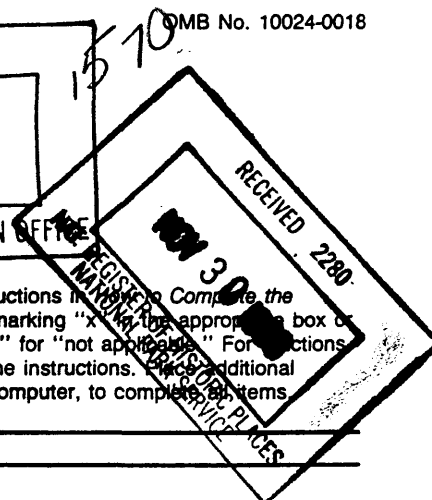
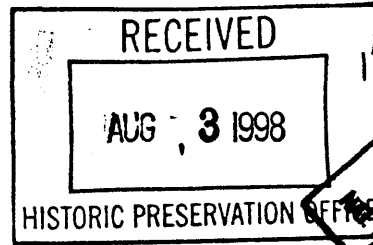


United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

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

1. Name of Property

historic name St. Lucy's Church

other names/site number \_\_\_\_\_

2. Location

street & number 19-26 Ruggiero Plaza N/A  not for publication

city or town Newark  vicinity

state New Jersey code NJ county Essex code 013 zip code 07104

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  nationally  statewide  locally. ( See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title

Date

Assistant Commissioner for Natural & Historic Resources/DSHPO

State of Federal agency and bureau

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

Signature of certifying official/Title

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

- entered in the National Register.  See continuation sheet.
- determined eligible for the National Register  See continuation sheet.
- determined not eligible for the National Register.
- removed from the National Register.
- other, (explain:)

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

Edson H. Beall

12/31/98

St. Lucy's Church  
Name of Property

Essex County, New Jersey  
County and State

**5. Classification**

**Ownership of Property**  
(Check as many boxes as apply)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

**Category of Property**  
(Check only one box)

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

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

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1	0	buildings
_____	_____	sites
_____	_____	structures
_____	_____	objects
1	0	Total

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

N/A

**Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register**

0

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

RELIGION/religious facility = Church  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Current Functions**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

RELIGION/religious facility = Church  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

Romanesque Revival  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Materials**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation concrete block  
walls brick  
\_\_\_\_\_  
roof metal  
other terra cotta  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Narrative Description**

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

St. Lucy's Church

Name of Property

Essex County, New Jersey

County and State

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

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

- Criteria A, B, C, D with checkboxes and descriptions.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- Criteria A through G with checkboxes and descriptions.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

Ethnic Heritage - European

Architecture

Art

Period of Significance

1925-1948

Significant Dates

1925

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Architect - Neil J. Convery

Artist - Gonippo Raggi

Narrative Statement of Significance

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

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

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

Previous documentation on file (NPS): N/A

- Documentation checkboxes: preliminary determination, previously listed, designated landmark, recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey, recorded by Historic American Engineering Record.

Primary location of additional data:

- Location checkboxes: State Historic Preservation Office, Other State agency, Federal agency, Local government, University, Other.

Name of repository:

Seton Hall University Library

St. Lucy's Church  
Name of Property

Essex County, New Jersey  
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property less than .5 acre

Orange Quad

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1	1 8	5 6 9 5 0 0	4 5 1 1 1 6 0
	Zone	Easting	Northing

3			
	Zone	Easting	Northing

2			
---	--	--	--

4			
---	--	--	--

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

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

Boundary Justification

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

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Ulana D. Zakalak/Historic Preservation Consultant

organization Zakalak Associates date July 29, 1998

street & number 57 Cayuga Avenue telephone (732) 571-3176

city or town Oceanport state NJ zip code 07757

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A Sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative black and white photographs of the property.

Additional items

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

Property Owner

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

name St. Lucy's Church

street & number 19-26 Ruggiero Plaza telephone (973) 482-6663

city or town Newark state New Jersey zip code 07105

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

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places  
Continuation SheetSection number 7 Page 1St. Lucy's Church  
Newark, Essex County, New Jersey**Description**

St. Lucy's Roman Catholic Church, the "Italian Cathedral," located at Ruggiero Plaza and Seventh Avenue, Newark, is a two-story, hybrid basilica plan, Romanesque Revival/eclectic church (Photo 1). One of the unique religious edifices in the City of Newark, the church features a beige brick exterior trimmed with glazed, white, terra cotta, and a richly painted interior, with sculptured marble altars, bejeweled and costumed statuary, colorful murals, mosaics and magnificent stained glass windows. The church represents an architectural blend of western and eastern influences such as a basilica plan with transepts, repeated rounded arches, and elaborate combinations of decorative painting and statuary. Located in the northeast corner of the Central Ward, northwest of the Central Business District, the building was constructed by Italian immigrants from the Naples region around 1925. Designed by local architect Neil J. Convery, the church is also the National Shrine to St. Gerard Majella in the United States. The plan of the church is a modified basilica with a central nave flanked by aisles, a narthex with a single tower at its southern end, an apse at the western end, and transept arms immediately east of the apse. Clerestory windows above the aisles and transept arms illuminate the interior. The church is finished in stretcher bond, matte-glazed, pressed beige brick with glazed terra cotta trim, a granite water table and steps, and a standing seam copper roof.

The division of spaces within the plan is reflected in the church facade (eastern elevation), which is composed of a large central gable with a single corner tower at the southern end (Photo 2). The entrance facade consists of a central, two-story, gabled nave, approached by a podium of five granite steps, which stretches along the entire width of the church. The facade is dominated by the central, colossal pilaster-flanked bay, with a projecting, round-arched entrance on the first floor; a rose window on the second floor; and a gabled pediment at the attic level. The colossal pilasters span the height of the facade in an uninterrupted fashion, ending at the entablature.

The lower story is articulated by three, double-door entrances: a large central door flanked by smaller entrances set in pedimented, limestone surrounds. The center entrance is the most elaborate of the three. The Composite order-supported, arched surround is studded with cherub faces. The lunette within the arch is filled with a bas relief panel depicting the Blessed Virgin Mary holding the infant Jesus, flanked by flower-bearing angels. The doors are carved with symbols of the four evangelists, Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. The stone surround immediately next to the doors is ornamented with grapevines. The side doors are crowned with simple triangular pediments. Each of the paired, carved, wooden side doors is decorated with a cross.

