

## COMMENT ON NATIONAL REGISTER NOMINATION

**ADDRESS: 3600 and 3601-07 N. Broad Street, Zion Baptist Church and Educational Annex**

**OVERVIEW:** The Pennsylvania Historical & Museum Commission (PHMC) has requested comments from the Philadelphia Historical Commission on the National Register nomination of 3600 and 3601-07 N. Broad Street located in the North Philadelphia and historically known as the Zion Baptist Church and Educational Annex. PHMC is charged with implementing federal historic preservation regulations in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, including overseeing the National Register of Historic Places in the state. PHMC reviews all such nominations before forwarding them to the National Park Service for action. As part of the process, PHMC must solicit comments on every National Register nomination from the appropriate local government. The Philadelphia Historical Commission speaks on behalf of the City of Philadelphia in historic preservation matters including the review of National Register nominations. Under federal regulation, the local government not only must provide comments, but must also provide a forum for public comment on nominations. Such a forum is provided during the Philadelphia Historical Commission's meetings.

The nomination for the two church buildings, located at the northwest and northeast corners of North Broad and Venango Streets, asserts that the properties are significant under Criteria A and B in the area of Social History for their association with the Reverend Leon H. Sullivan (1922-2001), the nationally influential civil rights leader and social activist who led the church from 1950 until his retirement in 1988. Sullivan's lifelong commitment to racial justice through economic advancement brought the hope of equal opportunity not just to his congregation, but to Philadelphia's broader African American community and to disadvantaged groups across the country. Zion Baptist Church is also significant under Criterion C in the area of Architecture as a major ecclesiastical work in the Modern style by Philadelphia's most prominent Black architect of the post-war period, Walter R. Livingston, Jr. (1922-2011). The period of significance for the area of Social History begins in 1969, the year the congregation acquired the Annex, which played an important role in their mission, and ends in 1988, when Sullivan's tenure as pastor ended. The period of significance for the area of Architecture is 1973, the year Zion Baptist Church was completed. The property meets Criterion Consideration A, owing to its role in the Black community, the leadership of Rev. Sullivan, and the significance of its architectural design. The property also meets Criterion Consideration G.



*3600 N. Broad Street, Zion Baptist Church*



*3601-07 N. Broad Street,  
Educational Annex*

**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 National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any 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.

## 1. Name of Property

Historic name: Zion Baptist Church and Educational Annex

Other names/site number: Trinity Reformed Church

Name of related multiple property listing: N/A

## 2. Location

Street & number: 3600 and 3601-07 N. Broad Street

City or town: Philadelphia State: PA County: Philadelphia

Not For Publication: NA Vicinity: NA

## 3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this  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 set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.

In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

national  statewide  local Applicable National Register Criteria:  A  B  C  D

Signature of certifying official	Date
Title; State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government	

In my opinion, the property <input type="checkbox"/> meets <input type="checkbox"/> does not meet the National Register criteria.	
Signature of commenting official	Date
Title; State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government	

## 4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register
- determined eligible for the National Register
- determined not eligible for the National Register
- removed from the National Register
- other (explain) \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

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**5. Classification**

**Ownership of Property**

- Private:
- Public – Local
- Public – State
- Public – Federal

**Category of Property**

- Building(s)
- District
- Site
- Structure
- Object

**Number of Resources within Property**

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>2</u>	<u>0</u>	buildings
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	sites
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	structures
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	objects
<u>2</u>	<u>0</u>	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

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**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions:** RELIGION: Church

**Current Functions:** RELIGION: Church

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## 7. Description

### Architectural Classification

Zion Baptist (3600 N. Broad Street): Modern  
Trinity Reformed/Zion Educational Annex (3601-07 N. Broad Street): Gothic Revival

### Materials (Principal exterior materials of the property)

Zion Baptist (3600 N. Broad Street): Brick, glass  
Trinity Reformed/Zion Educational Annex (3601-07 N. Broad Street): Granite, terra cotta

## Narrative Description

### Summary Paragraph

The Zion Baptist Church and Educational Annex consists of two church buildings located at the northwest and northeast corners of North Broad and Venango Streets in North Philadelphia, respectively Zion Baptist Church, which is a two-story brick and glass church in the Modern style designed by architect Walter R. Livingston, Jr., and completed in 1973; and the Zion Educational Annex, which is a two-story Gothic Revival-style church with attached three-story Sunday School that was designed by Carl P. Berger and completed in 1912, and altered and expanded by architect Horace W. Castor in 1929. The Zion Educational Annex was originally home to the Trinity Reformed Church, which sold the building to the Zion Baptist Church congregation in 1969.<sup>1</sup> The Zion Baptist Church is largely unaltered on both the exterior and interior from its 1973 construction. The former Trinity Reformed Church is also largely intact, retaining virtually all of its exterior features and many of its interior features from 1912 and the 1930 alterations. The only notable change to Trinity Reformed has been the removal of the pews in the sanctuary to create a more flexible multi-purpose space, but the volume of the sanctuary and most of its historic features and finishes remain virtually intact. Due to the relatively minor changes that have occurred in the building, the former Trinity Reformed Church easily conveys the important role it played in the mission of Zion Baptist Church during the time it was led by the Reverend Leon Sullivan.

### Setting

The Zion Baptist Church and Educational Annex are located in the dense urban environment of North Broad Street, which is the primary north-south corridor running through North Philadelphia. The Zion Baptist Church has concrete sidewalks along the east and south elevations, faces a parking lot to the north, and abuts several rows of three-story, turn-of-the-twentieth century houses to the west. The parking lot to the north of the building, which is surrounded by a short metal picket fence that appears to be 20-30 years old, has been partially owned by the Zion Baptist congregation and has been used by them since the early 1990s. Prior to that time, four separate residential and commercial buildings occupied this area, which still consists of four separate parcels (3618, 3620, 3622, and 3624 North Broad Street). Zion Baptist owns three of the parcels (3618, 3620, and 3622), which they acquired between 1989 and 1992.

<sup>1</sup> As explained in Section 8, the Zion Baptist congregation bought the Trinity Reformed Church in 1969 to use as a community center known as the Zion Educational Annex.

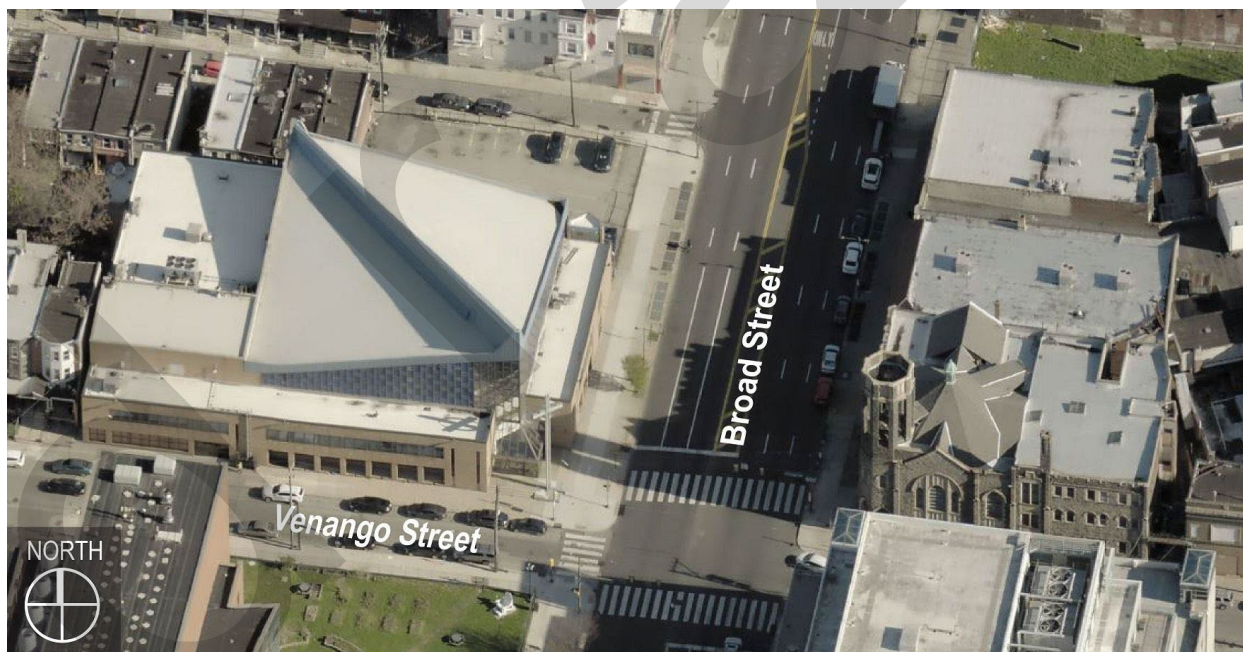
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The fourth, northernmost parcel (3624), is owned by a third party. Because Zion Baptist's ownership and use of these parcels postdates the period of significance, they are not included within the National Register Boundary.

Located directly across Broad Street from the Zion Baptist Church, the Zion Educational Annex has concrete sidewalks along the west and south elevations and is located just west of the historic commercial corridor of Germantown Avenue, which is lined by two- and three-story commercial buildings dating from the late-nineteenth through the mid-twentieth century.

North Broad Street experienced intense residential development beginning in the late nineteenth century, and some former single-family houses and churches from this era remain, but the corridor became largely commercial by the early twentieth century and remains so today. More recent developments have begun to change the character of Broad Street south of the nominated properties, including the large, nearly block-long Temple University School of Medicine, built in 2007 across Venango Street from the Zion Baptist Church, and the ten-story, 1990s-era Shriners Children's Hospital, located across Venango Street from the Zion Educational Annex. North of Venango Street, however, very few substantial changes have occurred in recent decades and many of the corridor's circa 1890 to 1920 commercial buildings remain standing in this area, although many are altered. The only notable recent development north of Venango Street is the rehabilitation of the National Register-listed Beury Building, which is currently underway. Located a little over one block to the north of the Zion Baptist Church and Educational Annex, the 14-story, Art Deco-style Beury Building, built in 1926 and enlarged in 1930, will be converted into a hotel.



**Figure 1** – Recent aerial view, looking north (Pictometry). Zion Baptist Church, with its distinctive Modern roofline, is at the left, and the former Trinity Reformed Church, which became the Zion Educational Annex, is at right.

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Figure 2 – Site plan with National Register Boundary.

### Zion Baptist Church – 3600 N. Broad Street

The Zion Baptist Church is a two-story, rectangular plan building in the Modern style. Oriented toward the southeast corner of the site, the building is primarily characterized by dramatic clerestory walls of aluminum-framed, staggered glass panels of varying color (blue, red, and yellow along most of each side, but also clear at the southeast corner) that rise behind and above the more solid two-story wings along Broad Street and Venango Street (the east and south elevations, respectively). The two-story wings are faced in light brown brick (Photo 1). The glass walls, which are capped by a band of vertically seamed, blue metal panels, mark the location of the sanctuary inside the building. Sloping up from the northwest to the southeast corners, the glass walls culminate in a steeple-like spire formed from a vertical extension of the blue metal panels. The glass panels directly below the steeple, which are clear rather than colored, extend down vertically, then splay out on both sides to cover a glass-walled vestibule containing the main entrance doors into the building (Photo 1). The vestibule is nestled between the brick wings and is accessed via shallow concrete steps with wide landings at the top.

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**Photo 1** – South and east elevations, looking northwest from Broad Street.

To the north of the vestibule, a two-story brick wing extends along Broad Street, containing several tall, slit-like stained glass windows as well as regular groups of aluminum windows with awning-type operable lower panels (Photo 2). The stained-glass windows feature the same color scheme and are an abstract, geometric pattern. On the first floor, the windows are recessed into the building, creating a sheltered space within the exterior walls. In addition to the windows, there is a pair of aluminum-framed glass doors with a transom in the northernmost bay. To the south of the vestibule, along Venango Street, there is another two-story brick wing, which is treated nearly identically to the east elevation but is much longer (Photo 3). These two wings contain classrooms, offices, and a multi-purpose room.

The north elevation, which faces the asphalt parking lot described above, consists of a blank brick wall. The west elevation also largely consists of a blank brick wall, but does have a small number of aluminum windows similar to those on the south and east elevations. Only a very narrow alley separates the west elevation from the adjacent rowhouses, therefore the west elevation is not readily visible from Venango Street.

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**Photo 2** – East elevation, looking west from Broad Street.



