NPS Form 10-900
(Oct. 1990)

OMB No. 10024-0018

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NAT. REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

696

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name First Presbyterian Church of Newtown

other names/site number N/A

2. Location

street & number 54-05 Seabury Street [ ] not for publication

city or town Elmhurst [ ] vicinity

state New York code NY county Queens code 081 zip code 11373

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this [X] nomination [ ] request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements as set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property [X] meets [ ] does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant [ ] nationally [ ] statewide [X] locally. ([ ] see continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Ruth L Pierpont DSHPO 7/12/13
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

New York State Office of Parks, Recreation & Historic Preservation
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property [ ] meets [ ] does not meet the National Register criteria. ([ ] see continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

[✓] entered in the National Register
[ ] see continuation sheet
[ ] determined eligible for the National Register
[ ] see continuation sheet
[ ] determined not eligible for the National Register

[ ] removed from the National Register

[ ] other (explain) _____

Signature of the Keeper Edson H. Beall date of action 9.9.13

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(check as many boxes as apply)

[X] private
[ ] public-local
[ ] public-State
[ ] public-Federal

Category of Property
(Check only one box)

[X] building(s)
[ ] district
[ ] site
[ ] structure
[ ] object

Number of Resources within Property
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
2		buildings
		sites
		structures
		objects
2	0	**TOTAL**

Name of related multiple property listing
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

N/A

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(enter categories from instructions)

RELIGION/
religious facility - church
church school
church-related residence
Social/
Civic

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

RELIGION/religious facility - church
SOCIAL/civic
DOMESTIC/single dwelling

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)

LATE VICTORIAN/ Gothic
LATE 19th AND EARLY 20th CENTURY REVIVALS/
Late Gothic Revival

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation CONCRETE
walls STONE/Granite/Sandstone, Brick (church); BRICK, STONE/limestone (parish house); WOOD/shingle (manse)
roof STONE/slate (church, parish house); ASPHALT/shingle (manse)
other

Narrative Description
(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets)

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria
(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

[X] **A** Property associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.

[ ] **B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.

[X] **C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or that represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.

[ ] **D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations
(Mark "x" in all boxes that apply.)

[X] **A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.

[X] **B** removed from its original location

[ ] **C** a birthplace or grave

[ ] **D** a cemetery

[ ] **E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure

[ ] **F** a commemorative property

[ ] **G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years

Areas of Significance:
(Enter categories from instructions)

Architecture

Social History

Period of Significance:

1895-1931

Significant Dates:

1895; 1907; 1924; 1931

Significant Person:

N/A

Cultural Affiliation:

N/A

Architect/Builder:

Frank A. Collins (church and manse)

Meyer & Mathieu (parish house)

Narrative Statement of Significance
(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography
(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

[ ] preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.
[ ] previously listed in the National Register
[ ] previously determined eligible by the National Register
[ ] designated a National Historic Landmark
[ ] recorded by historic American Building Survey
_____
[ ] recorded by Historic American Engineering Record
_____

Primary location of additional data:

[ ] State Historic Preservation Office
[ ] Other State agency
[ ] Federal Agency
[ ] Local Government
[ ] University
[ ] Other repository: _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 0.66

UTM References
(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
1	18	594801	4501	3	18		
2	18			4	18		

Verbal Boundary Description
(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification
(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Jonathan Taylor/Historic Preservation Consultant

organization _____ date April 14th, 2013

street & number 191 Luquer St #2B telephone 718 722-9213

city or town Brooklyn state NY zip code 11231

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location
A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

Additional items
(Check with SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner (Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO)

name First Presbyterian Church of Newtown

street & number 54-05 Seabury Street telephone (718) 639-3126

city or town Elmhurst state NY zip code 11373

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 *et seq.*)

Estimated Burden Statement: public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, D.C. 20503

Description: First Presbyterian Church of Newtown

Summary-

The First Presbyterian Church of Newtown is a Gothic Revival church located on the south side of Queens Boulevard, near the corner of 54th Avenue. The church is located in the northern quadrant of the block and oriented on a northeast-southwest axis, with its main entrance and a tower on the northeastern façade (Photograph 1). The church—the fifth home of the congregation, founded in 1652—was completed in 1895, on a site some 125 feet to the northeast. It was moved to its current site in 1924 when the city widened Queens Boulevard. The church's original steeple and a smaller attached building containing a lecture hall were lost in the move. Sitting on a concrete foundation laid for the moved building, the church is constructed of granite and brownstone bearing walls, with a slate roof. The building was designed by Queens architect Frank A. Collins, following the instructions of the donor that it replicate the First Presbyterian Church of Cherry Valley, New York, completed in 1873. Cherry Valley's First Presbyterian was listed on the National Register as part of the Cherry Valley Historic District in 1988.

The nominated property also includes a two-story Collegiate Gothic parish hall; constructed in 1931 and connected to the church on its south, with brick walls and slate pitched roof. Designed by the Brooklyn firm Meyer & Mathieu, the parish hall contains classrooms originally used as a Sunday school and other functional rooms; it is now used for a variety of church and community activities and also contains an auditorium/gymnasium and two kitchens.

Also part of the nominated property is the two-and-a-half story manse, or parsonage, in the western quadrant of the block, facing southwest onto Seabury Street. The house was probably designed by Collins and originally constructed in 1907 at a site across Seabury Street to the west, between the present 53rd and 54th Avenues, where it faced in the opposite direction. The manse was moved to its current position and orientation around the same time that the church was moved. The hip-roofed frame residence, clad in wooden shingles and with an asphalt shingle roof, had a porch across the front of the first floor before it was moved.

1895 Church Exterior

The church consists of a rectangular nave with a steep gable roof and clerestory, flanked by side aisles with shed roofs, and a large tower beside the main entrance. The walls are variously constructed in gray random-ashlar granite or brick, with brownstone used for quoins on all corners, surrounds on all windows and doors, and a stringcourse connecting the windows on the northwestern aisle. The roof is of slate. The window exteriors are covered with protective plexiglass except where noted.

Northeastern (Main) Façade

The main façade (Photograph 2) is consists of a central section with the main doorway, below three large pointed-arch windows above, and a steep-pitched gable; to the left, the 85-foot-high tower; and to the right, the front of the shed-roofed northwest aisle. The roofline is finished with thin brownstone coping. The historic wooden double doors of the entrance are carved with cusped arches and quatrefoils, echoed by arches and a quatrefoil in the pointed-arch, carved-wood transom above. The door is flanked by wide brownstone jambs, from which rise thin brownstone moldings forming a steep pediment and, around the transom, a brownstone surround carved with the words "PAYNTAR MEMORIAL," referring to the bequest of funds for the building by John Goldsmith Payntar (1822-1891). Flanking the doorway are two small pointed-arch windows. Above the pediment is a large lancet window flanked by two slightly smaller ones, all contained within a brownstone pointed-arch molding. Above, the pinnacle of the gable's coping is surmounted by a small, plain finial in brownstone.

To the left, the tower projects about 13 feet from the main façade and is about 17 feet wide. At the base of each corner is a buttress framed in brownstone quoins. On the ground-floor level is a pair of small pointed-arch windows sitting above a stone sill. Above is single, large, pointed-arch window, below a corbel table that wraps around the tower. Above is a pair of pointed-arch openings to the belfry, whose louvers are surmounted by a quatrefoil opening. A brownstone cornice wraps around the top of the tower, which is surmounted by a granite and brownstone railing decorated with cusped-arch openings. The railing was added after the church was moved in 1924, to finish the new top of the tower after the loss of the original steeple. To the right of the main entrance, a receding buttress divides the central façade from the aisle section, topped with a finial in brownstone. This façade of the aisle section contains a single pointed-arch window. At the base of the right (north) corner is the cornerstone laid in 1893, which reads, "First Presbyterian Church of Newtown, N.Y."

Northwestern Facade

The northwestern façade (Photograph 1) consists of the aisle at ground level, covered by its shed roof, with the nave clerestory above, beneath the steep gable of the nave roof. At the left side of the aisle façade is a wooden door recessed in a pointed arch, reached by a set of stairs with iron pipe railing. To the right are five bays with large pointed-arch windows with brownstone surrounds, connected by a brownstone stringcourse at the base of the arches. In the clerestory, each bay has a set of three small wide arched windows set in rectangular brownstone surrounds, currently covered with white aluminum-framed protective plexiglass. The clerestory wall between the windows is clad in shingles of pale slate. To the right of the main body of the church, there is a projecting section, echoing its profile in smaller scale, with a recessed wide-arched door reached by concrete steps. Another concrete stairway, oriented perpendicularly, leads below to a basement-level door. In the clerestory of this section there is one small arched window.

Southwestern Elevation

The southwestern, or rear elevation, is of painted brick, bare except for a single arched window at lower left, with a small arched door to the right of it (Photograph 4). A slender chimney projects up the center, to a wider chimney atop the gable, with brownstone corners. The right section of this façade is largely covered by the attached parish hall.

Southeastern Elevation

The southeastern façade (Photograph 3) is visible from Queens Boulevard, to the northeast, and from the garden that it overlooks. At the right end, this side of the tower resembles its front façade, except without any windows. To the left of the tower is a five-bay aisle section with clerestory above, as on the opposite side of the building. The rightmost portion, between the windows and the tower, is mostly clad in concrete, with a section of stone above; this was once where the adjoining lecture hall connected to the main church building. To the left of that, the wall, with the five large windows, is brick, reflecting the fact that this façade was originally concealed by the smaller lecture hall building. The windows are partly covered with modern aluminum-framed protective plexiglass (some of which was destroyed in Hurricane Sandy). They have brownstone sills, and a thick brownstone belt course runs below, just above ground level; at the basement level, each bay has a rectangular window with a granite lintel. The clerestory matches that on the opposite façade.

