

ADDRESS: 6633 ARDLEIGH ST

Name of Resource: Convent of St. Therese of the Child Jesus

Proposed Action: Designation

Property Owner: Vincents Homes Inc.

Nominator: David Gest, SquareSide LLC

Staff Contact: Jon Farnham, jon.farnham@phila.gov

OVERVIEW: This nomination proposes designating the Convent of St. Therese of the Child Jesus, also known as the Convent at the Shrine of the Little Flower, at 6633 Ardleigh Street in East Mt. Airy and listing it on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places. The Archdiocese of Philadelphia commissioned the convent for the Sisters of St. Joseph, which ran the parish's parochial school, from the architectural firm of Gleeson & Mulrooney in 1941. The firm designed many buildings for the Archdiocese in the mid-twentieth century, while it was rapidly expanding in the outer neighborhoods of the city and the suburbs. The nomination argues that the convent satisfies Criterion for Designation D; it embodies distinguishing characteristics the Jacobean Revival architectural style. The nomination also argues that the convent satisfies Criterion for Designation J; it exemplifies the heritage of the community known as Little Flower Parish.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: The staff recommends that the nomination demonstrates that the Convent of St. Therese of the Child Jesus at 6633 Ardleigh Street satisfies Criteria for Designation D and J.



October 2, 2024

Philadelphia Historical Commission
1515 Arch St., 13th Floor
Philadelphia, PA 19102
Attention: Dr. Jonathan Farnham, Executive Director

Re: Nomination of 6633 Ardleigh Street for Historic Designation

Dear Dr. Farnham:

Vincent's Homes, Inc. is the current owner of the property located at 6633 Ardleigh Street, the former Convent at the St. Therese of the Child Jesus Roman Catholic Church, also known as the Shrine Church of the Little Flower. This property has a rich history as a Catholic Parish, and is also a good example of the Jacobean Revival architectural style. We write to support the Nomination for Historic Designation recently submitted for the property, and waive the 30-day property owner notice provision in the Historical Commission's Rules and Regulations.

Sincerely,

Robert P. Maloney

Fr. Robert P. Maloney
Chairman, Board of Directors
Vincent's Homes, Inc.

**NOMINATION OF HISTORIC BUILDING, STRUCTURE, SITE, OR OBJECT
PHILADELPHIA REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
PHILADELPHIA HISTORICAL COMMISSION**

SUBMIT ALL ATTACHED MATERIALS ON PAPER AND IN ELECTRONIC FORM (CD, EMAIL, FLASH DRIVE)
ELECTRONIC FILES MUST BE WORD OR WORD COMPATIBLE

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

Street address: 6633 Ardleigh Street

Postal code: 19119

2. NAME OF HISTORIC RESOURCE

Historic Name: St. Theresa of the Child Jesus Roman Catholic Parish

Current/Common Name: Shrine of the Little Flower

3. TYPE OF HISTORIC RESOURCE

Building

Structure

Site

Object

4. PROPERTY INFORMATION

Condition: excellent good fair poor ruins

Occupancy: occupied vacant under construction unknown

Current use: Recent former use as convent / chapel / religious institution

5. BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

Please attach a narrative description and site/plot plan of the resource's boundaries.

6. DESCRIPTION

Please attach a narrative description and photographs of the resource's physical appearance, site, setting, and surroundings.

7. SIGNIFICANCE

Please attach a narrative Statement of Significance citing the Criteria for Designation the resource satisfies.

Period of Significance (from year to year): from 1941 to 1987

Date(s) of construction and/or alteration: 1941

Architect, engineer, and/or designer: Gleeson & Mulrooney

Builder, contractor, and/or artisan: John P. Donovan, contractor

Original owner: His Eminence, Dennis J. Dougherty, Cardinal Archbishop of Philadelphia

Other significant persons: _____

CRITERIA FOR DESIGNATION:

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

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

8. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Please attach a bibliography.

9. NOMINATOR

Organization SquareSide Date September 18, 2024

Name with Title David Gest, Esq. Email david@squareside.us

Street Address 145 Greenwood Avenue, Suite 400 Telephone 215-635-2124

City, State, and Postal Code Wyncote, PA 19095

Nominator is is not the property owner.

PHC USE ONLY

Date of Receipt: September 18, 2024

Correct-Complete Incorrect-Incomplete Date: September 20, 2024

Date of Notice Issuance: October 4, 2024

Property Owner at Time of Notice:

Name: Vincent Homes Inc.

Address: 475 E. Chelten Avenue

City: Philadelphia State: PA Postal Code: 19144

Date(s) Reviewed by the Committee on Historic Designation: October 16, 2024

Date(s) Reviewed by the Historical Commission: November 8, 2024

Date of Final Action: _____

Designated Rejected

5. BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION



Figure 1. The subject property at 6633 Ardleigh Street, shown in blue. Source: atlas.phila.gov.

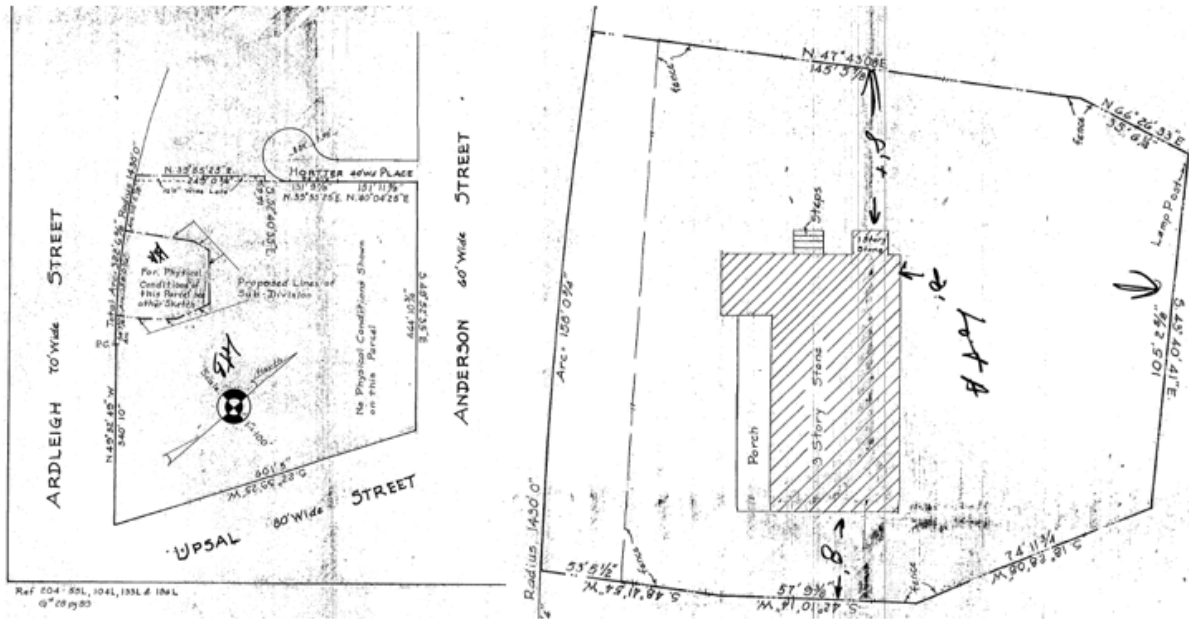


Figure 2. Details from zoning plan, Francis X. Burns, Surveyor and Regulator, 9th Survey District, Philadelphia, March 3, 1987. Source: City of Philadelphia Zoning Archive.