The lower story is separated from the upper story by a limestone entablature consisting of a simple architrave, unadorned frieze and dentillated cornice. Above this simple entablature, the second floor is articulated by a circular rose window in the center bay, flanked by acanthus-leafed patera set in flat, circular surrounds. The rose window surround is composed of a garland-wrapped ovolo, within which is an acanthus-leafed moulding. The acanthus leaf motif continues along the limestone cross in the center of the window. Inside the pilasters enframing the second floor center bays, is a patterned brick enframing with limestone corner blocks.

The end bays are ornamented with round-arched niches supported by plain pilasters with Composite capitals. The southern niche contains a statue of St. Lucy, while the northern niche has a statue of St. Gerard. The top of the second story is finished with a slightly more elaborate entablature than the one at the first floor level. The architrave is a simple stepped limestone fascia. The frieze consists of the blank brick wall. The cornice is

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Newark, Essex County, New Jersey

supported by modillions and an egg and dart ovolo, and finished with a plain fascia and cyma recta. Rising over the center bay is a triangular pediment edged with the same treatment as the cornice. Inside the pediment is a circular panel containing a bas-relief of St. Lucy holding her eyes on a platter. A simple limestone cross crowns the apex.

A two story, hipped-roof, square campanile rises from the southern bay. The first floor of the campanile is articulated by paired, round-arched openings on all the sides, connected by a simple belt course at the springing line. The interior support of the paired arch is a slender, Composite colonette. Separated from the first floor by a simple stepped fascia belt course, the second floor is more elaborate with a triple arched opening connected by a balustrade. The entablature of the bell tower consists of a simple dentil course and a cyma reversa. The top of the pyramidal roof is crowned by a cross.

The north and south elevations of the church feature one story, side aisles covered with shed roofs, and articulated by round-arched, stained glass windows (Photos 1 and 3). There are five, single, round-arched, stained glass windows illuminating each of the aisles. Above the shed roof, on the second story wall, are circular stained glass windows, each one located over a first floor window. At both the first and second floors of the side elevations, the roof edges are articulated by a narrow terra cotta entablature. The rear and side elevations behind the transept arms are treated in a similar manner.

The north and south transept elevations feature large, circular, brick window surrounds containing large stained glass windows (Photos 4 & 5). The rather planar east and west elevations of the transept arms are relieved by smaller, circular windows set in narrow brick surrounds. The half-cylindrical apse is ornamented with two, individual, round stained glass windows with brick surrounds at each end of the intersection of the apse with the transept arms.

On either side of the apse are two story, single bays with hipped roofs. The southern bay is further enhanced by a semi-hexagonal bay on its south wall, and a small porticoed entrance on its east wall. This bay houses the chapel of St. Gerard. On the opposite side of the apse, the single bay houses the sacristy. Beyond the sacristy in the northwest corner of the church, is a side entrance hall with a staircase leading to the basement and a bathroom. Above the crossing of the transept and the nave is a hexagonal cupola, clad and capped by a standing seam, metal-roofed dome and cross.

The church building is located at 19-26 Ruggiero Plaza. To the north of the church is the St. Lucy's Community Center (Photo 1). In back of the church, to the west, are the rectory, school and convent. The church has a planted garden and parking lot on the south, and is enclosed by a wrought iron fence. The garden contains a grotto dedicated to Our Lady of Lourdes, set off by a wrought iron fence separated by brick piers and a gate.

The exterior of the church is in excellent condition.

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Newark, Essex County, New Jersey**Interior****Vestibule**

The vestibule (or narthex) provides a desirable transition space from the street to the nave of the church (Photo 7). At the southern end of the vestibule is a staircase leading to the choir loft. On either side of the vestibule is a small office/storage space separated from the vestibule by a glass-paned, metal door. The vestibule, which is set below the nave, contains a staircase which leads to a second set of triple doors opening into the nave. Each set of paired, leather-clad, and brass tack-studded, wooden doors is set into a segmentally arched surround. Each door contains an acid-etched, cross-ornamented, oval glass panel and brass door pull. Between the doors are marble pilasters ending in stylized capitals. Above each set of doors is a stained glass tympanum. The center tympanum depicts St. Lucy and St. Gerard. The southern door is illustrated with St. Lucy's eyes on a tray, and the northern tympanum contains a crucifix, skull and Bible. The painted marble walls of the vestibule are finished with a dentil-ornamented entablature, and a travertine base. The floor is terrazzo, and the plaster ceiling is coffered and poly-chromed (Photo 7).

**The Nave**

All the doors lead into the nave of the church. Upon entering the nave, the sweep of high arches carried by the marble columns on both sides leads the eye to the sanctuary and to the elaborate apse with its high altar (Photos 7 & 13). The wide nave is flanked by the columned, clerestory walls, illuminated by stained glass windows and decorated with elaborate murals. A center passageway, which leads to the high altar, is flanked by wide wooden pews with carved end panels. The ceiling of the nave is a barrel vault ornamented with an elaborate mural depicting the martyrdom and glorification of St. Lucy (Photo 12). The taupe-colored, plaster walls are finished with multi-colored, marble wainscoting.

The four, smooth, marble columns on each side are topped by stylized Composite capitals. From these capitals spring round, decorated, nave arches which support the clerestory walls above and form the side aisles. Behind these nave arches, and set on a perpendicular to them, are horizontal supports which form a series of decorated ceiling coffers (Photo 10). Between the nave arches are murals depicting various angels, and above them are embedded capitals from which spring arches enclosing circular stained glass windows. Each window depicts an individual, religious symbol, such as a cross, or a dove. Above each clerestory window is a painted, stylized scallop shell surrounded by arabesques.