1895 Church Interior

The church's interior is composed of a rectangular nave with a raised chancel and choir loft at the southwest end, and a gallery balcony at the northeast end (Photographs 5-6). There is a narthex between the main entrance and the nave, with two staircases leading to the gallery, one continuing to the belfry. Behind the chancel/choir loft is a room containing additional organ pipes, and to its west, a "groom's room." The interior walls of the sanctuary are finished in painted plaster, with wooden arched-brace trusses in the central vault, and matching brackets under the shed roofs of the aisles. The church's original wood floor is mostly covered with non-historic red carpeting.

Main Body

There are five bays along the length of the nave, each with a recessed, pointed-arch stained-glass window with a wood-clad frame and wood sill. (Up to the level of the sills, wooden wainscoting runs around the interior walls.) The rearmost windows are partially concealed by the gallery. Between the windows, wooden brackets spring from the walls to the ceiling above, meeting wooden beams that run along the bottom of the clerestory interior. (Two wrought-iron lamps hang from each beam.) In the clerestory, each bay has a set of three short, wide-arched stained glass windows (Photograph 9). The aisle windows each consist of a pair of side-by-side lancet windows surmounted by a quatrefoil (Photograph 8). The windows contain identical designs composed

of geometric and abstract floral elements, in colors dominated by shades of violet, with striking accents of gold and green. Between the second and third windows from the chancel end of the nave, on side, hang two paintings incorporating religious symbols, created in the 1940s or 1950s. There are 16 rows of wooden pews on each side of the center aisle. (One original row was removed at some point, possibly to accommodate an enlargement of the chancel.) The pews are carved with rosette and leaf details. Each row is very slightly V-shaped.

Chancel and Choir Loft

The church's chancel consists of a raised platform of wood. A carved wooden altar sits at the center, flanked by four ornate wooden chairs for celebrants. A wood screen, carved with Gothic ornamental details, runs behind the altar and chairs, dividing the chancel from the choir loft behind. At the left (east) end of the rail is an octagonal wooden pulpit. On the opposite side of the chancel, in front, is a wooden lectern, and at the right corner of the platform, a marble baptismal font.

Behind the chancel, a large pointed arch, springing from Corinthian pilasters with engaged columns, opens to the recessed choir loft. At the rear of this space, above Gothic-carved wooden paneling rise pipes of the organ. (Additional organ pipes are in a room behind this space.) The interior of the loft recess is painted pink. At the sides, non-historic doors set in paneling connect the loft to passages on either side. Above these doors on each side is a small wide-arch window: the one on the east side is of stained glass, complementing the geometric designs and colors of the aisle and clerestory windows; the opposite one is of plain glass.

Around the large arched opening of the loft is painted, in gold script, the biblical quote, "I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life," dating from the same time as the symbolic paintings on the side walls. A gilded cross hangs on the wall above. (This cross is seen in some historic photographs hanging in front of the organ pipes.) At either side of the arch, wood Corinthian pilasters bear plaques indicating the years of the founding of the church (1652, at left) and the current year (at right)—displays added in the twentieth century.

Flanking the chancel are pointed-arch doorways: at right, leading to the groom's room, and at left, leading to the passageway to the parish house as well as to the space behind the loft. The groom's room has a wide-arch geometric stained-glass window (damaged, currently repaired with tape) in a wood frame. A decorated milk-glass lamp hangs from a plaster medallion in the ceiling. A wooden doorway leads to the outside.

Narthex and Gallery

Three doorways connect the nave and the narthex (Photograph 10): a central double door and single doors at each aisle, carved similarly to the church's exterior doors. Small pointed-arch stained-glass windows, with designs relating to those in the nave, flank the main entrance door from the outside. On the north side of the

nave, a stairway rises perpendicular to the doorways, to the gallery; stairs here also lead down to the basement. On the south side, a doorway leads into the tower, where a stair also leads to the gallery, and thence to the belfry and the 1788 bell, carried over from the previous church building.

On the gallery level, two single doors at each side of the landing, with pointed-arch transoms, lead to the balcony, whose outer face bears neoclassical wood paneling. There are three rows of pews extending the full width of the gallery. Behind these, in a recessed space, are three smaller rows. In the wall of this space is a set of three large lancet windows (Photograph 7). The taller central one depicts the risen Christ, over a panel dedicating the window to the memory of John Goldsmith, the church's pastor from 1819 until his death in 1854. (Church donor John Goldsmith Payntar was named after Goldsmith.) The slightly smaller flanking windows depict angels adoring the central figure. All three windows include fine renderings of Gothic stone tracery at their tops. The window is referred to in some church records as the "Hofmann Ascension," a name that has been attributed to the former name of Queens Boulevard, which it faces on the outside. It is more likely that the name derives from the adaptation of a drawing of the Ascension by popular late nineteenth-century German religious artist Heinrich Hofmann.

Basement

A staircase leads from the narthex down to the basement, where there is a choir room finished with resilient flooring, with the unfinished basement underneath the sanctuary behind it.

1931 Parish House Exterior

The parish house is situated south of the sanctuary and is connected to its rear façade. Its main body is rectangular, with a pitched roof with one small hip end, and two stories: a sunken ground floor with classrooms and other functional rooms along a corridor, and a combination auditorium and gymnasium above.

The gabled main façade faces southwest, overlooking Seabury Street (Photograph 11). Above a base of stone rising to the level of the raised main entrance, it is of brick, laid in American bond, with stone details. A central rectangular section has corners that protrude beyond the lines of the roof, with a triangular parapet above following the roofline.

A stone staircase leads to a platform in front of the front double door. The frame and panel doors are of wood, painted black, with an arched transom light with four lights of leaded glass above. The doorway is framed in Gothic carved stone, with iron lamps hanging on either side, and the inscription above, "Church House – First Presbyterian Church of Newtown." The stone frame is continuous with the stone surrounding the window above the entrance, which has six lights and stone mullions. The central rectangular section of the façade has stone

quoins on each side, reaching up to a stone course across the top. At the center of this course, a carved stone shield is inlaid below, with a pair of small, slender windows and stone surrounds above. The parapet is trimmed with stone coping.

The southeast elevation has seven bays, divided by brick buttresses capped with stone (Photograph 12). High on the wall in each bay is a large casement window. Close to the ground, below a course of soldier bricks, are the windows of the rooms of the lower level, which have non-historic replacement frames. The northwest façade, on the other side, is similar, but has a door at the right end, and only four bays; to their left is the two-story projecting section that connects the parish hall to the back of the church (Photograph 13). It has similar brick walls but a flat roof with tile coping. The southwest side has two bays of windows in both stories; the northwest side has a door and window on the first floor, and two windows and a vent on the second.

The northeast elevation is entirely of brick, save for the stone caps on its two brick buttresses, and overlooks the lawn and garden and Queens Boulevard beyond. The wall's shape follows the pitch of the roof, with tile coping, to a small flat top, where the roof has a slight hip end. The elevation has two windows on the outer side of these buttresses at the upper level, a small narrow central window near the top of the façade, three non-historic double windows and one casement window near the ground. To the right is a one-bay, flat-roofed section, with a historic casement window in each story, and a recessed section connecting the building to the church. There is a door in this connecting section, with a casement window above it.

1931 Parish House Interior

The main entrance leads to a vestibule, with plaster walls, resilient flooring, and two Gothic style glass and metal lamps hanging from the ceiling. A pair of double doors leads into the auditorium/gymnasium, which has a wood floor with basketball court markings and baskets at each end, recessed ceiling lights, and a raised wooden stage at the end opposite the entrance (Photograph 14). In the wall to the left of the stage is a serving window and door into a large kitchen, and a door leading to the landing of the stairs down to the lower level. There is another door from the landing to the kitchen, which contains historic wooden cabinets, cooking appliances and a steam table. It and the remaining spaces of the parish house generally have resilient floors and fluorescent light fixtures, and wooden cases around the doors.

The stairs lead down to the section connecting the main body of the parish hall and the church. From the bottom of the stairs to the right through a doorway is a pair of rooms, divided by wooden folding doors, now serving as church offices. Moving to the left leads to the main corridor of the lower level of the parish hall, with lavatories at each end and a series of rooms on each side, mostly built as classrooms and now serving an assortment of educational, office and recreational uses (Photograph 16). A large room at the northeast corner, built as the

"church parlor," has a beamed ceiling and fireplace with stone mantel (Photograph 15). Adjacent to it is a smaller kitchen, also with historic cabinets. At the far end of the corridor, a stairway at right leads back up to the vestibule of the parish hall.

1907 Manse Exterior

The manse is mostly clad in wooden shingles painted olive green, has an L shape, with a smaller, stucco-clad wing projecting from the rear of the main body of the house. The main façade faces southwest, overlooking Seabury Street (Photograph 17). The central frame and panel door is set atop two brick steps and within a Colonial Revival doorway, flanked by leaded-glass sidelights, with a transom including the street number in leaded glass, a fanlight, Ionic pilasters, dentils, and a projecting pediment supported by brackets (Photograph 18). There is one set of double windows to each side of the entrance (non-historic storm windows over the original windows throughout the house). Directly above it, in the second story, is a triple window, also flanked by double windows. Molding runs across the top of the wall, underneath the eaves, continuing around the entire house. A central dormer projects forward from the hip roof, with a triple window and a fanlight above the central window, adorned with wide white molding and a pronounced keystone shape.

The northwest elevation, overlooking 54th Avenue, has three bays of windows in both floors—one bay near the right end, and two grouped at the left—as well as corresponding basement windows. A brick chimney projects at center from the slope of the roof. The northeast, rear elevation, is partly similar to the front façade, with double windows in the right bay of both floors, a central triple window in the second floor, and a smaller, double-window dormer. Both stories of the left third and the center of the ground floor have a projecting, stucco-clad wing. There are recessed single windows in the northwest-facing side of this section in both stories, and on the northeast face, there are single windows in the first and second stories, as well as, in the first floor, a further projecting bay that contains the rear entrance foyer of the house. It has a single window facing northwest, a double window facing northeast, and a door, at the top of concrete steps, facing southeast, under a non-historic metal awning. On the southeast elevation of the main part of the rear projection, there is a small recessed double window in the first floor. To the left is the shingled southeast façade of the main body of the house, with four bays of single windows in the first floor (with corresponding cellar windows) and three in the second floor, and a small, single-window dormer.

