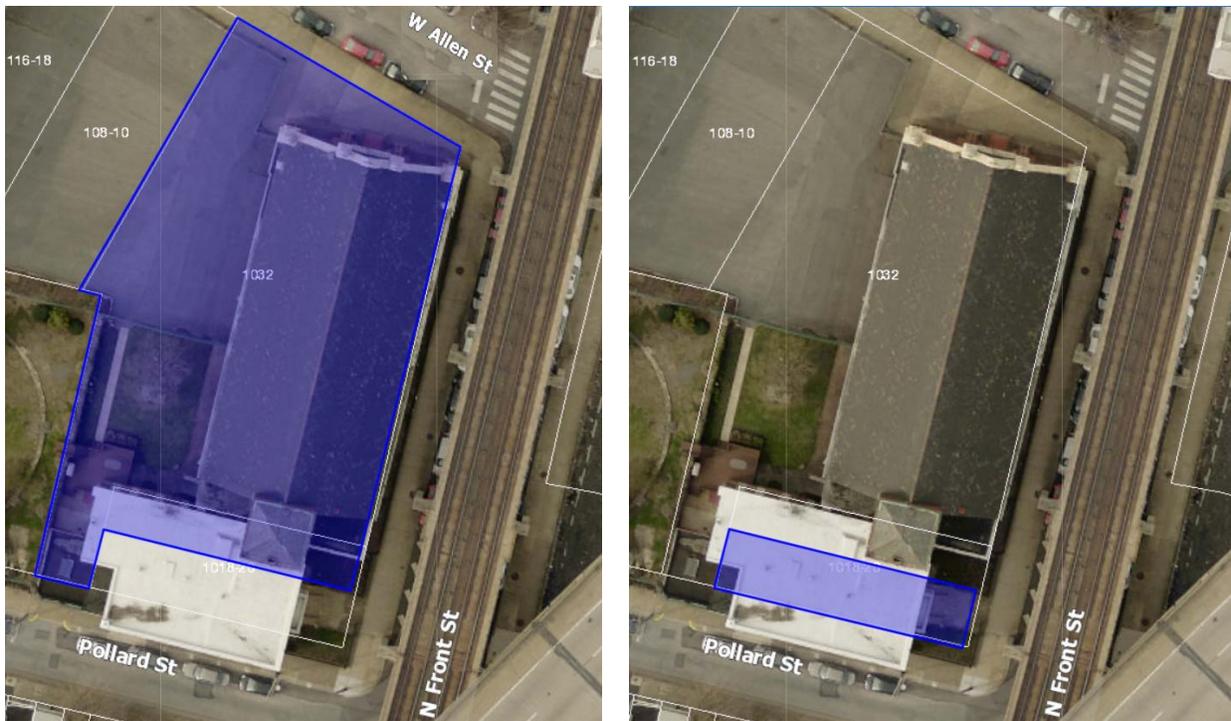


Figure 1: (Left) 1032 N Front Street boundary in blue. (Right) 1018-20 N Front Street boundary in blue.

## 6. PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION

The Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary (Immaculate Conception) Roman Catholic Church (1870-71) and Rectory (1880s/1909) are semi-detached structures that occupy two parcels along N Front Street between Allen Street and Pollard Street in the Northern Liberties neighborhood of Philadelphia. The properties are immediately adjacent to the Market Street Elevated line, and just north of an I-95 overpass. A parochial school associated with the church formerly occupied a portion of the 1032 N Front Street parcel along W Allen Street, but has since been replaced with a surface parking lot. Much of the former surrounding residential and industrial context has been demolished.



Figure 2: Birdseye view looking southwest at the church and rectory. Source: Pictometry, 2018.

### **Immaculate Conception Roman Catholic Church**

The church building, designed by master ecclesiastical architect Edwin Forrest Durang in 1870, is situated at the southwest corner of Allen Street and N Front Street. Designed in the Lombard Romanesque style with Gothic Revival overtones, Immaculate Conception features a red brick exterior set upon a brownstone base and with brownstone and pressed metal details. The patterned slate gable-roofed church is three bays wide by eight bays deep. A truncated four-story and one-bay deep steeple and a one-story, one-bay deep addition appends the south elevation of the church. The rectory building is also attached at the south elevation.



**Figure 3: North (Allen Street) elevation of the Immaculate Conception Roman Catholic Church, 1032 N. Front Street. Source: Philadelphia Historical Commission staff, December 2018.**

### Allen Street (North) Elevation

The building presents an uncommonly wide gable front form facing onto Allen Street. This elevation is both broad and tall with a generous ground floor and an additional one-and-a-half stories in the gable. Almost the entirety of the building's elevations are defined and decorated with elaborate brickwork. The gable front expanse that comprises the primary elevation is divided bays, delineated by four brick pilasters, also known as Lombard bands. The pilasters are not applied but are part of the brickwork and structure of the building, featuring corbelling to give the impression of more formal columns with incised crosses and niches. The pilasters terminate into metal pinnacles, featuring crosses, at the base of which are copper plinths with niches and paneling. The pinnacles emulate the Gothic Revival style. At each end of the primary elevation, the pilasters feature capitals with brownstone blocks with carved architectural details.

Accessed by a short flight of four brownstone steps that span the entire primary elevation, the first floor is dominated by a striking trio of three doorways defined by Romanesque arches. Archivolts and jambs are formed by a recession of brick corbelling that defines the three round arch doorways. Each of these openings features double wooden doors with transoms above separated by wooden lintels. Within the transoms are semi-circular rose or wheel windows. Also delineating the doorway from the round arch transom above are brownstone blocks set within each recess of the corbelled brick surround. Above the central doorway and at the very center of the primary elevation, a Romanesque pier-arch is supported by flanking impostes with decorative capitols that rests on a projecting vertical brick corbel table between the inner pilasters. At the center of this arch, is a large circular aperture, which is an original rose or wheel window. Above the central aperture is a large blind pentagonal panel that is concaved at the bottom, and set within a recession of brick corbelling. At the center of this recessed panel is a vertically-oriented rhombus-shaped window created by brick corbelling. Above this panel is the central and highest point of the gable end, featuring various decorative elements and a cross at the top. The outer two bays are mirror images of each other, defined by large triangular panels that are recessed and formed by brick corbelling. The inner panels feature brick corbelling at the uppermost portion of each bays of blind brick paneling. The gable is delineated by an elaborate corbelled and metal cornice, broken by the central pilasters.



**Figure 4: The primary (north) elevation of the Church of the Immaculate Conception along Allen Street. Source: Oscar Beisert, 2018.**



Figure 5: The primary, Allen Street elevation of the Church of the Immaculate Conception. Source: Oscar Beisert, 2018

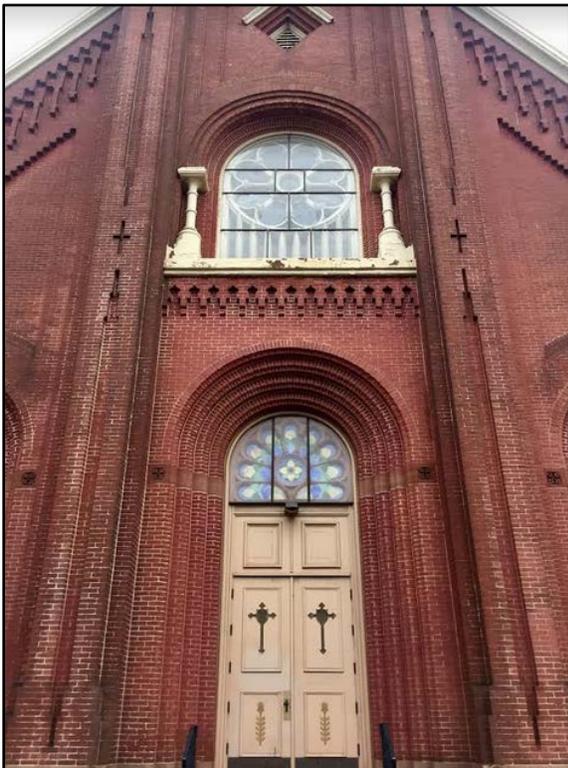


Figure 6: (Left) Detail of the existing central entrance bay on the Allen Street elevation. Source: Oscar Beisert, 2018. (Right) Original door detail, visible in 1916 photograph. The fanlight and paneled transom remain, but the door slabs have been replaced. Source: The Library Company of Philadelphia.

### East and West Side Elevations

The side elevations of the church are eight bays deep, with an arcade of arched stained glass windows separated by vertical brick pilasters. Each bay is defined by the flanking pilasters and topped with rows of brick corbelling. Single arched basement windows are set within the brownstone base and centered within each bay. A simple pressed metal cornice runs the length of the gabled roof, which is visible from both side elevations, and clad in patterned slate.



**Figure 7: West elevation of the Church and north elevation of the Rectory. Source: Oscar Beisert, 2018.**



Figure 8: Details of the northeast corner of the church. Source: Oscar Beisert, 2018.



Figure 9: East elevation of the church along N Front Street. Source: Cyclomedia, 2018.



