

**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

For HCRS use only
received **APR 25 1983**
date entered

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic Reformed Dutch Church and Green of Hackensack
and/or common First Reformed Church of Hackensack; "Church on the Green"

2. Location

street & number 42 Court Street N/A not for publication
city, town Hackensack N/A vicinity of congressional district
state New Jersey code 34 county Bergen code 003

3. Classification

7/29 K's	Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial
	<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational
	<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
	<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
		<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
		<u>N/A</u>	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military
				<input type="checkbox"/> museum
				<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> park
				<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
				<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> religious
				<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
				<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
				<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other: cemetery

4. Owner of Property

name 1) First Reformed Church
2) City of Hackensack
street & number 1) 42 Court Street
2) 65 Central Avenue
city, town 1) Hackensack N/A vicinity of state New Jersey
2) Hackensack

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Bergen County Courthouse
street & number Court Street and opposite aforementioned church
city, town Hackensack state New Jersey

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Historic American Buildings Survey - HABS-NJ-4 has this property been determined eligible? yes no
date 1935, 1936, 1941 federal state county local
depository for survey records Library of Congress
city, town Washington state D.C.

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved date _____
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

DESCRIPTION

The Reformed Dutch Church and Green of Hackensack are the historical center of the city and face the the Bergen County Courthouse complex. On the church property is a 1791 sandstone church, a third quarter 19th century service house, and the cemetery which dates back to the late 17th century. Adjacent to the church is a 1904 monument commemorating Revolutionary War General Enoch Poor, and a small rectangular public green established by the early 18th century.

The Reformed Dutch Church of Hackensack, which occupies a visually prominent location adjacent to the Green in downtown Hackensack, is basically a traditional church of the Wren-Gibbs type consisting of simple rectangular block, topped with a gable roof and fronted by a central tower with spire. However, the building has Gothic elements in its pointed arched windows. Walls and towers are constructed of coursed ashlar sandstone, except the rear wall which is brick.

The present church, built in 1791, stands on the site of its predecessors on a slight rise of ground above marshland bordering on Doctors/Hackensack Creek to the south (now filled in) and the Hackensack River to the east. The previous 1696 and 1728 buildings were said to have been octagonal in shape, but there is no documentation for this.

A 1790 plan records that the new church was to be 48' x 60' with two galleries and pews. Measurements were not strictly adhered to for it was built larger than planned, 53 1/2' wide and about 69' long. Subsequently, the church was twice enlarged to the rear, first in 1847 and again in 1869. Today the church measures 99 1/2' x 53 1/2' with a tower and steeple rising to the height of 93 1/2'. Nineteenth century views of the church spire are inconclusive, but the steeple may have been modified at some point. Although the tower is recessed into the main structure, it projects 5' beyond the front (south) facade. At the rear an organ loft extends 7' 8" from the wall. Walls and tower are constructed of coursed rectangular brown sandstone ashlar. The rear is brick except for the frame organ loft with wood siding. The gable is frame construction with wood

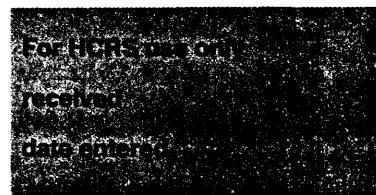
**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

Dutch Reformed Church and Green of Hackensack

Continuation sheet Hackensack, Bergen Co., NJ Item number 7

Page 1



Description (continued)

trusses, rafters and purlins which have been reinforced and repaired. Below grade level, stone pillars carry the weight of the tower. Wood joists support the church proper. East and west facades each have five Gothic arched windows of stained glass 5' 8" wide with a contour outline of brick. Under roof eaves, the cornice has dentil decorations.

The main entrance is in the south facade of the tower, flanked by two additional doors which once were Gothic windows. A datestone and three windows, one round, are above the tower entrance where a bell was installed in 1865. The steeple which surmounts the stone tower is frame supported by oak timbers. It is two-tiered and octagonal in shape, the lower section clapboard and the spire itself is shingled. The weathercock was known to the Dutch as a "Petrine haen," believed to be the traditional symbol of Peter's denial of Christ. It was also noted as a sign of a Jersey Dutch Church.