Within the aisles, the walls are decorated by stained glass windows and bas-relief panels depicting the Stations of the Cross (Photo 10). There are five stained glass windows in each aisle. Each is set in a round-arched marble surround with a keystone, connected by a belt course at the springing line. Each arch is set on a bracket-flanked marble dado. The following windows are located on the south side of the church, listed from east to west: St. Rocco; St., Anthony; St. Sabino; Maria della Neve (Our Lady of the Snows); and the Sacred Heart of Jesus. On the north side of the church, are from east to west: St. Theresa; St. Michael; St. Nicholas; St. Mark the Evangelist; and the Pieta. The pictorial, stained glass panel spans the upper three-quarters of the window. The lowest one-quarter of the window consists of a pivoting window panel containing the name of the window donor

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Newark, Essex County, New Jersey

in a ribbon. At the top of the pictorial panel is an architectural canopy of a castle motif, one of the characteristics of the Munich school of stained glass. This canopy consists of a centered round arch flanked by turrets and surmounted by a triangular pediment.

Between each of the windows is a panel from the Stations of the Cross. These are elaborate bas-relief plaster panels set in a broken bonnet, marble frame with colonettes flanking the pictorial scene. The Stations of the Cross begin on the south side of the church and extend from east to west. They continue in an easterly direction on the north side. Additional aisle decoration includes polychromatic banding of the underside of the nave arches, and decorative medallions for the aisle coffers. The marble wainscoting of the outside walls is a variegated pink with a darker cap moulding.

At the crossing of the nave with the transept, the ceiling is a large groin vault with a cupola ornamented with paintings of the Holy Spirit descending upon Mary and the twelve Apostles. The other female figures included in the cupola are St. Elizabeth to the left of Mary, and St. Lucy to the right (Photo 11). At each of the four downward points of the vault is a figure from the Old Testament. From this point, the sanctuary continues to the west, and the side altars within the transept arms, to the north and south. The elaborate murals and decorations were completed in the 1940s, under the direction of Professor Gonippo Raggi, whose work included the interior ornamentation for Sacred Heart Cathedral, as well as many other Catholic churches in the Newark archdiocese.

### The Sanctuary

Upon crossing the transept, one enters through the triumphal arch into the sanctuary (Photo 13). The sanctuary is further divided from the transept by being elevated on a three step platform. A small, modern altar (not original), facing the congregation, is placed at the front of the sanctuary podium. At the rear of the podium, is the elaborate multi-tiered, and multi-bay, high altar of St. Lucy. The semi-circular apse which forms the sanctuary is elaborately decorated with marble paneling, contrasting marble wainscoting, and a dentil-ornamented, classicizing entablature. A pedimented entrance on either side of the altar leads to service rooms at the back of the church: the door on the north leads to the sacristy, and the door on the south to the carillon room. Paired round-arched and column-supported entrances lead to marble-clad, side chapels, located on either side of the apse. On the south is the chapel dedicated to the Blessed Virgin Mary; and on the north is the chapel dedicated to Jesus. Within the chapels, each statue is set into a pedimented niche. High above the altar, in the dome of the apse, is a mural of the crowning and glorification of St. Lucy in heaven. In the lower left of the mural is her cathedral church in Syracuse, Sicily; in the lower right, the volcano-Mt. Etna, outside of Syracuse.

The high altar is an approximately three story, marble and plaster-clad structure. The first tier consists of a marble altar which matches the marble wainscoting of the apse walls. Immediately above the altar is the centered, gold, Holy Tabernacle set into the base of an elaborate column and domed baldachin. The baldachin is flanked by the second tier of the altar, consisting of a trabeated arch on either side, in turn supporting a coffered half-dome. Enclosing this second tier and springing from the main altar, is a colossal order of Composite-capped marble columns flanked by matching pilasters. These in turn support an elaborate classicizing entablature with a broken bonnet pediment. Also notable in the sanctuary is the elaborately carved marble pulpit, the marble Communion rail with its wrought iron gate, and the column-supported, paired, round arched entrances on either side of the apse.



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Newark, Essex County, New Jersey**The Transept Arms**

The transept arms contain the side altars and the confessionals. The side altars are set perpendicular to the main altar at the ends of the transept arms, and are the repositories for the numerous statues which are the objects of devotion on their feast days. Each statue represents a patron saint from a particular village in southern Italy whose townsfolk brought the statue with them when they immigrated to Newark. These statues are carried from the church in a colorful procession on the appropriate feast days.

On the south side of the sanctuary is the side altar of St. Joseph. Here a statue of St. Joseph holding the infant Jesus is set on a podium, which in turn sits on a marble altar. Flanking the altar of St. Joseph are various statues depicting saints popular with the congregation of St. Lucy's. St. Joseph is flanked by Maria Incoronata (from the town of Sant' Andrea di Conza) and Our Lady of the Snows (Maria della Neve from Calabritto). Other statues in this area include St. Michael (from Maddaloni), St. Anthony, St. Donato, St. Rocco (from Lioni), the Infant of Prague, St. John the Baptist and St. Sebastiano (from Marigliano). On the north side is the altar of Our Lady of Mt. Carmel (from Avigliano, Photo 14). She is surrounded by statues of Maria dell' Assunta di Pierno (from San Fele), St. Anne, St. Sabino (from Atripalda), Maria Incoronata (from Recigliano), St. Nicolo (from Teora), St. Theresa, and St. Vito (from Castelgrande). Both altars within the side chapels reflect the architecture of the main high altar. A ground level, marble altar is surmounted by stepped tiers of inlaid marbles. A centered niche holds the Holy Tabernacle. Each altar is set into a niche and flanked by marble columns with Composite capitals. The columns, in turn, are flanked by round-arched, marble-enframed niches. There is also an elaborate, carved wooden confessional with a broken bonnet pediment in each of the transept arms, adjacent to the side altars.

The large rose windows above the side altars depict St. Joseph with the Child Jesus on the south side and St. Lucy on the north side. Both side windows are large circular rose windows set off by stylized banding.

**The Choir Loft**

At the rear of the nave is the choir loft filled with organ pipes (Photo 9). In the center of the choir loft is a rose window divided into four panels by a cross. The four panels contain pictorial images of King David, St. Cecilia, Pope St. Gregory and Pope Pius X. The choir loft is framed by a carved wooden balustrade. Below the choir loft, the walls of the church are ornamented with marble pilasters and wainscoting. The back wall also contains the side altars of Maria Addolorata with a niche for St. Lucy (Photo 16) in the northeast corner and a confessional in the southeast corner.