1907 Manse Interior

The front door leads to a vestibule and an interior door with a large light, flanked by sidelights, leading to the central hall lit by a metal and crystal chandelier. Halfway down the hall is a wide arch on wooden pilasters with Ionic capitals, after which there is the main staircase. The hall, and the rest of the rooms on this floor except the

kitchen and bath in the rear extension, have parquet wood flooring. There are dark-stained wooden baseboards, thin crown molding, and wooden casings around windows and doorways throughout the house. To the left of the hall, through wooden pocket doors set in molded wooden trim, is a room that has a fireplace in a diagonal wall, with a brick mantel topped with wood. Behind this room through another pocket door is another room with a matching fireplace backing on the one in the other room. A single door leads back to the hallway. Both rooms have non-historic light fixtures. To the right of the hall, through a wide cased opening, is a large room with a metal chandelier with pineapple motif. Another cased opening leads back to a smaller room with a fireplace in the rear wall, similar to those previously described. A door leads back to the central hall. At the back of the hall, past the staircase, is a doorway leading into the rear extension, which contains lavatory and kitchen with non-historic interiors, stairs down to the cellar, and a rear stair to the second floor.

On the second-floor stair landing, a triple window overlooks the rear of the house (Photograph 21). The floors on this floor are wooden floorboards, in contrast to the parquet on the first floor. To the right, a doorway leads to the rear stairs, a closet, and a bathroom with a black-and-white tile floor, wooden wainscoting and a (non-historic) claw-foot bathtub. Adjacent on the same (east) side of the stair hall is a room with built-in wooden bookcases with glass doors on two walls, likely serving historically as an office for the pastor (Photograph 20). Next to it is a front corner room, currently with blue non-historic carpeting. At the front end of the hall is a small room with a triple window overlooking Seabury Street (the only room on this floor without a closet), connecting to the other front corner room. From this room, a passageway with shelving storage leads back to another room that connects to the hall.

The stairs lead up to a landing and a double window overlooking the rear of the building. Turning toward the front, there are doorways into the attic on each side of the hall—the east attic has a single dormer window—and a triple window at the front of the house.

Significance: First Presbyterian Church of Newtown

The First Presbyterian Church of Newtown is significant under National Register criteria A and C in the areas of Architecture and Social History. Completed in 1895, the church sanctuary was designed by Queens architect Frank A. Collins to fulfill the wish of the building's donor that it be modeled on an 1873 church in Cherry Valley, New York. The imposing edifice is significant as an example of high Victorian Gothic Revival style ecclesiastic architecture executed in granite and sandstone located in the Queens neighborhood of Elmhurst. The church houses windows by noted New York City stained-glass artists Sellers & Ashley, practitioners of the opalescent style popular in the late 19th century and associated with Tiffany Studios, for whom both Benjamin Sellers and William J. Ashley also worked. The building is a rare example of a church designed by Frank A. Collins, whose career as the New York City Department of Education's deputy superintendent of buildings for Queens is credited with overseeing the construction of some fifty school buildings in the borough, and it is also one of his largest private commissions.

The church gains additional significance as the fifth home of one of the very first congregations established on Long Island, whose early history is intertwined with the original settlement and governance of Newtown, Queens, in the seventeenth century. The 1895 church and its 1907 manse were both moved short distances in 1924 to accommodate the widening of Queens boulevard and laying out of the neighboring street grid as the 20th-century neighborhood of Elmhurst. The feat of moving the heavy stone church to preserve it dramatizes the long continuity of First Presbyterian's historic relationship with the local community, even as it was transformed from rural farmland to a residential district. The loss of some facilities during these changes led to the 1931 construction of a Collegiate Gothic parish hall, connected to the sanctuary, to house the church's numerous educational and social activities. A period of significance has been established from 1895, the date of the church's completion, to 1931, the date of the parish hall's construction.

Origin of the church and its first building[1]

The First Presbyterian Church of Newtown was founded in 1652, in the Dutch New Netherland colony. It is believed to be the oldest still existing congregation in the New York City borough of Queens. A group of Englishmen, dissenters from the Church of England and seeking religious freedom, received New Netherland Director Peter Stuyvesant's permission to begin a settlement in what is now Elmhurst, Queens. The settlement began in the wilderness, on both sides of the now filled-in Horsebrook Creek, a half block from the present church. They brought with them a pastor, the Rev. John Moore, to establish the church. Moore helped purchase

[1] The following section of the history of the congregation, up to the construction of the current church in 1895, drawn from Riker's history of Newtown and the church histories by Hendrickson, Northacker and Melikian (see bibliography), and composed by Melikian, a church elder.

land for the town from the Indians in 1656.[2] The first church building was a multipurpose small thatch-roofed wooden building that served also as town hall, school, and manse (pastor's residence); the parish and the town were essentially identical. The church was located north of the creek on what is now Dongan Street, near Broadway. The first town was named Middleburgh or Middelburg, to honor a town in Holland that had sheltered other English dissidents. In 1653, a year after the founding of the church, England and Holland went to war. Being English, members of the church became afraid of attack. They sent a delegation to Stuyvesant, who angrily dismissed them, so they appealed to Connecticut Colony for protection. In 1662, Connecticut laid claim to Long Island, including Middleburgh. But in 1664, a huge English fleet sailed into New York harbor, forcing Stuyvesant to surrender all of New Netherland. To honor this, Middleburg renamed itself Hastings, after the English site of William the Conqueror's victory in 1066.

Moore had died in 1657, and the church/town house building needed repairs to attract another pastor. It was re-thatched, chimney repaired, plastered, and both it and the attached lean-to were underpinned with stone and mortar. The next pastor, the Rev. William Leverich, who had preached to Indians for several years, came in 1662. He died in 1677. In 1665, the town was enlarged by additions of land, and from then on became known as the "New Towne," or Newtown. Newtown eventually included all of western Queens, but later small villages sprang up and became independent. The vicinity of the original settlement was the last remnant of old "Newtown," and was renamed Elmhurst in 1896 by Cord Meyer, who developed much of it as a residential neighborhood. It and the other villages of Queens joined with the City of New York in 1898. The Rev. Leverich's theological writings were bound with the town records of Newtown at that time and are owned now by the City of New York. The name Newtown lives on in the church of today, the nearby subway stop, and Newtown High School.

The second church

In 1669 the town resolved to build a new church to be used exclusively for worship. It was paid for by all citizens "at a rate of forty pounds, one half to be paid in corn, the other half in cattle." Member Ralph Hunt donated a small gore of land for it, close to where the present church stands—approximately at the intersection of Grand Avenue and Queens Boulevard.

[2] A 1666 record by the secretary of the New York colony took note of the purchase a decade earlier, and the fulfillment of the obligations under the agreement. NY State Archives Series A0453, Record of Deeds 1652-1884, vol. 2, p. 135.

Issues of Religious Freedom

The third pastor was the Rev. Morgan Jones, a dissenter, who was ejected from his parish in England and emigrated to Virginia. Serving there as a chaplain, he was captured by Indians and ransomed by a member of another tribe, with whom he stayed for four months, preaching and becoming friends. He came to the Newtown church in 1680. After one year, controversy arose over the English custom of taxing the whole town to pay a pastor's salary. Newtown was growing, and people of differing beliefs were moving in who did not want to pay the tax. The town sought to respect all, perhaps influenced by the 1657 Flushing Remonstrance, in which residents of that nearby village had protested to Stuyvesant the Dutch ban on Quaker worship. Officials decided to pay the pastor through a free-will offering instead, and subscriptions were taken of pledges to pay. The church still owns offering lists from the 1700s and later. However, Jones did not receive the equivalent of his promised salary in the offering, and left.

In 1693 a law was passed in Queens combining Newtown, Jamaica and Flushing into one parish, and the law reinstated a required payment of 60 pounds a year to support one pastor for the whole area. Newtown kept up the practice of free-will offerings and appealed to the state legislature for exemption from the law. The bill was passed in 1695, but the British governor, Lord Cornbury, refused to sign it. He had been pressured by Queen Anne to make the Church of England the religion of the colony, and he intended that tax for a Church of England pastor.

A New Parsonage, and British Persecution of Dissenters

Jones was succeeded by a young man, the Rev. John Morse, in 1694. The congregation bought a new parsonage and enough land for a farm. This new parsonage farm was about a mile away, near the present Saunders Street and Eliot Avenue in Rego Park. But Morse also did not receive enough in offerings to support himself. Wanting him to stay, the congregation built an addition onto the farm. Unfortunately, Morse died in 1700, only 26 years old. He was succeeded by the Rev. Robert Breck. In 1702-03, an election of church officers was held for the entire area. Lord Cornbury moved to Jamaica for the election, taking over the home of the local Presbyterian minister, the Rev. Hubbard, for himself. Cornbury forced Hubbard out of the pulpit and replaced him with a Church of England pastor. However, the electorate chose Hubbard to be the pastor of the entire area. Enraged, Cornbury appointed his own Church of England pastor instead. He then began persecution of Breck, the Newtown pastor, for boldly asserting the principles of the nonconformists. Breck stood his ground for several years before resigning in discouragement. The church was turned over to the Rev. Urquhart, Cornbury's choice, who had been placed in charge of so many churches that he could only visit each once a month. Not only were the people of Newtown forced to pay the tax to support the pastor, but Cornbury made it illegal for dissenting pastors to preach at all in his province without his permission.