Contemporary sketches trace enlargement of the building. The 1791 structure was depicted in an 1844 drawing of the west facade showing three Gothic arch windows and a rail at the base of the steeple. In 1847 about 10' or more was added to the rear at a cost of \$3,000. In a sketch made after this date but before 1867, the extension is shown to have included another window in the style of the original three, and all were still in evidence. In 1869 another 20' was added to the rear and is shown in early sketches and photographs. This addition included another window as well as changing the front windows into two additional doors. The patchwork involved in this change is evident in the stonework. The last exterior change was the apse for the organ loft in 1890.

There are three entrances from the vestibule into the nave. Two heavy Victorian staircases lead to the U-shaped balcony supported by decorative cast-iron columns. The balcony terminates

**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

Dutch Reformed Church and Green of Hackensack

Continuation sheet Hackensack, Bergen Co., NJ Item number 7

Page 2

Description (continued)

near the chancel in graceful rounded ends. A wide center aisle and two narrow side aisles separate the two center columns of pews and a row of pews beneath the balcony. The raised chancel features a paneled wainscot, a wooden railing and a pipe organ. Despite the 1890's organ and the late 19th century stained glass windows, the interior essentially dates to the 1869 remodeling. The church can accommodate 600 people.

The adjacent Service House was built in 1867 on the site of an earlier, small frame structure. The two story brick building measures 35 1/2' X 66 1/2' with a gable roof and decorative brackets under the eaves. The return has large paired brackets. The entrance is beneath the raised center window. The south facade fenestration is accentuated by brick pilasters separating the three bays. Soon after completion, a small one story brick addition was attached to the east wall which was later absorbed by enlargement along the entire length of the older building, measuring 17' 3" in width. The interior of the Service House has been remodeled and today contains an auditorium with stage, a lounge and kitchen on the first floor and classrooms on the second. Over the years it has served as a Chapel, Sunday School and lecture hall.

There is a churchyard/cemetery east and north of the church with simple grave stone, obelisk, and prone tablets. The grave of General Enoch Poor is located in its southwest corner. The cemetery is enclosed by wrought iron fencing.

Established by the 18th century, the Hackensack Green is a small rectangular urban park with spokes radiating out from a center focus to each corner. At its center is a bronze statue of a World War I soldier situated on a low stone cylindrical base. The base has low-relief scenes from wars (Washington rallying troops, surrender of Lee to Grant, charge of Rough Riders, and trench warfare in World War I). The monument was placed on the Green in 1924 and was designed by Charles Niehaus. East of the World War I monument is a flagpole and a Civil War era cannon donated to Hackensack by the War Department in 1908. Cement sidewalks encircle the World War I monument. Sidewalks are also located along the circumference. The rest of the Green has grassy lawn, trees, and benches.

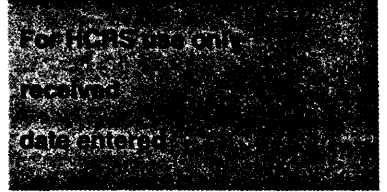
**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

Dutch Reformed Church and Green of Hackensack,

Continuation sheet Hackensack, Bergen Co., NJ Item number 7

Page 3



Description (continued)

Located east of the Green is a monument commemorating General Enoch Poor. This 1904 monument, consisting of a stone base and stone pillar with a bronze statue of General Poor by C.F. Piatti, is located on a small plot surrounded by paved streets.

8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

Specific dates 1791 Builder/Architect N/A

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

SIGNIFICANCE

The Reformed Dutch Church of Hackensack, organized in 1686, is the oldest Reformed Dutch congregation in present Bergen County and the second oldest in New Jersey. The congregation, responsible for founding 16 daughter churches in New Jersey and New York, occupies an important place in regional ecclesiastical history. The construction of the first church building in Hackensack in 1696 is important to the history of the development of the city since the church was the nucleus for the developing hamlet, which became the county seat in 1715. The existing church building dates to 1791 and is the second oldest extant church edifice in Bergen County, in spite of being the third church structure on its site. Executed in local sandstone, the building is an excellent example of a vernacular interpretation of the Wren-Gibbs church type and typical of the Reformed Dutch Church built in New Jersey from the late 18th century into the early 19th century. The 1791 Hackensack sandstone church was patterned after the 1773 Old Bergen Church. The use of Gothic arched windows is typical of 18th & early 19th century Reformed Dutch Churches. Although it cannot be documented that they are original, an illustration completed before 1844, however, clearly shows the pointed arches. (Barber and Howe, p. 81) Precedent for the pointed arches of the Hackensack building is seen in the design of the Second Trinity Church, constructed in Manhattan in 1788-90 (no longer extant). It is entirely possible that the pointed windows are an intrinsic part of the Reformed Dutch Church design in Northeast New Jersey.