**The Chapel of St. Gerard**

Between the south transept arm and the apse is the two story chapel of St. Gerard (Photo 15). The chapel reflects the architecture of the church with its barrel vaulted ceiling and apse. Finished in various imported marbles and with painted murals on the ceiling, the chapel is the National Shrine to St. Gerard Majella. His statue is located at the top of a very narrow staircase in the apse, behind a small marble altar. On each side of the chapel is a painted ceiling mural depicting a scene from the life of St. Gerard. Around each panel is an elaborate

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National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

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St. Lucy's Church  
Newark, Essex County, New Jersey

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enframement of stylized botanical plasterwork banding. On the west side of the chapel are round arched, stained glass windows containing small portrait roundels. The chapel is also the site of the marble colonette-supported, domed baptismal font.

### The Sacristy

On either side of the apse are service rooms set into a one story, rectangular enclosure. To the south is the service room containing the carillon. To the north is the priests' sacristy. The two rooms are connected by a corridor which runs behind the apse.

### The Stained Glass Windows

An outstanding feature of St. Lucy's Church is its stained glass windows. Over 30 windows from the Munich school of stained glass are in the church, although the exact attribution is not known. There are five windows along both sides of the aisles, five in each clerestory above the aisles, three rose windows: one in the facade and one in each transept arm; and eight in each of the upper levels of the transept arms. The remaining windows are in the St. Gerard Chapel and the sacristy. The windows bear the names of a dozen towns from Avellino, Potenza, Salerno, and Caserta provinces which were the wellspring of migration to the First Ward at the beginning of the 20th century. The stained glass windows include elaborate white and gold columns and canopies in the framework. Other Munich features include highly painted glass, realistic figures and leadlines subordinate to the glass.

### Additional Ornamentation

The pews, confessionals, and vestment cases for the sacristy and the altar boy room were purchased from the Josephinum Company of Columbus, Ohio. The main altar was provided by Bernadini Statuary Company in New York City. The exterior terra cotta was provided by the Atlantic Terra Cotta Company and the brick came from the Oschwald Brick Works. The contractor for the construction of the church was W. H. Fissell and Company, New York.

### Basement

The basement of the church is used for storage. It contains a stage at the west end, and an open floor plan through most of the basement, with storage and utility rooms at the south end. A corridor on the north side of the basement leads into the community center next door.

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Continuation SheetSection number 8 Page 7St. Lucy's Church  
Newark, Essex County, New Jersey**Statement of Significance**

St. Lucy's Church is being nominated to the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A for its long and historic association with the Italian immigrant community in the old First Ward (now the northernmost section of the Central Ward). The Church is known locally as the "Italian Cathedral," and is one of the largest Italian churches in the Newark Roman Catholic archdiocese. Since its construction in 1925, the church has been the gathering spot and focus of the large Italian community in the old First Ward, as well as surrounding neighborhoods. St. Lucy's Church is the spiritual heart of the now vanished Newark's "Little Italy," once the nation's fifth largest Italian community. St. Lucy's Roman Catholic Church is also being nominated under Criterion C, for Architecture and Art. Designed by Neil J. Convery, the church, a colorful mixture of western and eastern design influences, is architecturally significant as one of the unique religious edifices in the City of Newark. In both design and workmanship, St. Lucy's Church is indicative of the high quality of early 20th century church architecture built in Newark. The murals in St. Lucy's are a significant example of the work of Gonippo Raggi, one of the foremost interior decorators of Roman Catholic churches in the twentieth century.

**Historical Background and Significance**

For Italian immigrants, especially ones who did not speak English, life centered on the church. Here they gathered to worship, to heed lectures on church-related subjects, to enjoy church choirs, educate their children in the ways of their homeland, and socialize with members of their own ethnic group. To this day, St. Lucy's Church continues to provide the Italian community with the same services provided to its earliest members. The Church provides Italian language religious services, a parochial school, religious festivals, and is the site of important public gatherings and social events in north Newark.

St. Lucy's Church played a vital role in the development of the First Ward and reflected the importance of the Catholic Church in southern Italy. There, village-based solidarity (*campanilismo*) was measured by proximity to the bell tower (*campanile*) of the local church. Southern Italians expressed their faith through devotion to the *paese*, or patron saint of their town, by processing the patron saints' statue on its feast day. These processions were faithfully recreated by the First Ward immigrants. St. Lucy's served as a repository for the statues brought over from Italy by these church members. The church also served as a melting pot for the various immigrants, teaching them to consider themselves "Italian-American" rather than Calabrittani or Teorese.

The establishment of St. Lucy's Church followed the general religious trend prevalent in Newark at the end of the 19th and beginning of the 20th centuries. Churches sprang up on an average of one for each new 1,000 residents until the eve of the Civil War. Churches followed the spreading populace into the "Down Neck" (Ironbound) area, westward to the hill country, and northward to the Mount Pleasant area. Established churches first sent out missions or encouraged local congregations to meet anywhere. Nearly all the denominations present in Newark were involved and most followed the same pattern of building a frame mission house before building a church of stone or brick. As Catholics from Europe began to immigrate to Newark in large numbers at the end of the 19th century, churches were established to meet their needs. Polish immigrants clustered near the eastern end of South Orange Avenue founded St. Stanislaus's Church on Belmont Avenue in 1889. Lithuanians who lived in the Ironbound section along Adams and Warwick streets founded the Sacred Heart of Jesus Church in 1894, and Holy

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Newark, Essex County, New Jersey

Trinity in 1902. Slovaks organized St. Stephen's Church in 1902, and Hungarians established the Church of the Assumption in 1911, buying the former Free Methodist Church as their sanctuary.