**Figure 10: (Left) The south elevation of the church sanctuary and the square brick tower at its southern end. (Right) Southeastern corner of the church, along N Front Street. Source: Oscar Beisert, 2018.**

### South Elevation

At the rear center of the church is a square brick tower that rises slightly above the roofline of the south gable end, the base of a tall steeple that was either never completed or was removed prior to 1913 (see .<sup>1</sup> However, the tower also achieves an Italian Romanesque stylistic appearance, emulating many ruined or incomplete towers of ancient times that survive in Europe today. The brick tower is defined by vertical brick pilasters at each corner at the center of which are pairs of round arch windows on both the second and third floors with two-over-two windows. The top, fourth floor of the tower features a rectangular aperture that is divided into four small windows by columns. A horizontal corbel table rises above the fourth floor on each elevation of the tower and unites with the Lombard bands. The east facing portion of the tower is visible from N. Front Street, though the ground floor is obscured by a small, single story addition that is of the same, red brick construction and design. The upper floors of the tower contain two windows per floor at the second and third levels and a three-part window on the fourth level. The rear and west side elevations of the tower are largely obscured by the rectory.

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<sup>1</sup> A rendering of the church from c. 1880 and a newspaper article written during the building's construction indicate the intention of a prominent tower and spire, but the spire does not appear in early-twentieth century photographs and no information has been found indicating that the tower was removed. It is possible that the spire was never constructed as intended owing to the fact that the ground was swampy and "...considerable difficulty was experienced in finding solid ground for the foundations..." during construction, according to Daniel H. Mahoney's c. 1895 *Historical Sketches of the Catholic Churches and Institutions of Philadelphia*. It is also possible that the spire was damaged and removed before 1913. An October 1878 newspaper article recounting the destruction of a recent tornado notes that, among the damage done to large swaths of the city, the "large gilt cross on the spire of the Church of the Immaculate Conception at Front and Canal Street, was blown down." (*The Times* (Philadelphia), 24 October 1878, p. 1).

## Rectory

Attached to the south elevation of the church tower is rectory, the existing visible portions of which were constructed between 1881-1885 and in 1909. The brown-red brick rectory is three stories tall, set on an elevated basement, and features a flat roof. The 1909 addition by George I. Lovatt, Sr. is visible along N Front Street (east elevation) and on the street-fronting south elevation along Pollard Street, and combines elements of the Romanesque Revival and Arts and Crafts styles. The east elevation of the rectory is three bays wide and features a prominent box bay window supported by heavy brackets. The bay window contains three window openings: a wider center window flanked by two narrower windows. Beneath the bay window is central, arched doorway with double doors and an elaborate arched transom. To either side of the entrance are single, flat-arch brick window openings. The second floor features double windows in flat-arch openings. The third floor, which is separated from the lower floors by a brick beltcourse, features three banks of biforate windows with inset basketweave brickwork. All of the existing windows appear to be replacement windows. The original windows, visible in historic photographs and in Lovatt's drawings were one-over-one wood windows whose shape corresponded to their openings. A Lombard band and corbelled brick cornice tops the east and south elevations of the rectory.

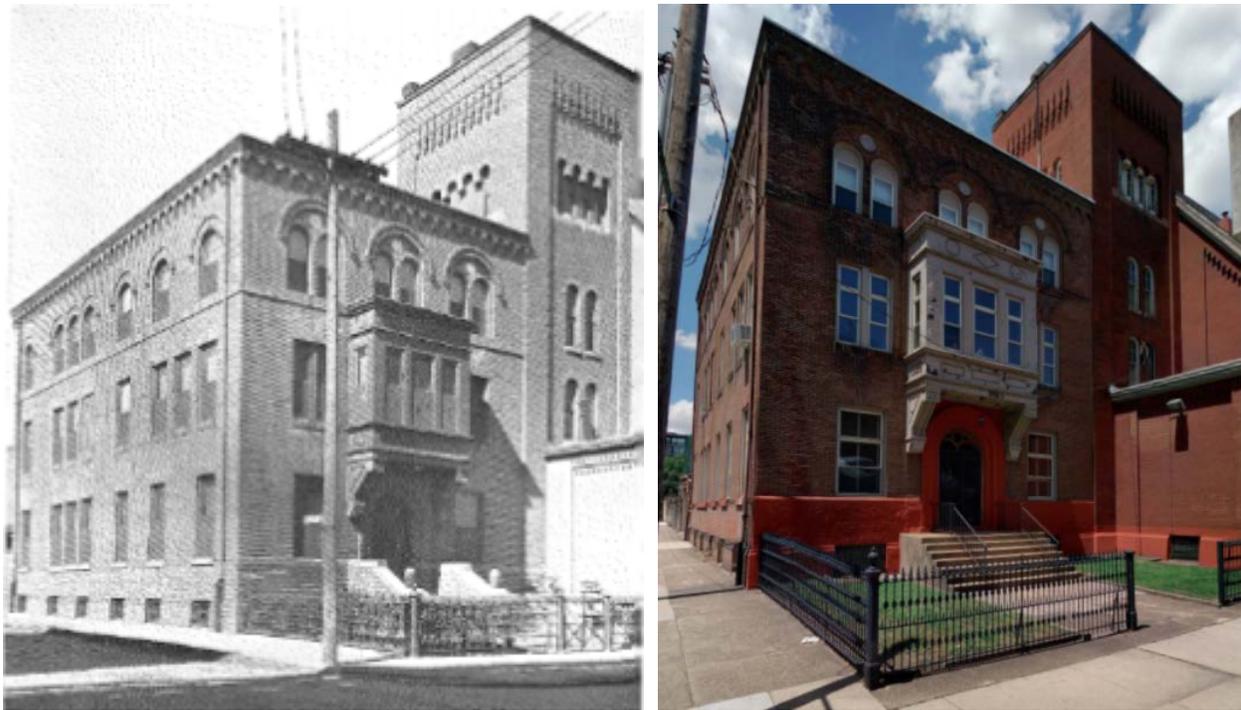


Figure 11: Left, view of the Rectory from the intersection of Pollard Street and N. Front Street. Right, the Rectory in 2018. Source: Cyclomedia.



Figure 12: East elevation of the rectory along N Front Street. Source: Oscar Beisert, 2018.

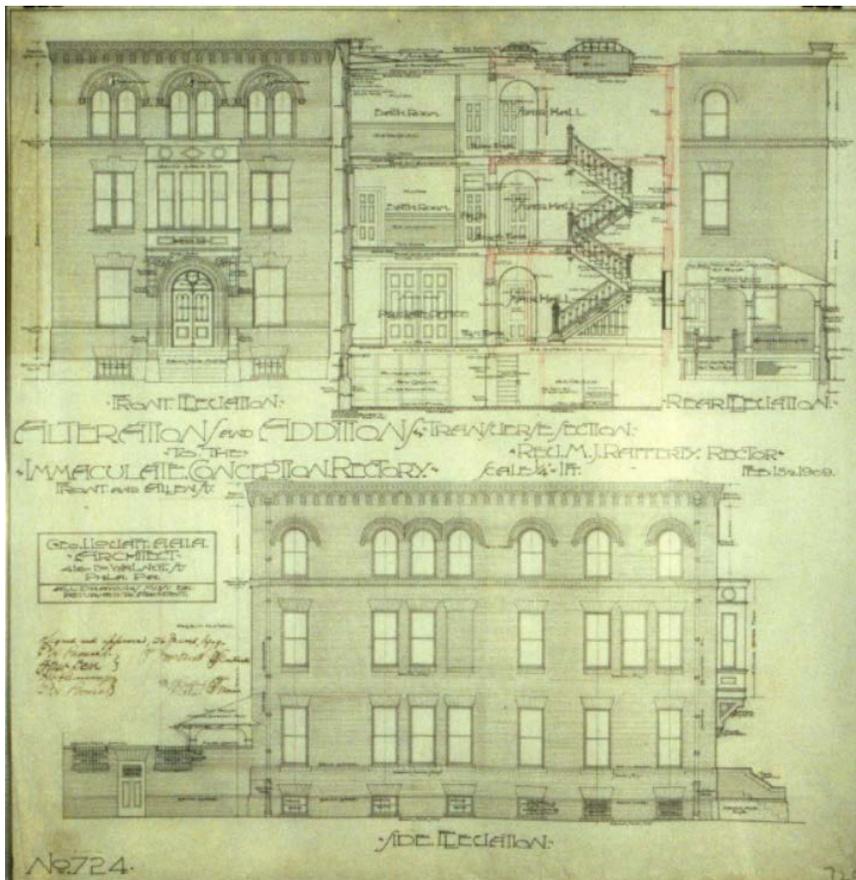


Figure 13: Lovatt's drawings for the Rectory addition in 1909. Source: Philadelphia Architects and Buildings website, Lovatt Collection, Athenaeum of Philadelphia.

The south elevation of the rectory is seven irregular bays wide. The basement, first, and second floors feature brick flat arch window openings. The basement windows, which have been infilled with glass block, feature brownstone sills, as do the first-floor windows. The second floor windows feature brick sills. The third floor, which is separated from the second by a brick beltcourse that continues from the east elevation, features round arch windows with decorative archivolt trim.

The west elevation of the rectory is visible from Pollard Street and shows two construction campaigns. The portion of the rectory to the north dates to between 1876-1886 and the portion to the south dates to 1909.