The adjacent Hackensack Green, one of the oldest public squares in New Jersey, is the historic center of the City of Hackensack. Since 1696 when John Berry donated the land to the public as part of the parcel given for the First Reformed Church, it has been a public meeting place, and a place where public notices were posted. Since 1715 a Bergen County Courthouse building has faced the green. In the 18th century the Green was the place where punishments were inflicted on criminals and where militia trained. In 1820 it was enhanced only by trees along its edges and a flagpole. About 1858-60 the trees were removed, new trees planted, and the Green was fenced. Subsequent late 19th century embellishments included a cast-iron fountain and a bandstand. The 19th century features were replaced in the 20th century by the cannon, a recent flagpole, and a World War I monument. The monument is a fine example of outdoor

9. Major Bibliographical References

See Continuation Sheets

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property 1.65

Quadrangle name Hackensack

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

UMT References

A

1	8
---	---

5	8	0	6	5	0
---	---	---	---	---	---

4	5	2	5	5	8	0
---	---	---	---	---	---	---

 Zone Easting Northing

B

--	--

--	--	--	--

--	--	--	--	--	--

 Zone Easting Northing

C

--	--

--	--	--	--

--	--	--	--	--	--

D

--	--

--	--	--	--

--	--	--	--	--	--

E

--	--

--	--	--	--

--	--	--	--	--	--

F

--	--

--	--	--	--

--	--	--	--	--	--

G

--	--

--	--	--	--

--	--	--	--	--	--

H

--	--

--	--	--	--

--	--	--	--	--	--

Verbal boundary description and justification

Block 202, Lot 8 and Block 200 - City of Hackensack Tax Maps

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state	N/A	code	county	code
-------	-----	------	--------	------

state	code	county	code
-------	------	--------	------

11. Form Prepared By

Revised by Terry Karschner, Office of Cultural and Environmental Services 2/82

name/title Reginald McMahon/T.R. Brown

organization Bergen County Office of Cultural and

Historic Affairs/Bergen Co. Hist. Soc. date 4-1980/8-1981

(home) 186 Oxford Terrace

street & number 355 Main Street telephone (201) 489-8382/646-2313

city or town River Edge/Hackensack state New Jersey

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national state local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature *Terry Karschner* 4/8/83

title Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer date

For HCRS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

Thomas A. Druehl date 6/9/83
 Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

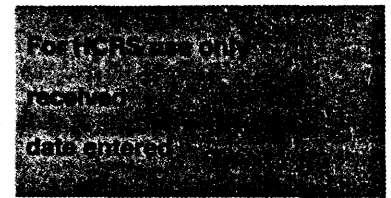
**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

Dutch Reformed Church and Green of Hackensack,
Hackensack, Bergen Co., NJ

Item number 8

Continuation sheet

Page 1



Significance (continued)

sculpture. It was designed by Charles Henry Niehaus, a prominent New York City sculptor whose work embellishes the Library of Congress and the Statuary Hall of the U.S. Capitol. Between the Green and the Church is a 1904 monument to General Enoch commemorating a Revolutionary War figure who is buried in the adjacent cemetery of the First Reformed Church. Poor died in 1780, possibly of wounds incurred in a duel. Part of his military funeral took place on the Green. This funeral was attended by George Washington and Lafayette.

Members of the 1686 Reformed Dutch Church of Hackensack first met in a house or barn on the east side of the Hackensack River in the Old Indian locality named Hackensack (Ackingh-sack, Ackensack). Later they met across the River in New Barbadoes and with the construction of the 1696 church here, the Indian name was established on the west bank of the river because of the church name.

Land for the church building was given by John Berry in a deed of April 20, 1696 which Berry confirmed as two and three quarter acres in a subsequent deed dated March 23, 1712. The property included the present church site and Hackensack's historic Green. Pastor Gillium Berthold, the celebrated Dutch Reformed minister, delivered the first sermon in the completed church on November 15, 1696. The church was constructed of stone and possibly octagonal in shape. It was replaced by a similar structure in 1728.

For a time the church was united with Acquackanonk (Passaic) and later Schraalenburgh (Bergenfield). It was the mother church of 16 congregations in New Jersey and New York, including the Tarrytown Sleepy Hollow Church.