St. Lucy's was founded as a result of a rapid upsurge of Italian immigrants in the old First Ward area. Thousands of immigrants from southern Italy and Sicily settled in the area, and brought with them their Catholic faith and their devotion to the patron saints of their towns. They settled in the area known as the First Ward, or quarry district, a largely undeveloped area of Newark in the late 19th century. They built a community of multi-family houses, tenements and stores. They created their own village, which later became known as Newark's "Little Italy." On September 20, 1891, St. Lucy's Catholic Church was established by the Reverend Conrad Schotthoeffer, a German priest fluent in Italian. He was dispatched to Newark by Bishop Winand Wigger to organize parishes in the city's Italian districts. Reverend Felix Morelli, who also participated in the formation of Italian parishes in Newark and New York City, served as St. Lucy's first administrator. The first pastor, Father Joseph Perotti, was appointed administrator in 1897, and named pastor in 1899. The cornerstone for the first St. Lucy's, a small, wood-frame church, was laid on December 13, 1891, the feast of the patroness of the Church.

Despite the extreme poverty of the church, the earliest activities of the congregation surrounded the purchase of land and buildings necessary for the construction of the church. Land for the new church and parochial school was secured on Amity Place in December 1900. In 1901, a house located on Amity Place was bought for use as a parish house. The same year, the church began organizing a parochial school. Perotti turned to Mother Frances Xavier Cabrini, (the first American citizen canonized by the Catholic Church) who had already organized a school at Our Lady of Mount Carmel parish in Newark's Ironbound. Under Mother Cabrini's direction, the Missionary Sisters of the Sacred Heart came to St. Lucy's in 1902 to organize a school. The church was so poor however, that after a year, plans were abandoned. After several more attempts, Father Perotti succeeded in convincing the Sisters of St. John the Baptist to try again. In 1906, the Sisters established a residence for their order at St. Lucy's and assumed responsibility for the school.

By 1920, Newark had the fifth largest Italian community in the United States. Along with the swelling of the Italian population in the First Ward, St. Lucy's grew. In 1920, the parish census stood at 17,000. More than 10,000 baptisms had been performed during the previous decade; 1,100 were recorded in a single year. Father Perotti knew that a new structure was desperately needed, but the parish was extremely poor and could not support the construction of a new edifice. The feasts celebrated by the people with such fervor were organized by societies that were outside the control of the church. Although quite poor, the people generously supported the feasts, but the church reaped little financial benefit. Perotti tried to suspend the feasts to raise money for the new church but was unable to do so. Although impoverished, Perotti went ahead with his plans and built a parish hall to serve as a temporary place of worship while the new church was being constructed. Two years later, the old church was demolished and on May 3, 1925, Father Perotti broke ground for a new church, which was consecrated on the Feast of St. Lucy, the following December.

The church remained unfinished during the Depression, while Perotti attended to the needs of his poor parishioners. In 1929, he established the Saint Vincent de Paul Society to assist the needy. Two years later, he was elevated to the rank of Monsignor. In 1933, he completed a new building to house the Italian Catholic Union, however, that same year he collapsed while celebrating Mass. He died on September 14, 1933. Thousands of

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people attended his funeral, and Bishop Walsh declared in his eulogy, "We are burying a saint today." During his tenure, Saint Lucy's had grown from two thousand to thirty-five thousand members.

In 1934, Monsignor Perotti's assistant, Reverend Gaetano Ruggiero was appointed pastor. He had been at St. Lucy's Church since 1921, and was intimately aware of the problems of the church. A man of strong personality, Ruggiero moved quickly to assert his authority. One of his first acts was to take over the control of the feasts. Despite vehement objections, including a threat against his life, Ruggiero prevailed. With the money from the feasts, he was able to complete the interior of the church. Father Ruggiero actively led the congregation until his death in 1966, when he was succeeded by Monsignor Joseph Granato, the present pastor.

In the early 1950s, with the exception of St. Lucy's Church, the "Little Italy" of the First Ward vanished in one of the first urban renewal projects in Newark. The redevelopment area covered 46 acres and included approximately 470 structures. About 1,300 families were displaced, and Eighth Avenue, the First Ward's main artery, was leveled. The buildings were replaced by eight, twelve-story, low income, high rise apartment buildings called Columbus Homes. Although residents protested and filed lawsuits against the project, the clearance of the First Ward had the support of Congressman Peter Rodino and Mayor Ralph Villani. Initially even Reverend Ruggiero supported the project thinking the neighborhood would get better homes. By the time he fully understood the enormity of the project, it was too late. People were thrown out of their homes, and businesses that thrived in the neighborhood had to close. Rather than stabilize the community, urban renewal tore it apart. Only the church remained. Eventually Columbus Homes failed as well. By 1972, Columbus Homes was partially closed due to the deterioration of the neighborhood. In 1990, the buildings were completely abandoned, and in 1994, imploded. During this period, St. Lucy's Church stood as a bulwark against these outside forces. Urban renewal created a First Ward Diaspora, and St. Lucy's Church served as the heart and soul of the displaced community. Through the years it has remained a sacred and familial space for the displaced First Warders and their descendants.

**Architectural and Artistic Significance**

In both design and workmanship, St. Lucy's Church is indicative of the high quality of early 20th century church architecture in Newark. The building is an example of the Romanesque Revival/eclectic architectural influence and is characterized by the use of brisk articulation and strong rhythms established by regular fenestration, distinctive rounded mouldings, and the use of single window openings. The use of only one tower is a vernacular touch meant to re-create a village church in Italy with its characteristic campanile. The church provides a focal point to the area and visually dominates the neighborhood.

The architectural significance of the church is further enhanced by its interior ornamentation. The church is decorated with elaborate murals from the studio of master painter Gonippo Raggi, polychromatic banding of stylized floral motifs, arabesques, and scallop shell motifs, colorful coffered ceilings, elaborate bas-reliefs and altars, and exquisite stained glass windows. The statues from the various towns representing patron saints allow the congregation to make emotional connections to their home villages. The secular and the sacred are intertwined in the use of Italian symbolism, with sacred images from the life of Jesus Christ and the saints. Traditional cultural values, meld with religious associations to provide a sanctuary for a displaced immigrant. Religion and culture become one in St. Lucy's Church.