**Figure 14: South elevation of the rectory, along Pollard Street. Source: Historical Commission staff, December 2018.**



**Figure 15: West elevation of the rectory, from Pollard Street. The portion of the rectory to the north (at the center of the photograph) dates to between 1875-1886. Source: Historical Commission staff, December 2018.**

## Church Interior

Interior images are provided for informational purposes only. The interior is not proposed for designation.

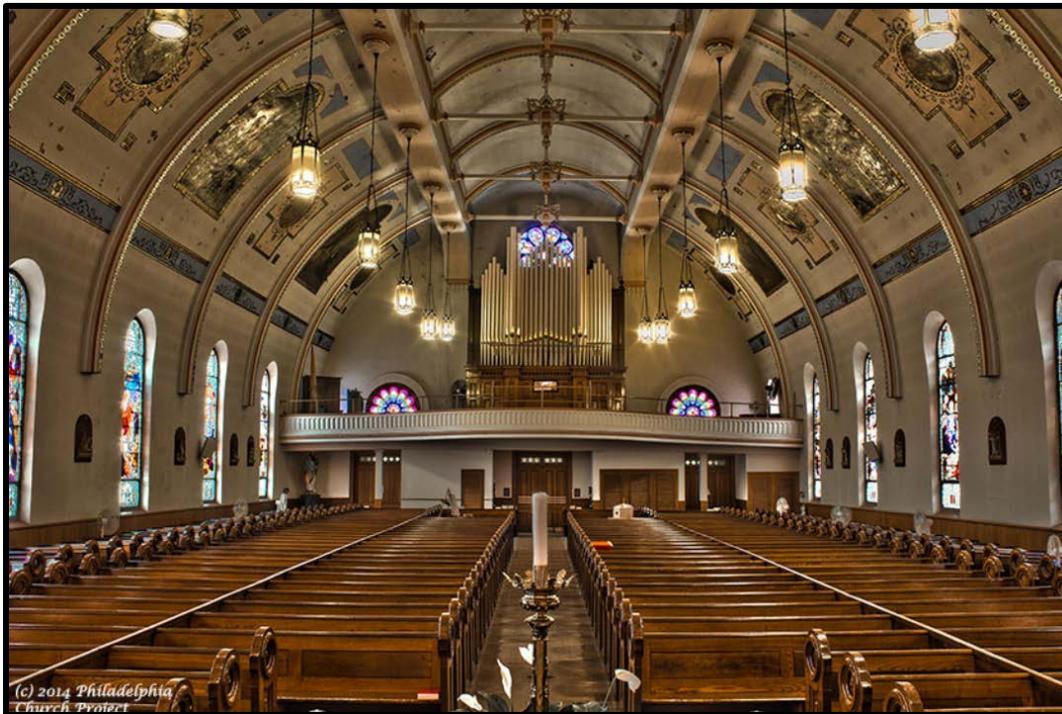
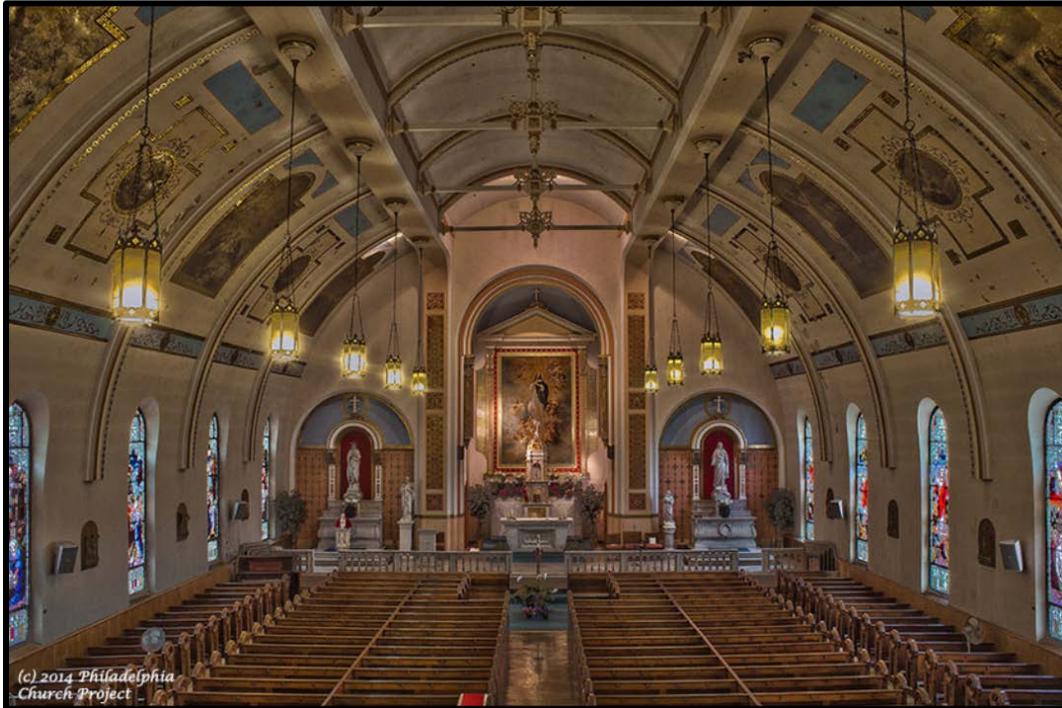


Figure 16: (Top) Looking south within the interior of the Church of the Immaculate Conception. (Bottom) Looking north within the interior of the Church of the Immaculate Conception. Source: The Philadelphia Church Project, 2014.



**Figure 17: (Top) Looking south within the interior of the Church of the Immaculate Conception. (Bottom) Looking south within the interior of the Church of the Immaculate Conception. Both photographs were published in the fiftieth anniversary booklet of the church. Source: Pamphlet: “Golden Jubilee Church of the Immaculate Conception, Front and Allen Street, Philadelphia, Sunday, October 12<sup>th</sup>, 1919” (Philadelphia: 1919), Historical Society of Pennsylvania.**

## 7. STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Immaculate Conception Roman Catholic Church and Rectory at 1018-20 and 1032 N. Front Street are significant historic resources that merit designation by the Philadelphia Historical Commission and inclusion on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places. The subject properties satisfy the following Criteria for Designation, as enumerated in Section 14-1004 of the Philadelphia Code: Criteria d, e, and j.

- (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 or historical heritage of the community.

The period of significance dates to the time of design and construction: 1870-1909.



Figure 18: Lithograph of the Roman Catholic Church of the Immaculate Conception, likely based on the architectural drawings of Edwin Forrest Durang. This dates to c. 1880. Source: Historic American Buildings Survey, Creator. *Church of the Immaculate Conception, North Front Street, Philadelphia, Philadelphia County, PA.* Pennsylvania Philadelphia County, 1933. Documentation Compiled After. Photograph. <https://www.loc.gov/item/pa1159/>.

***Criterion J: Exemplifies the cultural, political, economic, social or historical heritage of the community.***

Referred to in 1919 by the parish as having a “sentinel-like” presence in the neighborhood, Immaculate Conception exemplifies the cultural, social, and historical heritage of Philadelphia’s evolving Great Experiment and, specifically, the influx of Irish-born Catholic immigrants to the nineteenth-century city.<sup>2</sup> In 1869, when the Bishop Wood bought the subject property and the Rev. Michael Filan was directed to establish the Immaculate Conception parish, the city’s Irish-born immigrant population was nearing the all-time record high of 96,698 in 1870.<sup>3</sup> For much of the 1860s, the Archdiocese of Philadelphia had been enlarging the capacity of the urban and regional church, creating new parishes throughout their jurisdiction.<sup>4</sup>

The formal expansion of the church was a response to the significant influx of immigrants to Philadelphia from the western and southern parts of Ireland, a migration that had begun almost two decades earlier during and in the aftermath of the Irish Potato Famine (1845-49). When the parish laid the cornerstone of the subject building at the southwest corner N. Front and Allen Streets in 1870, Irish-born immigrants made up roughly 14% of Philadelphia’s population, which accounts for just over half of the city’s larger foreign-born population, then at a record high of roughly 27%.<sup>5</sup> The establishment of the Immaculate Conception parish and the construction program that ensued after 1869 was a direct action of the Archdiocese of Philadelphia to serve a specific population of poor, Irish-born immigrants living on the Delaware Waterfront, in Northern Liberties, and South Kensington, including the lower part of Fishtown. These immigrants worked in the mills and factories that comprised a significant section of the city that was central to what would become known as the Workshop of the World.