In 1707, on two Sundays it was without a pastor, the congregation asked two visiting Presbyterian ministers on their way to Boston, the Rev. Francis Makemie and the Rev. John Hampton, to preach. Days after Hampto's sermon, and just before Makemie's, they were arrested near the church. Cornbury charged them with "preaching their pernicious doctrine" without a license. Hampton was discharged for lack of evidence; Makemie stood trial and was acquitted—and went on to become a founder of the Presbyterian Church in the United States. So many complaints were received by the queen about Cornbury that he was eventually recalled.

The Church Becomes Officially Presbyterian

In 1708, the church was able to call a pastor of its own choosing, the Rev. Samuel Pumroy. He was given the church farm parsonage to live in. He was influenced by the Rev. George MacNish of Jamaica, who came to the American colonies with Makemie and was one of the leading members of the Presbytery of Philadelphia. MacNish's son, also named George, later became the seventh pastor. Pumroy helped organize the Presbytery of Long Island. The church membership applied to officially become a member of the Presbyterian Church on Sept. 15, 1715. A book of records was begun in that year, which the church still possesses, a remarkable historical record that was maintained through the American Revolution and kept safe though British occupation. Pumroy recorded not only membership in this book but also listed slaves as members of families entitled to the same baptisms, weddings and funerals he gave others. He also recorded local events, including epidemics and an earthquake.

The Third Church

A gift of land was given for a new church by member Jonathan Fish in a 1715 deed to "the dissenting Presbyterian Church of Newtown." The church still has the sheepskin deed, which references the young king of England, George III. This land was across the street from the present church. Church members themselves built a small new church, finished in 1741. It was at this time that the church became known as the First Presbyterian Church of Newtown. (From 1652 to 1720, it had been the only church in western Queens.) When Pumroy died, he was succeeded in 1744 by the Rev. George MacNish, Jr. He served as a "stated supply"—a fixed temporary term—for two years. He in turn was followed in 1746 by the Rev. Simon Horton, a staunch advocate of the colony's rights. In 1755, Horton was asked to become the pastor of the new St. James Episcopal Church, but the governor would not allow it because he could not provide proof of signing the Act of Conformity, pledging compliance with the prescribed doctrines and rites of the Church of England. Instead, he stayed at the Presbyterian Church, and after 27 years of service the congregation grew discontent with him, thinking his sermons dull and that he devoted too much time to the farm. Horton resigned in 1773, but remained at the church's parsonage farm until the Revolution. A Scotsman, the Rev. Andrew Bay, replaced him in 1773. He

was an eloquent preacher but his ministry also ended badly: the congregation voted in 1775 to dismiss him. The Elders did not file a formal complaint, but it is believed he had a problem with drinking.

The Church's Role in the American Revolution

King George III called the American Revolution the "The Presbyterian Rebellion" because the majority of American Presbyterian churches were mostly pro-independence. The Presbyterian Church of Newtown was no exception, although most of the town were Loyalists. The church still owns an original draft of a resolution to form a local "Committee of Correspondence" to stay in touch with the Continental Congress and other states' committees, to promote the cause of independence. On December 29, 1774, the authors wrote that they considered the imposition of taxes without representation to be a subversion of the English constitution and that they had a right to transmit to posterity the valuable rights and privileges their ancestors had. Lore holds that the draft was written at The Old Corner House, an inn and tavern nearby, since on the back there is a bar bill. The owner was also a member of the congregation. The committee reported to the Congress that local Tories were arming themselves.

When independence was declared by the Continental Congress in 1776, a copy was read in Newtown on the church steps. The disastrous battle of Long Island took place in Brooklyn on August 27, 1776. Two days later, the British army and their Hessian allies marched into Newtown and stayed for the duration of the war. Lord Howe's report to Parliament on the Battle of Long Island was written in the nearby home of one of the church's first three elders. His large house and many others were confiscated, and owners were forced to feed and house British officers and soldiers. One night before the invasion, three young Tories tore down the small steeple of the church. The British took over the church when they came, using it for a prison. They removed the pulpit and used it for a horse hitching post in the street as an insult. A British deserter was imprisoned in the church and later hung from a nearby tree. Eventually the British tore down the whole church, using the wood for soldier's huts. When the war was over, the Loyalists fled. Only five church members were left in Newtown, the rest having fled or been killed. Somehow, the church's original book of records, begun in 1715, was kept safe through the war.

Starting Over After the Revolution: The Fourth Sanctuary is Built

After the war, in 1783, the Rev. James Lyon was sent as a stated supply pastor for two years. He was a musician, one of the first American composers of hymns. In his prior post in Machias, Maine, he had been a patriot and is celebrated there today. His efforts were also responsible for setting the northeast border of Maine (and the United States). The Rev. Peter Fish, a native of Newtown, became the next stated supply pastor in 1785. He had been inspired as a youth by hearing the great English evangelist, the Rev. George Whitefield,

speak in an orchard by the church. Fish's uncle had given the land in 1715 for the new Presbyterian church. During his ministry, in 1787, construction was begun on the congregation's fourth church building. Fish left in 1789 but returned again as pastor briefly in 1810.

Known as "The Old White Church," the fourth church existed from its dedication in 1791 until 1928, thirty-three years after the construction of its successor. The wood-frame building was two stories tall with a belfry. It was painted white and originally had plain glass windows. It was located across what is now Queens Boulevard from the present building. In 1788 a bell, made in Holland and originally for another church, was installed in the church; this is the same bell that rings in the current church today. There was a small separate frame building next to the Old White Church used for Sunday School classes. In 1928, the church belfry caught fire, presumably from lightning, and the church burned down.

The Rev. Elihu Palmer was pastor 1788-1789. His views were unorthodox, and after only six months he left the church to become a Universalist and later a well-known Deist. In 1790, he was succeeded by the Rev. Nathan Woodhull, who served until his death in 1810. After a brief return by Fish, the Rev. William Boardman was the next pastor. A spirit of revival was in the land, and many people joined the church during his pastorate. At this time the old farm parsonage, owned for more than a century, was sold. The church then purchased for a temporary manse the Union Hotel—the former Old Corner House—a block away, and its land. The Rev. Boardman died in 1818, only 37. The Rev. John Goldsmith became pastor in 1819 and served for 35 years; he is memorialized in the windows of the current church. He was a president of the Long Island Bible Society and a leading member of the Presbytery of New York, assisting also in the creation of the Astoria Presbyterian Church. Under his leadership, a new manse was built in 1821, on the site of the orchard where Whitefield had preached in 1784, southwest of today's church and manse. In 1822 land was donated next to the church for a cemetery, which remained there until the 1950s, when the land was sold. Those buried there were reinterred in the Cemetery of the Evergreens on the Queens/Brooklyn border, where one stone marks the church's dead.

After the Civil War, a New Church Edifice

At the time of the Civil War, the church had a pastor, the Rev. John Knox, who was from Georgia and had come to Newtown in 1855. He had previously served as pastor of a church in St. Thomas, West Indies, where he became involved in promoting education. One of those he influenced was Edward Blyden, who later became an ambassador from Liberia to England and founded one of the earliest colleges in Africa, Moravian College in Monrovia. The Rev. Knox promoted Liberia as the solution for freed slaves, and the church possesses a document showing fund-raising for that effort. Under Knox's ministry, the Old White Church was remodeled, a pipe organ put in, and the plain glass windows were replaced with stained glass. Knox died in 1882 at Newtown. The Rev. Payson was installed in 1882 and succeeded by the Rev. Jacob Mallman in 1890.

Soon after Mallman came, he learned that the church would receive a bequest in the will of John Goldsmith Payntar to build a new sanctuary. Mallman resigned in October 1895, only a few months after the opening of the new church, in the fallout of a dispute with elders over selling church land to raise money for the new church's upkeep. The Rev. Hendrickson was installed in June 1896 and resigned in 1906 to take up mission work. The Rev. David Yule, born in Scotland but educated in the U.S., was installed pastor in 1906. In 1910 he resigned due to the inadequacy of his salary. During his pastorate the church's current manse was built, in 1907.

The Rev. Feltus became pastor in April 1911, serving for six years. He was succeeded by Dr. Howard Northacker, who came to the church in 1919 and served 41 years, retiring in 1961 at age 70. Under him the church had its largest membership, over 400 people, spurring the creation of numerous church social and service organizations. Northacker was also a prominent civic figure, writing a newspaper column and serving as director of the Greater New York Federation of Churches. At the church's own 300th Anniversary celebration in 1952, he said that the church had been offered one million dollars for its property, but it had been turned down.

Northacker had been married when he came to the church but later divorced and remarried, which caused great controversy in the church. Most of the elders, all male, resigned and left to form their own church, taking some members. With a lack in leadership, women were asked to become elders for the first time. They have had equal opportunity in leadership roles ever since.

The Donation and Construction of the Payntar Memorial Church Building

John Goldsmith Payntar was born in Newtown in 1822 to a family that traced its origins to the earliest settlers of Long Island. He was named in honor of John Goldsmith, pastor of the church from 1819 to 1854. Becoming a successful businessman in a clothing firm in Manhattan, Payntar lived there and belonged to the Madison Avenue Presbyterian Church until his death in 1891. Payntar left no immediate relatives apart from his widow, Mary Boone Payntar, whom he had married less than a year before he died.[3] As he had indicated before his death, Payntar left more than $60,000 to be used to construct a new stone church for the Newtown Presbyterian congregation. He stipulated that it be modeled after the First Presbyterian Church of Cherry Valley, Otsego County, New York. That church had been designed in an English Gothic style by architect Nelson Whipple of Brooklyn and completed in 1873.[4] The Cherry Valley church is an example of the post–Civil War High Victorian Gothic style, with heavy stone walls and buttresses, use of contrasting stone for quoins, window

[3] "John Goldsmith Payntar, His Munificent Bequest," *Newtown Register*, Aug. 27, 1891; "Death of John Goldsmith Payntar," *New York Times*, Aug. 15, 1891.
[4] "The New Presbyterian Church: Extracts from the Will of John Goldsmith Payntar Relating Thereto," *Newtown Register*, Sept. 10, 1891; D. Hamilton Hurd, *The History of Otsego County, New York, 1740-1878* (Philadelphia: Everts & Fariss, 1878), 132.

surrounds and other trimmings, and its proportionately large tower. Payntar was said to have "admired"[5] the Cherry Valley church, but the exact connection between Payntar and Cherry Valley and/or Payntar and Nelson Whipple has not yet been discovered.