**Photo 3** – South elevation, looking northwest from Venango Street.

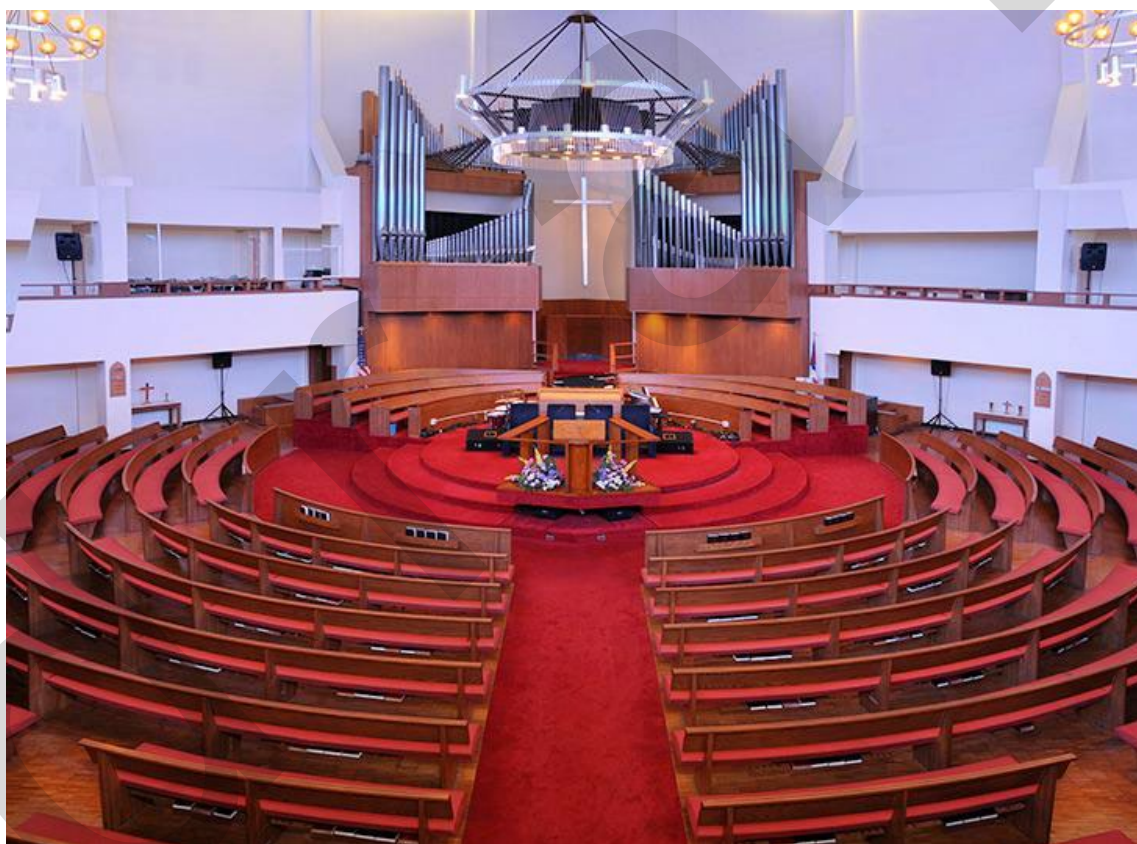


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*[Will be adding a few photos showing the north and west elevations.]*

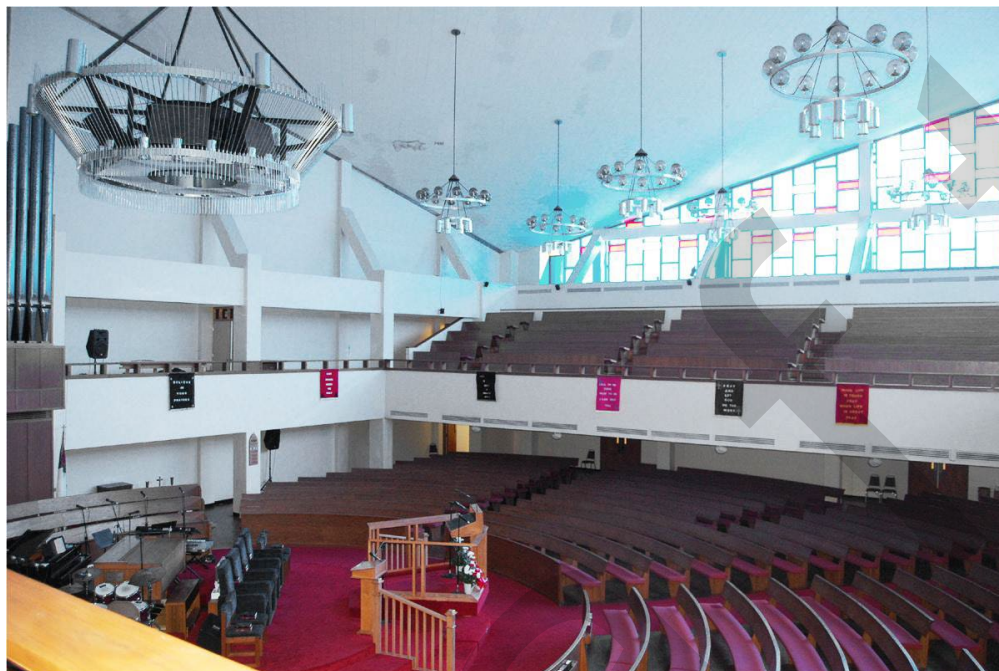
*Interior:* The interior of the Zion Baptist Church is dominated by the large, two-story sanctuary space, which occupies most of the eastern half of the building (Photos 4 and 5). The sanctuary is square in plan with circular, auditorium-style pews. There are also balconies on all four sides, although pews only exist along the east and south sides. The altar and reredos, which partially conceal an impressive array of organ pipes, is located at the northwest corner of the space. The ceiling slopes up from the northeast and southwest corners to a ridge aligned along a diagonal axis from the entrance at the southeast corner to the altar at the northwest corner. Above and behind the balcony seating along the east and south sides of the space, the colored glass clerestory walls visible from the exterior filter light coming into the space. Electrical light is provided by several aluminum chandeliers that hang from the ceiling. Apart from the carpeting, which is a later replacement of the original carpeting, all of the existing features and finishes within the sanctuary are original to the 1973 period of construction, including the pews, balconies, white painted walls, and ceiling fixtures. This interior space therefore has virtually pristine integrity.



**Photo 4** – Sanctuary, looking northwest toward the altar from the balcony (Community Design Collaborative/Partners for Sacred Places).

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**Photo 5** – Sanctuary, looking northeast from the balcony (Community Design Collaborative/Partners for Sacred Places).

To the east and south of the sanctuary, the first and second floors contain a number of classrooms and meeting spaces all connected via long corridors parallel to the Broad Street and Venango Street wings. Typical finishes within these spaces, including the corridors, are vinyl tile floors, drywall walls, and dropped acoustical tile ceilings with linear, fluorescent lighting fixtures. As the finishes and fixtures are characteristic of the 1970s period of construction, it does not appear that these spaces have substantially changed since the building was completed ([Photo 6](#)). There is no clear distinction between the areas used by church administration and those used by the wider congregation.

West of the sanctuary, there is a large multi-purpose meeting and dining room on the first floor, which contains vinyl tile floors, exposed brick perimeter walls and column enclosures, and dropped tile ceilings ([Photo 7](#)). To the north of the multi-purpose room is a large commercial-style kitchen. Directly above the kitchen, there is a basketball court with wood floors, painted concrete block walls, and exposed steel trusses at the ceiling ([Photo 8](#)).

There are several original stairs in the building, including two open concrete stairs that lead up from the vestibule to the second floor, as well as three other more concrete stairs: two located roughly at the midpoints of the Broad Street and Venango Street wings, respectively, and a third at the northwest corner of the building, adjacent to the second-floor basketball court.

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**Photo 6** – Typical classroom/meeting room (Chris Kendig Photography).



**Photo 7** – Multi-purpose meeting and dining room on the first floor (Chris Kendig Photography).

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**Photo 8** – Basketball court on the second floor (Chris Kendig Photography).

**Zion Educational Annex (Trinity Reformed Church) – 3601-07 N. Broad Street**

Trinity Reformed Church is a two-story church with attached three-story Sunday School at the northeast corner of North Broad and Venango Streets. Designed by architect Carl P. Berger and built in 1911-1912, this granite building with terra cotta trim was altered and expanded by architect Horace W. Castor in 1929. The building was designed in a simplified version of the Gothic Revival style, and the alterations completed in 1929 included the Art Deco-style reconstruction of the corner tower, which historically was shorter and more ornate with Gothic decoration.

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**Photo 9:** West and south elevations, looking northeast from Broad Street.

The church is anchored by the tall, octagonal 1929 tower at the southwest corner of the building ([Photo 9](#)). At ground level, the tower features granite steps leading up to three pairs of painted wood doors with stained glass panels and pointed arch transoms with stained glass, although the center transom is currently concealed by a painted wood panel. The doors are framed by terra cotta trim. Above the entrances, there are three small stained-glass windows with arched heads and terra cotta trim. The upper portion of the tower contains eight tall openings and is topped by terra cotta spandrel panels alternating with the stone piers.

The west elevation, which faces Broad Street, is four bays wide, with each bay framed by slightly projecting stone buttresses with terra cotta caps ([Photo 10](#)). The first bay north of the tower is the widest, containing three small, rectangular stained-glass windows at ground level with three taller, pointed arched stained-glass windows above. These six windows are united into a single group by terra cotta trim, which includes colonnette-like mullions, ribbed spandrel and transom panels, and quoining on the sides.

The next two bays to the north are similar but smaller versions of the first bay, with the ground level containing a single rectangular stained-glass window and the upper level containing a single pointed arch stained-glass window. The fourth bay is nearly identical except that there is a pair of painted wood doors rather than a window at ground level. These three bays are topped by a crenellated roofline with terra cotta coping.

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**Photo 10:** West elevation, looking east from Broad Street.

On the south elevation, which faces Venango Street, the first and second bays east of the tower are identical to the first and second bays north of the tower on the Broad Street side (Photo 11). To the east is the 1929 Sunday School section of the building, which is four bays wide and three stories tall. The first bay of the Sunday School contains a hollow metal slightly above ground level. The door is set within stucco infill and is reached by granite steps. The second and third floors above the door contain two rectangular stained-glass windows each. The door and upper-level windows are united into a group by terra cotta surround with quoins and raised spandrel panels. The three bays to the east each have two rectangular stained-glass windows on the first floor, two double-hung stained-glass windows on the second floor, and two one-over-one, double-hung wood windows on the third floor. All windows have terra cotta surrounds with quoining on the sides. The top of the Sunday School building has a crenellated roofline with terra cotta coping.

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**Photo 11:** South elevation, looking north from Venango Street. The three-story Sunday School wing dates to the 1929 alterations and expansion designed by Castor, as does the corner tower, which replaced the original.

The east elevation, which faces a narrow alley between the Sunday School and an adjacent two-story commercial building, is faced in red brick and contains a number of one-over-one, double-hung wood sash windows. The north elevation abuts another two-story commercial building and is not visible.

*Interior:* The main entrance at the southwest corner of the building opens into a small, hexagonal vestibule with terrazzo floors, plaster walls with stained wood wainscoting, plaster ceilings, and several stained wood doors (some with stained glass transoms) that open to the sanctuary and to the stair leading up to the balcony (Photo 12).

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**Photo 12:** Vestibule, looking northeast.

The voluminous sanctuary is square in plan and is capped by a vaulted plaster ceiling. The main level is an open space with no pews, which were probably removed when the building was converted into a community center around 1970 (**Photo 13**). The floor surface consists of circa 1970 vinyl tiles, and there are plaster walls punctuated by tall pilasters with ornate Gothic capitals. On the north side of the space, there is a stage-like platform that was installed around 1970; historically, the transition up to the altar was more gradual as evidenced in a historic photo from 1942 (**Figure 29**).



**Photo 13 (left):** Sanctuary, looking northwest toward the stage.



**Photo 14 (right):** Reredos and stained glass windows at the back of the stage, looking northwest from the sanctuary.



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The original stained wood reredos and paneling remains along the north side of the stage (Photo 14). On the south side of the space, there is a sloped balcony with wood pews that is accessed on the west side via a stair from the vestibule on the first floor and on the east side from another stair located in the Sunday School section of the building (Photos 15-17).



**Photo 15:** Sanctuary, looking southeast toward the balcony.



**Photo 16 (left):** Balcony, looking southeast.



**Photo 17 (right):** Balcony, looking northeast.

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The west and south walls contain the exterior-facing stained glass windows described above. There are also stained glass windows behind the altar, although these do not receive natural light since the north elevation abuts an adjacent two-story building.



**Photo 18:** Passageway along east side of the sanctuary, looking north.

Apart from the vinyl tile floors, the stage on the north side, and the removal of the original pews on the main level, all of the finishes and features within the sanctuary, including white-painted plaster surfaces and stained woodwork, are intact from the 1912 and 1930 periods of construction.