ALL THAT CERTAIN lot or piece of ground with the building and improvements thereon.

SITUATE in the 22nd Ward of the City of Philadelphia and described herein according to a Survey and Plan, dated March 3, 1987, by Francis X. Burns, Surveyor and Regulator of the Ninth Survey District as follows:

BEGINNING at a point on the Northeasterly side of Ardleigh Street (70 feet wide) said point being the following two (2) courses and distances from the Northwesterly side of Upsal Street (80 feet wide): (1) North 49 degrees, 32 minutes 49 seconds West the distance of 340 feet, 10 inches and (2) Northwestwardly on a line curving to the right having a radius of 1,430 feet, 0 inches the arc distance of 54 feet, 3-3/4 inches to a point; thence Northwestwardly from said beginning point, along the Northeasterly side of said Ardleigh Street, on a line curving to the right, having a radius of 1,430 feet, 0 inches, the arc distance of 158 feet 0-3/4 inches to a point; thence North 47 degrees 43 minutes 08 seconds East the distance of 145 feet, 5-7/8 inches to a point; thence North 66 degrees 26 minutes 33 seconds East the distance of 35 feet, 6-1/4 inches to a point; thence South 43 degrees 40 minutes 41 seconds East the distance of 105 feet, 2-5/8 inches to a point; thence South 18 degrees 28 minutes 08 seconds West the distance of 74 feet, 11-3/4 inches to a point; thence South 42 degrees 10 minutes 14 seconds West the distance of 57 feet, 9-3/8 inches to a point; thence South 48 degrees 41 minutes 54 seconds West the distance of 53 feet 5, -1/2 inches to a point on the Northeasterly side of said Ardleigh Street being the first mentioned point and place of beginning.

BEING known as No. 6633 Ardleigh Street.
BEING BRT# 775072600

6. PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION

The convent at the St. Therese of the Child Jesus Roman Catholic Church complex, also known as the Shrine Church of the Little Flower, is a three-story granite-clad building in the Jacobean Revival style. The convent building is located on the northeast side of Ardleigh Street, mid-block between E. Upsal Street to the southeast and E. Phil Ellena Street to the northwest. The architectural firm of Gleeson & Mulrooney designed the building, which was constructed in 1941.

The convent building is composed of three intersecting volumes. Three-story, gable-roof volumes at the north and south are connected by a perpendicular, half-gable volume that rises from two stories at the front to three stories at the rear.



Figure 3. Aerial view of 6633 Ardleigh Street, looking north. Source: Pictometry.



Figure 4. View looking north from Ardleigh Street. Source: Nominator.



Figure 5. South façade (facing Ardleigh Street), view 1 of 2. Source: Nominator.



Figure 6. South façade (facing Ardleigh Street), view 2 of 2. Source: Nominator.

The south façade of the building, facing Ardleigh Street, includes the gable fronts of two three-story volumes connected by a central two-story volume. The façades are constructed of “light colored granite from quarries at Mount Airy, North Carolina, one and two man rock faced rubble.”¹ The south façade features the most prominent architectural element of the building, an open porch with a simple colonnade with pointed arches and a decorative crenelated parapet, extending to the eastern end of the building. The central volume includes four bays, with the first floor including a doorway on the eastern end and two pairs of one-over-one and single light windows, plus a tripartite one-over-one window to the west. The second floor of the second floor includes four pairs of one-over-one windows. Each of the three-story volumes on either end includes a four-part one-over-one window on the first floor, a four-part single light window on the second floor, and a narrow single light window on the first floor. All original windows were steel casements, and all trim on the building is cast stone in a “white marble aggregate” color.² All window and door openings in the building have cast-stone surrounds with quoins that are typical of the Jacobean Revival style. The door surrounds include drip moldings, also typical of the style. The steeply pitched roofs are clad in “Mohawk” slate.³ The gable ends extend above the slate roofs and are capped with cast-stone coping, as is typical of the Jacobean Revival style. A

¹ Gleeson & Mulrooney, Architects, *Specifications for Little Flower Convent*, Philadelphia, 1941, p. 12.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 14, 16.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 17.

large chimney clad in stone projects from the roof and includes a decorative terra cotta chimney pot, again a hallmark of the style.⁴



Figure 7. Alternate view of west façade. Source: Nominator.

⁴ The chimney pot is Top No. 1030-C, manufactured by the Pursell Co. Cincinnati, Ohio, as noted in Gleeson & Mulrooney, Architects, *Specifications for Little Flower Convent*, Philadelphia, 1941, p. 13.



Figure 8. West façade. Source: Nominator.

The west façade includes the primary entrance to the building. In front of the building rests an ornamental stone statue enclosure with an unnamed religious figure, bracketed by two curved stone benches. The building's façade is two stories and five bays wide, with the central bay featuring a wide wood door set into an arched entranceway six steps from grade. The doorway features a Jacobean Revival cast-stone door surround with Tudor arch, quoins, and drip molding. The northernmost bay on the first floor features the projected rear portion of the chapel, with a blind slit opening, a Jacobean hallmark, facing west and stained-glass windows facing north and south. The remaining first-floor windows include a two-part single light window and two sets of two-part one-over-one windows. The second floor includes two sets of two-part single light windows and two sets of two-part one-over-one windows. The roof is pitched slate.



Figure 9. North façade (facing away from Ardleigh Street). Source: Nominator.

The north façade of the building is three stories and seven bays wide. It includes a central door on the first floor, abutted by exterior stairs leading to the basement. Two gabled portions of the façade are connected by the four-bay central portion, which includes a slate façade on the third floor with five sets of two-part single light windows. The remainder of the central volume of this façade includes, on the second floor, a pair of two-part one-over-one windows and a pair of two-part one-over-one windows. The first floor includes two tripartite one-over-one windows plus a recessed single light window. The eastern volume includes a tripartite one-over-one window on the first floor, a two-part single pane window on the second floor, and a single pane window on the third floor. The western volume features the chapel at the ground floor, with four pointed-arch, stained-glass windows; a pair of two-part, single light windows on the second floor, and a single light window on the third floor. The roof is pitched slate.