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Continuation SheetSection number 8 Page 10St. Lucy's Church  
Newark, Essex County, New Jersey**Statement of Significance**

St. Lucy's Church is being nominated to the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A for its long and historic association with the Italian immigrant community in the old First Ward (now the northernmost section of the Central Ward). The Church is known locally as the "Italian Cathedral," and is one of the largest Italian churches in the Newark Roman Catholic archdiocese. Since its construction in 1925, the church has been the gathering spot and focus of the large Italian community in the old First Ward, as well as surrounding neighborhoods. St. Lucy's Church is the spiritual heart of the now vanished Newark's "Little Italy," once the nation's fifth largest Italian community. St. Lucy's Roman Catholic Church is also being nominated under Criterion C, for Architecture and Art. Designed by Neil J. Convery, the church, a colorful mixture of western and eastern design influences, is architecturally significant as one of the unique religious edifices in the City of Newark. In both design and workmanship, St. Lucy's Church is indicative of the high quality of early 20th century church architecture built in Newark. The murals in St. Lucy's are a significant example of the work of Gonippo Raggi, one of the foremost interior decorators of Roman Catholic churches in the twentieth century.

**Historical Background and Significance**

For Italian immigrants, especially ones who did not speak English, life centered on the church. Here they gathered to worship, to heed lectures on church-related subjects, to enjoy church choirs, educate their children in the ways of their homeland, and socialize with members of their own ethnic group. To this day, St. Lucy's Church continues to provide the Italian community with the same services provided to its earliest members. The Church provides Italian language religious services, a parochial school, religious festivals, and is the site of important public gatherings and social events in north Newark.

St. Lucy's Church played a vital role in the development of the First Ward and reflected the importance of the Catholic Church in southern Italy. There, village-based solidarity (*campanilismo*) was measured by proximity to the bell tower (*campanile*) of the local church. Southern Italians expressed their faith through devotion to the *paese*, or patron saint of their town, by processing the patron saints' statue on its feast day. These processions were faithfully recreated by the First Ward immigrants. St. Lucy's served as a repository for the statues brought over from Italy by these church members. The church also served as a melting pot for the various immigrants, teaching them to consider themselves "Italian-American" rather than Calabrittani or Teorese.

The establishment of St. Lucy's Church followed the general religious trend prevalent in Newark at the end of the 19th and beginning of the 20th centuries. Churches sprang up on an average of one for each new 1,000 residents until the eve of the Civil War. Churches followed the spreading populace into the "Down Neck" (Ironbound) area, westward to the hill country, and northward to the Mount Pleasant area. Established churches first sent out missions or encouraged local congregations to meet anywhere. Nearly all the denominations present in Newark were involved and most followed the same pattern of building a frame mission house before building a church of stone or brick. As Catholics from Europe began to immigrate to Newark in large numbers at the end of the 19th century, churches were established to meet their needs. Polish immigrants clustered near the eastern end of South Orange Avenue founded St. Stanislaus's Church on Belmont Avenue in 1889. Lithuanians who lived in the Ironbound section along Adams and Warwick streets founded the Sacred Heart of Jesus Church in 1894, and Holy

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## 9. Major Bibliographic References

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## 10. Geographical Data

### Verbal Boundary Description

St. Lucy's Church is located at 19-26 Ruggiero Plaza, at the corner of Seventh Avenue, in the Central Ward of Newark. It occupies Block 455, Lot 1 (formerly Lot 8), City of Newark Tax Map.

### Boundary Justification

The nominated property includes the entire parcel on which the church is located.

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**Photograph List**

The following information is the same for all the photographs listed:

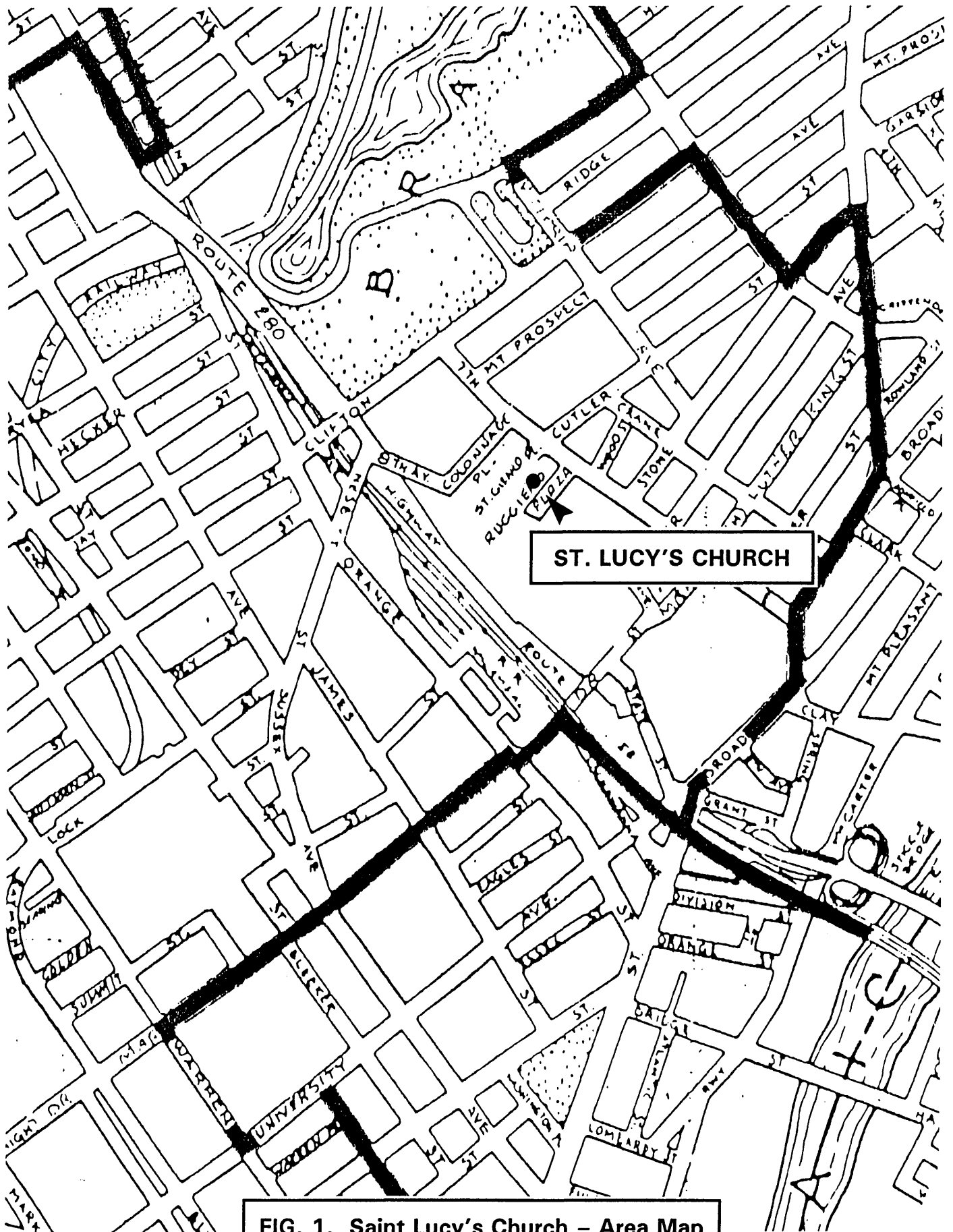
- 1) Name of property: St. Lucy's Roman Catholic Church
- 2) City, county and state: Newark, Essex County, New Jersey
- 3) Photographer: Gerry Weinstein
- 4) Date of photographs: May, 1998
- 5) Location of negatives: Photo Recording Associates  
40 W. 77th Street 17B  
New York, New York 10024