Architect Frank A. Collins

The church building committee engaged Frank A. Collins, a Queens-based architect, to design the church in accordance with Payntar's specifications.[6] Collins later served as deputy superintendent of buildings for the Queens school system, while also maintaining his own architectural practice. The church appears to be the largest private commission by Collins. Collins was born in 1858 in Trappe, Maryland. He studied at the Cooper Union in New York, and in 1880 he became chief architect of the Queens building concern, J. Milnor Peck Co.[7] He married Peck's daughter, Sarah Peck, and became a partner in the firm after his father-in-law's death in 1882.[8] The company failed in 1891, at which time a news article described Collins as a "silent partner."[9]

Also in 1891, a new high school building for Flushing, designed by Collins, was completed.[10] In 1898, Queens became part of the consolidated New York City, and in the reorganization of the school system, Collins became the Department of Education's deputy superintendent of buildings for Queens. He held that post for twenty-six years and was credited in an obituary with overseeing the construction of some fifty school buildings. He also continued to maintain a private architectural practice.[11] Collins was also first vice president and trustee of the Queens County Savings Bank. He retired in 1923 and died in 1924.[12]

In addition to the First Presbyterian Church of Newtown—and likely the church manse completed in 1907 (see below)—other recorded private projects by Collins include a pair of three-story frame houses in

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[5] "Newtown's Old Church," *Sun*, May 5, 1895.
[6] *Real Estate Record and Guide* 51, no. 1315 (May 27, 1893), 837.
[7] "Frank A. Collins, Queens School Architect, Dies," *New York Herald-Tribune*, Aug. 30, 1924; "Frank A. Collins, Architect," *New York Times*, Aug. 30, 1924.
[8] *Half a Century's Progress of the City of Brooklyn* (New York: International Publishing Co., 1886), 299; James W. Moore, *Rev. John Moore of Newtown, Long Island, and Some of His Descendants* (Easton, Pa.: Chemical Publishing Co., 1903), 67; "Mrs. Anna L. Peck" (obituary), *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, Oct. 28, 1901; "Various Paragraphs," *Evening Post*, Sept. 8, 1882.
[9] "A Flushing Man Assigns," *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, July 14, 1891.
[10] New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission, Flushing High School (1912-15), designation report (1991), 3. (The school designated a landmark is the successor building to Collins's.)
[11] Advertisements for the practice appeared numerous times in the *Newtown Register*, e.g., Jan. 5, 1905, p. 2; May 12, 1914, p. 2; and July 11, 1918, p. 3.
[12] "Frank A. Collins, Queens School Architect, Dies," *New York Herald-Tribune*, Aug. 30, 1924.

Flushing designed in 1894; a building for the Flushing Boat Club, to which he belonged, in 1909; and a number of small buildings, extensions and interior alterations.[13]

Stained Glass Maker Sellers & Ashley

Among the prominent architectural features of the Newtown Presbyterian Church are its stained-glass windows. The memorial window on the main façade— a large pointed-arch window depicting the Ascension of Christ and flanked by two smaller windows—is a departure from the Cherry Valley model, which has a round window over a trio of blind arches on its façade. Church accounting records and correspondence indicate that the windows in the church were furnished by the firm of Sellers & Ashley and maintained for some years after by Benjamin Sellers, following the dissolution of that partnership in October 1895, months after the completion of the Newtown church. Relatively little is known about the firm or about the details of the artists' individual tenures as employees of Tiffany & Co. However, their work in the opalescent glass popular in the US in the late 19th century has been recognized as particularly fine, with Sellers's work having gained widespread contemporary praise.

According to its advertisements in newspapers and magazines from as early as 1893, the partnership of Benjamin Sellers (1860-1930) and William J. Ashley (1864-?) had its studio at 21 University Place in Manhattan and offered "Art Stained Glass, Ecclesiastical and Domestic," with "Special Study Given to Memorial Windows." The ads mentioned that Sellers was a veteran of "10 Years With Tiffany Glass Co." Both men were born in England; Sellers came to the United States in 1881 and Ashley in 1884. Sellers must have joined Tiffany soon after arriving in the US to have worked there ten years before 1893. An 1896 advertisement for Ashley's independent firm also described him as "late with Tiffany Glass Co."[14]

In 1894—the year that the First Presbyterian Church of Newtown was being constructed—the *New-York Daily Tribune* took note of an exhibition at the Sellers & Ashley studio, displaying a window produced for the South Bergen Reformed Church in Jersey City (now the Cotton Temple Church of God in Christ). The window, the newspaper said, was "an example of what may be accomplished in stained glass without the aid of pigments or paints of any kind, save in the ornamentation of certain parts, such as the face, hands, etc…. It is made entirely of opalescent glass. Drapery glass is used to represent the folds and creases in the garments, giving about the same effect as was formerly obtained by the use of paints. The subject treated is 'Christ, the Good Shepherd,' after [German religious painter Bernhard] Plockhorst's picture." The article also noted that the firm

[13] *Real Estate Record and Builders' Guide* 53, no. 1356 (March 10, 1894), 391; "Dedicated Boat Club," (Queens and Brooklyn) *Daily Star*, Aug. 23, 1909.
[14] Advertisement in *The Homiletic Review* (May 1896), 152.

was "at present engaged upon a large window for the Fourth Presbyterian Church, this city [now Annunciation Greek Orthodox Church in Manhattan], 'Christ's Journey to Emmaus' being the subject."[15]

An 1895 advertisement gave notice that the partnership of Sellers & Ashley had dissolved "by mutual consent," and Sellers henceforth advertised his own firm, based at 79-81 Bible House in New York, and later referred to as Benjamin Sellers & Sons.[16] A 1910 advertisement claimed that the firm had made windows for more than eighty churches and built more than 100 "Special Memorials." As late as 1918, the firm, from which the elder Sellers was by this point retired, was also advertising stained-glass work for theaters.[17] The firm closed by 1920.[18] Other windows, most of them memorials, executed by Sellers are found at the First Presbyterian Church of Southampton, NY (1896); the Bridgehampton (NY) Presbyterian Church (1897); Calvary Methodist Episcopal Church, Harlem, Manhattan (1899, now the Salem United Methodist Church); the Second Congregational Church of Winsted, CT (1899, based on the Heinrich Hoffman picture "Christ in the Midst of the Doctors"); Greene Avenue Presbyterian Church, Brooklyn, NY (1900, church destroyed by fire 1910); Winsted (Conn.) United Methodist (1904); Lafayette Avenue Presbyterian Church, Brooklyn (1897-1902); St. John's Methodist Episcopal Church, Brooklyn (1900-1902, demolished); First Presbyterian Church, Dover, NJ (1900, after the Hoffman painting of Christ in the home of Mary and Martha); Classon Avenue Presbyterian Church, Brooklyn (1901); Shelter Island (NY) Presbyterian Church (1902, church destroyed by fire 1934); Central Presbyterian Church, Brooklyn (1899, 1902, including the President William McKinley Memorial Window, after Hoffman's *Christ in Gesthemane*; church destroyed by fire in 1936); Washington Avenue Presbyterian Church, Brooklyn (1902) (now Brown Memorial Baptist Church); First Presbyterian Church, Brooklyn (1902); Borough Park Presbyterian Church, Brooklyn (1904, demolished); First Methodist Episcopal Church (now First United Methodist Church), Perry, NY (1907); the Bowery Mission, Manhattan (1908-09); and the Newcastle (PA) Methodist Episcopal Church (1910).[19] Ashley remained at 21 University Place,

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[15] *New-York Daily Tribune*, April 20, 1894.
[16] Headquarters of the American Bible Society on Astor Place (demolished 1956); *New York Times*, April 2, 1956.
[17] *Moving Picture World* 35, no. 2 (Jan. 12, 1918), 292; Benjamin Sellers's 1919 application for a passport application at the U.S. consulate in Bristol, England, indicates that he had been in England since 1914.
[18] Sellers in 1920 applied for another passport to return to England, stating that he had recently returned to the U.S. to resume his business, but that it had since closed.
[19] Bridgehampton Presbyterian Church, *Visitors Guide* (2010), 14; "Harlem and the Bronx," *Brooklyn Eagle*, July 7, 1899; Second Congregational Church of Winsted website, http://sccwinsted.org/php/the_building.php; "New Church Dedication," *Brooklyn Eagle*, May 7, 1900; Winsted United Methodist Church website, http://www.unitedmethodistwinsted.org/history.htm; "Thayer Memorial Windows," Brooklyn Eagle, Nov. 20, 1902; "Memorial Window in St. John's," *Brooklyn Eagle*, May 18, 1900; "In Memoriam: Luke Taylor Merrill," *Brooklyn Eagle*, Nov. 11, 1900; "Pouch Memorial Window," *Brooklyn Eagle*, April 4, 1901; "In Long Island Churches," *Brooklyn Eagle*, March 1, 1902; "Memorial to a Child," *Brooklyn Eagle*, Nov. 25, 1899; "McKinley Memorial Window," *Brooklyn Eagle*, Dec. 6, 1902; "Sizer Memorial Window," *Brooklyn Eagle*, July 6, 1902; "Barnes Memorial Window," *Brooklyn Eagle*, Jan. 10, 1902; "Church News and Notes," *New-York Tribune*, Jan. 23, 1904; "Perry Department," *Wyoming County Times*, July 17, 1907; New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission, Bowery Mission designation report (2012), 1, 5-6; *The Christian Work and the Evangelist* (June 18, 1910) cover, 814.