Figure 10. East façade. Source: Nominator.

The east façade of the building is two stories, with a four-part double-hung window and a tripartite double-hung window on the first floor and three sets of two-part windows, one one-over-one and the others single light. The roof is pitched slate. One archway and one column from the arched, parapeted porch enclosure rests at the southern end of the façade.

The interior of the building includes a communal room and bedrooms in the basement; a kitchen, dining hall, offices, and a chapel on the first floor; and multiple bedrooms on the second and third floors. The building was historically used for public, civic, and institutional uses as part of the Parish's religious mission.

Based on a review of the original blueprints and specifications, the building retains a high degree of integrity and matches its original design, with no material alterations. The most significant change appears to be the replacement of several windows that previously included muntins, but the window openings remain the same as original throughout.

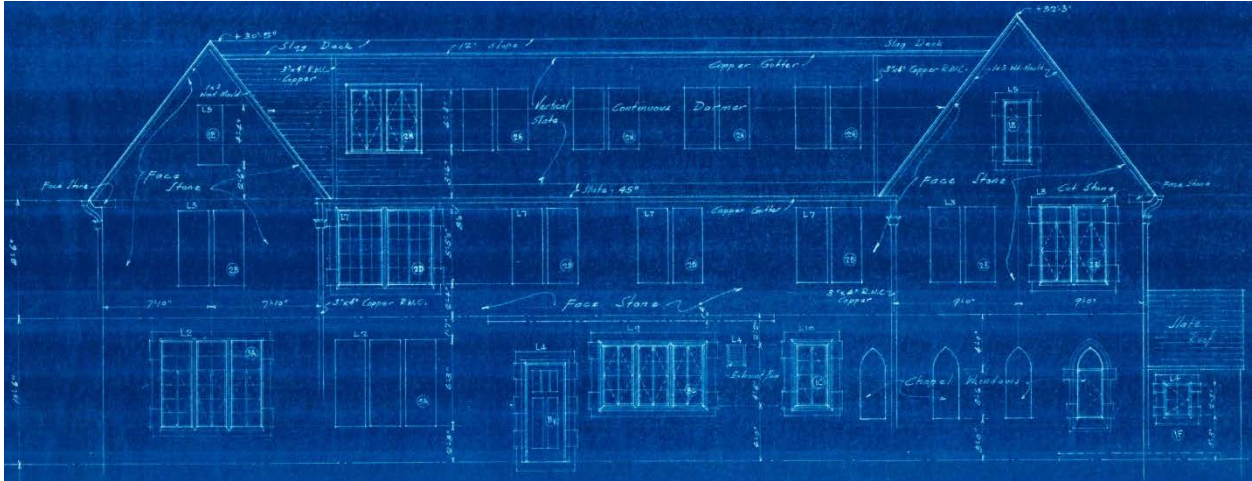


Figure 11. Original blueprint of rear elevation (north façade), Gleeson & Mulrooney, 1941. Source: property archive.

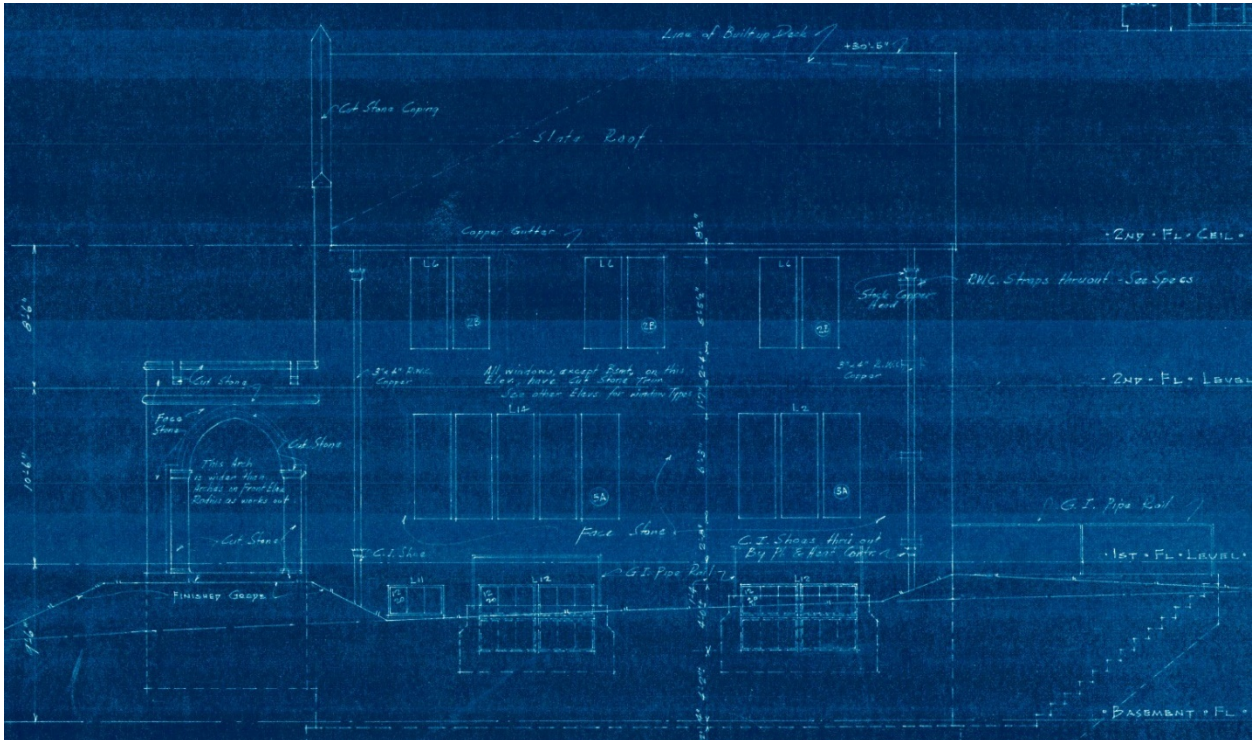


Figure 12. Original blueprint of east elevation, Gleeson & Mulrooney, 1941. Source: property archive.