6) and 7) Description of views indicating direction of camera:

- Photo 1 of 16: Ruggiero Plaza elevation. View looking northwest.
- Photo 2 of 16: Ruggiero Plaza elevation. View looking west.
- Photo 3 of 16: Ruggiero Plaza elevation. View looking southwest.
- Photo 4 of 16: South elevation. View looking northeast.
- Photo 5 of 16: West (rear) elevation. View looking southeast.
- Photo 6 of 16: North elevation. View looking south.
- Photo 7 of 16: Narthex (vestibule). View looking northwest.
- Photo 8 of 16: Nave. View looking west.
- Photo 9 of 16: Nave with choir loft above. View looking east.
- Photo 10 of 16: North aisle. View looking northeast.
- Photo 11 of 16: Ceiling detail at crossing. View looking northeast.
- Photo 12 of 16: Nave ceiling. Martyrdom and glorification of St. Lucy by Gonippo Raggi.
- Photo 13 of 16: Sanctuary with high altar. View looking west.
- Photo 14 of 16: Our Lady of Mount Carmel side chapel, in north transept arm. View looking north.
- Photo 15 of 16: Chapel of St. Gerard Majella. View looking south.
- Photo 16 of 16: Maria Addolorata and St. Lucy in the northeast corner of the nave. View looking east.