The parish recognized this as an important part of its history in 1919 when the church celebrated its golden anniversary:

Fifty years ago in the territory between St. Augustine’s and St. Michael’s and St. Ann’s there was a large number of Catholics. These were most sturdy Irish Catholics who had received their Baptism of suffering for the faith in that ever persecuted isle of Catholicity, and who, coming out to this country, united their lessons of faith to the recent suffering and persecuted St. Michael’s and St. Augustine’s and to the resisting St. Ann’s. It was for these Catholics that the parish of the Immaculate Conception was established.<sup>6</sup>

This parish, this “sentinel,” served that working-class population, and was an established support network that helped maintain and elevate its Irish Catholic parish. In its first fifty years to the time of its closing, the parish served a local, working-class population, as both a religious and educational center, providing numerous services to its neediest members. However, nearing the end of the first quarter of the twentieth century, the parish also included a more economically and socially diverse mixture of parishioners:

One of our own schoolboys, now a brilliant young attorney at law—the Honorable John P. Connelly—is the City Solicitor of Philadelphia. Mr. James B. Sheehan, one of most loyal supporters, is the present Register of Wills for Philadelphia. Mr. I.D. Hetzell and

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<sup>2</sup> *Golden Jubilee Church of the Immaculate Conception, Front and Allen Street, Philadelphia, Sunday, October 12<sup>th</sup>, 1919* (Philadelphia: 1919).

<sup>3</sup> Allen Freeman Davis and Mark H. Haller, *The Peoples of Philadelphia: A History Ethnic Groups and Lower-Class Life, 1790-1940* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1973), 204.

<sup>4</sup> James Connelly, *The History of the Archdiocese of Philadelphia* (Philadelphia: 1976), 264.

<sup>5</sup> *Irish Emigration to the United States: What It Has Been and What It Is* (New York: The Catholic Publication Society, 1873), 162.

<sup>6</sup> *Golden Jubilee Church of the Immaculate Conception*.

Dr. R.D. Burke, both well-known members of this parish, are members of the City Council. The fame of another one of our members of Doctor Peter F. Moylan. His skill as a physician, and his charitable deeds mark him as a man worthy of the much coveted admission into the Knights of St. Gregory.

While this parish was in no way the largest or the wealthiest within the larger context of Catholicity in Philadelphia, Immaculate Conception is a parish that is representative of an important period of immigration, when Irish-born immigrants made up the largest component of the city's foreign-born population. This parish and its "sacred edifice" was constructed as part of a diocesan directive to enlarge the church's urban capacity in order to serve the influx of Irish-born immigrants that lived and worked in the larger industrial neighborhood. What started as a planned development would, overtime, become a solid parish of working and middle class Irish-American Philadelphians. The subject complex is one of the significant tangible resources of the cultural, economic, social, and historical heritage of this specific Irish Catholic population that is representative of the larger historic context of the period in Philadelphia.

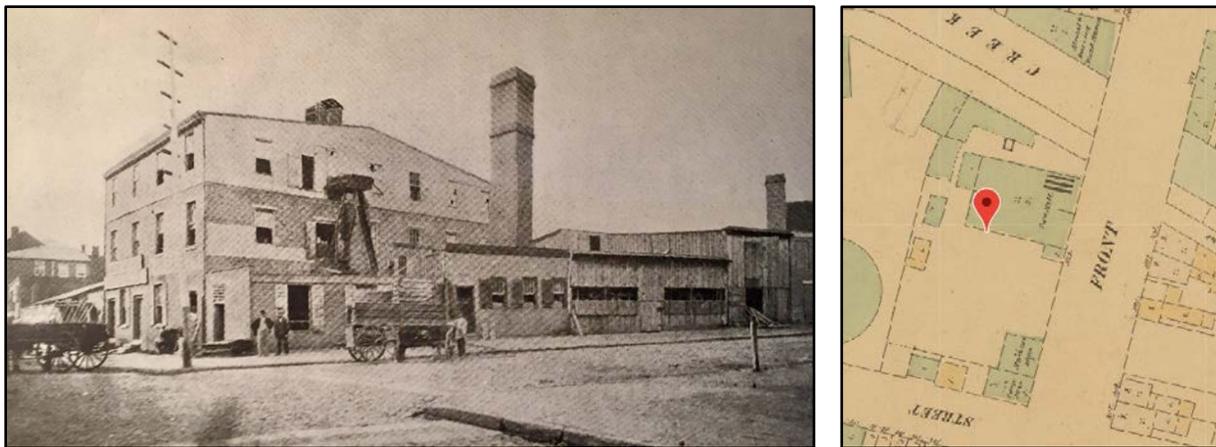


Figure 19: Left: The former industrial complex at the southwest corner of N. Front and Allen Streets, the current site of the Church of the Immaculate Conception. Source: *Golden Jubilee Church of the Immaculate Conception, Front and Allen Street, Philadelphia, Sunday, October 12<sup>th</sup>, 1919* (Philadelphia: 1919). Right: 1858-1860 Philadelphia Atlas, Hexamer & Locher, showing the site prior to the construction of the Church of the Immaculate Conception. Source: Greater Philadelphia GeoHistory Network.

### Irish Immigration to Philadelphia, 1845-1870

In 1850, approximately 72,000 Philadelphians were Irish-born, constituting about 17.6% of the city's population. This influx of Irish immigrants to Philadelphia was a reaction to the Irish Potato Famine (1845-1850), an economic and social crisis caused by a potato blight in the western and southern parts of Ireland. These issues were exacerbated by Great Britain's policies that allowed neglect and eviction of Irish farmers and laborers. As a result of the famine, more than one quarter of the Irish population—more than one million, immigrated to other countries. Nearly 10% of the 900,000 Irish immigrants to the United States came to Philadelphia. Between 1850 and 1870, immigrants poured into the Quaker City by the thousands, resulting in 96,698 Irish-born Philadelphians by 1870. This population increase constituted a 25% rise since 1850.<sup>7</sup> The second largest city in the country, Philadelphia consisted of 700,000 souls in 1870, and the Irish-born inhabitants amounted to roughly 14% of the population.<sup>8</sup> The immigrant population of Philadelphia was represented roughly 27% of the city in 1870, and the Irish stood for more than half of that statistic.<sup>9</sup> Despite the large influx of immigrants into Philadelphia from that time forward,

<sup>7</sup> Davis and Haller, *The Peoples of Philadelphia*, 204.

<sup>8</sup> Davis and Haller, *The Peoples of Philadelphia*, 9.

<sup>9</sup> Davis and Haller, *The Peoples of Philadelphia*, 204.

the Ninth Population Census of the United States captured the decade with the highest percent of foreign-born Philadelphians in history.

### **Establishment & Construction of Immaculate Conception**

“Far apart as are St. Augustine’s and St. Michael’s, there was not between them for thirty-six years a church for English-speaking Catholics.” Rev. Michael Filan was selected to lead the formation of Immaculate Conception in July 1869.<sup>10</sup> The site for the parish’s new building had already been secured at the southwest corner of N. Front and Allen Streets, which was described by the parish historian as home to a “spoke factory,” with land described as being “little better than a swamp, at least its north end, where a creek had formerly flowed towards the Delaware.”<sup>11</sup> Father Filan’s first duty in establishing the parish was to oversee the erection of a temporary chapel. The small, one-story brick edifice, measuring 48 feet by 95 feet, was completed between August and October 1869. Father Filan had no trouble filling his temporary chapel, and, before long, the industrial laborers of the nearby factories and mills of Northern Liberties and Lower Kensington formed a parish that outsized the building.<sup>12</sup> The Archdiocese commissioned architect Edwin Forrest Durang to complete plans for the new church.<sup>13</sup>

In July of 1870, pilings were driven in the swampy ground to ensure solid ground for a commodious house of worship. Construction of the church began in the latter part of August 1870.<sup>14</sup> The laying of the corner stone came on September 10, 1870, which was celebrated by a “Large Religious Procession”<sup>15</sup> The New Year, 1871, led to predictions that Immaculate Conception’s new building would be completed by the close of the year for a “Divine service on Christmas Day.”<sup>16</sup>

*The Philadelphia Inquirer* described the construction of the new house of worship in September 1871:

The work on the new church of the Immaculate Conception, now building at Front and Canal Streets, is going on rapidly under the direction of the architect, Edward [sic] F. Durang. The brick work is progressing so that the walls will be ready for the rafters in less than three weeks. The building is being erected in the Romanesque style, pressed brick, with brown sandstone dressings, and has a frontage on Canal street of 62 feet, by 130 feet in depth on Front Street, with tower and spire in rear 130 feet in height. The interior ceiling will be vaulted 45 feet high, with side bays encircled with panels, while the centre portion will be decorated with Scriptural historical subjects. The moulded ribs will spring from corbels on the walls.<sup>17</sup>

The opening of the new church included “Imposing Ceremonies” and a Solemn High Mass in January 1872. The parish priest, Father Filan, administered the well-attended ceremony.<sup>18</sup> The territory originally assigned to the parish extended from 6th Street at the west, Shackamaxon Street at the east, Girard Avenue at the north, and Green Street at the south. In 1873, under the leadership of Father Filan, this territory was expanded to Columbia Street (now Cecil B. Moore Avenue) at the north and the Delaware River at the east.

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<sup>10</sup> *Golden Jubilee Church of the Immaculate Conception*.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>13</sup> Historic American Buildings Survey, Creator. *Church of the Immaculate Conception, North Front Street, Philadelphia, Philadelphia County, PA*. Pennsylvania Philadelphia, 1933. Documentation Compiled After. Photograph. <https://www.loc.gov/item/pa1159/>.

<sup>14</sup> *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, 23 August 1870, 2.

<sup>15</sup> *The Evening Telegraph*, 10 September 1870, 8.

<sup>16</sup> *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, 2 December 1871, 2.

<sup>17</sup> *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, 2 September 1870, 2.

