

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

SG-616



# National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. **Place additional certification comments, entries, and narrative items on continuation sheets if needed (NPS Form 10-900a).**

### 1. Name of Property

historic name ST. JOHN'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH

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

### 2. Location

street & number 8 SUNNYSIDE AVENUE

city or town VILLAGE OF PLEASANTVILLE

state NEW YORK code NY county WESTCHESTER code 119 zip code 10570

	not for publication
	vicinity

### 3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,

I hereby certify that this  nomination  request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.

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

national  statewide  local

Ruth A. Purpoint DBHPO 12/16/16  
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of commenting official Date

Title State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

### 4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

entered in the National Register  determined eligible for the National Register  
 determined not eligible for the National Register  removed from the National Register

other (explain) \_\_\_\_\_

[Signature] 1-31-17  
Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

**ST. JOHN'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH**  
 Name of Property

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**5. Classification**

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

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

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

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	private
<input type="checkbox"/>	public - Local
<input type="checkbox"/>	public - State
<input type="checkbox"/>	public - Federal

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	building(s)
<input type="checkbox"/>	district
<input type="checkbox"/>	site
<input type="checkbox"/>	structure
<input type="checkbox"/>	object

Contributing	Noncontributing	
3	0	buildings
0	0	sites
0	0	structures
0	0	objects
3	0	<b>Total</b>

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

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

N/A

N/A

**6. Function or Use**

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

RELIGION: religious facility

DOMESTIC: single dwelling

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

RELIGION: religious facility

DOMESTIC: single dwelling

**7. Description**

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

LATE 19<sup>th</sup> & 20<sup>th</sup> CENTURY REVIVALS: Late Gothic

Revival, Tudor Revival

**Materials**  
 (Enter categories from instructions.)

foundation: STONE

walls: STONE, STUCCO

roof: SLATE

other: GLASS, METAL, WOOD

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**Narrative Description**

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**Summary Paragraph**

St. John's Episcopal Church is a visually prominent feature of Bedford Road and a recognizable landmark located in the Village of Pleasantville, Westchester County, New York. The nominated property consists of the church edifice, built in 1912 to the plans of architect Charles A. Hoag by local contractor-builder Reuben Brundage, Jr.; a parish hall, which extends from the original construct and was erected in 1928-29 to plans developed by architect Oscar Vate; classroom and office additions dating to 1972, which extend from the south side of the parish hall; and the rectory, a story-and-a-half wood frame vernacular dwelling with gambrel roof built ca. 1800 and acquired and incorporated into the church property in 1920.<sup>1</sup> The church, parish hall and classroom and office additions are interconnected and thus form a single architectural entity, while the rectory is a separate, freestanding building situated on its own lot with a small automobile garage. The centerpiece of the complex, the stone-walled church, is a highly intact and representative example of Late Gothic Revival-style ecclesiastical architecture, built on a modified cruciform plan with offset tower, transepts, and a projecting chancel and patterned after English parish church models. Its exterior is characterized by walls of uncoursed granite rubble, the massive tower with crenelated parapet, stepped wall buttressing, and a slate shingle roof; inside, the worship space features the expression of the roof framing and large Gothic-arched windows fitted with stained glass. To this original construct was added the parish hall, which engages the south transept by means of a curving loggia with Tudor arches; also executed in a Gothic idiom, it features stone and stucco exterior treatments and contains a large open hall which sustains a number of functions for the church. The features which collectively form the complex are located on the south side of Bedford Road, at its intersection with Sunnyside Avenue, in a neighborhood of Pleasantville that is largely composed of nineteenth and early to mid-twentieth century residential architecture. The church and parish hall were oriented with their principal elevations facing eastwards, towards Sunnyside Avenue, while the rectory was oriented northwards, towards Bedford Road. On the opposite side of Bedford Road, directly across from the church on the east side of Great Oak Lane, is the former Pleasantville Public Library, erected ca. 1896.