The Sunday School is entered from the door on the south elevation, which opens to a small vestibule with terrazzo floors and the primary stairway. The sanctuary can be entered through a doorway on the north side of the vestibule, which leads to a passageway along the east side of the sanctuary. This passageway contains a series of original stained wood windows and doors ([Photo 18](#)). The windows, which are “glazed” with wood panels rather than glass, open to one of the Sunday School rooms in a manner similar to an Akron plan church. One set of the doors provides access to this room, while the others open to other rooms the purpose of which is currently unknown. The schoolroom contains vinyl tile floors, plaster walls with stained wood baseboard and chair rail, and plaster ceilings ([Photo 19](#)). The other rooms on the first floor of the Sunday School building are similarly treated, with some containing carpeting rather than vinyl tile floors ([Photo 20](#)). Apart from the vinyl tile floors, carpeting in some locations, and modern light fixtures, all of the finishes and treatments appear to be original to the 1912 and/or c.1930 periods of construction.

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**Photo 19** (left): First floor, Sunday School room, looking southwest.



**Photo 20** (right): First floor, Sunday School room, looking south.

The main stairway, which accessed from the above-described vestibule, contains an original U-return metal stair with painted metal picket railings and newel posts, original stained wood hand rails, and original terrazzo treads and landings (Photo 21). This stair provides access from the basement to the third floor.



**Photo 21**: Main stairway, looking southwest on the second floor.

The second and third floors of the Sunday School contain a number of small and large schoolrooms, which are treated similarly to those on the first floor, with vinyl tile or carpeting on the floors, plaster

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walls with stained wood baseboard and chair rail, and plaster ceilings (Photos 22, 24, 25). The schoolrooms are arranged along a T-shaped corridor on each floor, and each room is entered through a stained wood door with three-light transom (Photo 23).



**Photo 22** (left): Second floor, Sunday School room, looking southeast.



**Photo 23** (right): Second floor, Sunday School corridor, looking south.



**Photo 24** (left): Third floor, Sunday School room, looking southeast.



**Photo 25** (right): Third floor, Sunday School room, looking north.

### Integrity

The Zion Baptist Church and Educational Annex retain integrity as neither building has been substantially altered on either the exterior or interior since their respective dates of construction in 1973 and 1912/1929. The predominant exterior materials, including brick and glass on the Church and stone and terra cotta on the Educational Annex, are intact and are representative of both Modern and Gothic Revival style buildings that were built in and around Philadelphia during these periods. Inside, the Zion Baptist

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Church remains virtually unchanged (see Figures 12, 13). Within the Educational Annex, there have been very few changes to the sanctuary since the 1929 alterations except for the removal of the pews and the installation of vinyl tile floors. On the interior of the Sunday school portion of the Annex, the original plan has been slightly altered in some locations – such as the insertion of a limited number of doors in random locations, and the installation of drywall partitions in scattered locations to subdivide larger spaces – but the historic finishes remain intact in several of the corridors, classrooms, and offices. The sanctuaries in both buildings not only retain most of their original finishes, but also their impressive, soaring volumes. Overall, the high quality of the historic design, materials and workmanship exhibited conveys not only the care taken by the designers and builders of the two buildings, but also the hopes and aspirations of the generations of men and women who worshipped there. Finally, the location, association, feeling and setting of the subject property since the last phases of construction were completed in 1973 and 1929, respectively, remain intact. As there have been no substantial changes to these resources, they continue to read as a religious place that once served as the spiritual home of the Zion Baptist congregation and as a community anchor for the neighborhood.

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## 8. Statement of Significance

### Applicable National Register Criteria

- A. Property is 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.
- C. Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or 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

- A. Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes
- 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 old or achieving significance within the past 50 years

### Areas of Significance

Social History; Architecture

### Period of Significance

1973-1988 – Zion Baptist Church

1969-1988 – Zion Educational Annex

### Significant Dates

1969; 1973

### Significant Person

Rev. Leon H. Sullivan

### Cultural Affiliation

N/A

### Architect/Builder

Walter R. Livingston, Jr. (Zion Baptist Church architect); Progress Construction Company and Daniel J. Keating Company (Zion Baptist Church builder); Carl P. Berger (Trinity Reformed architect); Horace W. Castor (Trinity Reformed alterations architect)

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## Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph

The Zion Baptist Church and Educational Annex are significant under Criteria A and B in the area of Social History for their association with the Reverend Leon H. Sullivan (1922-2001), the nationally influential civil rights leader and social activist who led the church from 1950 until his retirement in 1988. Sullivan's lifelong commitment to racial justice through economic advancement brought the hope of equal opportunity not just to his congregation, but to Philadelphia's broader African American community and to disadvantaged groups across the country. In 1972-73, Sullivan himself spearheaded the construction of the present church after a fire destroyed an older building on the site. Several years earlier, in 1969, the Zion Baptist congregation acquired the Trinity Reformed Church, located directly across Broad Street, when that congregation departed. The Gothic Revival-style former church, built in 1912 and altered and expanded in 1930, was renamed the Zion Educational Annex. The Annex building actively served the congregation's mission of community outreach and support and helps to reflect the Social History area of significance. Zion Baptist Church is also significant under Criterion C in the area of Architecture as a major ecclesiastical work in the Modern style by Philadelphia's most prominent Black architect of the post-war period, Walter R. Livingston, Jr. (1922-2011). Although Zion Baptist Church was important prior to moving to this location, and continues to play an important role in the Black community, for the purposes of this nomination the period of significance for the area of Social History begins in 1969, the year the congregation acquired the Annex, which played an important role in their mission, and ends in 1988, when Sullivan's tenure as pastor came to a close. The period of significance for the area of Architecture is 1973, the year Zion Baptist Church was completed. The property meets Criterion Consideration A, due to its role in the Black community, the leadership of Rev. Sullivan, and the significance of its architectural design. The property also meets Criterion Consideration G. The period can confidently extend to 1988 as it is clear that Rev. Sullivan and the congregation continued to be influential at the time of his retirement. Future examination, after continued passage of time, may extend the period even further, but 1988 appears to be an appropriate end date based on existing documentation and analysis.<sup>2</sup>

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## Narrative Statement of Significance

### Statement of Significance:

#### *The Early Years of Zion Baptist Church*

The origins of the Zion Baptist Church can be found in a missionary prayer meeting organized in 1882 by the Reverend Horace B. Wayland (1843-1896) in the home of Mr. and Mrs. Lewis Simms in Philadelphia. In 1883, when Wayland was ordained as a minister, the church had 40 members and was formally recognized by the Philadelphia Council of the Baptist Association. The same year, the church embarked on the construction of a permanent building nearby at 15<sup>th</sup> and Brandywine Streets. By 1890, however, having increased in size to 173 members, the congregation had already outgrown the building and again relocated, this time to the old Spring Garden Baptist Church near 13<sup>th</sup> and Wallace Streets in

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<sup>2</sup> See Emily Cooperman, "African American Churches of Philadelphia, 1787-1949," National Register of Historic Places Multiple Property Documentation Form, 2010 (NRHP #64501108) for a broader context of African American congregations and religious buildings in Philadelphia. The period of significance for the Zion Baptist Church and Annex post-dates the period covered by this context study. Therefore, while the document was useful for understanding the earlier history of churches in Philadelphia, and Zion's overall importance within the religious community, the nomination is not being listed under the cover of the MPDF.

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the West Poplar neighborhood of lower North Philadelphia. Zion Baptist was the first Black Baptist church located north of Market Street; historically, the city's African American population was concentrated in South Philadelphia but was increasingly moving northward toward the end of the nineteenth century.

Over the next several decades, Zion Baptist Church was led by a number of progressive, community-minded pastors. These leaders were instrumental in the growth of the Baptist faith in the African American community, in furthering not only the spiritual needs of the congregation, but in supporting their educational and economic needs as well. Wayland, in addition to establishing Zion Baptist Church and making it a financially stable congregation, became involved in mission activities in the region that led to the formation of a dozen other Baptist churches in the city, and in nearby Ambler, Ardmore, and Wayne, Pennsylvania, as well as in Camden and Atlantic City, New Jersey.



ZION BAPTIST CHURCH,

**Figure 3:** Zion Baptist Church on 13th Street (the former Spring Garden Baptist Church).

The Reverend Elbert W. Moore (1865-1940), who succeeded Wayland on his death in 1896 and led Zion Baptist until 1915, was not only the church's pastor, but a "civic leader who was in vanguard of every movement for the civic and economic progress of the people."<sup>3</sup> Prominent civil rights lawyer Raymond Pace Alexander (1897-1974) wrote of Moore, his mentor, that "it was a rarity in those days" for a church to have a "well educated and highly motivated Baptist clergyman." Pace's biographer, David A. Canton writes that Moore "represented a New Negro minister who concentrated on the religious, social, and intellectual needs of black Philadelphians."<sup>4</sup>

<sup>3</sup> "Zion Baptist: Religious and Community Leader," *Philadelphia Tribune*, July 20, 1965; Peggy Pinder, "Zion Baptist Celebrates 100 Year Legacy," *Philadelphia Tribune*, August 24, 1984.

<sup>4</sup> David A. Canton, *Raymond Pace Alexander: A New Negro Lawyer Fights for Civil Rights in Philadelphia* (University Press of Mississippi), 9.



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Wayland and Moore were followed by a line of pastors who not only strengthened the financial footing of the church by liquidating debts and raising funds, but worked to further the role of the church in the lives of its members. These men, who included Rev. William Henry Moses, D.D. (served 1916-21), Rev. William B. Reed, D.D. (1923-25), Rev. Robert J. Langston (1926-42), and Rev. Arthur W. Jones (1945-49), maintained Zion Baptist's role as the spiritual home of the congregation, while making efforts to meet other community needs by establishing youth programs, implementing employment and financial support initiatives, and expanding community service projects. Langston even began to plan for a separate community center near the church, although this was postponed due to the outbreak of World War II. The programs begun by these pastors, which were critically important to a Black congregation that could not always rely on support from predominantly white-led institutions, would serve as a foundation for the future work of Rev. Leon Howard Sullivan who succeeded Langston in 1950.



**Figure 4:** Rev. Sullivan early in his career; date unknown (Historical Society of Pennsylvania).

*A New Pastor – Reverend Leon H. Sullivan*

Born in Charleston, West Virginia, in 1922, Leon Howard Sullivan became a Baptist minister at the age of 18 and graduated from West Virginia State College with a bachelor of arts degree in 1943. That year, he met the influential Black minister Adam Clayton Powell, Jr. (1908-1972), who was visiting the area from New York City. With the encouragement of Powell, Sullivan moved to New York in 1943, entering the prestigious Union Theological Seminary, which he attended until 1945. Sullivan later earned a master of arts degree in religion from Columbia University in 1947. While in school, Sullivan served as an assistant minister at Powell's Abyssinian Baptist Church in Harlem, one of the oldest and most revered Black churches in New York. During his brief time in New York – he left in 1947 to become pastor at First Baptist Church in South Orange, New Jersey – Sullivan developed a working relationship with Mayor Fiorella LaGuardia. In an early sign of his lifelong commitment to racial equality and community activism, particularly the pursuit of employment opportunities for young Black men, Sullivan persuaded LaGuardia to permit the opening of a new police recruitment office in Harlem. Sullivan's goal of hiring 100 new Black police officers was met within only a single month. In addition to providing secure

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employment to Black men who otherwise faced a lack of job prospects, this effort created officers who, unlike the predominantly white police force, understood the problems of Black Harlem and could be trusted by its residents.<sup>5</sup>

Following his tenure as pastor of the First Baptist Church in South Orange, New Jersey, Sullivan moved on to Philadelphia to become the pastor of Zion Baptist Church in 1950. According to historian Karl Ellis Johnson, Sullivan “was a perfect fit for a church that wanted a charismatic leader who could continue the church’s community-oriented mission throughout the city.”<sup>6</sup> Although a small congregation of about 600 members, Sullivan’s charismatic leadership started to attract many newcomers and by 1955 the congregation had outgrown its home at 13<sup>th</sup> and Wallace Streets. Reflecting the continuing movement of African Americans into North Philadelphia, Sullivan and Zion Baptist acquired the former St. Paul’s Reformed Episcopal Church at the corner of North Broad and Venango Streets in 1954, moving in the following year. In addition to a larger sanctuary that provided space for over a thousand congregants, the building had “a full gymnasium with shower and locker rooms, expansive facilities for a departmentalized Christian education program, a large nursery that is scaled in every detail for young children, and other rooms for club and meeting purposes.” These facilities, which the church largely lacked at 13<sup>th</sup> and Wallace Streets, allowed Sullivan and Zion Baptist to greatly expand the congregation’s social, recreational, and educational programs.<sup>7</sup>



**Figure 5:** Zion Baptist Church (the former St. Paul’s Reformed Episcopal Church) at the northwest corner of Broad and Venango Streets, 1969 (Temple University Library). This was the congregation’s home from 1955 until 1970, when it was destroyed by fire. The current church building was built on this site.