<sup>18</sup> *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, 23 January 1872, 2.

By February 1879, roughly five years after the new building was opened, Father Filan and his lone assistant, Rev. Joseph F. O’Keefe, served a parish of “the working people of lower Kensington,” with attendance at its second mass reaching nearly 950.<sup>19</sup>

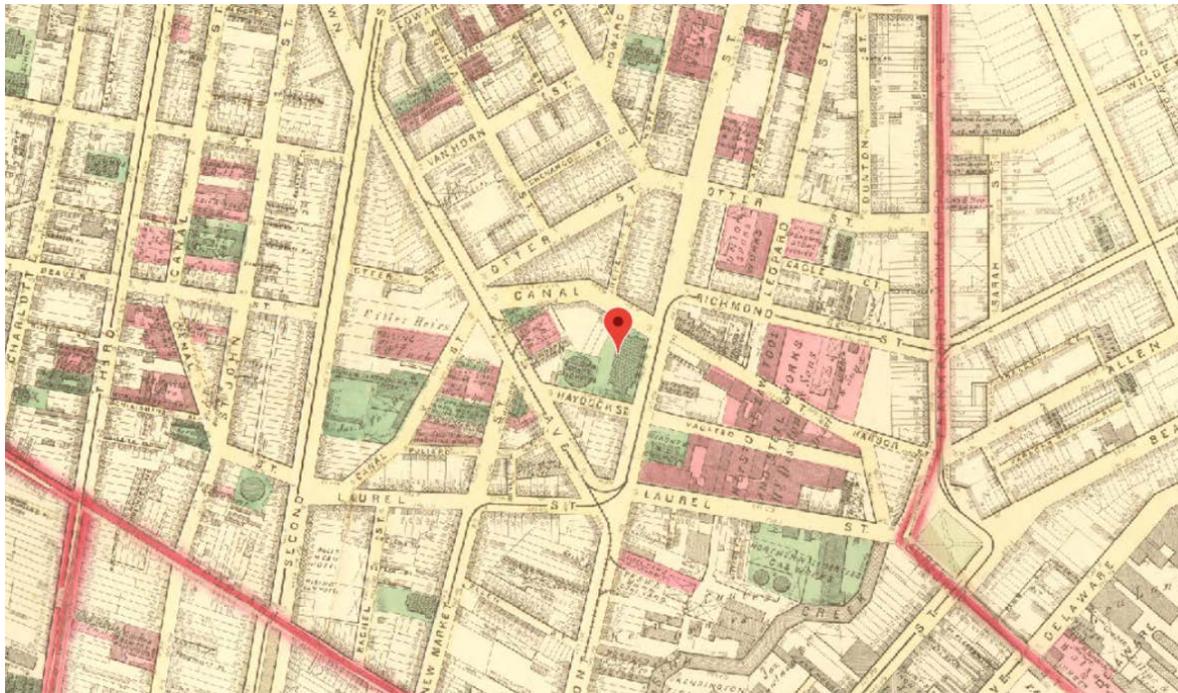


Figure 20: The 1875 G.M. Hopkins Atlas shows Immaculate Conception in the context of a working-class neighborhood of dense rowhouses and various industrial facilities. Source: Greater Philadelphia GeoHistory Network.

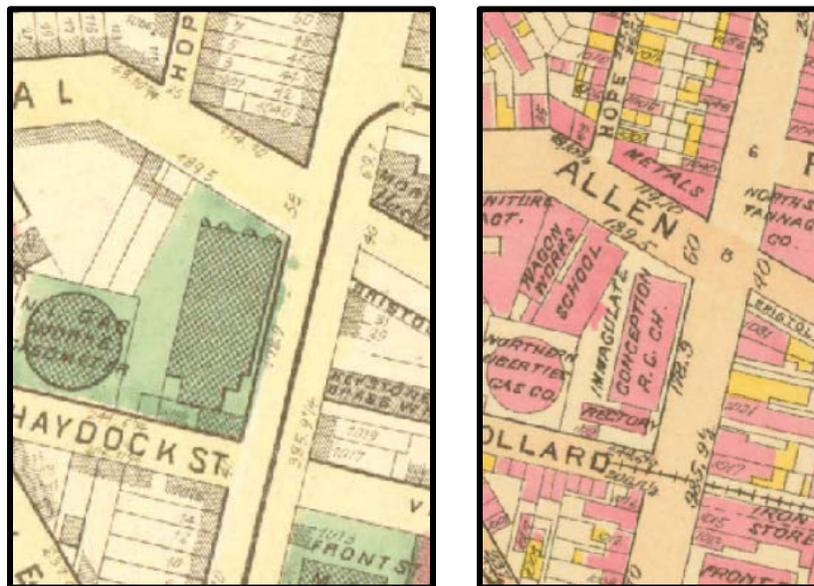
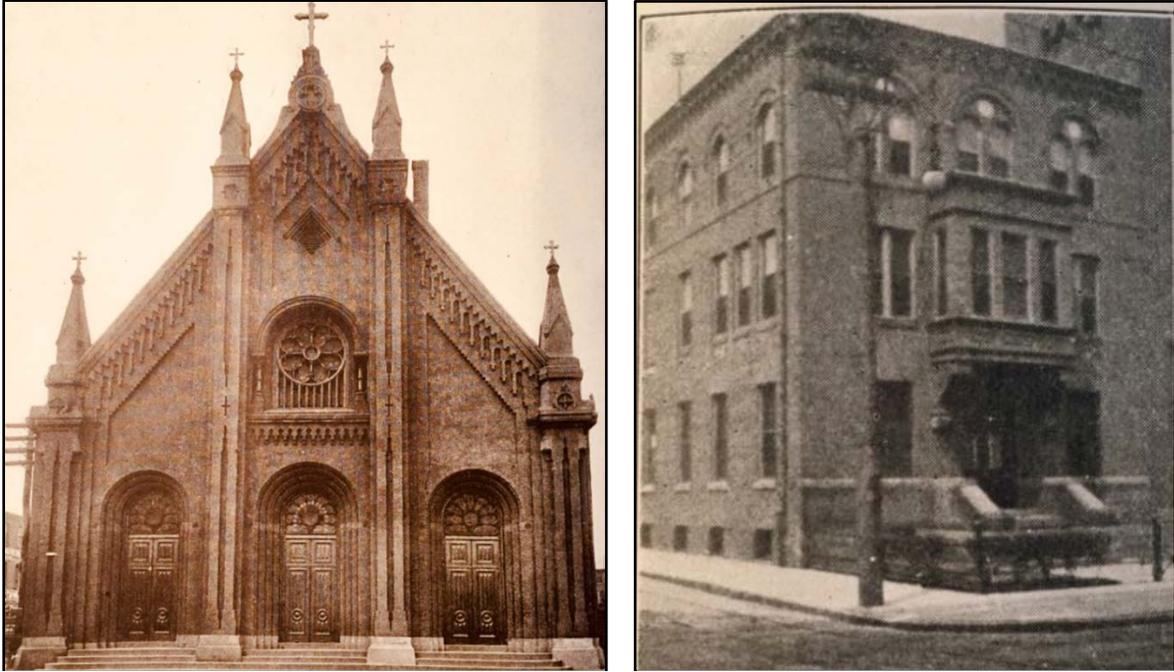


Figure 21: 1875 atlas detail (Left) and 1895 atlas detail (Right). By 1895, the church had purchased the adjoining lot to the south and constructed a rectory building, and the lots to the west and constructed a school. Source: Greater Philadelphia GeoHistory Network.

<sup>19</sup> Attendance of the three masses was published by *The Philadelphia Inquirer*: first 258; second, 948; third, 637. *The Times*, 24 February 1879, 4.



**Figure 22: “Progress of steel construction in Front St. at bent 99, looking south, June 19, 1916.” [including Immaculate Conception R.C. Church, at Allen St., two blocks bel. Girard Ave.].” Source: the Library Company of Philadelphia.**



**Figure 23: Early 20<sup>th</sup> century photographs of the Church and Rectory of the Immaculate Conception, Northern Liberties. Source: *Golden Jubilee Church of the Immaculate Conception, Front and Allen Street, Philadelphia, Sunday, October 12<sup>th</sup>, 1919* (Philadelphia: 1919).**

***Criterion D: Embodies distinguishing characteristics of an architectural style or engineering specimen***

Immaculate Conception is a distinctive and unique local revivalist example of the Lombard Romanesque style, as interpreted by Edwin Forrest Durang during the Victorian era in Philadelphia. While the house of worship is a definite specimen of Victorian eclectic revivalism of the early 1870s, its physical form, scale, and overall architectural treatment appears to have been most influenced by the Lombard Romanesque style. Overall, the Romanesque Revival style, popular between 1840 and 1900, is characterized by round arches and heavy, masonry construction, arcades, barrel vaults, columns, decorative arcading, masonry walls, round or semi-circular arches, solidity and strength—all of which are present in the design of Immaculate Conception. Churches are commonly designed in the Romanesque style, and among the most salient features, in addition to those aforementioned, are portals and towers.