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**Narrative Description**

**LOCATION & SETTING**

The nominated property is located west of the intersection of Bedford Road and Sunnyside Avenue in the Village of Pleasantville, Westchester County, New York. Martling Avenue, the course of which runs parallel with Sunnyside Avenue, is the next north-south village street to the west, while Clinton Street is the next street to the south. The church, parish hall and school and offices were oriented to face eastward towards Sunnyside Avenue and are approached via an interconnected system of walkways that extend from the sidewalk; one walkway leads to the church's principal entrance, positioned astride of the offset bell tower, while the other leads to a side entrance and additionally provides access to the parish hall. The church is the most visually conspicuous element of the complex, given its position, and its tower is located near the corner of Bedford Road and Sunnyside Avenue on a rise of land that enhances its prominence as an architectural feature. The parish house and other interconnected features extend southwards from the church's south transept, while the rectory property is located to the west, beyond the rear of the church, where an unpaved driveway is situated. The manicured lawn to the east of the church complex on the Sunnyside Avenue side, which is bisected by walkways, is punctuated by a small number of deciduous and coniferous trees and there are additionally decorative plantings, in the form of shrubbery and ornamental ground cover, around the perimeter of the building. As for the rectory, it is set back from the course of Bedford Road and is partially screened by mature deciduous trees which are present between it and the street. The overall character of this part of Pleasantville, situated a short distance east of the village's commercial core, is primarily residential in nature, consisting in large measure of handsome and well-maintained freestanding dwellings situated on

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<sup>1</sup> The rectory has been variously dated to 1734 and 1785; its construction features and finish work instead suggest a date closer to ca. 1800.

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landscaped parcels along tree-lined streets. To the south of the parish hall and 1972 additions, towards the property's southern perimeter, is a community garden, consisting of raised vegetable beds.

**SYNOPSIS: CHURCH, PARISH HALL & 1972 ADDITIONS**

The church (1912) was built above a modified cruciform plan with its principal axis aligned on a roughly east-to-west orientation, parallel with the course of Bedford Road, the tower forming the northeasternmost feature of the plan and the projecting chancel being on the building's westernmost extreme. The building's design consists of a nave, transepts, chancel, tower and an entry vestibule, or porch; construction is load-bearing masonry, consisting of undressed rubble granite ranging in hue from cream to dark gray and laid up in an irregular and highly picturesque manner. The intersecting gable roofs of the nave and transepts are steeply pitched and terminated by parapet gables. Exterior detailing is of a distinctly Gothic nature and includes pointed arch and square-headed lancet windows, stepped wall buttresses and crenelated parapets. The parish hall (1928-29) was erected to the south of the church and was sited in such a way that its principal axis is not parallel with that of the church; instead, it was oriented in relationship to Sunnyside Avenue, its east façade being set perpendicular to it. These two sections are connected by means of a Gothic-arched loggia; a breezeway provides separation between the two sections at ground level, though they are nevertheless linked at the second-story level by enclosed space that provides internal communication. The parish hall section largely centers on the main block, which shelters a large open mixed-use space within, in addition to classroom and administrative space. Exterior walls were built with rough-hewn granite laid in random range ashlar and there are additionally stucco panels on the main block's south elevation. Detailing is again of a Gothic nature though tending more towards a Tudor Gothic idiom, particularly on the south elevation. From the south side of this section extends a cross-gabled addition (1972), which features detailing and treatments compatible with, though nevertheless distinguishable from, the two earlier sections.

Contributing components of this nomination are the church complex—inclusive of the church, parish hall and 1972 additions—and the rectory. The community garden is a non-contributing site.

**EXTERIOR**

The east elevation of St. John's Episcopal Church constitutes the principal elevation. It consists of the end wall of the nave, within which is centered the entrance porch, and the offset tower, these combining to form an asymmetrical composition. The tower rises approximately 42' above a square plan and consists of a distinctive base with buttressed corners and narrow paired lancets on the east and north elevations, a bell stage with paired louvered openings on all four facets, and a crenelated parapet. Moulded cornices mark the transition between the base, bell stage and parapet, with the upper cornice's design incorporating decorative frieze blocks. Most all of the tower's south elevation engages the north wall of the nave. The interior of the church is accessed by means of the projecting porch, the door aperture being defined by a Gothic arch set within a smoothly dressed surround with label mold. The double-leaf doors were crafted from mahogany and on their exterior have iron strap hinges of medieval inspiration. An electric lighting fixture is set above the doors, which are approached by a low concrete ramp with iron handrail. The porch has corner buttresses and a steeply pitched parapet gable that terminates in a cross motif. Behind the porch rises the main mass of the nave, which is punctuated by a large Gothic-arched window with smoothly dressed voussoirs. A steep parapet gable with smooth coping rises above this window from flanking sections of parapet wall and is surmounted by a prominent Celtic cross.