according to advertisements from 1896—including one describing him as "late of Tiffany"—but there is little other record of his independent works.[20]

Sellers & Ashley's Windows at Newtown Presbyterian

The ledger for the expenses of constructing the Payntar Memorial church refer to Sellers & Ashley as makers of the "Hoffman's Ascension Memorial Window to Dr. John Goldsmith."[21] This triple window on the church's main façade was a modification of the original plans for the church. Goldsmith's daughter, Sarah Prall, was a member of the building committee, and requested the use of some of Payntar's funds for a window memorializing her father and Payntar's namesake. An 1894 letter from Collins to Prall refers to requests he had made to Sellers & Ashley for estimates for the cost of the clerestory ventilator windows and other ventilators, indicating that the firm was also responsible for the other windows in the church. Later ledgers record numerous payments to Benjamin Sellers in the first years of the 20th century among the church's repair expenses.[22]

Construction of the Church

Ground was broken for the church on May 22, 1893, and the cornerstone was laid July 6, 1893. The builder was Manhattan-based Hopkins & Roberts, builders of numerous churches in New York City and state, and New Jersey, including the Central Baptist Church and Middle Collegiate Church in Manhattan.[23] The church was reportedly nearly completed in late 1894 and was dedicated May 5, 1895.[24] As originally constructed, the church had two elements that were lost when the church was moved a short distance in 1924: its steeple and a small lecture hall building in matching materials and style, adjacent to the sanctuary's east and attached to it by a passageway. The 1791 church building remained standing, used as a chapel and Sunday school, until it was destroyed in a fire in 1928.

Development of Elmhurst in the Late 19th Century

The construction of what was "the largest and costliest stone church anywhere on Long Island outside of Brooklyn" came just as Newtown was about to begin its transformation from a village of farms and small

[20] Advertisement in *The Homiletic Review* (January 1896), 20.
[21] Payntar Memorial Church ledger, First Presbyterian Church of Newtown archives (FPCN), 9.
[22] E.g. 1903, 2; 1905, 15 ($5.25); 1908, 39 ($22.31 and $21.53), FPCN.
[23] "About to Be Built," *Newtown Register*, May 18, 1893; "The New Presbyterian Church," *Newtown Register*, June 29, 1893; "A Newtown Church Dedicated," *New York Times*, May 6, 1895; advertisement in George W. Kramer, *The What, How and Why of Church Building* (New York, 1897), 269.
[24] "Newtown's New Church Building," *New York Times*, Oct. 21, 1894; "Newtown: The New Presbyterian Church Nearly Ready for Use," *New York Tribune*, Nov. 17, 1894; "A Newtown Church Dedicated," *New York Times* 1895.

commercial enterprises to a residential area. Cord Meyer Jr. and Christian Meyer, sons of a successful fertilizer manufacturer-turned-investor in the sugar industry and real estate, in the 1890s purchased substantial amounts of farmland in Newtown. The Cord Meyer Co. graded streets and pressed for the introduction of utilities to create an attractive residential suburb—and for the changing of the area's name to Elmhurst, to eliminate the association with the Newtown Creek, a polluted industrial waterway.[25]

The Construction of the 1907 Manse

The parsonage, or manse, has historically been an integral part of the church property, constituting a significant component of the pastor's compensation, and providing his office as well as living space. The church's trustees at their May 8, 1905, meeting resolved to construct a new parsonage, or manse, on the site of the existing one—believed to have been built in 1821—which was found to require such extensive repairs as to make replacement preferable. (The parsonage site was farther south of Hoffman Boulevard than the church, and slightly to its west.[26])

The trustees agreed the following month to a "colonial" style of architecture for the parsonage. Minutes of meetings in 1906 note progress on the project, as well as the rental of a temporary parsonage. On October 7, 1907, the trustees heard that the work had been completed and paid for, and discharged the committee overseeing the project.[27] A 1910 article in the *New York Times*, regarding the resignation of pastor David Yule over an unsatisfactory salary mentions that a new parsonage had been built during his four years in the pastorate, at a cost of $5,000.[28] There are no surviving architectural plans for the manse completed in 1907 or building permit records at the Queens Borough Department of Buildings. A ledger for the "New Parsonage Account" in the church archives includes a 1906 payment to Frank A. Collins for $200, suggesting that the architect was engaged by the church again in connection with this building.[29]

There are no photographs or detailed descriptions of the manse as it was completed in 1907. The earliest known images of it are a pair of photographs by New York City historian Eugene L. Armbruster: one from 1923 appearing to show it in its original location, and one from 1925 after it was moved closer to the church site and turned to face away from Queens Boulevard. The 1925 photo shows the manse largely as it appears today; a front porch was removed between the dates the two images were taken. Accompanying text states that the

[25] Vincent Seyfried, *Elmhurst: From Town Seat to Mega-Suburb* (Merrick, N.Y.: Traction Yearbook, 1995), 71-85.
[26] Atlas of Queens County, Long Island, New York (New York: C. Wolverton, 1891); *Insurance Maps of the Borough of Queens, City of New York*, vol. 3 (New York: Sanborn Map Co., 1902); Atlas of the Borough of Queens (New York: E. Belcher Hyde, 1908-1912); *Atlas of the City of New York–Borough of* Queens (New York: G.W. Bromley, 1909).
[27] Trustees' minutes, 1905-07, FPCN.
[28] "Pastor Wants More Money," *New York Times*, Aug. 2, 1910.
[29] New Parsonage Account ledger, Dec. 5, 1906, FPCN.

manse was "remodeled" at the time of its 1925 move to a new site. It is not clear to what extent the manse's appearance might have changed between its 1907 construction and the 1923 photo.

The manse's main entranceway, framed by Ionic pilasters, a fanlight and pedimented portico, as well as the earlier columned porch and the pronounced keystone element over the front façade's rounded dormer window, are consistent with the "colonial" specifications recorded by the trustees. These decorative elements are applied to a house that, with its steep roof with small hip, wide eaves, and prominent dormers on two facades, also belongs to the American Foursquare and Arts & Crafts movements of the late 19th through early 20th centuries. The interior also reflects the combination of Colonial Revival and Arts & Crafts influences, with substantial wood trim on windows, doors and mantels throughout, finished with neoclassical molding. The nine-room house, including an office for the pastor, reflects the historic role of the manse not only as the residence of the pastor, but also a space for working and receiving members of the church community.

The Widening of Queens Boulevard and the Moving of the Church and Manse

The thoroughfare known as Queens Boulevard was designed in the early 20th century to traverse central Queens and connect with the Queensboro Bridge, spanning the East River, which opened in 1909. The bridge, and the creation of a road network linked to it in Queens, was a pivotal point in the urban development of the borough. The boulevard was achieved largely by the linking and widening of existing roads. In 1912, a commission was appointed to oversee condemnations and compensations for owners of property affected by the project.[30] In Newtown, the new boulevard passed in front of the Presbyterian Church, incorporating the former Hoffman Boulevard (also labeled on earlier maps as part of Jamaica Road or Avenue). The widening of the thoroughfare was to be achieved in this area by the widening of Hoffman Boulevard, specifically moving its southern edge farther south, encroaching on the site of the 1895 church. According to newspaper accounts, Justice Leander B. Faber, of the condemnation commission, had proposed in 1914 that the city could purchase the church and demolish it, or the church could accept funds from the city for the cost of moving it back, and the congregation agreed to the latter option, in which it was to receive $35,000.[31]

The church in February 1924 contracted with Walter Kidde & Co. of New York City—a construction and engineering firm that later became a major maker of fire-extinguishing equipment—to move the church and manse "from their present sites to new locations," including "cutting loose the main Church structure from its

[30] "Queens Boulevard: The Largest Street Opening Proceeding in the Borough," *New York Times*, Oct. 27, 1912; *Queens Borough* (New York: Chamber of Commerce of the Borough of Queens, 1913), 80.
[31] "Acquire Land for Street: Church Moved Back to Widen Queens Boulevard," *New York Times*, Dec. 10, 1922; "Big Church Moved 125 Ft. to New Site," *New York Times*, Sept. 14, 1924.

old foundations and moving it bodily to new foundations prepared for it approximately 125ft directly back of the present location"; removal of "the masonry church spire to a point considered safe by the Engineer and later finishing it off to form a tower as shown in the Engineer's sketches"; "the complete demolition of the Chapel [also often known as the lecture hall] now adjoining the Church"; and "the removal of the Manse from its present location to new foundations prepared in a new location near the Church."[32] The *New York Times* reported on September 14, 1924, on the nearly complete progress of the church since the moving operation began in the spring of that year:

> More than 400 wooden screws were used to raise the church from its foundations. A temporary foundation of heavy timber was used then constructed and placed on cradles. Under these were placed rollers, and the structure was then started on its journey, being moved only one inch at a time. Twenty-four men at huge hand-winches, reinforced by a complicated grouping of ropes and pulleys, supplied the force that moved the church. This care had to be taken so that there would be no jar.[33]

Photographs in the church archives show the new foundation laid before the move and stages of the church's progress on its rollers, including a view from underneath the structure. Some remnants of the roller mechanism remain in the subbasement below the sanctuary. The *Times* put the actual cost of the move at $87,000, leaving the congregation with a deficit of $52,000 after the city's moving allowance of $35,000.[34]

The establishment of the new boulevard also provided the "chance to open up streets running at right angles to the boulevard" and develop the resulting blocks with new housing.[35] A church ledger entry from 1924 that reads "parsonage and ground sale" to local developer Fred Reiner, suggests that the church at this time sold the former manse and some of the church's surrounding land at this point. A 1925 Armbruster photograph shows the former manse and says it was moved to a site at the southeast corner of 53rd Avenue and Seabury Street, where, much altered, it appears to stand today. The current manse in 1924 was moved to the northeast, joining the church within the block bounded by Queens Boulevard, the newly created Weimar Street (now 54th Avenye), Seabury Street, and a street variously known as Locust, Valentine and Lewis (now 55th Avenue). In the words of a church history published in 1927, "Three years ago the manse was turned completely around and given a journey of about a half block to a new foundation at the rear of the church, with the entrance on Seabury."[36]

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[32] Contract, FPCN.
[33] "Big Church Moved 125 Ft. to New Site," *New York Times* 1924.
[34] "Big Church Moved 125 Ft. to New Site," *New York Times* 1924.
[35] "Acquire Land for Street: Church Moved Back to Widen Queens Boulevard," *New York Times*.
[36] Howard A. Northacker, *History of the First Presbyterian Church of Newtown at Elmhurst, New York* (Elmhurst, N.Y.: First Presbyterian Church of Newtown, 1927), 14.