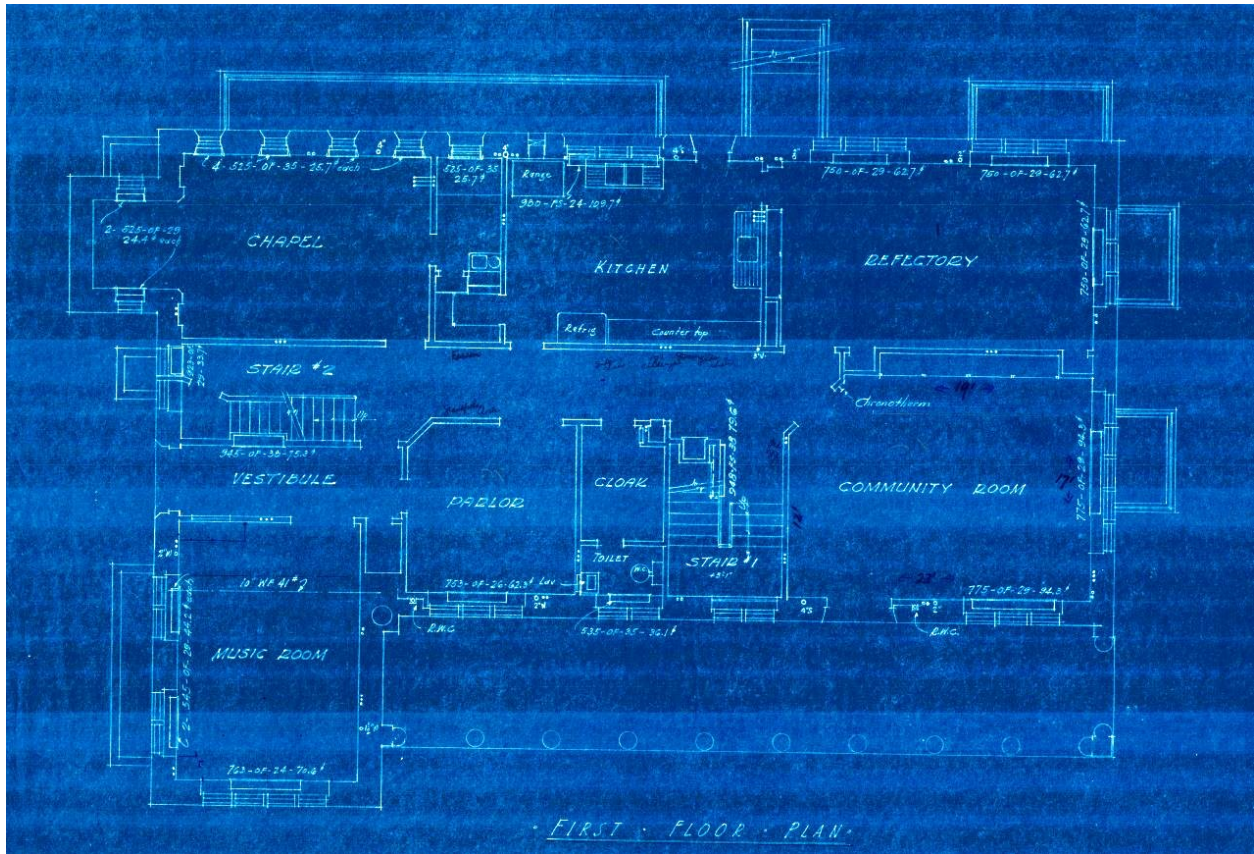


Figure 13. Original blueprint of first-floor plan, Gleeson & Mulrooney, 1941. Source: property archive.

7. STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Convent of the St. Therese of the Child Jesus Roman Catholic Parish, also known as the Shrine of the Little Flower, was built in 1941 to house nuns of the Sisters of St. Joseph, which ran the Parish's parochial school. The construction of the convent was a critical milestone in the development of the Parish and the Catholic Church's expansion into the Northwest Philadelphia as the area grew as a middle-class neighborhood in the mid twentieth century. The Archdiocese of Philadelphia founded the Parish in 1925, the same year as the beatification of Marie Francoise Therese Martin of Lisieux, France, and thus the Parish became home to the first church in the world named for Saint Therese. The Convent was designed by the firm of Gleeson & Mulrooney, established in 1923, which designed many buildings for the Archdiocese of Philadelphia in the mid-twentieth century. Consequently, as described in more detail below, the Convent of the St. Therese of the Child Jesus Roman Catholic Parish merits listing in the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places by satisfying the following criteria established by Philadelphia Code Section 14-1004(1):

- (d) Embodies distinguishing characteristics of an architectural style or engineering specimen; and
- (j) Exemplifies the cultural, political, economic, social, or historical heritage of the community.

The Catholic Church's presence in Philadelphia dates to the eighteenth century, with significant Catholic immigration, principally from Ireland, coming in the 1830s.⁵ The first Italian Catholic Church in the United States was founded in 1851 in South Philadelphia; in the late nineteenth Century, the Catholic population in Philadelphia grew to approximately 475,000, and the Catholic Parish system expanded north and west to neighborhoods including Overbrook, Manayunk, and Germantown.⁶ The Catholic Church concurrently expanded its parochial school system operated under the Archdiocese of Philadelphia, with members of the religious order performing most of the teaching until employing more lay teachers in the twentieth century.⁷ At the beginning of the twentieth century, the Archdiocese significantly expanded its building program to accommodate the number of parishes growing in Philadelphia's newer residential neighborhoods and the outward migration from the city's older districts.⁸ Cardinal Dennis Dougherty, Archbishop of Philadelphia, oversaw much of this construction during his tenure from 1918 to 1951, including many churches, schools, rectories, and convents.⁹

⁵ "Three Chapters in the Architecture of Catholic Philadelphia," Michael J. Lewis, *Sacred Architecture Journal*, 2023.

⁶ *Philadelphia: A 300-Year History*, Russell Frank Weigley, Nicholas B. Wainwright, and Edwin Wolf, W.W. Norton & Company, 1982, pp. 488, 491.

⁷ *Philadelphia: A 300-Year History*, Russell Frank Weigley, Nicholas B. Wainwright, and Edwin Wolf, W.W. Norton & Company, 1982, p. 683.

⁸ "The Changing Look of Philadelphia Catholic Architecture," Thomas F. Rzeznik, *American Catholic Studies*, Vol. 131, No. 1, 2020, p. 113.