The north elevation, fronting on Bedford Road, consists of the corresponding north walls of the tower, transept, and chancel. A beveled cut-stone water table defines the transition between the raised foundation and first floor within. Three evenly spaced bays, divided by two buttresses, define the corresponding section of nave wall; these contain small square-shaped windows at basement level and large Gothic-arched windows above, which are further subdivided by cut-stone mullions into narrow tripartite units with lozenges above. A

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crenelated parapet marks the transition between the wall and roof planes; purple-gray slate shingles cover the roof; the same material was used on the subsequent sections. The north wall of the transept is punctuated by a large Gothic-arched bay with smoothly dressed voussoirs and has a parapet gable with smoothly dressed coping; there are additionally windows on its east and west facets. The chancel extends westward from the larger gabled mass of the nave and is punctuated by a single narrow lancet window on its north and south walls.

The west elevation consists of the projecting wall of the chancel, which extends from and is superimposed on the larger nave gable. A single Gothic-arched window subdivided into a tripartite composition punctuates this wall and is set higher than the flanking windows corresponding with the rear walls of the transept. Windows are also present below the water table on this elevation, in addition to an at-grade door below the chancel that leads to the undercroft, where a thrift shop is presently located. Copper leaders are present on the north and south walls of the chancel and divert water from the gutters to the ground and away from the foundation.

There are a total of four evenly spaced bays—matching the design of those on the opposite north elevation—on the south elevation, situated between the east façade and the south transept. A single window punctuates the east wall of the transept, matching the characteristics of the larger windows already described, and below it is a small square bump-out. Most of the south wall of the transept is now obscured; however, a circular window remains in the gable field, though presently closed off and stuccoed over.

Extending southward from the southeast corner of the south transept is an arcade formed of four Tudor arches, the front of the loggia which provides covered outdoor communication between the church and parish hall at ground level. The arches spring from smoothly finished freestanding octagonal columns which have moulded bases and capitals, and the voussoirs that form the arches are also smooth, providing a strong contrast with the rugged masonry walls; pilasters and arches on the south wall echo the treatment of the open arcade, while a Gothic-arched portal, or breezeway, penetrates between the church and parish house and leads to a small grassy area on the church's west side, beyond which is the rectory property. A parapet with embrasures terminates the arcade wall. Set back from it is a narrow gable-roofed space that abuts the south transept of the church and the east pitch of the parish hall's roof; it has stucco-clad walls and three rectangular-shaped window bands fitted with metal casements. This upper level of finished space post-dates the depiction of the building on the 1933 Sanborn fire insurance map but predates the 1972 work.

There are two large window bays in the north wall of the parish hall's main block east of where it engages the loggia, in addition to a door that is shielded beneath that feature and a small lancet window near the northeast corner. The two larger window openings are subdivided into four leaded-glass units by a cruciform mullion and have smoothly finished rusticated surrounds; the smaller upper windows are transoms, while the larger lower units are operable casements. The northeast corner is buttressed, like the southeast corner. The stone wall, laid up in a manner that harmonizes with the earlier church (though on this section the stone is roughly dressed ashlar, as opposed to the more rounded stone used for the church), is terminated by a parapet with embrasures.

The east gable end of the parish hall is punctuated by a single large Gothic-arched window with mullions that subdivide it into five narrow units with lozenges above. The window has a rusticated surround, like those on the north wall; at impost level, at the spring point of the arch, extends a belt course which returns around the corner to the north and south elevations before it terminates.

The south wall of the parish hall deviates from the north and east elevations in the use of stucco finish in concert with stone. At the southeast corner is an entrance which is shielded beneath an extension from the principal roof and approached by stairs contained within a low stone enclosure. West of the entrance,

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between it and the 1972 cross-roofed addition, are four evenly spaced windows with cruciform mullions and leaded-glass transoms and casements; they are situated within stuccoed panels divided vertically by stone buttresses with stone and beveled coping below. Beyond the westernmost window extends the 1972 addition, a two-story T-plan extension from the parish hall with intersecting roofs, stucco walls, leaded-glass casement windows and window bands, a projecting bay window on the south elevation, and an entrance.

The rear, or west elevation, of the parish hall contrasts stone and stucco surfaces and exhibits complex massing inclusive of gables, buttresses, and a three-sided engaged projection. The principal feature of this elevation is the rear gable wall of the parish house, against which is centered a large stone exterior chimney which rises well above the roofline. From the walkway that provides access to the undercroft and thrift shop extends another smaller walkway, laid with concrete pavers, which provides access to the breezeway between the church and parish house in addition to other points of access.