On October 20, 1765, New Jersey Governor William Franklin granted a charter to the Protestant Dutch Reformed Churches at Hackensack and Schraalenburgh. Minister John Henry Goetschius and members of the congregation were leaders in the founding of Queens

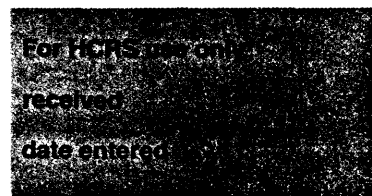
**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

Dutch Reformed Church and Green of Hackensack,

Continuation sheet Hackensack, Bergen Co., NJ Item number 8

Page 2



Significance (continued)

College (Rutgers), the nucleus of which was to have been Peter Wilson's Academy that was built near the Green. (The plan for Queen's at Hackensack was defeated in favor of New Brunswick). Goetschius also established a formal Grammar School in 1766 and a theological school at his Schraalenburgh parsonage.

Dissension within the church in 1755 divided the congregation into groups called the Coetus and Conferentie who met in the church building at different times. During the Revolution, the Coetus were Patriots and the Conferentie Tories.

A raid on Hackensack on March 23, 1780 threatened the church as the British burned the adjacent courthouse and homes. Rebel Pastor Dirck Romeyn escaped capture by hiding behind a chimney in a nearby house. When Brigadier General Enoch Poor died on September 8, 1780, he was buried in the churchyard with a full-fledged military funeral attended by George Washington. Near this tombstone, a life-size statue of Poor was erected in 1904.

The present church building (third on site) was proposed in a "Plan for Rebuilding the Church at Hackensack, A.D. 1790" which specified that it was to be 48 feet wide and 60 feet long with two galleries. Construction began in 1791 and was completed in 1792. Stones with these dates are imbedded in the exterior walls (also incorporated are date and monogram stones from the original 1696 building). The structure was lengthened ten feet at the rear in 1847 and another 20 feet was added in 1869, but the greater part of the exterior remains essentially the same as 1791.

The architecture of the Hackensack church is noted for its simplicity and, with its later sister churches of the same style, has been described as "renditions in stone of the American Dutch Calvinism, as perfectly fitted to the countryside and the people of the Hackensack Valley as the beautiful New England churches fit their green."

**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

Dutch Reformed Church and Green of Hackensack,

Continuation sheet Hackensack, Bergen Co., NJ Item number 8

Page 3

Significance (continued)

The adjacent Service House was erected in 1867 about 25 feet east of the church. Built of brick, it has served as a Sunday School, Chapel, and lecture hall.

Among the 18th and 19th century notables buried in the churchyard are General Enoch Poor; Col. Richard Varick, Washington's aide and Mayor of New York City; Adam Boyd, wartime Sheriff of Bergen County; Peter Wilson, founder of the 1767 Hackensack Academy, Provost of Columbia College, Patriot and State Legislator; several pastors as well as veterans of the Revolutionary and Civil War.

**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

Dutch Reformed Church and Green of Hackensack,

Continuation sheet Hackensack, Bergen Co., NJ Item number 9

Page 1

Taylor, Benjamin C. Annal of the Classis of Bergen. Reformed Church, New York, 1857.

Thatcher, James. Military Journal of the American Revolution. Hubert, Williams and Company, Hartford, Conn., 1862.

Romyen, Theodore B. Historical Discourse. . . May 2, 1896. Reformed Church, New York, 1891.

Historic American Buildings Survey - NJ-4 "First Reformed Church." Library of Congress, Washington, D.C., 1935-1941.

Leiby, Adrian C. The Revolutionary War in the Hackensack Valley. Rutgers University Press, New Brunswick, 1962.

Wilcox, John C. The Old Church on the Green. 1964

Bogert, Fred W. Bergen's Old Dutch Churches. Sunday Record, Hackensack, December 17, 1972.

Peter Wilson. Bergen County Annual, Bergen County Historical Society, 1972.

Leiby, Adrian C. The United Churches of Hackensack and Schraalenburgh. Bergen County Historical Society, River Edge, New Jersey, 1976.

Architectural Record 111, July 1893-July 1894. 246-246 and xxx11 (July-December 1912) 456-457.

Deed Book B, page 78, April 20, 1696.

Deed Book B, page 79, March 12, 1712.

(Both deeds recorded at the Bergen County Courthouse, Hackensack, N.J.)

Original mss. records in archives of First Reformed Church, Hackensack.