⁹ "The Changing Look of Philadelphia Catholic Architecture," Thomas F. Rzeznik, *American Catholic Studies*, Vol. 131, No. 1, 2020, p. 115.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE ST. THERESE OF THE CHILD JESUS COMPLEX

The Catholic Church established the St. Therese of the Child Jesus Roman Catholic Parish on May 17, 1925, the same year that Pope Benedict XV sanctified Saint Therese, thus making the Philadelphia Parish the first in the world to bear her name.¹⁰ Cardinal Dougherty of Philadelphia attended the sanctification ceremony of St. Therese in Rome and published a short history of the new saint. Saint Therese or Marie Françoise Therese Martin was born in Aleçon in French Normandy on January 2, 1873. She died at the age of 24 on September 30, 1897. The Pope sanctified Saint Therese for her exemplary spiritual accomplishments.¹¹

Cardinal Dougherty appointed Father John M. Toohey, who served from 1925 until 1948, as the first Parish pastor St. Therese of the Child Jesus.¹² The Parish church, also known as the Shrine Church of the Little Flower, initially operated in two private homes at 316-318 E. Hortter Street and served approximately nine to 15 families, eventually growing to over 60 families under Father Toohey's tenure. The second floor of this property included a temporary rectory until August of 1928, when the Parish acquired 601 Vernon Road as a temporary residence for priests. Around 1927, the Parish acquired property on Ardleigh Street south of Vernon Road, reconstructed a World War I barracks from Hog Island as a church, and converted a stable on the property into a school.¹³

¹⁰ "Golden Jubilee Shrine of St. Therese of the Child Jesus," St. Therese Church, Mt. Airy, Philadelphia, Pa., 1976, pp. 2, 5.

¹¹ "Nun Is Sanctified in Impressive Rites," *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, May 18, 1925; "The Little Flower," by His Eminence D. Cardinal Dougherty, D.D., Archbishop of Philadelphia, undated.

¹² "Golden Jubilee Shrine of St. Therese of the Child Jesus," St. Therese Church, Mt. Airy, Philadelphia, Pa., 1976, p. 14.

¹³ "Golden Jubilee Shrine of St. Therese of the Child Jesus," St. Therese Church, Mt. Airy, Philadelphia, Pa., 1976, pp. 2-6; and *Our Faith-Filled Heritage: The Church of Philadelphia, Bicentennial as a Diocese, 1808-2008* (Philadelphia: Archdiocese of Philadelphia, 2007), p. 136.



Figure 14. Sanborn Fire Insurance Company map, 1926, arrow shows approximate location of subject building.



Figure 15. Aerial photograph of subject property, 1942, arrow points to subject building. Source: Penn State / USDA Farm Service Agency.

The Parish had no convent for the first two years of its operation, with services attended by nuns of the nearby Cecilian Academy; their work focused on Sunday instruction of school pupils. The Parish established its first convent at 318 E. Hortter Street, which the Parish Sisters occupied on August 31, 1928. On December 27, 1938, the Sisters moved into a new, temporary convent at 600 E. Phil-Ellena Street.¹⁴

In August 1941, the Shrine Church of the Little Flower's Monthly Parish Calendar noted:
The "tract adjoining the Church and facing Ardleigh Street has been cleared of underbrush. This has been done to make ready for the erection of a new convent for the Sisters who are teaching in our school. Our building program was to have started with the erection of a new school, had the original plans for the purchase of 600 E. Phil-Ellena Street carried through. But unfortunately, the price asked, and the restrictions on this property made it impossible for us to even think of buying. Consequently, we are faced with the emergency of building a home for the Sisters, since we have only a lease on the present convent. The plans have been drawn up, and approved, and work will begin soon."

¹⁴ "Golden Jubilee Shrine of St. Therese of the Child Jesus," St. Therese Church, Mt. Airy, Philadelphia, Pa., 1976, p. 7.



Figure 16. Rendering of subject property, circa 1941, Gleeson & Mulrooney. Source: *Golden Jubilee Shrine of St. Therese of the Child Jesus, St. Therese Church, Mt. Airy, Philadelphia, Pa., 1976.*

The Archdiocese of Philadelphia retained the architectural firm of Gleeson & Mulrooney to design a convent for the St. Therese complex in 1941. The firm, which was founded in 1923 by Raymond Gleeson and Thomas F. Mulrooney and active in the 1920s through 1950s, designed many buildings for the Archdiocese of Philadelphia and its parishes.¹⁵ The City of Philadelphia issued a zoning and use registration permit to contractor John P. Donovan for the convent on September 2, 1941.¹⁶ The convent was dedicated on June 3, 1942, when it was noted that the “beautiful stone convent erected on parish property ... marked the climax of many years of hard work and fundraising on the part of Father Toohey.”

¹⁵ See Philadelphia Architects and Buildings, www.philadelphiabuildings.org. In 1942, Gleeson & Mulrooney designed a very similar but larger, four-story building, the rectory at St. Helena’s Roman Catholic Church at 6127 N. 5th Street in Philadelphia. See “Plans Drawn for Rectory,” *Inquirer*, April 19, 1942, p. 138.

¹⁶ See Zoning and Use Registration Permit #63176, September 2, 1941, City of Philadelphia Zoning Archive.

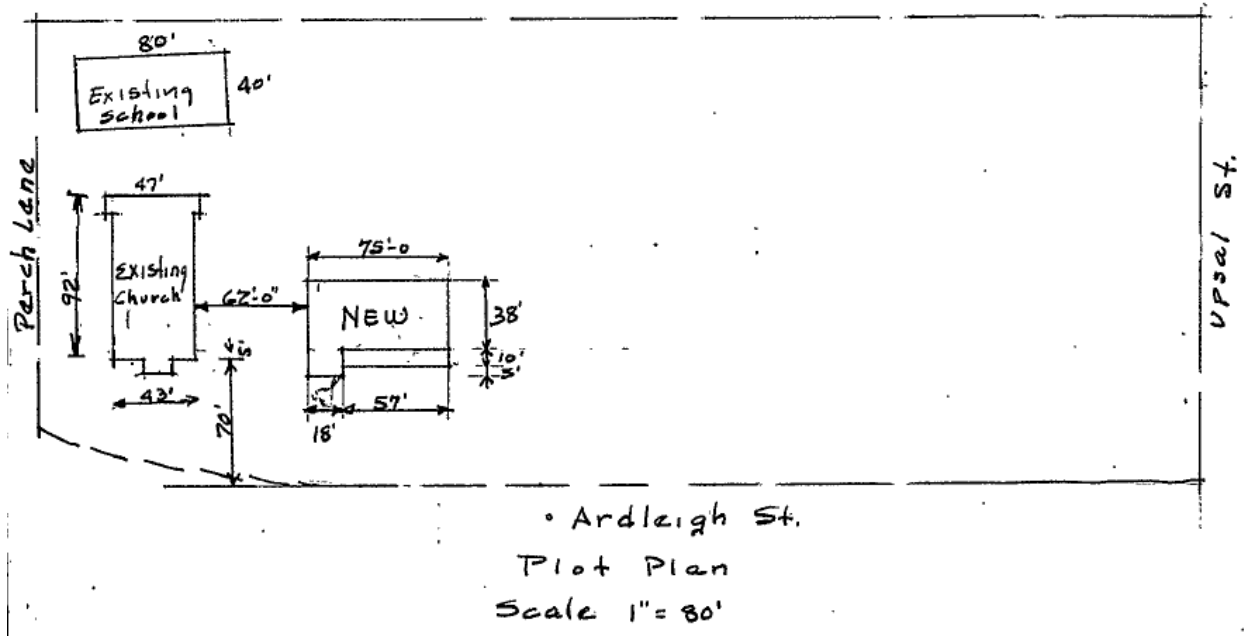


Figure 17. Site plan for the new convent attached to the zoning and use registration permit, September 2, 1941. Source: City of Philadelphia Zoning Archive.