Often called First Romanesque and rooted in the architectural forms and features of Lombard architecture of the 7<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup>, and 9<sup>th</sup> centuries, the origins of the Lombard Romanesque style surface in Lombardy's ecclesiastical structures during the 10<sup>th</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup>, and even 12<sup>th</sup> centuries as one of the first streams of Romanesque architecture.



**Figure 24: Left:** Chiesa Romanica di San Ferreolo, Grosso, Italy, c. 11<sup>th</sup> century, a typical gable front Lombard Romanesque church. Source: Wikipedia. **Right:** San Vincenzo in Prato, Milan, Italy, c. 10<sup>th</sup> Century. Source: medioevo.org.

Like many of the early examples of the Lombard Romanesque, Immaculate Conception presents a relatively ornate façade that is fashioned almost entirely of masonry—in this case, red brick. Some of the earliest of its antecedents appear today to have been built almost entirely of brick and/or stone masonry, seeming to have had very little in the way of applied architectural embellishments. The Basilica of San Vincenzo in Prato, Milan, is one of the earliest examples of Lombard architecture that retains its original Palaeo-Christian appearance, the church itself being rebuilt in the early 10<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>20</sup> This building, like the subject property, is constructed almost entirely of earthen-colored masonry, featuring a dominant gable-front defined by its corbel table and three round arch openings at the ground floor.<sup>21</sup> The Chiesa Romanica di San Ferreolo, Grosso, Italy, c. 11<sup>th</sup> century, is a small, vernacular example of the Lombard Romanesque that also boasts a gable front with similar corbelling at the cornice level, as well as a round arch opening at center and vertical pilasters or Lombard bands at the corners. This structure too is also built entirely of masonry.

One of the more unique characteristics of Immaculate Conception in the context of Italian-inspired churches in Philadelphia is the form of the building. Unlike many other local examples that may relate to the Lombard Romanesque, the nave and the aisles of the building are all contained under one, single pitch roof structure. Other churches, halls, and even industrial buildings separate the nave and the aisles with the former under one primary roof structure that often forms a clerestory, with the latter below under separate appending roof structures. The façade of the Frankford Presbyterian Church (John McArthur, Jr., 1859) presents this building form, though its clerestory façade is simply a false front, but is still distinctly of the Lombard Romanesque family. Many other small churches were executed in this style, but few were without the clerestory level. Another building type that often took advantage of the Italianate motif were single-story production sheds with clerestory levels. The Morse Elevator Works (c. 1899) on Frankford Avenue had several of these sheds and used the Italian roofline and corbel tables to stylize their utilitarian facades.

<sup>20</sup> Arthur Kingsley Porter, *Lombard Architecture*, vol. 1 (Yale University Press, 1917), 70.

<sup>21</sup> <http://www.lombardiabeniculturali.it/architetture/schede-complete/LMD80-00347/>



**Figure 25: Left: The Presbyterian Church of Frankford. Source: Pinterest. Right: First Independent Christian Church of Kensington. Source: Hidden City Philadelphia.**



**Figure 26: The production shed of the Morse Elevator Company, Frankford Avenue, Fishtown. Source: Hidden City Philadelphia.**

The presentation and treatment of the primary elevation of Immaculate Conception is also evocative of the Lombard Romanesque style. Immaculate Conception is divided into three sections by four pilasters, emulating enumerable antecedents, ancient and well known landmarks, including the Basilica di Michele Maggiore in Pavia, dating to the eleventh century.<sup>22</sup> Built entirely of stone, this building is a well-known specimen of the Lombard Romanesque, featuring a three part façade delineated by four pilasters. The building also features a round arch doorway in each section of the façade and the entire cornice is defined by an elaborate form of corbel tables and in many cases Lombard banding. Also in Pavia, San Pietro in Ciel d’Oro, the Augustinian basilica, c. 1132, features four pilasters that delineate the façade’s three principal sections.<sup>23</sup> Each section features Lombard banding, corbel tables, and a round arch apertures.

<sup>22</sup> Porter, *Lombard Architecture*, 1: 443.

<sup>23</sup> Porter, *Lombard Architecture*, 1: 450, 477, 480.



Figure 27: Left: Basilica di San Michele Maggiore, piazza San Michele, Pavia, Italy, dating to the 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> centuries. The building is an example of the Lombard-Romanesque style. Source: Wikipedia. Right: San Pietro in Ciel d'Oro, an Augustinian basilica in Pavia, Italy, c. 1132. Source: Wikipedia.

Being an early style, the Lombard Romanesque evolved over time to take on various features of the later stylistic periods. These features included rose and wheel windows; pinnacles and spires atop Lombard bands; apertures and portals with Gothic arches; etc. Elements of the Gothic influence in the design of Immaculate Conception are also present in the execution of the primary elevation, including the rose or wheel window motif and the employment of pinnacles.



Figure 28: Left: The Cathedral of Ruvo di Puglia, Italy, built between the 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> centuries, with later alterations, features corbelling that is very similar to that of the subject property. Source: Wikipedia. Right: Church of St. Mary and St. Nicholas, Wilton, England, built 1845; designed by Thomas Henry Wyatt and C. Brandon, 1844. Source:

[https://history.wiltshire.gov.uk/community/images\\_search.php?atoz=&startrow=0&offset=10&mediatype=&item=&community=&community\\_in=Wilton&choice=&dir=Next](https://history.wiltshire.gov.uk/community/images_search.php?atoz=&startrow=0&offset=10&mediatype=&item=&community=&community_in=Wilton&choice=&dir=Next)

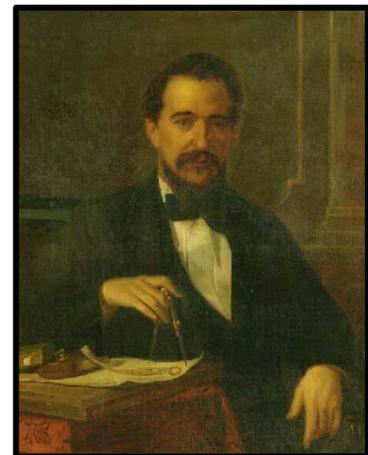
**Criterion E: Is the work of a designer, architect, landscape architect or designer, or engineer whose work has significantly influenced the historical, architectural, economic, social, or cultural development of the City, Commonwealth or Nation.**

The Church of the Immaculate Conception, constructed between 1870 and 1872, is an early and distinctive, albeit relatively small-scale, work of Edwin Forrest Durang (1829-1911). The rectory, which was altered and added to more or less its current appearance in 1909, was designed by George I. Lovatt, Sr., another important turn of the century ecclesiastical architect. Along with Henry D. Dagit, Durang and Lovatt were the preeminent designers of Catholic church and institutional buildings during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, their works significantly influencing the architectural, cultural, and historic development of the city of Philadelphia and beyond. Despite a fifty year age gap, George I. Lovatt, was a “formidable competitor for the considerable Catholic Church work which was initiated in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.”<sup>24</sup>

Edwin Forrest Durang was one of the great ecclesiastical architects of Philadelphia history—a man of notable accomplishment and unusual talent. His oeuvre possesses an impressive array of designs that represent a wide variety of architectural styles, as well as building forms and types. Within that broad range of commissions and designs, the Church of the Immaculate Conception is a distinctive, early surviving representative of his skill as an architect, and the diverse stylistic mark he made on the aesthetic and built environment of the Quaker City, and the range of masterful ecclesiastical commissions he completed for the Archdiocese of Philadelphia.

#### **Edwin Forrest Durang (1829-1911), Architect**

A member of the distinguished theatrical family, Edwin Forrest Durang was born in New York City on April 17, 1829, he was the son of Charles Durang (1794/96-1870), actor, author, ballet-master, dancer, prompter, and stage-manager, and Mary White (1798-1880), actress, both of whom were accomplished in the field of acting, from Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. His father, Charles Durang, and his uncle, Richard Ferdinand Durang, were the first to perform “The Star-Spangled Banner,” and his brother Charles Durang (1791-1870) also worked as the director and prompter at both the Chestnut Street Theatre and the American Theatre in Philadelphia. In addition, he was the grandson of John Durang (1768-1822), known to be America’s first native-born actor.<sup>25</sup>



**Figure 29: Edwin Forrest Durang (1829-1911), Architect. Painted by Lorenzo C. Scataglia, c. 1874. Source: Durang Collection, Athenaeum of Philadelphia.**

In Durang’s early years, prior to becoming an architect, he worked briefly as a lithographer and an engraver. In 1848, he partnered with Peter E. Abel in the creation and publication of political cartoons. By 1850, Durang is living in Philadelphia with his parents, a household comprised of at least eight other Durangs.<sup>26</sup> In 1853, “Mr. Durang & Daughters” advertised the reopening of their “Dancing Academy” at the Assembly Buildings, at which time the family occupied a house at 140 Spring Garden Street.<sup>27</sup> His brothers John T. and Oscar Durang were also employed in the printing trade. By this time, Durang appears to have produced a drawing of the “Jones Memorial,” which carries the following inscription:

<sup>24</sup> Sandra L. Tatman. “Edwin Forrest Durang (1829-1911),” Philadelphia Architects and Buildings. (Philadelphia). <[https://www.philadelphiabuildings.org/pab/app/ar\\_display.cfm/23154](https://www.philadelphiabuildings.org/pab/app/ar_display.cfm/23154)> Accessed 24 September 2018.