<sup>5</sup> Leon H. Sullivan, *Build Brother Build* (Philadelphia: Macrae Smith Company, 1969), 48-49.

<sup>6</sup> Karl Ellis Johnson, “Trouble Won’t Last: Black Church Activism in Postwar Philadelphia,” in *African American Urban History Since World War II*, ed. Kenneth L. Kusmer and Joe W. Trotter (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009), 257.

<sup>7</sup> “Zion Baptist Buys \$225,000 Edifice,” *Philadelphia Tribune*, February 16, 1954; “Historic Church Landmark Acquired by Zion Baptist Church,” *Philadelphia Tribune*, August 20, 1955.

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Almost as soon as he started at Zion Baptist, Sullivan continued his work toward expanding employment opportunities, believing that jobs, rather than public assistance, were critical to the economic growth and empowerment of Philadelphia's African American community. Sullivan became closely involved in Zion Baptist's employment agency. However, due to the innumerable barriers faced by Blacks in finding decent jobs at Philadelphia companies, little progress was made on this front during the 1950s. Frustrated, in 1959 Sullivan instituted a campaign of "selective patronage," which consisted of a series of boycotts on Philadelphia companies who discriminated against African Americans in their hiring practices. Working closely with other Black ministers, such as longtime supporter William H. Gray, Jr., of Bright Hope Baptist Church at 12<sup>th</sup> and Cecil B. Moore Avenue, Sullivan and his counterparts monitored hirings at companies across the city, relying "heavily on informal networks in the Black community, carried out by word of mouth by regular churchgoers," in the words of historian Karl Ellis Johnson. As Johnson further explains:

Each Sunday, black ministers urged their congregations not to buy the products of certain Philadelphia companies that discriminated against blacks. The church members spread the word about these boycotts to relatives and friends, which resulted in a general boycott. The black ministers would monitor a company by sending some church members around to see if it had changed its practices. Sullivan said about the process, "We ministers would hold midnight meetings to set our agenda and report on goals. When a company met our requirements, all 400 of us would go to our pulpits and say, 'it's off.'"<sup>8</sup>

The success of Sullivan's selective patronage campaign, which persisted with numerous boycotts through 1963 – was clear. More than two dozen companies were targeted, resulting in many of Philadelphia's most prominent employers – the Tasty Baking Company, Breyers Ice Cream, the *Philadelphia Inquirer*, and Sun Oil, among others – changing their hiring practices to include African Americans. In addition to the practical impact of finding an estimated 2000 skilled jobs for Black workers, selective patronage had a galvanizing impact on Philadelphia's African American community because it disproved the idea that they could not achieve success without aid from a predominantly white city government. In the words of historian Matthew J. Countryman, selective patronage "prefigured the Black Powers movement," demonstrating that "black nationalism might, in fact, provide a practical basis for developing new strategies for the movement for racial justice."<sup>9</sup>

Sullivan's leadership of the selective patronage campaign gained the attention of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. In October 1962, King invited Sullivan to Atlanta to help launch a similar campaign in that city. Implemented by the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, the Atlanta effort became known as "Operation Breadbasket," which by one account was "the single most innovative economic program to grow out of the civil rights movement."<sup>10</sup> In the words of King himself, "The fundamental premise of Breadbasket is a simple one. Negroes need not patronize a business which denies them jobs, or advancement [or] plain courtesy." The program's success in Atlanta – it brought an estimated \$25 million

<sup>8</sup> Johnson, 258.

<sup>9</sup> Matthew J. Countryman, *Up South: Civil Rights and Black Power in Philadelphia* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2006), 110.

<sup>10</sup> Phyl Garland, "The Unorthodox Ministry of Leon H. Sullivan," *Ebony* (May 1971), 114.

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a year in new wages to the Black community – led to Operation Breadbasket’s expansion to Chicago in 1967. The effort was later overseen by civil rights leader Jesse Jackson.<sup>11</sup>

Back in Philadelphia, Sullivan continued to fight for jobs for members of the Zion Baptist congregation and the broader African American community. Although the selective patronage campaign was widely successful in finding jobs previously unavailable to Blacks, Sullivan realized that many in the community lacked the skills needed to succeed in such opportunities. Sullivan said, “When integration came, I realized that integration without preparation only leads to frustration. Our people were getting jobs, but it was more and more difficult to find people to fill these jobs.”<sup>12</sup> To begin to remedy this situation, in 1964 Sullivan founded the Opportunities Industrialization Center (O.I.C.). Located in a disused police station at the corner of 19<sup>th</sup> and Oxford Streets in North Philadelphia, the organization aimed to provide employment training to prepare Black and other non-white Philadelphians to enter the job market (Figures 6, 7).<sup>13</sup>



**Figure 6:** Dedication ceremony at the first O.I.C. at 19th and Oxford Streets, January 1964 (Temple University Library). This building remains standing today, although it is currently not in use.

The O.I.C. was initially funded by the community, “beginning, as always, with the solid rock of [the Zion Baptist] congregation.”<sup>14</sup> Early on, the organization also relied on volunteer teachers, but Sullivan soon realized that the effort required paid positions that the congregation’s sponsorship could not support

<sup>11</sup> “Operation Breadbasket,” King Encyclopedia, The Martin Luther King, Jr. Research and Education Institute at Stanford University, accessed April 12, 2022, <https://kinginstitute.stanford.edu/encyclopedia/operation-breadbasket>.

<sup>12</sup> Garland, 114.

<sup>13</sup> Jason T. Bartlett, “Opportunities Industrialization Center (OIC),” The Encyclopedia of Greater Philadelphia, accessed April 12, 2022, <https://philadelphiaencyclopedia.org/essays/oic/>.

<sup>14</sup> Garland, 114.

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indefinitely, leading to mounting debts. As the success of the program grew, however, it started to gain attention from national foundations and elected officials. In 1964, the O.I.C. was granted \$200,000 by the Ford Foundation. And in 1965, the organization received both a \$458,000 grant from the Department of Labor and a \$1.7 million grant from the Office of Economic Opportunity, the latter made possible with the support of President Lyndon Johnson who visited the O.I.C. in 1967 (Figure 8). With these and other significant funding sources, the organization started to expand nationally, with Robert F. Kennedy becoming one of its most prominent advocates. Kennedy “extolled the virtues of combining public and private monies to stimulate economic development” in disadvantaged and historically Black communities like Bedford-Stuyvesant in Brooklyn, New York, where Kennedy helped set up an O.I.C. branch.<sup>15</sup>



**Figure 7:** Students in an O.I.C. classroom in 1965 (Temple University Library).

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<sup>15</sup> Bartlett.

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**Figure 8:** Rev. Sullivan with President Lyndon B. Johnson during his visit to Philadelphia. in 1967 (Temple University Library).

Sullivan’s fight for equality through economic advancement during the 1960s played out against a backdrop of more direct action that often included violent demonstrations by activists and regular citizens. In August 1964, growing unrest in North Philadelphia’s Black community over several incidents of police brutality led to a three-day riot along Columbia Avenue, one of the area’s primary commercial corridors. Reported to have caused over \$4 million in damage to businesses, the event was a defining one for the city. Sullivan believed the riot ran counter to the struggle for equality; in one statement, he said, “This is not civil rights – it’s civil destruction.”<sup>16</sup> But historian Courtney Ann Lyons argues that the event led to constructive efforts to address community needs and prevent future violence, with Sullivan’s O.I.C. playing a significant role in meeting North Philadelphia’s social, economic, and spiritual needs.<sup>17</sup>

Although Sullivan’s efforts often resulted in national attention and expansion of his programs to other cities, the pastor remained steadfastly devoted to Zion Baptist Church and North Philadelphia’s broader African American community. Balancing his pastoral duties with economic development, Sullivan sought to instill a sense of self-determination in his congregants. In one sermon, he exclaimed, “I will not be content until a black man can *make* everything he uses, from a pair of shoes to an airplane. And if you use what you’ve got and believe in *God*, you can do anything anyone else can do. Jesus doesn’t just care about what happens to you when you die. He also wants you to *live*.”<sup>18</sup> Toward this end, in the early 1960s Sullivan instituted what became known as the 10-36 plan, which asked 50 members of the congregation to contribute \$10 a month for a period of 36 months. Instead of 50 people, Sullivan got 200,

<sup>16</sup> James Lintz, “‘Civil Destruction Not Civil Rights’ Negro Leader Says,” *Philadelphia Inquirer*, August 30, 1964.

<sup>17</sup> Courtney Ann Lyons, “Burning Columbia Avenue: Black Christianity, Black Nationalism, and ‘Riot Liturgy’ in the 1964 Philadelphia Race Riot,” *Pennsylvania History* 77, no. 3 (July 2010): 342.

<sup>18</sup> Garland, 113.

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and the funds were channeled into a new venture capital company called Zion Investment Associates (ZIA), in which the contributing members became voting shareholders. By the mid-1960s several hundred more members had joined, and ZIA embarked on its first major investment: the construction of a \$1 million, 96-unit housing project on Girard Avenue between 10<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> Streets, which is still in use today. The rents generated by the project, known as Zion Gardens, became a significant source of revenue, leading to other, larger projects.<sup>19</sup>

In 1968, Sullivan and the ZIA completed what is perhaps their best-known development: Progress Plaza, which became the first Black-owned shopping center in the United States. Funded by the ZIA along with bank loans and a grant from the Ford Foundation, Sullivan and the ZIA built the shopping center on the east side of North Broad Street between Jefferson and West Oxford Streets. Progress Plaza opened on October 27, 1968, with nine Black-owned and six white-owned commercial tenants, including an A&P Supermarket. In addition to providing construction jobs to O.I.C. graduates, Progress Plaza created numerous managerial opportunities to African Americans, expanding their future career options, and kept Black-earned money in the Black community.<sup>20</sup> In a letter submitted to the *Philadelphia Tribune*, the city's oldest and largest Black newspaper, one local resident wrote, "First [Sullivan] opened the way for Negroes to get better jobs. Then he trained Negroes so they could get even better jobs. Now he's building a shopping center so we can spend the money we make at these better jobs at our own supermarket. Baby that's what I call 'takin' care of business.'"<sup>21</sup>



**Figure 9:** Rev. Sullivan at Progress Plaza in 1969 (Temple University Library).

<sup>19</sup> Stephanie Dyer, "Progress Plaza: Leon Sullivan, Zion Investment Associates, and Black Power in a Philadelphia Shopping Center," in *The Economic Civil Rights Movement: African Americans and the Struggle for Economic Power*, ed. Michael Ezra (New York: Routledge, 2013), 138-139. To date, Zion Gardens has not been evaluated for National Register eligibility.

<sup>20</sup> Dyer, 139; Brenda Galloway-Wright, "Around North Philadelphia: Progress Plaza," History News – A Temple Libraries' Blog, accessed April 12, 2022, <https://sites.temple.edu/historynews/2020/08/27/around-north-philadelphia-progress-plaza/>.

<sup>21</sup> Gregory B. Lake, "3 Cheers for Rev. Sullivan," letter to the editor, *Philadelphia Tribune*, February 18, 1967. To date, Progress Plaza has not been evaluated for National Register eligibility, however a state historical marker was installed on the site in 2016.

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Sullivan's demonstrable success in broadening economic opportunities in the Black community made him a national authority on civil rights and race relations by the late 1960s. As with President Johnson, Sullivan became a close informal advisor on race related matters to President Richard Nixon. In September, 1968, while still campaigning for the presidency, Nixon visited Progress Plaza with Sullivan and soon became a strong supporter of the pastor's work, including the O.I.C. Extending Sullivan's efforts to root out racism in the job market, Nixon adopted the so-called "Philadelphia Plan," which was implemented by the U.S. Department of Labor to require federal contractors to hire minority workers for construction jobs. And in March, 1969, after he was elected and his term began, Nixon invited Sullivan to the White House to discuss extending O.I.C. programs to Africa (Figure 10).



**Figure 10:** President Richard Nixon, Rev. Leon Sullivan, and John Hannah during a meeting in the Oval Office on March 25, 1969 (Library of Congress).