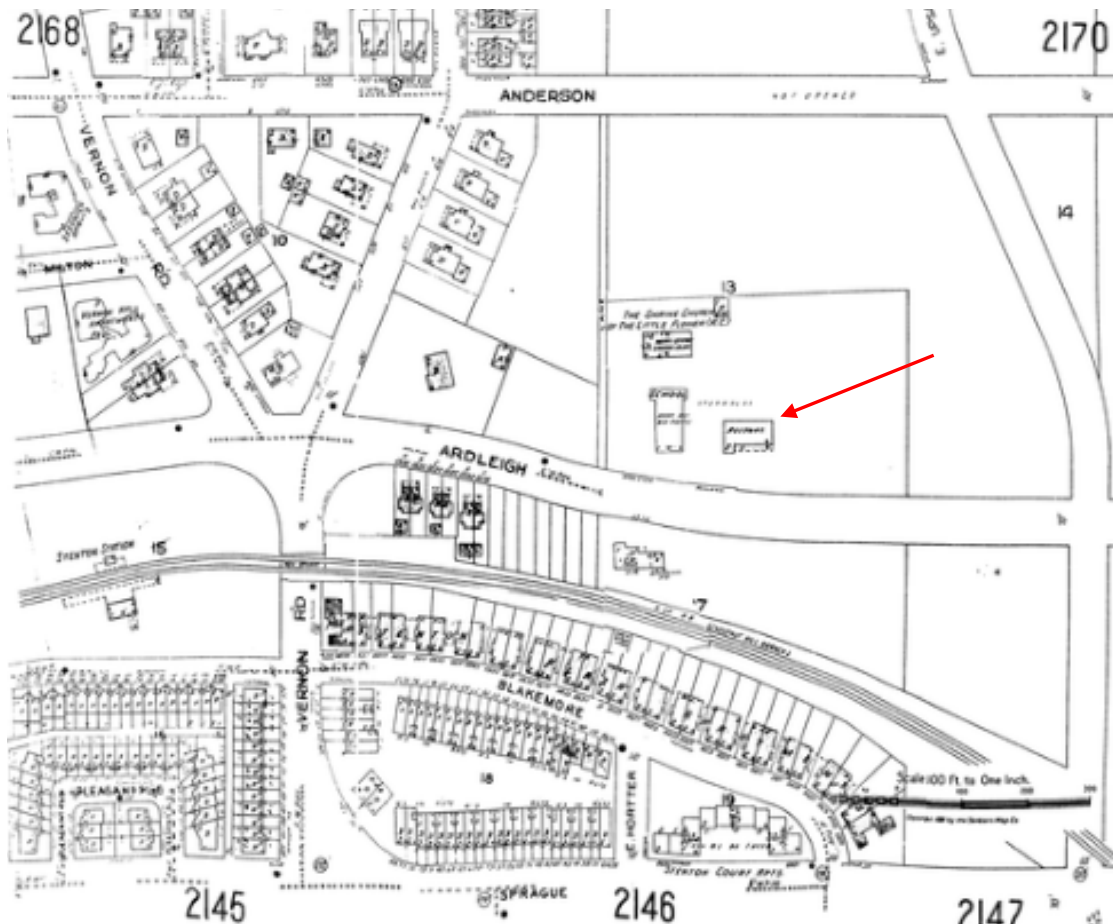


Figure 18. Sanborn Fire Insurance Company map, subject building, marked with arrow, identified as “Rectory”, 1950.

Father Toohey ended his tenure as pastor in 1948, and was succeeded by Father John P. Graham, who served until 1972.¹⁷ Under Father Graham’s leadership, the Parish constructed a new, modern school building on the St. Therese’s or the Little Flower campus in 1951. Designed by the architectural firm of Nolen & Swinburne, the 26,000 square foot school building was built of brick, stone, and reinforced concrete.¹⁸ The new school replaced the converted stable on the property that had been used for classes for about 25 years. At the time of the opening of the school in 1951, the educational facility was overseen by 10 nuns of the Sisters of St. Joseph, who resided at the convent adjacent to the school building.¹⁹

A few years later, architects Nolen & Swinburne designed a two-story brick-clad rectory for the St. Therese’s or Little Flower complex. The J.J. Kelly Co, Builders, Inc. constructed the rectory on open land along Ardleigh Street to the southeast of the convent in 1954.²⁰ With the construction of the rectory, the development of the campus was complete.

¹⁷ “Golden Jubilee Shrine of St. Therese of the Child Jesus,” St. Therese Church, Mt. Airy, Philadelphia, Pa., 1976, pp. 14, 16

¹⁸ See Zoning and Use Registration Permit #28326B, June 8, 1950, City of Philadelphia Zoning Archive.

¹⁹ “\$405,000 School Will Be Dedicated Today,” *Inquirer*, October 14, 1951, p. 47.