**INTERIOR**

The interior of the 1912 church at first-floor level is configured as follows. The east entrance porch leads into the nave; located directly opposite this point of access, on the west side of the plan beyond the transepts, is the raised chancel, the altar being centered against the far wall. The tower, situated to the right (north) of this entrance point, contains a chapel; as for the transepts, the north one contains a sacristy with acolyte room above and the south one an organ room, situated above a doorway that leads outside to the loggia and parish house. As for the parish hall, its principal entrance is via the doorway shielded under the loggia, on the north elevation, which leads directly into the great hall within. This open volume measures approximately 54' in length, 31' in width, and rises 26' to the apex of the ceiling. Adjacent to the great room on the north side of the plan, and also at first-floor level, is a large kitchen area. There is additionally office and classroom space located in the 1972 addition to the south and also in the second-story space located above the loggia. There is a partially finished basement under the chancel of the church, accessible from grade on the west elevation.

A set of interior doors leads from the interior of the porch, or narthex, into the nave. These doors contain stained glass panels that are purported to be of thirteenth century age and European pedigree, though their provenance and age remains a matter of speculation. Seating in the nave, consisting of square-ended slip pews, is arranged around a center aisle that leads from the east side of the nave to the chancel. Centered against that wall, above the altar, is a large stained glass window subdivided into tripartite form with quatrefoil lozenges. To the left (south) of the chancel is a tracker organ built by Flentropp Organ Builders of Holland and manufactured in the 1960s. Flooring is of a hardwood strip type and is covered in some places, like the center aisle, with area carpeting, and the walls are finished with plaster. The timber roof trusses and associated framing—common rafters, purlins and collar ties—was left exposed in characteristic fashion and painted a deep brown hue, in contrast with the off-white color of the walls. There is additionally a moulded wood cornice marking the transition between the wall and roof planes. The bases of the trusses are footed on corbels that project from the wall plane between the window openings; a decorative crown motif was incorporated into their design. Cylindrical lighting fixtures, suspended from the roof framing, provides artificial lighting, which augments the natural filtered light from the stained glass windows. The interior of the tower houses a chapel and columbarium and additionally contains a somewhat unusual item, a ship model, which serves as a votive for the Vestris, a vessel which sank in 1928 with great loss of human life. Among the survivors of this accident was stewardess Clara Gorn Ball, a resident of Pleasantville.

The richly colored stained glass windows are a preeminent character-defining feature of the nave; the large ones measure approximately six feet in width by eight feet in height. The studios and artisans responsible for their execution remain largely unidentified, save for one window—the Ascension Window—which dates to ca. 1927 and represents the work of Kempe & Company of London, England. It is currently believed that the majority of the windows are of English manufacture. Many were given as memorial windows by important

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families associated with the parish, among them the Choates and the Bernadottes. Prominent among the collection is the Christ the King window, which occupies a conspicuous position above the altar on the west wall of the chancel and thus serves as a visual focal point. The windows that are aligned along the nave's south wall interpret the events of Christ's life, beginning with the Nativity window, which was given in honor of the life of John Hill Prentice Choate, and the Epiphany window, which was given in memory of Susan Osgood Kitteridge Choate. The final installation on this side of the nave is the "Let the Children Come to Me" window, given in memory of Count Fredrick Oscar Bernadotte and Count Gustaf Eduard Bernadotte, young relations of King Gustaf V of Sweden, both of whom died in childhood; this particular window is of unknown pedigree and exhibits characteristics associated with the Tiffany studio, unlike the remaining collection. The large opening on the east wall of the nave, above the principal entrance from Sunnyside Avenue, is fitted with a Crucifixion window, a gift of Seabury Mastick in honor of his mother, Mary Wood Mastick. Other windows include those depicting Christ's triumphal entry into Jerusalem and the empty tomb.

The 1920s parish hall is approached from the church at ground level via the covered loggia, or otherwise from within via the second-floor rooms. The entrance from the loggia leads directly into the great hall. Like the interior of the church, it is a highly intact historic space that retains the bulk of its character-defining finish features. These include hardwood strip flooring, expressed roof framing, and high mahogany wainscoting, above which is textured plaster. The east wall serves as a focal point of the space, as there is a large Tudor Gothic-arched window centered against it, it being subdivided by mullions into five narrower units with cusped heads, above which are 10 lozenges corresponding with the head of the arch. The walls to either side are punctuated by the cruciform windows with operable lower casements and transoms above. As with the church's nave the roof framing is open and it consists of collared trusses which spring from wall corbels, longitudinal purlins aligned between the trusses, upon which common rafters bear, and a ridge pole. Highly decorative electric lighting features are suspended from the ceiling, and these augment the light provided by wall-mounted sconces with glass globes. Adjacent to the great hall is a large kitchen, which has linoleum flooring, sheetrock walls and an acoustical tile ceiling; notable among its features are wall-mounted cupboards with glass doors, aligned along the north wall above the counters.