The Addition of the 1931 Parish House

The loss of the lecture hall building attached to the 1895 church in 1924 and the 1928 destruction of the Old Presbyterian Church by fire drastically reduced the congregation's ancillary spaces for Sunday school and social and administrative functions. Another small chapel building on the church's property was condemned in 1930 for the construction of the subway line running under the boulevard. These circumstances led the church to appoint a building committee in 1930 to pursue the construction of a new parish house.[37] The committee engaged the Brooklyn firm of Meyer & Mathieu (Hans C. Meyer [1885?-1946] and Joseph Mathieu [1885-1969]) to design the parish house. Meyer & Mathieu specialized in church buildings, frequently employing the Collegiate style of Gothic Revival architecture. Collegiate Gothic, so called for its imitation of the medieval and Elizabethan buildings of England's colleges and universities, emerged on college campuses in the United States in the late 19th century, continuing to flourish in the first decades of the 20th century, when it was also employed in many secondary schools, as well as in church buildings. Meyer & Mathieu's other notable works include a church house for the Presbyterian Church of the Covenant in Manhattan (1927), part of New York City's Tudor City Historic District.[38]

Newtown Presbyterian's parish house is a Collegiate Gothic design, constructed on a concrete and steel frame, with a steeply gabled roof, and clad in red brick, with limestone quoins and window and door surrounds and casement windows. The lower of its two stories contained six classrooms, a large "church parlor" for social functions, with a beamed ceiling and a fireplace, a small kitchen, and locker rooms and restrooms; the upper floor was mostly occupied by a large auditorium with stage and a kitchen for catering large events.[39] The parish house was constructed by the New York builder Charles R. Krieg Inc. and completed in 1931. The church was now able to use its own space for Sunday school, as well as for the activities of its men's, women's and youth guilds and clubs, and scout groups, which since the demolition of the chapel had met in homes or other churches' spaces. Delays in payment from the city for the condemnation resulting from subway construction forced the congregation to take out a $60,000 mortgage in 1930 to cover the costs of the new facility. The church paid off the mortgage in 1935 after receiving what it was owed by the city.[40] The parish house has remained in constant use for both congregational and community activities; today it is used by the church for

[37] "New Building of Presbyterian Church of Historic Newtown Will Be One of Most Modern Church Houses in This Borough," (Long Island City) *Daily Star*, Jan. 24, 1931.
[38] Tudor City Historic District, New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission designation report, May 17, 1988, pp. 12, 14, 25, 43; *Meyer & Mathieu, Architects, Brooklyn, New York* (New York: Architectural Catalog Co., n.d.); "Joseph Mathieu, 83, a Church Architect," *New York Times*, 25 June 1969, 47.
[39] "New Parish House for First Presbyterian Church, Elmhurst," *Queensborough* (February 1931), 90; "New Building of Presbyterian Church," *Daily Star* 1931.
[40] "Old Church Burns Its Only Mortgage," *New York Times*, Nov. 25 ,1935.

Sunday school and social recreational activities and leased in part to a local youth organization, South Asian Youth Action (SAYA).

Bibliography of Principal Sources

Church Records

First Presbyterian Church of Newtown Archives, 1715 to present. The church has a large collection of original record books and letters. Some originals of microfilmed and digitized documents are to be given on permanent loan to the Presbyterian Historical Society in Philadelphia.

Newspapers and Magazines

Newtown Register
Brooklyn Eagle
(Brooklyn and Long Island City) *Daily Star*
New York Times
(New York) *Evening Post*
New York Herald-Tribune
Queensborough magazine
Real Estate Record and Builders' Guide

Books

Half a Century's Progress of the City of Brooklyn: The City's Leading Manufacturers and Merchants. New York: International Publishing Co., 1886.

Hurd, D. Hamilton. *The History of Otsego County, New York, 1740-1878.* Philadelphia: Everts & Fariss, 1878.

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Northacker, Howard A. *History of The First Presbyterian Church of Newtown At Elmhurst, New York.* Elmhurst, N.Y.: First Presbyterian Church of Newtown, 1927.

Melikian, Marjorie, "History of the First Presbyterian Church of Newtown," *First Presbyterian Church of Newtown—350th Anniversary*, 2002.

Queens Borough. New York: Chamber of Commerce of the Borough of Queens, 1913.

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Seyfried, Vincent. *Elmhurst: From Town Seat to Mega-Suburb.* Merrick, N.Y.: Traction Yearbook, 1995.

Verbal Boundary Description

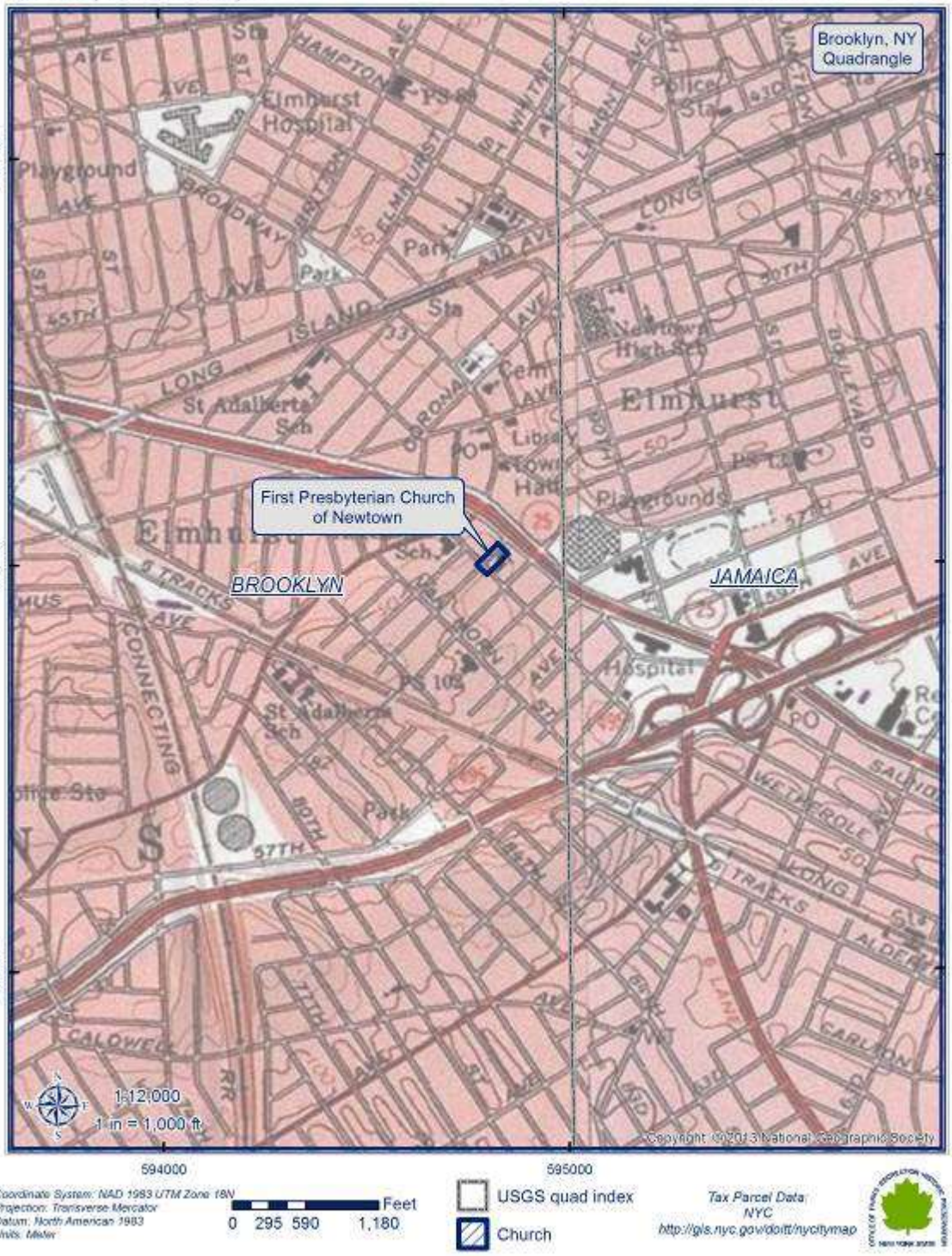
The rectangular parcel, 122 by 235 by 124 by 240 feet, consisting of Borough of Queens Tax Map Block 2582, Lots 1, 6 and 9, which encompasses the land on which the 1894 church, the 1907 manse and the 1931 parish house are situated. The Boundary is indicated by the heavy line on the attached map.