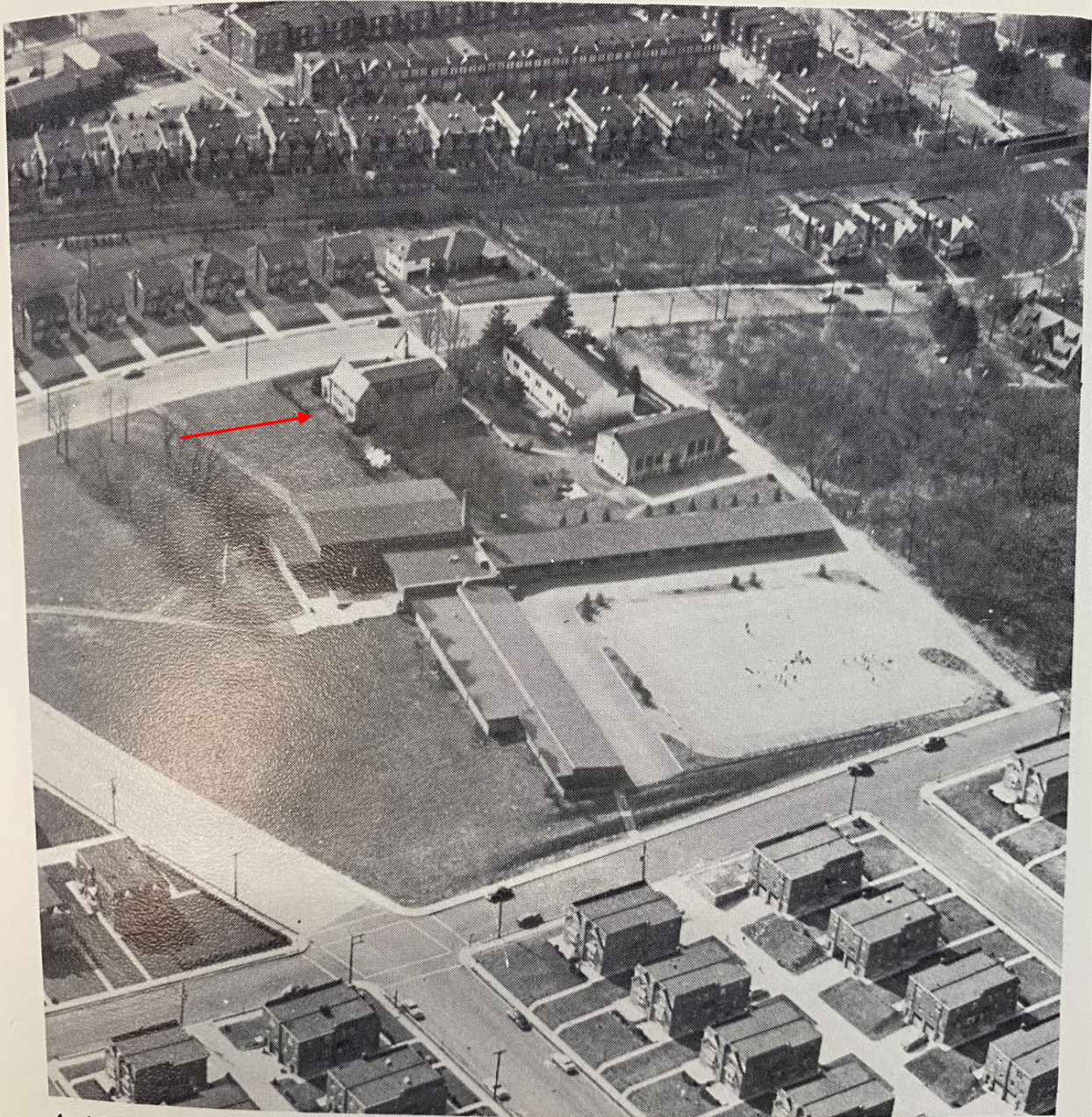
²⁰ See Zoning and Use Registration Permit #82296B, July 14, 1954, City of Philadelphia Zoning Archive.

CRITERION FOR DESIGNATION J

With the construction of the new convent, school, and rectory in the 1940s and 1950s, St. Therese of the Child Jesus Parish established itself as an important institution in the growing East Mount Airy neighborhood, where new Airlite houses were erected at a staggering pace immediately after World War II. As early as the 1930s, proximity to the church and school was a selling point for real estate in the area. By the 1940s, the area was known as Little Flower Parish, a name that stuck with the neighborhood until the late 1960s. Satisfying Criterion for Designation J, the Convent, where the nuns who ran the school resided, exemplifies the cultural, economic, social, and historical heritage of the community known as Little Flower Parish.



Figure 19. A comparison of the 1942 (above) and 1962 (below) land use maps for the area to north and east of St. Therese's shows the rapid expansion of housing in the area during the post-World War II period. The Vs on the map represent vacant land. Source: Atlas.



Aerial view of new school and surrounding area, circa 1951

Figure 20. Aerial photograph of subject property looking south, circa 1951, with the subject building marked with arrow. The new L-shaped school building is in the foreground. The former school building is located above the new school and the former church building is located above the former school and adjacent to the convent along Ardleigh Street. Newly built housing surrounds the Parish complex. Source: Golden Jubilee Shrine of St. Therese of the Child Jesus, St. Therese Church, Mt. Airy, Philadelphia, Pa., 1976.