While Sullivan remained committed to growing Black economic power in North Philadelphia, he acknowledged that the community, in particular the Zion Baptist congregation, had more wide-ranging needs. In 1967, when Trinity Reformed Church, located just across Broad Street, decided to move their congregation to suburban Broomall, Pennsylvania, Sullivan saw an opportunity. Entering into an agreement to acquire the church, which was built in 1912 and expanded in 1929, Sullivan and Zion Baptist aimed to open a community center. Known as the Zion Educational Annex, the building played host to a range of full-time weekday programs, including health services, a tutorial program, cultural activities, adult education, services to working mothers, and recreation.<sup>22</sup> The sale was completed in early 1969 after the new Trinity Reformed church was completed.<sup>23</sup>

<sup>22</sup> "Education Annex," *Philadelphia Tribune*, December 30, 1967.

<sup>23</sup> "Title to the Trinity Reformed Church," *Philadelphia Tribune*, February 4, 1969.



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**Figure 11:** The Trinity Reformed Church as it appeared in 1930. Trinity was acquired by the Zion Baptist Congregation in 1969 and became the Zion Educational Annex (Historical Society of Pennsylvania).

The Zion Educational Annex soon became more than just a community center. Despite Sullivan's active involvement in fire prevention efforts – he instituted a program in 1968 to educate church leaders throughout the Philadelphia area on fire safety measures and regulations – a fire destroyed his own church on November 13, 1970. Sullivan immediately pledged to rebuild, and the congregation temporarily relocated to the Annex, where the original pews had already been removed to allow greater flexibility of use in the historic sanctuary space. For the next two years, the congregation, now numbering upwards of 5000, crammed into the space for Sunday services, sitting uncomfortably on folding chairs.

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**Figure 12:** Rev. Sullivan preaching during a service in the Annex, just after the fire in November 1970 (Temple University Library).

As in Sullivan's and the ZIA's other development projects, the funds raised by the congregation to rebuild the church were kept in the Black community wherever possible. Sullivan hired architect Walter R. Livingston, Jr., (1922-2011) of the Philadelphia firm of Eshbach, Pullinger, Stevens, and Bruder – Livingston was the most prominent of the city's very small number of Black architects – to design the new building. Sullivan and the ZIA also formed their own construction firm, the Progress Construction Company, which partnered with the Daniel J. Keating Company to rebuild the church, creating dozens of jobs for Black laborers in the process. In this way, the church building itself became the physical embodiment of Sullivan's vision of racial justice through economic advancement. Construction of the \$2.5 million, 40,000 square foot building began in 1972 and was completed in September, 1973. At the first official service on September 23, Sullivan hailed the church as the "new ship of Zion."<sup>24</sup>

The O.I.C. remained a major focus of Sullivan's work throughout the 1970s. By 1971, the organization had spread to over a hundred cities across the country as well as in the Caribbean and Africa, employing a staff of about 3,000. Sullivan estimated that in the first seven years of O.I.C.'s existence, 65,000 people had been trained for various types of jobs, saving the United States \$90 million in relief funds and adding

<sup>24</sup> Maurice F. White, "Zion Baptist Moves into \$3-Million Structure," *Philadelphia Tribune*, September 25, 1973. Linda Loyd, "The New Black 'Ship of Zion' Rises Above Charred Ruins," *Philadelphia Inquirer*, September 24, 1973.

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\$200 million to the country's economy.<sup>25</sup> These impressive results gained further attention from national political figures. In March 1974, Vice-President Gerald Ford, led by Sullivan, toured the Philadelphia O.I.C. headquarters, which by then had moved into larger quarters at 1231 North Broad Street, as well as the original center at 19<sup>th</sup> and Oxford Streets, which remained in operation.<sup>26</sup> After Ford succeeded Nixon, he and Sullivan maintained a close relationship, with Sullivan regularly advising the president on matters related to civil rights and economic opportunities for African Americans and other disadvantaged groups. In February 1975, Ford attended and spoke at the 11<sup>th</sup> annual O.I.C. convention, which was held in Atlanta that year. During his speech, the president extolled Sullivan's self-help philosophy and argued that it could be applied even more broadly in shaping public policy.<sup>27</sup> Sullivan had a similar relationship with President Jimmy Carter, who visited and spoke at Zion Baptist Church during his reelection campaign in 1980 (Figure 12).



**Figure 13:** President Jimmy Carter speaking in Zion Baptist Church in 1980 (Philadelphia Department of Records).

In a still-growing national spotlight due to his work with O.I.C., Sullivan attracted attention not just from political figures, but from the business community as well. In 1971, Sullivan was invited to join the board of directors of General Motors, becoming the first African American on the board of a major national corporation. Although one writer suggested that the move “apparently was precipitated by burgeoning public pressure on Big Business to assume a role of social responsibility,” Sullivan would not be content

<sup>25</sup> Garland, 116.

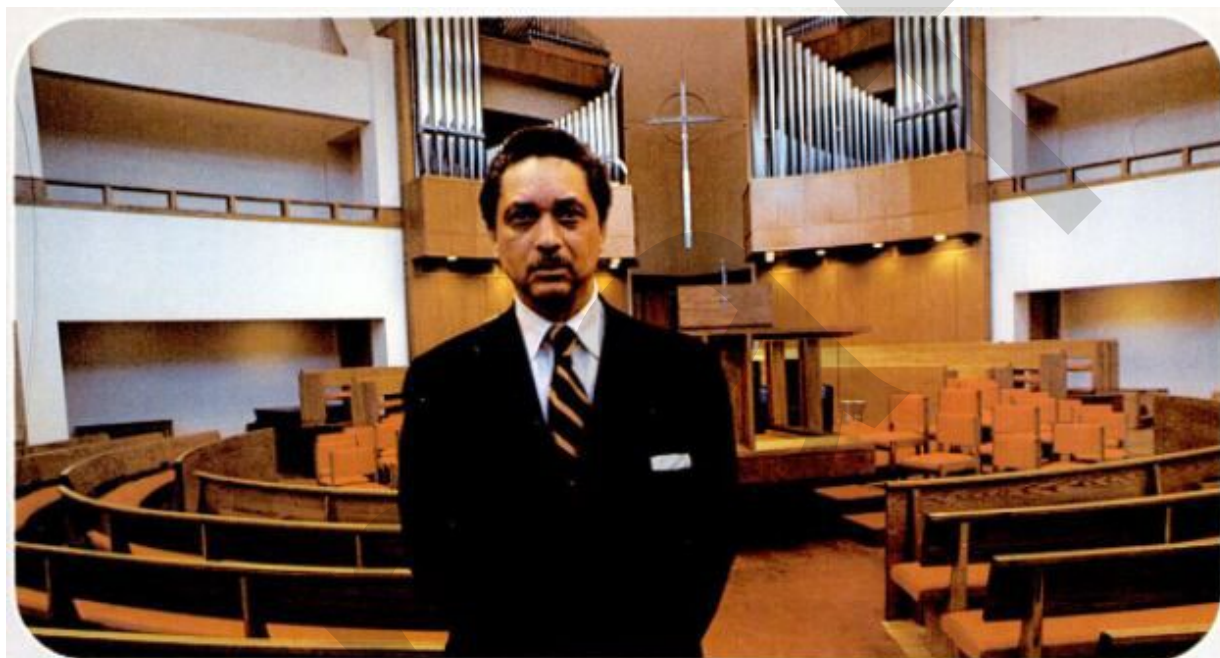
<sup>26</sup> Charles Barnes, III, “Vice President Ford Meets with Rev. Leon Sullivan, Tours O.I.C. Centers,” *Philadelphia Tribune*, March 12, 1974.

<sup>27</sup> Sandy Grady, “Ford Praises Rev. Sullivan for Self-Help Philosophy,” *Philadelphia Bulletin*, February 4, 1975.

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to sit by quietly. Almost as soon as he joined the board, Sullivan began to use his position to actively lobby GM to close its plants in South Africa in protest of that country's policy of apartheid. Sullivan never convinced the company to divest from South Africa, but he did persuade GM and other large corporations to abide by a set of seven principles, known as the Sullivan Principles, which served as a sort of code of conduct for companies who continued to do business there. As summarized in the *New York Times*, the Sullivan Principles "called for racial nonsegregation on the factory floor and in company eating and washing facilities; fair employment practices; equal pay for equal work; training for blacks and other nonwhites so they could advance to better jobs; promotion of more blacks and other nonwhites to supervisory positions, and improved housing, schooling, recreation and health facilities for workers."<sup>28</sup>



**Figure 14:** Rev. Sullivan standing in the sanctuary of the re-built Zion Baptist Church (from *Black Enterprise*, May 1975).

Leon Sullivan remained pastor of Zion Baptist Church until 1988, continuing to be active in the expansion of the OIC in the United States and Africa until that time. Sullivan also played an ongoing role in local OIC projects, most notably the construction of the Opportunities Towers, two high-rise apartment buildings for low-income seniors at 17<sup>th</sup> Street and Hunting Park Avenue in North Philadelphia.<sup>29</sup> The towers opened in 1982 and 1987, respectively, and continue to serve as subsidized housing for the elderly today. Additionally, demonstrating Sullivan's continued influence nationally into the 1980s, the Sullivan Principles were enshrined into U.S. law in the Anti-Apartheid Act of 1986, which was co-authored by William H. Gray III, successor to his father as pastor of Bright Hope Baptist Church and later a U.S. congressman representing Pennsylvania's 2<sup>nd</sup> district from 1979 to 1991.

<sup>28</sup> Paul Lewis, "Leon Sullivan, 78, Dies; Fought Apartheid," *New York Times*, April 26, 2001.

<sup>29</sup> "A Dream Come True for Senior Citizens," *Philadelphia Tribune*, May 18, 1982; Tommie St. Hill, "New Housing Towers Opened," *Philadelphia Tribune*, September 22, 1987.

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On his retirement in 1988, Sullivan could look back at a long career that took the fight for racial justice through economic advancement from North Philadelphia to the nation and finally the world. In recognition of his many accomplishments, President George H.W. Bush awarded Sullivan the Presidential Medal of Freedom in 1991. Although Sullivan died of leukemia in April 2001, his legacy lives on. Not only does Zion Baptist remain a thriving congregation today, but Sullivan's O.I.C., which is still headquartered in Philadelphia, provides job training and other workforce development programs from its 38 offices in the United States (spread among 22 states) and its centers in 20 countries across Africa, the Caribbean, and Central Europe. In addition, the Sullivan Principles live on, having been adapted into the Global Sullivan Principles by the United Nations in 1999. Despite being pulled in many directions during his career, Sullivan remained devoted to his congregation, which increased in membership from about 600 to 6000 people during his tenure. Both the Zion Baptist Church and the Zion Educational Annex remain potent symbols of Sullivan's leadership. Sullivan's death, one church member noted, "is going to be a great void...Most of us at Zion would say we've never known another person of his stature and vision."<sup>30</sup>

#### *The Architecture of Zion Baptist Church*

The new Zion Baptist Church that replaced the former 1904 building destroyed by fire in 1970 was designed by Philadelphia architect Walter R. Livingston, Jr. Born in Philadelphia in 1922, Livingston was educated at Central High School before moving on to Cheyney University (then known as Cheyney State College), a historically Black college where he earned a Bachelor of Science degree in education in 1943. Serving in the Army Corps of Engineers in Europe during World War II, on his return to Philadelphia Livingston entered the University of Pennsylvania where he completed a Bachelor of Architecture degree in 1949. He also later earned a Master of City Planning degree from Penn in 1955.

The early part of Livingston's career was taken up by several posts at the Philadelphia Redevelopment Authority (RDA). In 1949 he became the first African American on the technical staff of the Authority, initially serving as an administrative assistant but working his way up to site planner in 1951. In 1958, Livingston left the staff of the RDA when he was appointed by Mayor Richardson Dilworth to the Authority's board of directors, of which he eventually became vice-chairman.<sup>31</sup> In this capacity, Livingston played an influential role in some of the city's largest public housing and urban renewal projects of the 1960s, including the completion of Independence Mall. In 1973, Livingston was one of two men considered for the position of executive director of the City Planning Commission.<sup>32</sup>

At the same time Livingston joined the board of the RDA, he entered private practice as an architect for the first time, joining the Center City Philadelphia firm of Eshbach, Pullinger, Stevens & Bruder.<sup>33</sup> In 1960, Livingston earned his registration as an architect and in 1961, he left his employer, venturing out on his own to create a new firm with architect Marvin D. Suer, known as Suer & Livingston. The firm soon became known as Suer, Livingston & Demas the following year with the addition of partner C. Demas (first name unknown). For unknown reasons, in 1969 both Suer and Livingston had rejoined Eshbach, Pullinger, Stevens & Bruder.<sup>34</sup>

<sup>30</sup> Jim Remsen, "Death Casts a Pall on Zion Baptist," *Philadelphia Inquirer*, April 26, 2001.