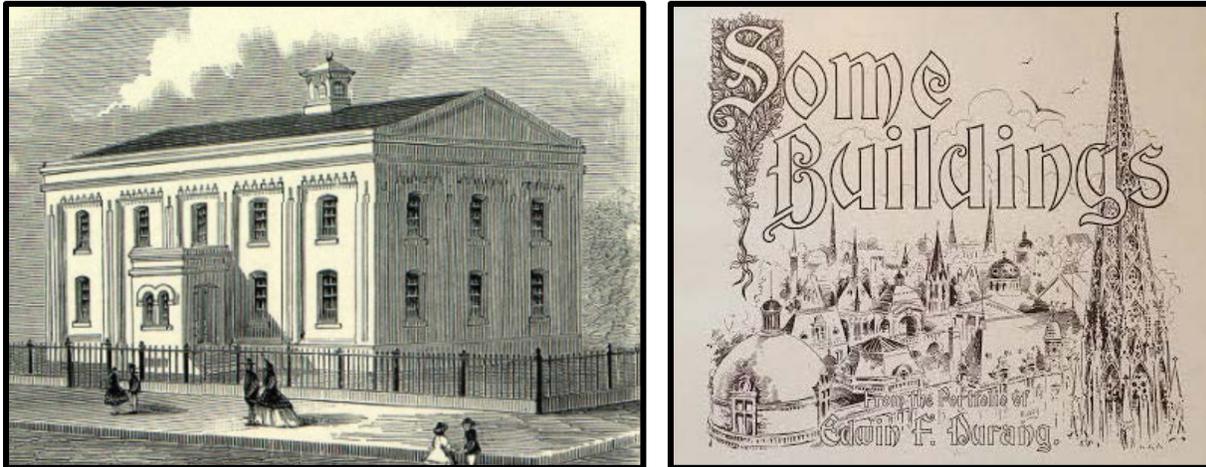
<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

<sup>26</sup> 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.

<sup>27</sup> *Public Ledger*, 1 September 1853, 3.

Edwin Durang's first piece of work. It got him a job. He designed this before he took up architect.<sup>28</sup>

In 1850, Durang produced architectural drawings for the Curtin School on S. Twentieth Street near Catherine, which was one of several schools of his career.<sup>29</sup> The building form was that of a Grecian temple, while the architectural treatment featured vertical pilasters or Lombard bands and corbel tables that served as cornices. By 1855, Durang appears in Philadelphia city directories as an architect, practicing at 304 Vine Street. Two years later, in 1857, he has moved to 417 Market Street, working with architect John E. Carver. Carver, the well-known ecclesiastical architect. Upon Carver's death in 1859, Durang was the successor to Carver's firm, occupying an office at 21 N. 6th Street until 1880.<sup>30</sup>



**Figure 30: Left: The A.G. Curtin School, 1850. Source: Philadelphia Architects and Buildings. Right: A drawing of the title page in Durang's portfolio. Source: Edwin Forrest Durang, *E. F. Durang's Architectural Album* (Philadelphia: s.n., ca. 1900), 66.**

By 1860, Durang, then listed as an architect, is still living with his family, at which time the household of Charles and Mary Durang included seven other Durangs. Charles Durang was listed as "Professor of Dancing," no doubt serving the Dance Academy he established in Philadelphia.<sup>31</sup> The same was true in 1870, at which time the household included eight family members.<sup>32</sup> The Durang family remained together through 1880, at which time "Edwin F. Durang" is listed as head of the household at 1129 Filbert Street in Philadelphia.<sup>33</sup>

In 1891, the following was written about Durang:

Among those who have made a successful study of architecture is Mr. Edward F. Durang, whose offices and drawing rooms are located at No. 1200 Chestnut Street. Mr. Durang has zealously devoted himself to the practice of his profession in Philadelphia for the last twenty-two years, and brings a wide range of experience to bear, coupled with an

<sup>28</sup> Athenaeum of Philadelphia - Durang Collection

<sup>29</sup> *Philadelphia on Stone Biographical Dictionary of Lithographers*. The Library Company of Philadelphia.

<sup>30</sup> Sandra L. Tatman. "Edwin Forrest Durang (1829-1911)," Philadelphia Architects and Buildings. (Philadelphia). <[https://www.philadelphiabuildings.org/pab/app/ar\\_display.cfm/23154](https://www.philadelphiabuildings.org/pab/app/ar_display.cfm/23154)> Accessed 24 September 2018.

<sup>31</sup> Eighth Census of the United States, 1860; NARA microfilm publication M653, 1,438 rolls. Washington, D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration, n.d.; and Ancestry.com. *Appletons' Cyclopaedia of American Biography, 1600-1889* [database on-line]. Lehi, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operations, Inc, 2016.

<sup>32</sup> Ancestry.com. *1870 United States Federal Census* [database on-line]. Provo, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operations, Inc, 2009. Images reproduced by FamilySearch.

<sup>33</sup> Tenth Census of the United States, 1880. (NARA microfilm publication T9, 1,454 rolls). Records of the Bureau of the Census, Record Group 29. National Archives, Washington, D.C.

intimate knowledge of the wants of the public. He has executed some of the most important architectural commissions in the city and vicinity, designing and superintending the construction of many prominent buildings.<sup>34</sup>

He was described as having "...made a specialty of ecclesiastical architecture and has built some of the finest churches in the country..."<sup>35</sup>

The following is a list of Durang's most notable works:

<b>Building/Resource/Location/Date of Construction</b>	<b>Status</b>
St. Michael's Church, Kensington, Philadelphia, c. 1865 <sup>36</sup>	Extant
Academy of the Sisters of Notre Dame, Rittenhouse Sq., c. 1866 <sup>37</sup>	Unknown
Public School House, SE corner of Sixth and Adelphi, c. 1866 <sup>38</sup>	Unknown
St. Anne's Church and School Philadelphia, c. 1866-1870 <sup>39</sup>	Extant
Immaculate Conception, Northern Liberties, c. 1870-1872 <sup>40</sup>	Extant
First-German Reformed Congregation, Reading, c. 1871 <sup>41</sup>	Unknown
St. Joahchim's Church, Frankford, c. 1874	Destroyed
Sacred Heart of Jesus Christ RC Church, Philadelphia, c. 1876	Extant
Church of the Visitation Philadelphia, c. 1879	Extant
The Church of the Gesu, North Philadelphia, c. 1879-1887	Extant
St. Agnes Hospital, Philadelphia, c. 1880	Demolished
St. James Church, West Philadelphia, c. 1881-1887	Extant
Church of the Nativity, of the BVM, Port Richmond, c. 1882	Extant
St. Laurentius Church, Fishtown, Philadelphia, c. 1885-1890	Extant
Beneficial Savings Fund Building, Philadelphia, c. 1887	Demolished
St. Charles Borromeo Church, Philadelphia, c. 1889	Extant
St. Vincent's Maternity Home, West Philadelphia, 1889	Demolished
Church of Our Lady of Mercy, Philadelphia, c. 1889-1896	Demolished
Roman Catholic High School, Philadelphia, c. 1890	Extant
St. Mary Magdalen Da Pazzi Church, Philadelphia, c. 1891	Demolished
St. Charles Borromeo Convent Philadelphia, c. 1893	Unknown
Parochial School of St. Thomas Aquinas, Philadelphia, c. 1894	Demolished
St. Veronica's Church, Philadelphia, c. 1894	Extant
Church of Our Lady of Good Counsel, Bryn Mawr, 1896	Extant
St. Michael's Church, Chester, c. 1900	Extant
St. Francis Xavier Church, Philadelphia, c. 1906 <sup>42</sup>	Extant

Those commissions without specific citations were referenced in Philadelphia Architects and Buildings.<sup>43</sup>

<sup>34</sup> *Philadelphia and Popular Philadelphians* (Philadelphia: 1891).

<sup>35</sup> *Philadelphia and Popular Philadelphians*.

<sup>36</sup> *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, 10 March 1865, 8.

<sup>37</sup> *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, 5 June 1866, 7.

<sup>38</sup> *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, 22 November 1866, 7.

<sup>39</sup> *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, 20 July 1866, 3.

<sup>40</sup> *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, 2 September 1871, 2.

<sup>41</sup> *Reading Times*, 28 August 1871, 1.

<sup>42</sup> Edwin Forrest Durang, *E. F. Durang's Architectural Album* (Philadelphia: s.n., ca. 1900), 66.

<sup>43</sup> Sandra L. Tatman. "Edwin Forrest Durang (1829-1911)," Philadelphia Architects and Buildings. (Philadelphia).

Among this long list of Durang's works several inform and/or borrow from the design of the subject building. Designed by Durang in 1866-67, the Roman Catholic Church of Our Mother of Sorrows, West Philadelphia, was commissioned by the Archdiocese of Philadelphia just a few years before the subject building. While obviously a much larger and more impressive church edifice, Our Mother of Sorrows is constructed of stone with a prominent gable front that features corbel tables and three round-arch openings at the ground floor. While similar in form and style to many of Durang's commissions, including, at first glance, Our Mother of Sorrows, the building known as St. Thomas of Villanova Church, built between 1883 and 1887, is actually representative of a later period. Like Our Mother of Sorrows, the building features a prominent gable front with corbel tables and other masonry work that is akin to Durang's earlier designs.