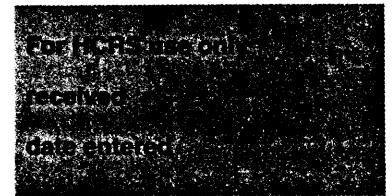
**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

Dutch Reformed Church and Green of Hackensack,

Continuation sheet Hackensack, Bergen Co., NJ Item number 9

Page 2



Hackensack: General Enoch Poor file, Bergen County Office of Cultural and Historic Affairs.

Postcards, Album of Bergen County Views, early 20th century, Bergen County Historical Affairs.

Mantle Fielding. Dictionary of American Painters, Sculptors and Engravers, 1926 pp. 258-9.

Map of the Counties of Bergen and Passaic, New Jersey. G.M. Hopkins, Philadelphia, 1861.

State Atlas of New Jersey. F.W. Beers, New York, 1872.

Westervelt, Frances. History of Hackensack. New York, 1922, pp. 1-2, 12-13.

Pomfret, John E. The Province of East New Jersey 1609-1702. 1962, p. 165.

Barber, John W. and Henry Howe. Historical Collections of New Jersey. 1844 and reprinted edition of 1865.

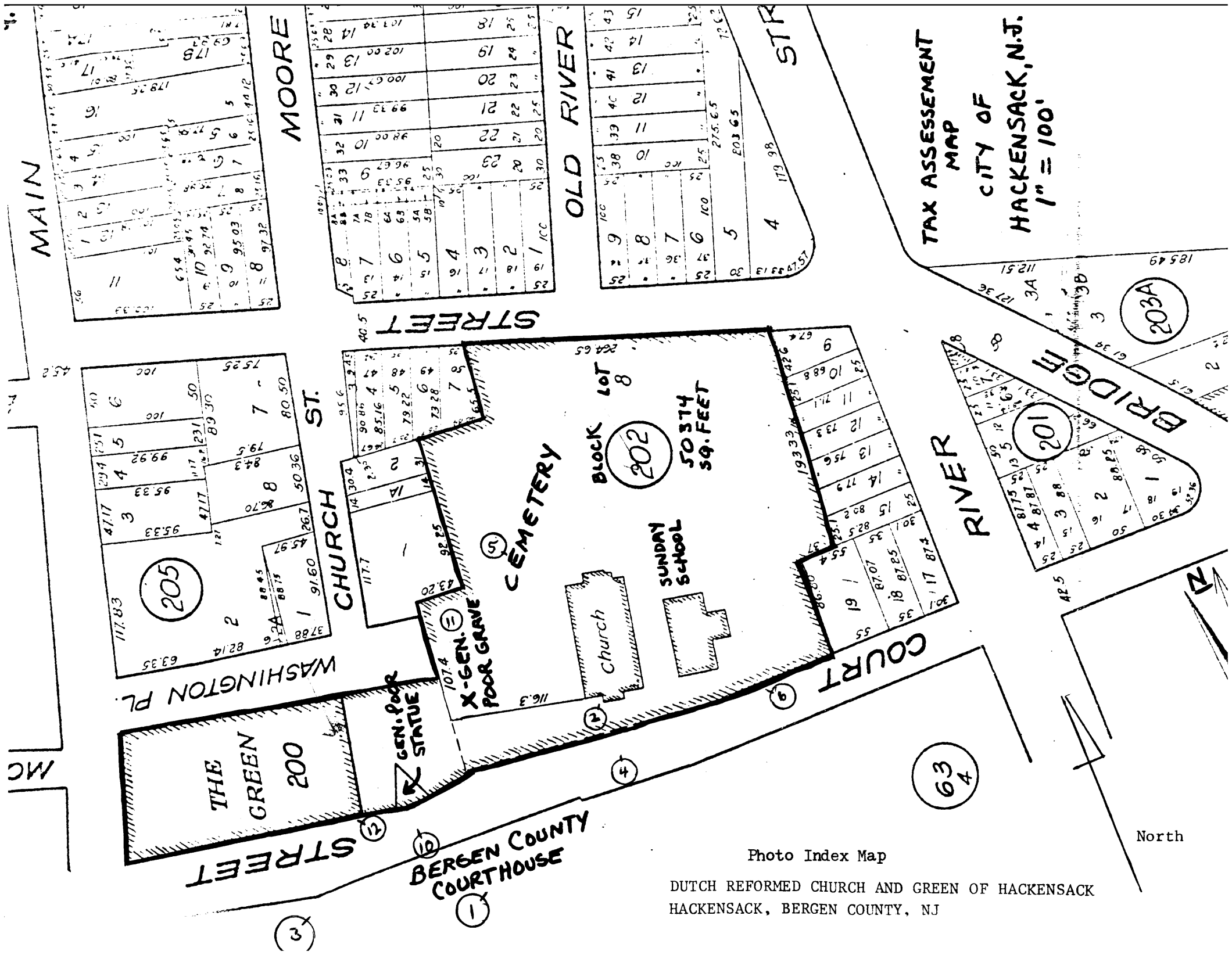
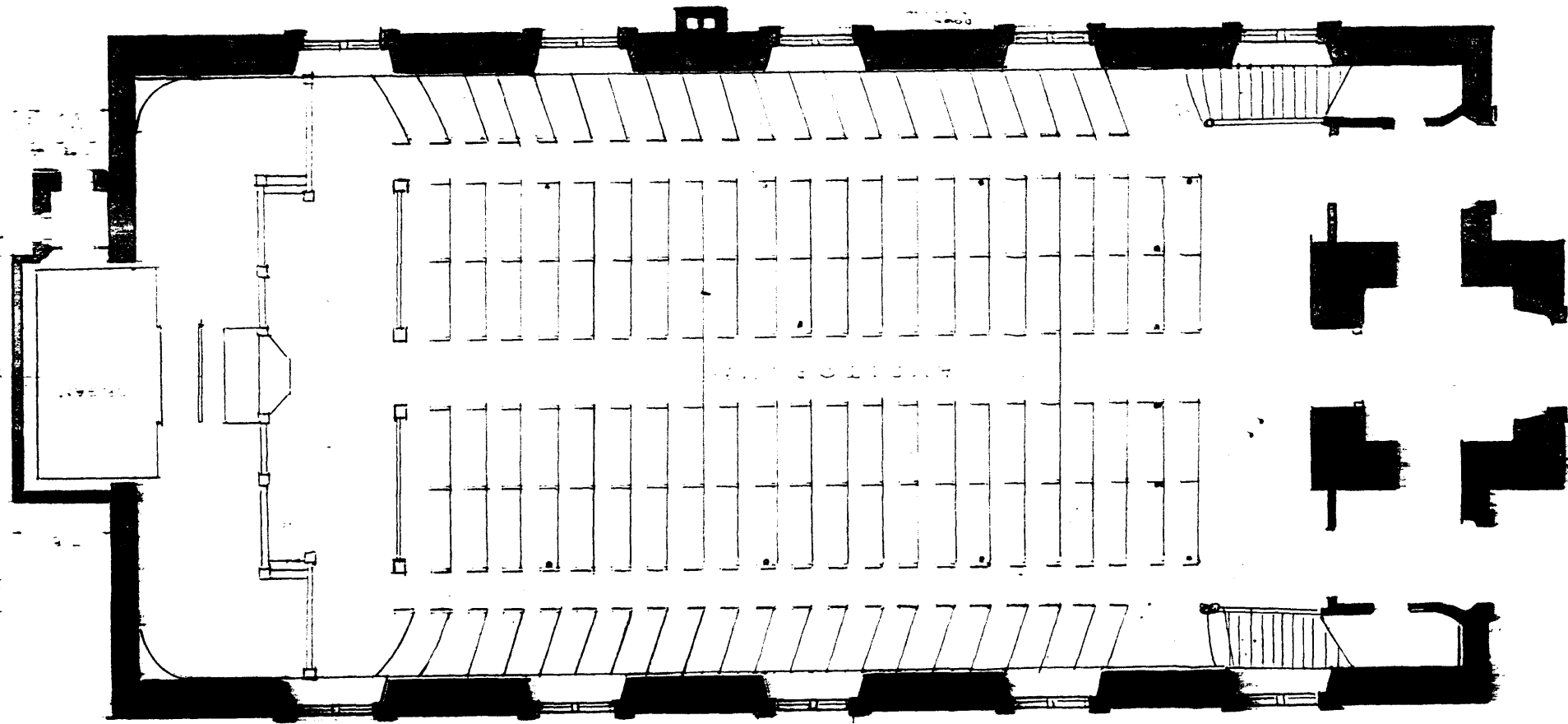


Photo Index Map

DUTCH REFORMED CHURCH AND GREEN OF HACKENSACK
HACKENSACK, BERGEN COUNTY, NJ

North



DUTCH REFORMED CHURCH OF HACKENSACK
HACKENSACK
BERGEN COUNTY
NEW JERSEY

FLOOR PLAN