<sup>31</sup> "Young Architect Gets Redevelopment Post," *Philadelphia Tribune*, July 12, 1949; "Authority Aides Promoted," *Philadelphia Tribune*, June 5, 1951.

<sup>32</sup> Ray Holton, "Planner, Architect are Weighed for Post," *Philadelphia Inquirer*, April 6, 1973.

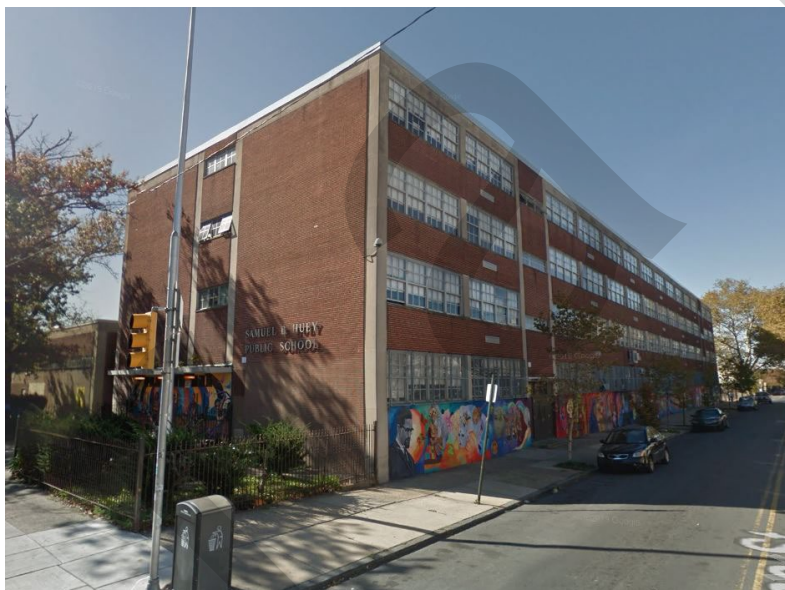
<sup>33</sup> "Dateline...Delaware Valley, U.S.A.," *Philadelphia Inquirer*, February 13, 1958.

<sup>34</sup> American Institute of Architects, *American Architects Directory, 3rd Edition, 1970* (New York: R.R. Bowker, 1970).

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When Livingston finally began to practice architecture in the late 1950s, less than 0.5% of all architects in the United States were African American.<sup>35</sup> According to research conducted by Robert S. Saxon, Sr. (1942- ), a Black architect in Philadelphia who was a contemporary of Sullivan, only about a dozen Black men (and no Black women) became registered architects in Philadelphia in the two decades following World War II.<sup>36</sup> As in other professional occupations, Blacks faced innumerable barriers in pursuit of an architectural career. From earning a spot in a competitive architectural program, to finding a job post-graduation, to winning major commissions, the careers of Black architects were often tinged by racial discrimination. Still, pioneers like Julian Abele (1881-1950), who became the first African American graduate of the University of Pennsylvania's Department of Architecture in 1902, persisted and helped shape the built environment of Philadelphia in significant ways. In 1906, Abele joined the firm of renowned architect Horace Trumbauer, later becoming its chief designer. Although an outlier due to his race, Abele's successful career served as a model for Livingston and the generation of Black architects to come.



**Figure 15:** The Huey Elementary School at 52nd and Pine Streets in 2014 (Google Streetview), designed by Livingston in 1962 and one of his first major projects.

While in partnership with Suer and Demas, and also later when he rejoined Eshbach, Pullinger, Stevens & Bruder, Livingston specialized in the design of housing projects, institutional buildings, schools, and recreational facilities, with most commissions coming from the City of Philadelphia and prominent African American organizations. Like other Black architects during this period, Livingston often had to rely on commissions from his own community and local government rather than the overwhelmingly white private sector. One of Livingston's first major projects came in 1962 when he designed the new

<sup>35</sup> Marion Kilson, "Black Women in the Professions, 1890-1970," *Monthly Labor Review* (May 1977), 38-41. This article includes tables indicating the percentages of both Black male and female professionals as a percent of all professionals at the beginning of each decade from 1890 to 1970.

<sup>36</sup> Robert S. Saxon, "Philadelphia's Black Architects, 1950-2000," accessed April 26, 2022, <https://saxoncapers.wordpress.com/>.

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Samuel B. Huey Elementary School at 52<sup>nd</sup> and Pine Streets in West Philadelphia. This large, four-story building, which Livingston designed in the International Style, is a quintessential example of mid-century school design in Philadelphia and remains in operation as a public school today.<sup>37</sup>

Although not as large of a commission as the Huey School, one of Livingston's other major projects came in 1964 when he remodeled the headquarters of the *Philadelphia Tribune*, which was founded in 1884 and is the oldest continuously published Black newspaper in the United States. Livingston transformed the newspaper's nineteenth-century building at 16th and Naudain Streets, "one of the most mammoth undertakings in the Tribune's history," by giving the 16th Street frontage a fresh, International Style makeover.<sup>38</sup> Livingston later served as chairman of the board of the Tribune, a position which he held from 1977 until the 2000s.<sup>39</sup> The *Tribune* still operates out of the 16<sup>th</sup> Street building today.



Figure 16: The Philadelphia Tribune offices on 16th Street in 2021 (Google Street View).

In the mid- to late-1960s, Livingston's work included several major commissions from the City of Philadelphia, including the District Health Center 4 at 4400 Haverford Avenue in West Philadelphia in 1965, a large addition to the Belmont School at 41st and Brown Streets in West Philadelphia in 1957, and the Fox Chase Library (a branch of the Free Library system) at 501 Rhawn Street in Northeast Philadelphia in 1968 (Figures 16-18). Suer, Livingston & Demas also collaborated with the renowned firm of Stonorov & Haws on the design of the Stephen Smith Towers, an 11-story public housing project at 1030 Belmont Avenue in West Philadelphia (Figure 19). Livingston's work during this period appears to show the influence of the so-called Philadelphia School. This loose collective of architects associated with the University of Pennsylvania – Louis Kahn, Robert Venturi, Denise Scott Brown, and Romaldo Giurgola, among others – began in the 1950s to explore the interplay of mass and volume, and the architectural and structural possibilities of concrete. As opposed to earlier works in the International Style, which favored sharply geometric forms, long ribbon windows, and little in the way of facade articulation, Livingston's later projects become more playful in terms of exterior treatments, such as in

<sup>37</sup> For a broader contextual discussion of public schools in Philadelphia during this period, see "Public Schools in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, 1938-ca. 1980," National Register of Historic Places Multiple Property Documentation Form, 2016 (NRHP #MP100002986).

<sup>38</sup> Art Peters, "Publisher Reveals Remodeling Plans for 4th Building," *Philadelphia Tribune*, September 12, 1964.

<sup>39</sup> "Tribune Elects Board Chairman," *Philadelphia Tribune*, May 7, 1977.

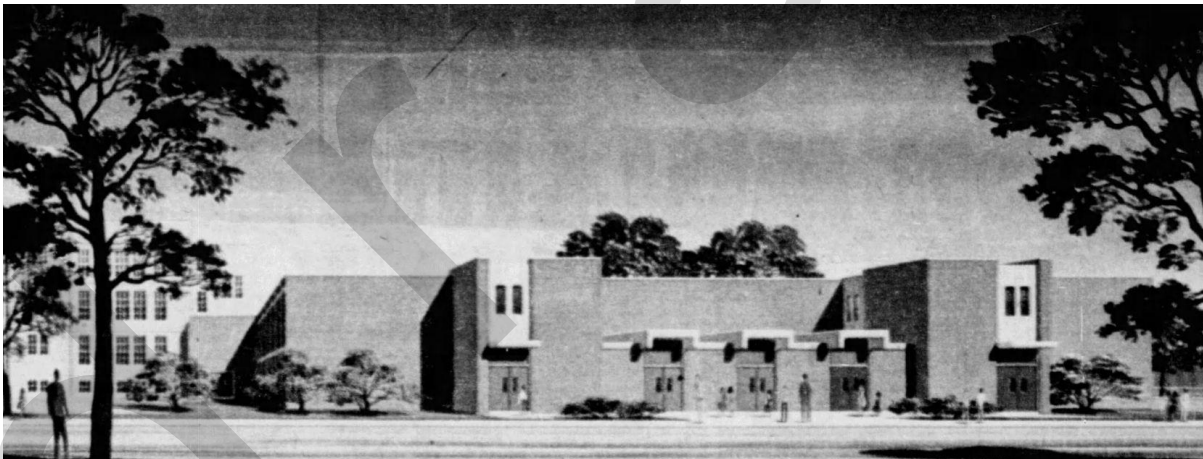
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the rhythmic, sculptural concrete window panels in District Health Center 4. All four buildings remain in their original use today.



**Figure 17:** District Health Center 4 at 44th Street and Haverford Avenue in 1966 (Philadelphia Department of Records).



**Figure 18:** Addition to Belmont School, rendering by architect, 1967 (from the *Philadelphia Inquirer*, June 9, 1967).



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**Figure 19:** Fox Chase Library in 1968 (Free Library of Philadelphia).



**Figure 20:** Stephen Smith Towers at 1030 Belmont Avenue in 2018 (Google Streetview).

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For the design of the new Zion Baptist Church, Livingston continued to explore the relationship between volume and mass that characterized some of his work during the 1960s. Protected by two solid, two-story brick wings, the glass upper walls of the sanctuary soar upwards toward the southeast corner of the site, forming a sort of abstracted steeple that references and creates symmetry with the corner tower of the Educational Annex across the street. The steeple, reinforced by the playful, multi-colored glass panels in the walls below, is a hopeful gesture that appears to symbolize the aspirations of the congregation that the sanctuary houses. The peak of the sloped roof also points towards a tall metal cross that rises from the small plaza outside the main entrance at this corner, making it clear to all what the building represents.

Livingston's successful design for Zion Baptist led to other church commissions from Black Baptist congregations in and around Philadelphia. In 1978, Livingston was hired to design a new building for Triumph Baptist Church at 16th and Wingohocking Streets. Like Zion's former home in 1970, Triumph's church was destroyed by fire in February 1978 and the congregation soon decided to rebuild.<sup>40</sup> Completed in 1980, the new church echoed some aspects of Zion Baptist Church, including an emphasis toward the most prominent corner of the site and the use of aluminum-framed glazing with glass panels of varying dimension (Figure 21). But Triumph is best defined by its strikingly monolithic form, perhaps influenced by the work of Philadelphia architect Louis Kahn whose own approach was heavily defined by a monumentality derived from ancient monuments. Around the same time that Livingston worked on Triumph Baptist, he was hired to design an educational center addition at the Salem Baptist Church in Jenkintown, Pennsylvania, just outside Philadelphia. Opened in 1980, the center, which was set at the back of a deep site and relatively small in scale, was comparatively mundane in appearance. Although Triumph Baptist remains in use today, Salem Baptist Church, including Livingston's 1980 addition, were demolished in recent years.



**Figure 21:** Triumph Baptist Church at 16<sup>th</sup> and Wingohocking Streets in North Philadelphia (Google Streetview, 2014). Built in 1980, the church was designed by Livingston who once again incorporated staggered glass panels at the corner, similar to but on a much smaller scale than at Zion Baptist.

<sup>40</sup> Kendal Wilson, "Triumph Builds on Pastor's Evangelism," *Philadelphia Tribune*, October 31, 1980.

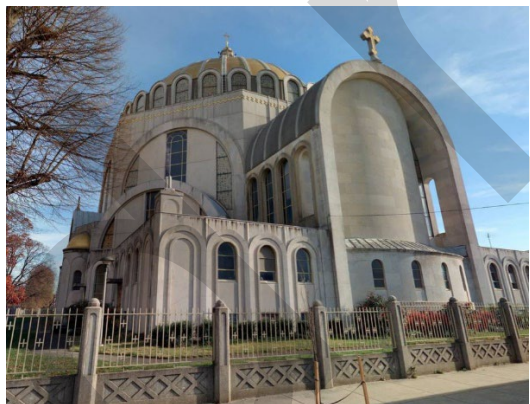
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In recognition of his significant contributions to the architectural field, in 1976 Livingston became the first Black architect from Philadelphia to be elected to the College of Fellows of the American Institute of Architects. In 1995, the career and work of Livingston, along with Robert Saxon and other Black architects in Philadelphia, including Van B. Bruner, Jr. (1931-2020), Theodore V. Cam (1929-2001), Theodore Capers (1943-1990), Emanuel Kelly, FAIA (1942-), William A. Mann (1936-2006) and Claude Melven Rose (1935-2015), were documented in a major exhibition at the African American Museum in Philadelphia in 1995.<sup>41</sup> Livingston continued to practice into the 1990s and died in 2011. In 2019, the City Council of Philadelphia named the 4600 block of Locust Street in West Philadelphia “Livingston Way,” in honor of Livingston’s legacy and “his dedication to his community and the architectural imprint he has left on Philadelphia.” That imprint consists primarily of works built to further the educational, health, and recreational needs of the city’s Black residents.