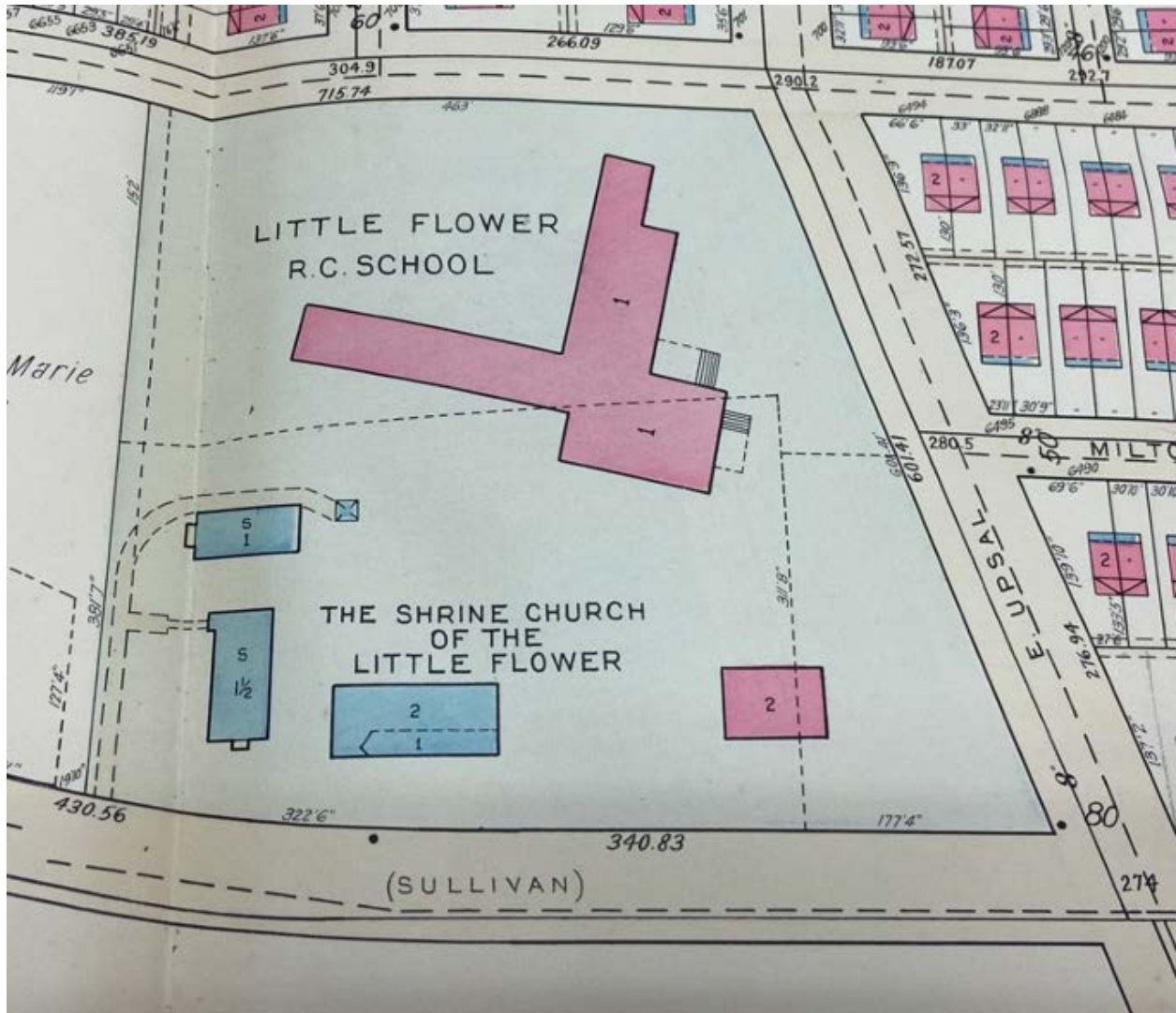


Figure 21. St. Therese complex, Ardleigh and Upsal Streets, 1955, with the new two-story, brick rectory depicted in the lower righthand corner. Source: Franklin's Property Atlas of the 22nd Ward, Philadelphia, PA, Volume 2, Plate 28.

LIST YOUR PROPERTY WITH US

Little Flower Parish

Attrac. mod. home on a large corner lot. 3 st. fronts, open front & side porch, living room with fireplace, dining rm., kitchen, 3 bedrms., tile bath, hwd. flrs., h. w. ht., gar. Immed. poss.

W. A. BELL

6780 GERMANTOWN AVE. GER. 6500

ARDLEIGH ST. Modern duplex on wide residential st. 2 bdrms 1 bath ea apt. Separate ht & util. Little Flower Parish. \$22,500.

TWIN REALTY OF GTN Vi 8-7133

Figure 22. Real estate advertisements in the Philadelphia Inquirer, February 25, 1945 (above) and February 18, 1968 (below).



*Figure 23. Aerial photograph of subject property, 1972 (subject building marked with arrow).
(Source: Penn State / USDA Farm Service Agency.)*

CRITERION FOR DESIGNATION D



Figure 24. Views of the Convent showing the Jacobean Revival style elements.

The Convent building embodies distinguishing characteristics of a simplified, modernized Jacobean Revival architectural style, a style that is sometimes called Jacobethan for its relationship to the Elizabethan Revival style and is also associated with the Collegiate Gothic style. It is clad in granite from Mount Airy, North Carolina. Its primary volumes are gabled. The gable ends extend above the roofline and are finished with cast-stone coping. The roofs are steep and finished with slate. The window and door surrounds are finished in a contrasting, lighter cast-stone and are quined. The doorways feature Tudor arches and drip moldings. The windows are often grouped in twos and threes. The chapel extension includes a blind slit opening, a hallmark of the style. The chimney is topped by a large ornamental terra cotta chimney pot, another hallmark of the style. Most significantly, the building includes a porch and colonnade, both of which are crenelated. The Convent building satisfies Criterion for Designation D; it embodies distinguishing characteristics the Jacobean Revival architectural style.

EPILOGUE

In 1971, the Parish converted the auditorium of the school building into a sanctuary for worship services and then demolished the original church building, a World War I barracks building that had been moved to the site and converted for use as a church about 1927.²¹

In 1968, the Archdiocese of Philadelphia signed its first labor contract with lay teachers in its parochial schools. The contract marked the start of a shift in parochial schools in Philadelphia away from teaching nuns to lay teachers.²² Eventually, the Convent at St. Therese of the Child Jesus closed its doors. The Parish subdivided the convent property at 6633 Ardleigh Street from the remaining property, and sold it to the Christian Brothers of Frederick, Inc. on March 17, 1987.²³

On May 11, 2000, the Philadelphia City Council passed Resolution No. 000327, honoring the history of the Parish on its 75th anniversary, and noting that the school on the property included a “culturally and racially diversified student body . . . staffed by a distinguished and dedicated lay faculty and, along with the parish, remains powerful evangelization instrument(s).”²⁴ Soon thereafter, in 2002, the parochial school closed its doors. Following the closure, the Parish rented the school building for use as a charter school during the remaining years of its ownership.

Owing to a dwindling congregation resulting from demographic shifts in the area and changing religious practices among Philadelphians, St. Therese of the Child Jesus Church held its final Mass on June 30, 2013. St. Therese along with the St. Madeline-Sophie Church merged with the Holy Cross Church in West Mount Airy. The new parish was called Holy Cross.²⁵ The Archdiocese of Philadelphia permanently closed St. Therese of the Child Jesus Church, which had been used infrequently for special occasions since 2013, and relegated it to profane use on January 11, 2017.²⁶ On May 22, 2017, Dare to Imagine Church, Inc. purchased the Parish properties at 6611 and 6613 Ardleigh Street and 6610 Anderson Street, ending the Parish’s 90-year history at the property.²⁷

²¹ See Zoning and Use Registration Permit #21186K, February 3, 1971, City of Philadelphia Zoning Archive; and *Our Faith-Filled Heritage: The Church of Philadelphia, Bicentennial as a Diocese, 1808-2008* (Philadelphia: Archdiocese of Philadelphia, 2007), p. 136.

²² Michael P. Caruso, *When the Sisters Said Farewell: The Transition of Leadership in Catholic Elementary Schools* (Blue Ridge Summit, PA: Rowman & Littlefield Education, 2012).

²³ Deed, St. Therese of the Child Jesus Roman Catholic Parish to Christian Brothers of Frederick, Inc., City of Philadelphia, Department of Records, Deed Book D 743, page 591.

²⁴ Philadelphia City Council Resolution No. 000327, May 11, 2000.

²⁵ Arlene Edmonds, “St. Therese traditions being kept at Holy Cross,” *Philadelphia Tribune*, July 11, 2013.

²⁶ Claire Sasko, “Archdiocese to Close Two City, Two Suburban Churches,” *Philadelphia Magazine*, December 12, 2016; “Decree of the Relegation of Saint Therese of the Child Jesus Church, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, to Profane but not Sordid Use,” Archdiocese of Philadelphia, Office of the Archbishop, December 7, 2017.

²⁷ Deed, Rev. William E. Grogan, in his capacity as Pastor of St. Therese of the Child Jesus Roman Catholic Parish, and Dare to Imagine Church, Inc., May 22, 2017, City of Philadelphia, Department of Records, Document 53217828.

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