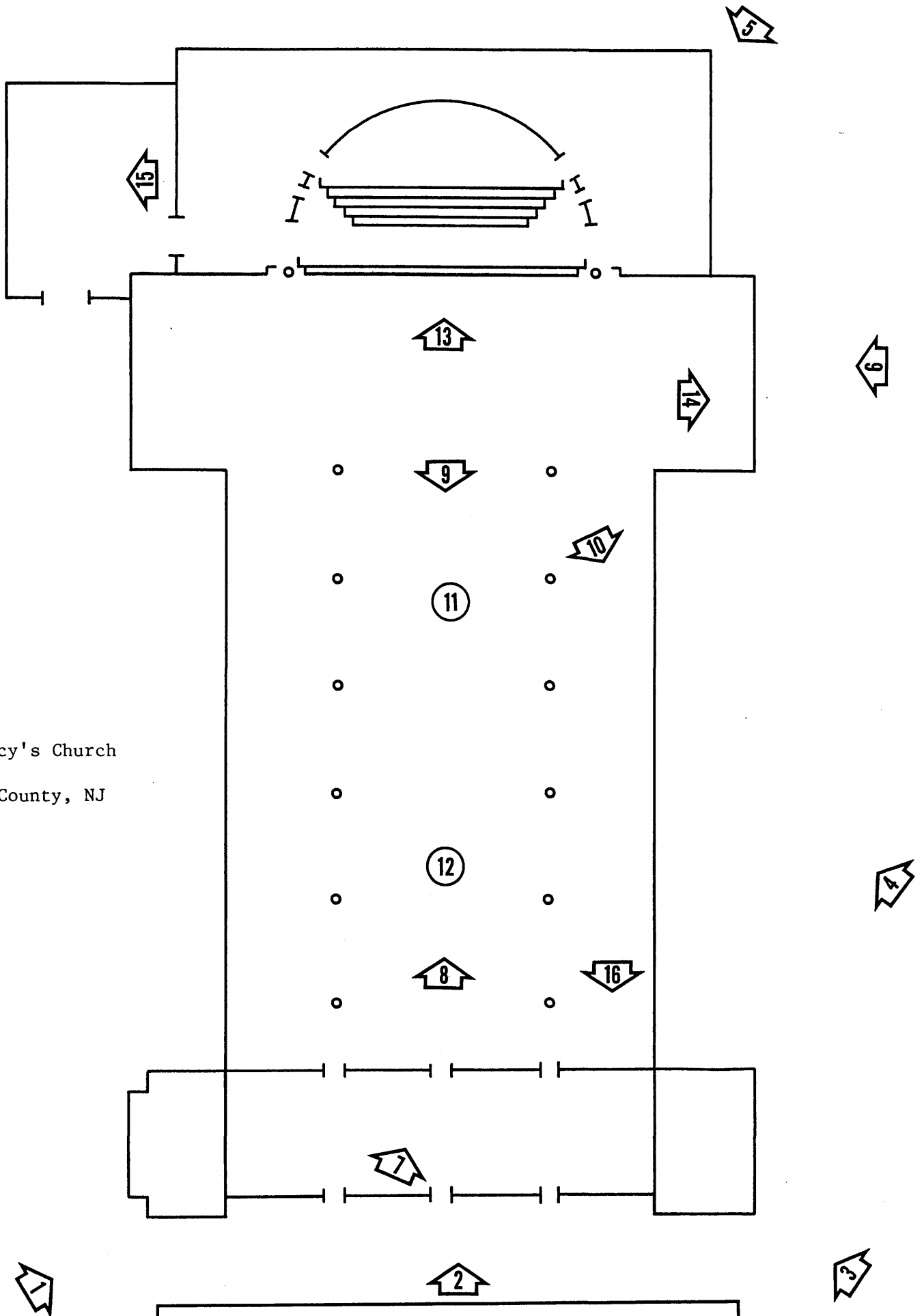


St. Lucy's Church, Newark, Essex County, New Jersey



**FIG. 1. Saint Lucy's Church - Area Map**  
Scale 1" = 750' (approx.)

St. Lucy's Church  
Newark  
Essex County, NJ



**FIG. 2. St. Lucy's Church - Schematic Floor Plan  
Photo Locator Map - Not to Scale**

~~FACTORY COLONNADE~~ PLACE ~~STREET~~

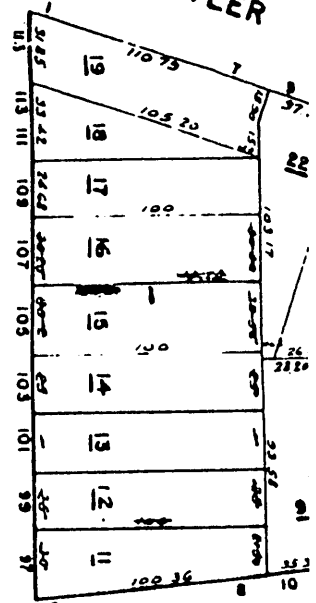
GARSDIDE STR.

SEVENTH



SCALE 1"

CUTLER



WOOD

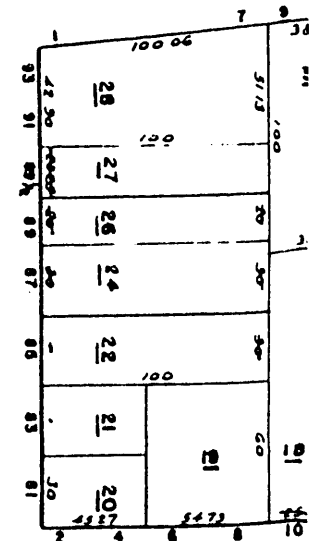
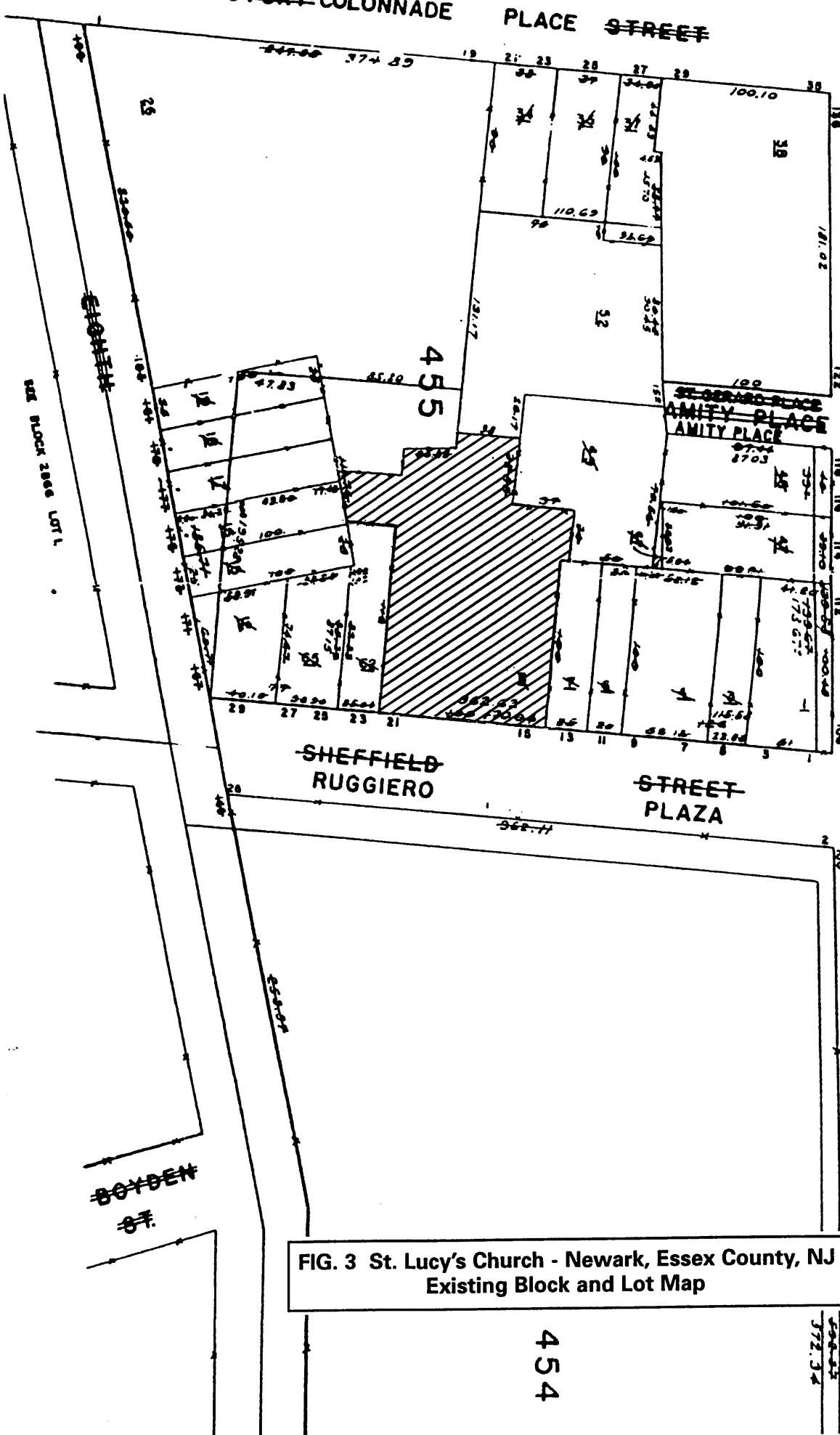


FIG. 3 St. Lucy's Church - Newark, Essex County, NJ Existing Block and Lot Map

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SEE BLOCK 2886 LOT 1

BOYDEN ST.