*Comparative Examples of Religious Buildings in Philadelphia 1950s-1970s*

Livingston’s design for Zion Baptist (and later Triumph Baptist) is notable in an era when few major places of worship were being built in Philadelphia outside of the Northeast region of the city where a postwar development boom. Those that did get built largely embrace Modernism, but in a such a variety of ways to demonstrate there was no consistent architectural language or vocabulary in church or synagogue design during this period. To start, several works of religious architecture built in Philadelphia during this period are simply modern interpretations of historical forms. This latter type includes the Ukrainian Catholic Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception at 801-809 North 8<sup>th</sup> Street, built in 1966 (Julian K. Jastremsky, architect) and Grace Baptist Church of Germantown at 29 West Johnson Street, built in 1966 (Mansell, McGettigan & Fugate, architects). While the Ukrainian Catholic Cathedral is clearly an homage to the centralized plan and domed sanctuary that characterize Byzantine-era churches, its simple, extruded concrete shapes clearly mark it as a work of Modern architecture (Figure 22). Similarly, although Grace Baptist Church conforms to a traditional Basilican plan and has a steeple recalling that of a Gothic Revival-style church, the building’s sharp massing and abstracted ornamentation demonstrate that it is a twentieth century building (Figure 23).



**Figure 22** (left): Ukrainian Catholic Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception at 801-09 N. 8<sup>th</sup> Street in Philadelphia, designed by Julian K. Jastremsky and built in 1966 (Google, 2021).

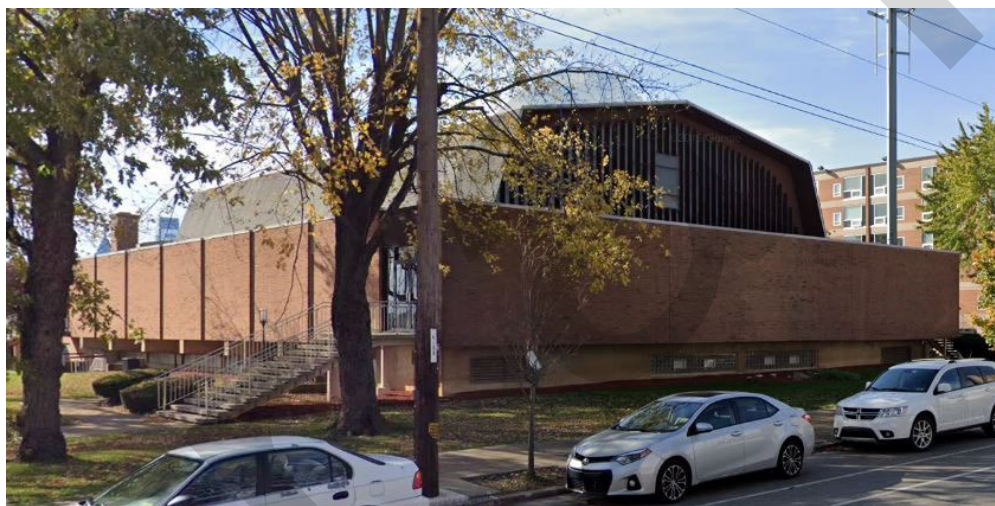
**Figure 23** (right): Grace Baptist Church of Germantown at 29 W. Johnson Street in Philadelphia, designed by Mansell, McGettigan & Fugate and built in 1966 (Cyclomedia, 2021).

<sup>41</sup> “Architecture Show Needs No Build-up,” *Philadelphia Daily News*, January 6, 1995; Charles Loftland, Jr., “Architectural Panel Converges at AAHCM to Discuss Blacks in the Field,” *Philadelphia Tribune*, February 3, 1995.

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On the other end of the spectrum, works that appeared in redevelopment areas were often purely functional in their appearance, such as the Bright Hope Baptist Church at 1601 North 12<sup>th</sup> Street, built in 1963 (Chapelle & Crothers, architects) as part of the massive Yorktown redevelopment project in North Philadelphia, and the Congregation Mikveh Israel Synagogue at 121 North Independence Mall East, built in 1975-1976 (Harbeson, Hough, Livingston & Larson, architects) within the Independence National Historical Park (Figures 23 and 24). Like Zion Baptist, both buildings embrace Modernism by relying on simple geometries. But with largely solid brick walls and few windows, Bright Hope Baptist and Mikveh Israel appear to turn their backs on their urban settings, whereas Zion Baptist presents a more hopeful gesture through its clerestory walls of playful colored glass that rise up inspirationally to a spire above the main entrance. Still other works are much more plastic in form, such as the synagogue of the Germantown Jewish Centre at 400 West Ellet Street in West Mount Airy, built in 1954 (Harry Sternfeld, architect). This impressive, sculptural mass of stonework suggests a monumentality echoed later in Livingston's design for Triumph Baptist Church (Figure 25).



**Figure 24:** Bright Hope Baptist Church at 1601 N. 12<sup>th</sup> Street in the Yorktown neighborhood of North Philadelphia, designed by Chapelle & Crothers and built in 1963 (Google Streetview, 2018).



**Figure 25:** Congregation Mikveh Israel Synagogue at 121 N. Independence Mall East, designed by Harbeson, Hough, Livingston and Larson and built in 1975-76 (from *Progressive Architecture*, April 1976).

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**Figure 26:** The synagogue at the Germantown Jewish Centre at 400 W. Ellet Street in the Mount Airy section of Northwest Philadelphia, designed by Harry Sternfeld and built in 1954 (Germantown Jewish Centre).

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## 8. Major Bibliographical References

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### Newspapers\*:

*New York Times*

*Philadelphia Inquirer*

*Philadelphia Real Estate Record and Builders' Guide*

*Philadelphia Tribune*

\*see footnotes for specific citations

### **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 Buildings Survey #

recorded by Historic American Engineering Record #

recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey #

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**Primary location of additional data:**

- State Historic Preservation Office
  - Other State agency
  - Federal agency
  - Local government
  - University
  - Other
- Name of repository: \_\_\_\_\_

**Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned):** NA

**9. Geographical Data**

**Acreeage of Property:** 1.19 acres

**Latitude/Longitude Coordinates**

Latitude: 40.007970 Longitude: -75.152030

**Verbal Boundary Description**

The boundary of the property is shown as a dotted line on the accompanying map entitled “Site Plan with National Register Boundary” (Figure 2).

**Boundary Justification**

The proposed National Register Boundary conforms to the historic (and current) parcels and includes all remaining resources that were historically associated with the Zion Baptist Church and Educational Annex within the period of significance. The parking lot immediately north of the Zion Baptist Church building, which is surrounded by a short metal picket fence that appears to be 20-30 years old, has been partially owned by the Zion Baptist congregation and used by them since the early 1990s. Prior to that, four separate residential and commercial buildings occupied this area, which still consists of four separate tax parcels (3618, 3620, 3622, and 3624 North Broad Street). Zion Baptist owns three of the parcels (3618, 3620, and 3622), which they acquired between 1989 and 1992. The fourth, northernmost parcel (3624), is owned by a third party. Because Zion Baptist’s ownership and use of these parcels postdates the period of significance, they are not included within the National Register Boundary.

**Form Prepared By**

name/title: Kevin McMahon, Senior Associate  
organization: Powers & Company, Inc.  
street & number: 1315 Walnut Street, Suite 1717 city or town: Philadelphia state: PA zip code: 19107  
e-mail: kevin@powersco.net telephone: (215) 636-0192 date: August, 2022

**Additional Documentation**

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A USGS map or equivalent (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location. **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO, TPO, or FPO for any additional items.)

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## Photographs

### Photo Log

Name of Property: Zion Baptist Church and Educational Annex  
 City or Vicinity: Philadelphia  
 County and State: Philadelphia, PA  
 Photographer: Kevin McMahon (unless otherwise noted in photo captions in Section 7)  
 Dates Photographed: December 15, 2021 and May 4, 2022 *[Will need to clarify photographer and date here or in table below]*

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera:

<i>Photo #</i>	<i>Description of Photograph</i>
1.	Zion Baptist Church - South and east elevations, looking northwest from Broad Street.
2.	Zion Baptist Church - East elevation, looking west from Broad Street.
3.	Zion Baptist Church - South elevation, looking northwest from Venango Street.
4.	Zion Baptist Church - Sanctuary, looking northwest toward the altar from the balcony.
5.	Zion Baptist Church - Sanctuary, looking northeast from the balcony.
6.	Zion Baptist Church - Typical classroom/meeting room.
7.	Zion Baptist Church - Multi-purpose meeting and dining room on the first floor.
8.	Zion Baptist Church - Basketball court on the second floor.
9.	Zion Educational Annex - West and south elevations, looking northeast from Broad Street.
10.	Zion Educational Annex - West elevation, looking east from Broad Street.
11.	Zion Educational Annex - South elevation, looking north from Venango Street.
12.	Zion Educational Annex - Vestibule, looking northeast.
13.	Zion Educational Annex - Sanctuary, looking northwest toward the stage.
14.	Zion Educational Annex - Reredos and stained glass windows at the back of the stage, looking northwest from the sanctuary.
15.	Zion Educational Annex - Sanctuary, looking southeast toward the balcony.
16.	Zion Educational Annex - Balcony, looking southeast.
17.	Zion Educational Annex - Balcony, looking northeast.
18.	Zion Educational Annex - Passageway along east side of the sanctuary, looking north.
19.	Zion Educational Annex - First floor, Sunday School room, looking southwest.
20.	Zion Educational Annex - First floor, Sunday School room, looking south.
21.	Zion Educational Annex - Main stairway, looking southwest on the second floor.
22.	Zion Educational Annex - Second floor, Sunday School room, looking southeast.
23.	Zion Educational Annex - Second floor, Sunday School corridor, looking south.
24.	Zion Educational Annex - Third floor, Sunday School room, looking southeast.
25.	Zion Educational Annex - Third floor, Sunday School room, looking north.

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<i>Figure #</i>	<i>Description of Figure</i>
1.	Current Aerial View (Google Maps).
2.	Site Plan with National Register Boundary.



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<i>Figure #</i>	<i>Description of Figure</i>
3.	Zion Baptist Church on 13th Street (the former Spring Garden Baptist Church).
4.	Rev. Sullivan early in his career; date unknown.
5.	Zion Baptist Church (the former St. Paul’s Reformed Episcopal Church) at the northwest corner of Broad and Venango Streets, 1969.
6.	Dedication ceremony at the first O.I.C. at 19th and Oxford Streets, January 1964.
7.	Students in an O.I.C. classroom in 1965.
8.	Rev. Sullivan with President Lyndon B. Johnson during his visit to Philadelphia. in 1967.
9.	Rev. Sullivan at Progress Plaza in 1969.
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11.	Trinity Reformed Church as it appeared in 1930.
12.	Rev. Sullivan preaching during a service in the Annex, just after the fire in November 1970.
13.	President Jimmy Carter speaking in Zion Baptist Church in 1980.
14.	Rev. Sullivan standing in the sanctuary of the re-built Zion Baptist Church.
15.	The Huey Elementary School at 52nd and Pine Streets in 2014.
16.	The Philadelphia Tribune offices on 16th Street in 2021.
17.	District Health Center 4 at 44th Street and Haverford Avenue in 1966.
18.	Addition to Belmont School, rendering by architect, 1967.
19.	Fox Chase Library in 1968.
20.	Stephen Smith Towers.
21.	Triumph Baptist Church.
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24.	Bright Hope Baptist Church.
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28.	Existing floor plan with photo locations – Zion Baptist Church, second floor
29.	Existing floor plan with photo locations – Zion Educational Annex, first floor
30.	Existing floor plan with photo locations – Zion Educational Annex, second floor
31.	Existing floor plan with photo locations – Zion Educational Annex, third floor