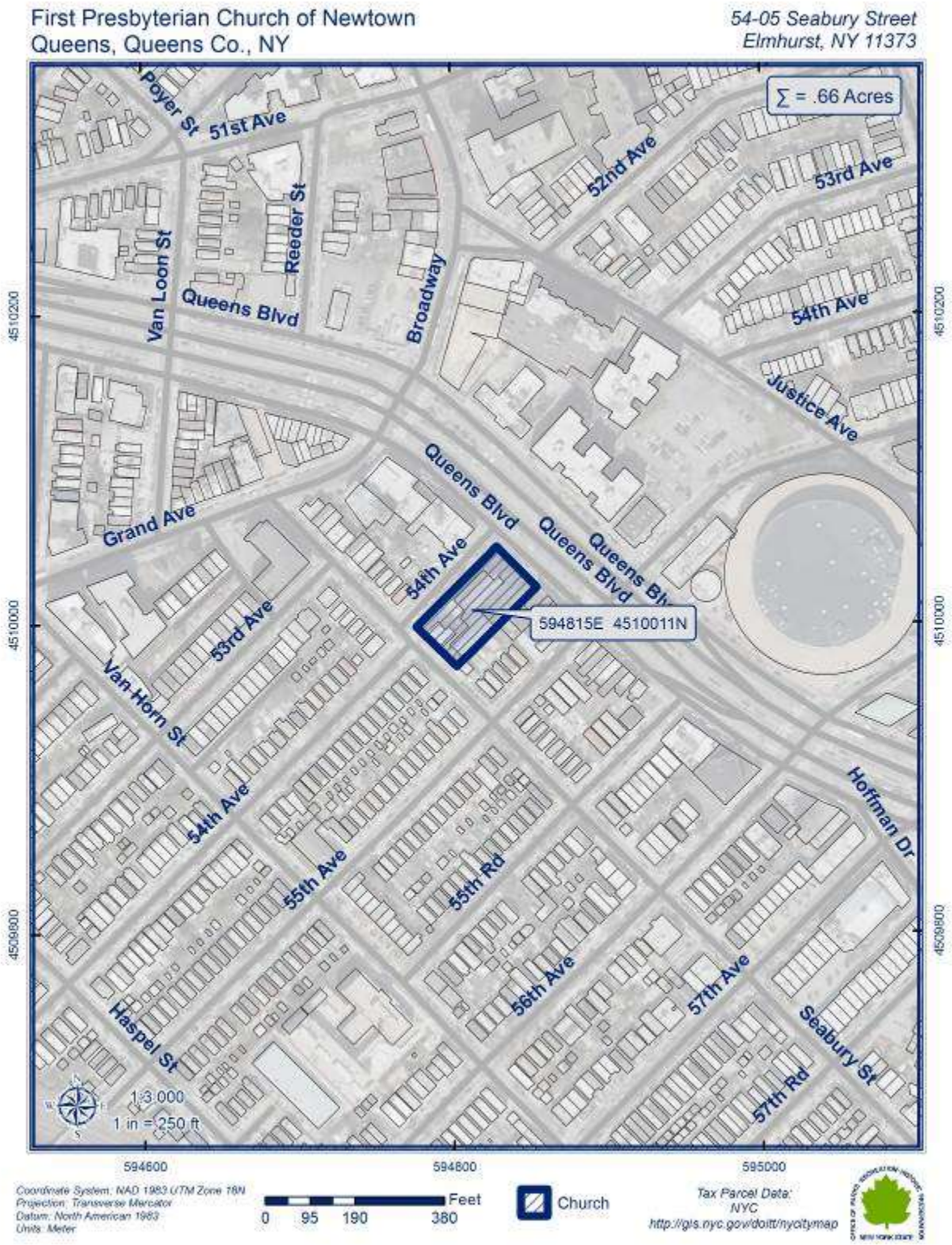
Boundary Justification

The boundary was drawn to include the current boundary of the church property, which encompasses the historic church and its dependencies. This boundary has been consistent since the property was acquired for the 1920s move.

First Presbyterian Church of Newtown
Queens, Queens Co., NY

54-05 Seabury Street
Elmhurst, NY 11373




First Presbyterian Church of Newtown
Queens, Queens Co., NY
54-05 Seabury Street
Elmhurst, NY 11373
∑ = .66 Acres
Poyer St
51st Ave
52nd Ave
53rd Ave
Reeder St
Van Loon St
Queens Blvd
Broadway
54th Ave
Justice Ave
Grand Ave
Queens Blvd
Queens Blvd
Queens Blvd
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Van Horn St
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55th Ave
55th Rd
Hoffman Dr
56th Ave
57th Ave
Haspel St
Seabury St
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Coordinate System: NAD 1983 UTM Zone 18N
Projection: Transverse Mercator
Datum: North American 1983
Units: Meter
Feet
0 95 190 380
Church
Tax Parcel Data:
NYC
http://gis.nyc.gov/doitt/nycitymap

Additional Information

Photographs

Name of Property: First Presbyterian Church of Newtown

City or Vicinity: Elmhurst, Queens, New York City

County: Queens State: New York

Photographer: Jonathan Taylor

Date Photographed: December 6, 2012–March 27, 2013

Description of Photograph(s) and number:

01 Northeast (main) and northwest facades of church, camera facing south

02 Northeast façade of church, camera facing southwest

03 Northeast and southeast facades of church; garden; northeast (rear) façade of parish hall, camera facing west

04 Church nave, camera facing southwest

05 Rear of church nave, camera facing northeast

06 Memorial window above gallery, camera facing northeast

07 Stained glass window, camera facing northwest

08 Clerestory window, camera facing northeast

09 Narthex, camera facing northwest

10 Southwest (main) façade of parish hall, portion of manse at left, camera facing north

11 Parish hall parlor, camera facing east

12 Parish hall corridor, camera facing northeast

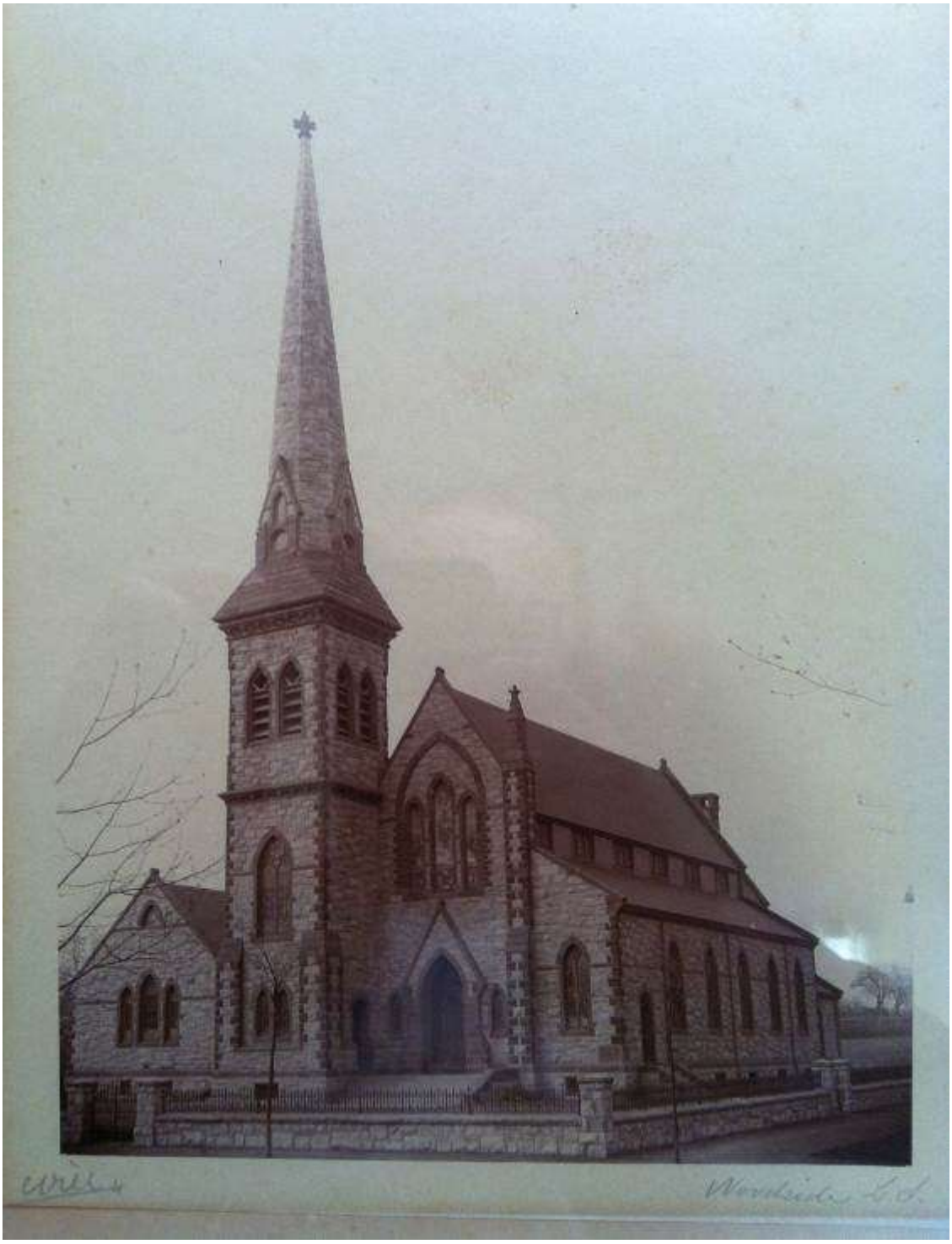
13 Southwest (main) façade of manse, camera facing northeast

14 Manse office, hall, view to room opposite, camera facing northwest

15 Manse second-floor stair hall, camera facing northeast

01 Newtown: new Presbyterian church, south side of Queens Boulevard, east of Grand Street, 1922
Photograph by Eugene L. Armbruster
New-York Historical Society

02 Undated (late 19th c.-early 20th c.) photograph of 1895 church building and original adjoining lecture hall
Church archives



03 Detail of 1925 photograph of manse by Eugene L. Armbruster
New York Public Library

04 The 1895 church and the new foundation it was moved to in 1924
Church archives

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Born April 10th Died April 6th
1794 1854
Pastorate
1819 — 1854

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