**Figure 31: Left: the Roman Catholic Church of Our Mother of Sorrows, West Philadelphia. Designed by Durang, this building features similar architectural details to the subject property within its central, gable-front bay, including the rose or wheel window, three round arch openings, and a corbel table serving as the cornice. Source: Edwin Forrest Durang. *E. F. Durang's Architectural Album* (Philadelphia: s.n., ca. 1900), 66. Right: St. Thomas of Villanova Church set within the campus of Villanova University, built between 1883 and 1887, Villanova just outside Philadelphia.**

Perhaps the most poignant design in relationship to the subject building was the Parochial School of St. Thomas Aquinas, designed by Durang over twenty years later in 1894. Like Immaculate Conception, St. Thomas Aquinas was built entirely of redbrick with a primary elevation defined by distinctive arched apertures, both pointed and rounded. The gable front, much like that of the subject property, is also defined by elaborate brick corbel tables delineating the cornice line. Much like the subject property as well, the side elevations were divided bays by projecting brick pilasters or Lombard bands. Another building, atypical of Durang's usual building forms, is St. Veronica's Church, built around 1900, in South Philadelphia. Also largely Gothic Revival in style, St. Veronica's features a gable front façade, built entirely of stone, which were defined by corbel tables at the cornice line of the building.

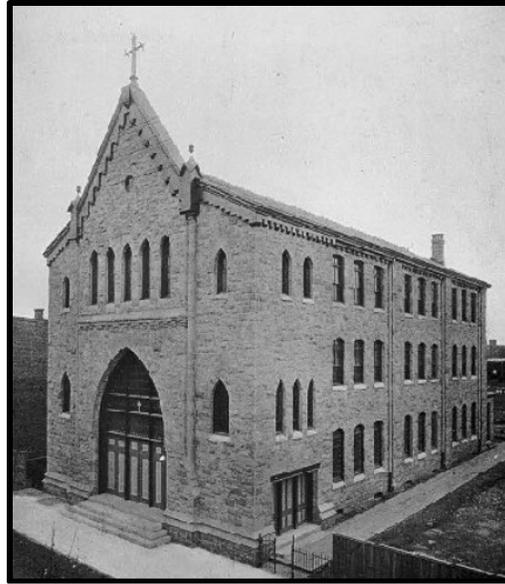


Figure 32: **Left:** the Parochial School of St. Thomas Aquinas, designed by Durang in 1894. Despite being commissioned twenty years after the subject property, this building embodies characteristics of the Lombard Romanesque with its Lombard bands, round arch apertures, and corbel tables. Source: *Philadelphia Real Estate Record and Builders' Guide*. (Philadelphia: 13 June 1894), vol. 9, no. 24, 1. **Right:** St. Veronica's Church, South Philadelphia. This church, no longer extant, is decidedly Gothic Revival, but features similar corbelling in stone. Source: Edwin Forrest Durang. *E. F. Durang's Architectural Album* (Philadelphia: s.n., ca. 1900), 66.



Figure 33: **Left:** St. Mary of the Immaculate Conception Roman Catholic Church at 134 S. Washington Street in Wilkes-Barre is a design completed by Durang in the Baroque style with architectural details akin to the subject building, including the gable-front motif, the use of pilasters, and the three round-arch openings on the primary elevation. Source: nepascene.com. **Right:** Durang's design of the Fulton Opera House in Lancaster, Pennsylvania is architecturally akin to the subject property. The building features a primary front gable in the Italianate style with corbel tables and pilasters or Lombard bands, as well as various paired and three-part round-arch mullion windows on the second and third floors. Source: Katherine Flynn, National Trust for Historic Preservation.

While Durang was largely known for his work on churches, he also designed a large number of buildings for organizations, as well as residential commissions in Philadelphia and beyond. In 1880, J.S. Albright commissioned Durang to design five three-story dwellings on Montgomery Avenue, and a two-story stable on Bouvier Street.<sup>44</sup> In 1881, Durang designed a "marble and pressed brick house" for Albert

<sup>44</sup> "Philadelphia," *The American Architect and Building News* (1876-1908). (16 October 1880), 191.

Diston, Esq. on Sixteenth Street below Oxford at a cost of \$40,000.<sup>45</sup> Another design for a dwelling was furnished by Durang for John Blackford in 1884.<sup>46</sup> In 1897, Durang was commissioned to design a house for James I. Irwin at Broad and McKean.<sup>47</sup>

Institutional buildings beyond ecclesiastical commissions include the following:

“E. F. Durang, the architect, of 1200 Chestnut Street, who does a great deal of the drawings and plans for Catholic edifices, has just finished the sketches for the grand new hall of the Philopatrian Literary Institute, which is to be built on Twelfth Street, below Locust. It is said that the structure will cost \$70,000.”<sup>48</sup>

Durang was commissioned to design the Academy of Music on Sixth Street in Reading in 1886, which was to be constructed of brick.<sup>49</sup>

Durang’s architectural dynasty represents one of the most successful of such enterprises in Philadelphia history, specializing in Catholic Church projects. Other similar dynasties included Henry D. Dagit and his sons, though the Dagit family do not quite measure up to the prolific master list of Durang. In addition, Durang provided architectural mentorship to a number of budding, young architects in ecclesiastical design, including Rowland Boyle, father to an architectural dynasty himself; Emile G. Perrot; and Frank R. Watson.

Furthermore, Durang’s work spanned the region, including various locations in Pennsylvania including Harrisburg, Lebanon, and Reading. Durang even designed buildings for the Catholic Church in Washington, D.C., including the “immense monastery buildings” for the Sisters of Notre Dame.<sup>50</sup> In November 1909, Durang was joined by his son F. Ferdinand Durang, who, having also become an architect, succeeded him after his sudden death in 1911. According to the obituary published in June 1911 in *Catholic Standard and Times*, he “died suddenly Monday morning near the rectory of St. Monica’s Church, Seventeenth and Ritner streets, while making measurements for the new convent.”<sup>51</sup>

### **George I. Lovatt, Sr. (1872-1958), Architect**

In addition to Henry D. Dagit, Durang was succeeded in Philadelphia’s growing number of Catholic commissions in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries by architect George I. Lovatt, Sr., who had studied at the Pennsylvania Museum and School of Industrial Art in the early 1890s.<sup>52</sup> Lovatt got his start in Catholic architecture while still in school, taking over the design of the Monastery of the Visitation in Wilmington, DE (since demolished), after the death of its original architect, Adrian Worthington Smith, in 1892.

Over the next several decades, Lovatt received numerous commissions for religious facilities, including the designs of new buildings and substantial alterations to existing structures in Philadelphia and the surrounding region, including Delaware and New Jersey. His design for the Church of the Most Precious Blood at 28<sup>th</sup> and Diamond Streets received a commendation at the International Exhibition in Barcelona,

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<sup>45</sup> “Building Intelligence,” *The American Architect and Building News (1876-1908)*. (26 November 1881), IX.

<sup>46</sup> “Building Intelligence,” *The American Architect and Building News (1876-1908)*. (20 September 1884), xi.

<sup>47</sup> “Building Intelligence,” *The American Architect and Building News (1876-1908)*. (4 September 1897), 3.

<sup>48</sup> Sandra L. Tatman. “Edwin Forrest Durang (1829-1911),” Philadelphia Architects and Buildings. (Philadelphia). <[https://www.philadelphiabuildings.org/pab/app/ar\\_display.cfm/23154](https://www.philadelphiabuildings.org/pab/app/ar_display.cfm/23154)> Accessed 24 September 2018.

<sup>49</sup> “Theatres,” *The American Architect and Building News (1876-1908)*. (23 January 1886), XV.

<sup>50</sup> *The Times* (Philadelphia), 8 June 1899.

<sup>51</sup> *Catholic Standards and Times*. June 1911.

<sup>52</sup> Sandra L. Tatman. “George Ignatius Lovatt, Sr. (1872-1958),” Philadelphia Architects and Buildings. (Philadelphia).

Spain in 1926, and the Church of the Holy Child at Broad and Duncannon Streets won the 1930 Philadelphia Chapter of the AIA's gold medal award.<sup>53</sup> Other impressive works from his ecclesiastical portfolio include Cathedral of Saint Patrick in Harrisburg, PA (1902); St. Rita's Roman Catholic Church at 1156-62 S Broad Street (1907-08); and St. Bridget's Roman Catholic Church on Midvale Avenue in East Falls (1925). Many of his works are still present in Philadelphia and the surrounding region, and have become landmarks of the built environment. Although not his most iconic or elaborate design, Lovatt's rectory addition design played off of the earlier Romanesque church to which it is integrally attached.



**Figure 34: Left, Cathedral of Saint Patrick, Harrisburg, PA, 1902. Source: Wikipedia. Right, St. Rita's Roman Catholic Church, S. Broad Street, 1907.**



**Figure 35: Left, St. Bridget's Roman Catholic Church, 3669 Midvale Avenue, 1925. Right, Church of the Holy Child, 5220-22 N Broad Street (N Broad Street and Duncannon Street), 1930.**

<sup>53</sup> Ibid.

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