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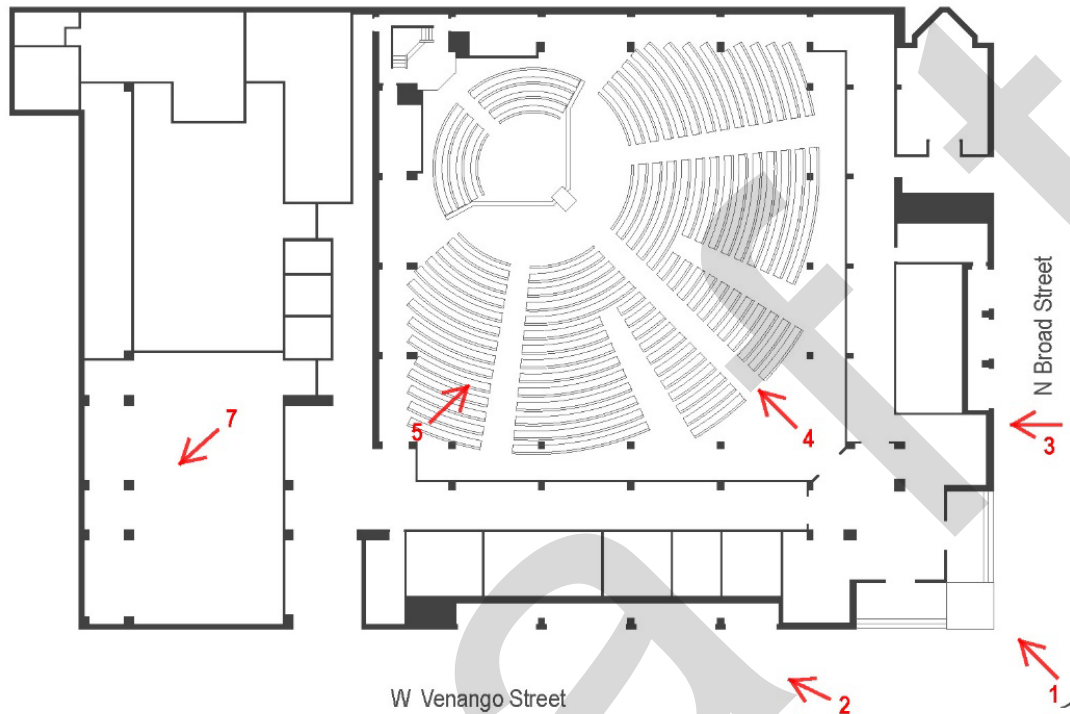


Figure 27: Existing floor plan with photo locations – Zion Baptist Church, first floor.

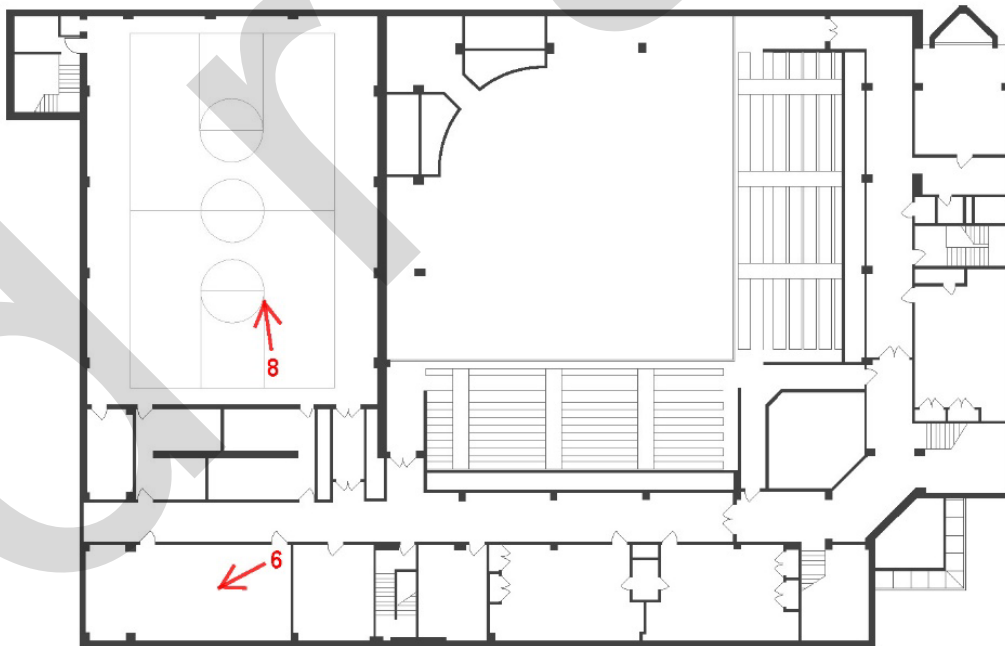


Figure 28: Existing floor plan with photo locations – Zion Baptist Church, second floor.

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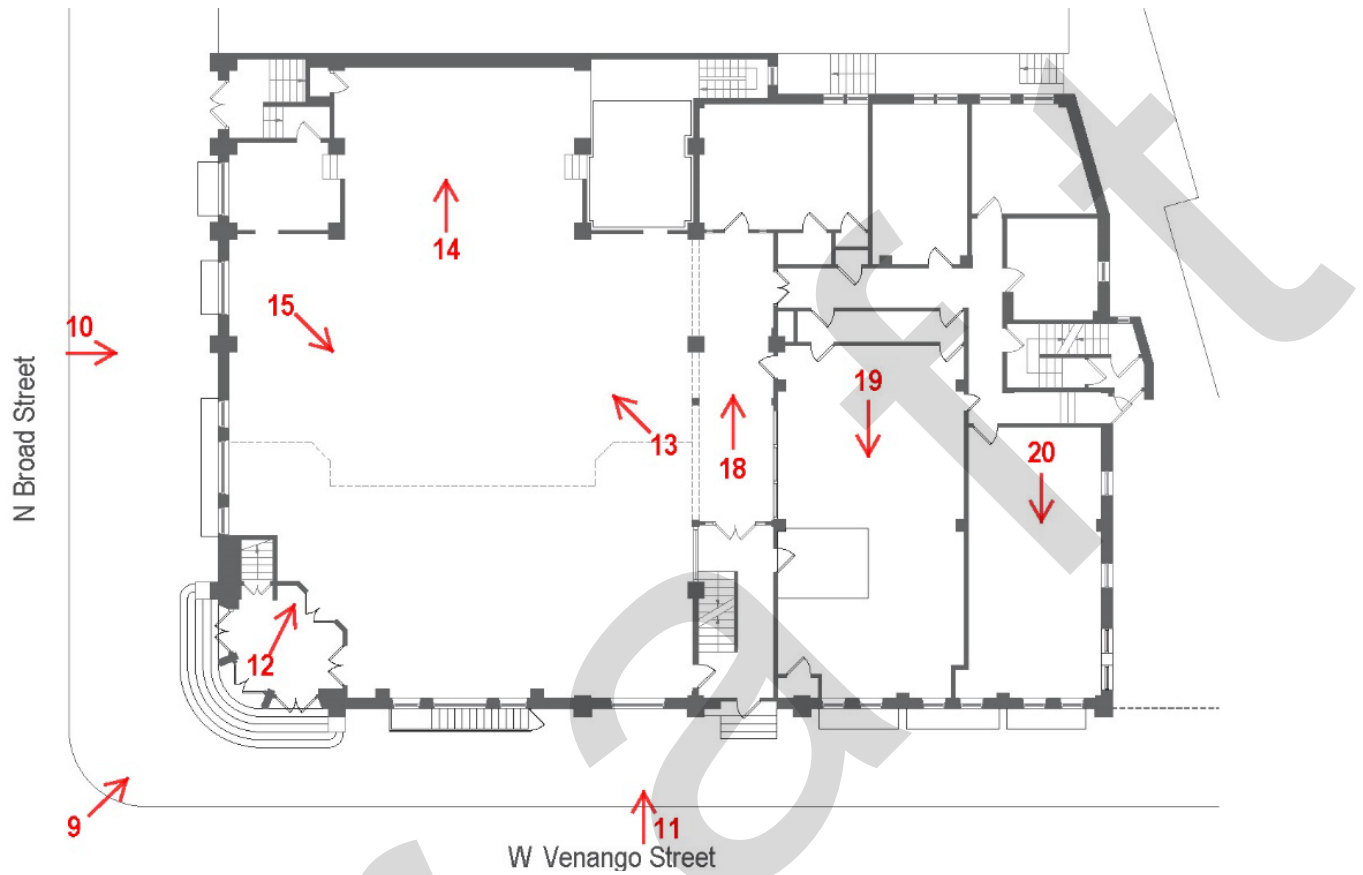


Figure 29: Existing floor plan with photo locations – Zion Educational Annex, first floor.

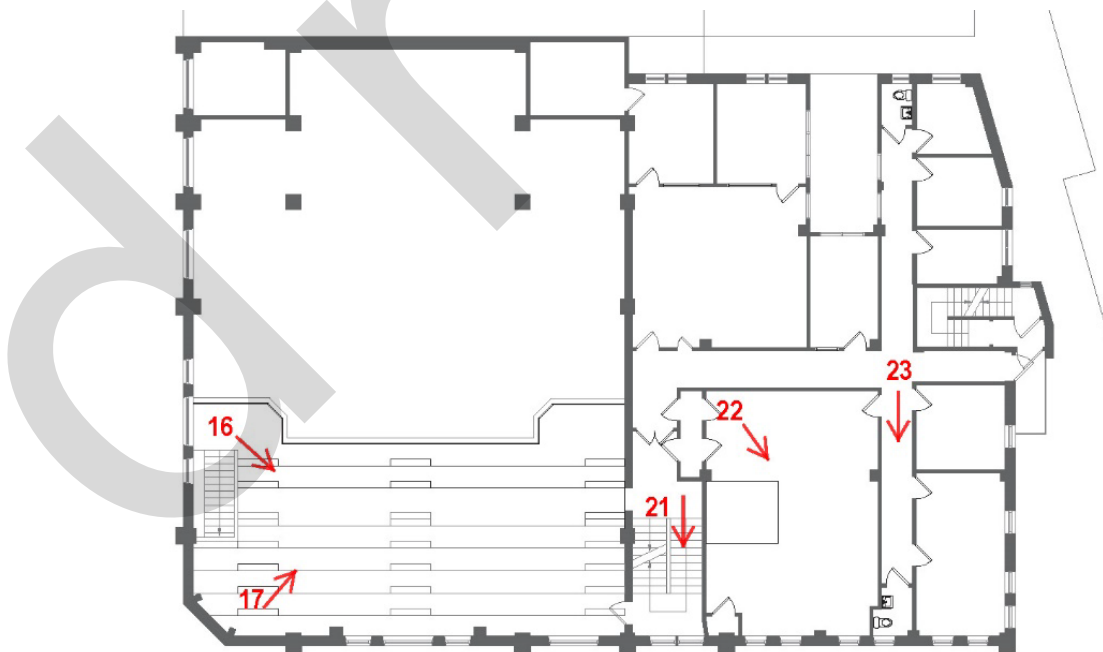
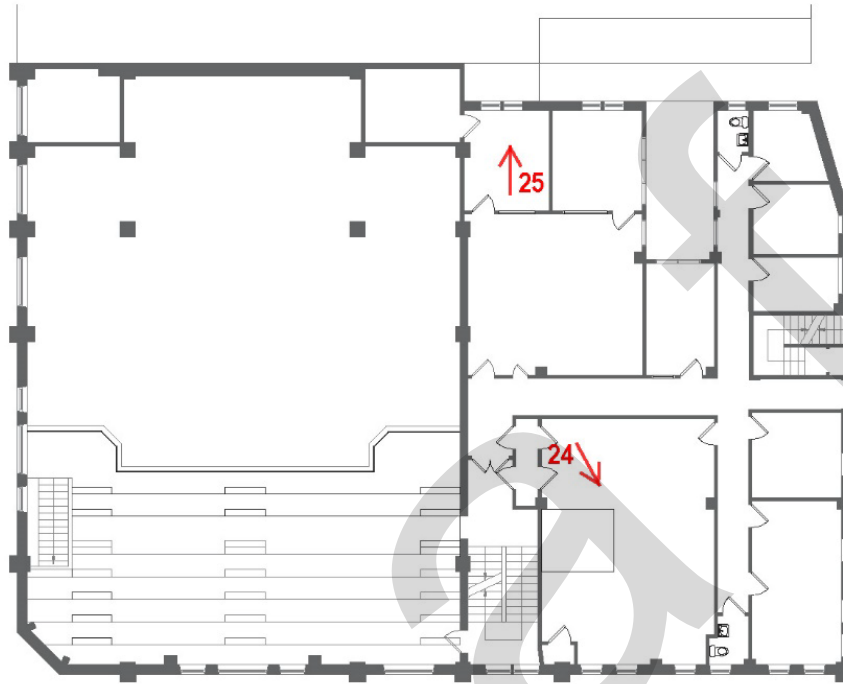


Figure 30: Existing floor plan with photo locations – Zion Educational Annex, second floor.

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**Figure 31:** Existing floor plan with photo locations – Zion Educational Annex, third floor.

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