The remaining areas of the interior contain administrative space, rest rooms, storage space, and at basement level the thrift shop, located in the undercroft beneath the chancel. In one of the offices within the 1972 section the expansion is particularly apparent, given the expression of a portion of a stone buttress and two basement windows, these being original exterior features of the 1920s parish house.

**RECTORY, ca. 1800 & later; last historic-era alteration ca. 1919**

The rectory is a wood-frame building consisting of three square-shaped sections, the story-and-a-half westernmost block being the largest. That section is characterized by a three-bay façade, a high-breaking gambrel roof with sprung eaves on the south elevation, two exposed brick fire-backs on the west elevation, and a wood shingle exterior. The story-and-a-half form and gambrel roof with sprung eaves relate the building to regional New World Dutch domestic architecture, though the side hall plan and Federal-style finish work are more in keeping with English influence. Both the first-story windows and smaller upper windows of the main block are fitted with six-over-six wood sash. The front porch, which shields the principal door and a rounded fanlight, is a Colonial Revival-style feature dating to 1918, as per HABS documentation; it is sustained by attenuated Tuscan order colonettes and has delicately scaled and chaste detailing. While not presently known the north-facing facade may well have been rendered like the opposite south elevation originally, with the roofline extended beyond the roof plane to form a porch. The porch that appears on photographs of the house taken before the current porch was installed exhibits features consistent with Greek Revival-style design and a date in the mid-nineteenth century. The lower pitch of the gambrel is punctured by dormers on the front and rear elevations, with two dormers on the north façade and one on the

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rear. Two brick chimneys rise from the roofline of the west elevation, corresponding with the fireplaces within.

The center block contains a kitchen, dining room and enclosed staircase to the upper story. Its form follows that of the larger block, being three-bays wide on the north elevation, a story-and-a-half in height and being covered with a gambrel roof with paired dormers on the north and south façades. A chimney rises from the roofline of this section, near its east wall, but is not centered on the ridge. The smallest section of the house is gable-roofed eastern-most block, which contains a laundry and an attached mud room, and which partially covers an exposed fire-back located on the east wall of the center block where it engages with it.

Inside, the main block exhibits a number of ca. 1800-vintage finishes, notably the open-stringer staircase, mantels, struck plaster cornice work, six-panel doors, and wood door and window trim consisting of sections of moulded architrave with roundel corner blocks. The plan of the main section consists of two rooms with end wall hearths located adjacent to a through passage with staircase; from the hallway, a doorway provides access to the dining room located in the adjacent center block, beyond which is the small east section. Floors are laid with hardwood strip flooring likely installed ca. 1920; plaster walls and ceilings appear largely intact throughout.



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**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.)

- A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

**Areas of Significance**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

**ARCHITECTURE**

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Period of Significance**

ca. 1800- 1972

\_\_\_\_\_

**Significant Dates**

ca. 1800; 1912; 1928-29; 1972

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Criteria Considerations**

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

Property is:

- A Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B removed from its original location.
- C a birthplace or grave.
- D a cemetery.
- E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F a commemorative property.
- G less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years.

**Significant Person**

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

N/A

\_\_\_\_\_

**Cultural Affiliation**

N/A

\_\_\_\_\_

**Architect/Builder**

CHURCH: Hoag, Charles A., architect; Brundage,

Reuben, builder (1912 church)

PARISH HOUSE: Vatet, Oscar (1928-29 parish hall)

\_\_\_\_\_

**Period of Significance (justification)**

**Criteria Considerations (explanation, if necessary)**

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**Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph**

St. John's Episcopal Church is an architecturally significant ecclesiastical building and a recognizable local landmark located in the Village of Pleasantville, Westchester County, New York. The church, erected in 1912 to the plans of local architect Charles A. Hoag, is a highly intact example of a Late Gothic Revival-style ecclesiastical edifice which was subsequently augmented with the construction of a parish hall addition in the later 1920s designed by architect Oscar Vatet. These two early twentieth century building campaigns, in addition to one undertaken more recently, in the early 1970s, largely account for the complex as it appears today, with its combination of Late Gothic Revival and Tudor Gothic features and stone and stucco-clad exterior elevations. The original Hoag-designed church remains in large measure as built, characterized by its highly picturesque stone masonry construction, steeply pitched rooflines, stout crenelated tower, wall buttresses, and large Gothic-arched windows; to this was added the parish hall, which uses a similar architectural vocabulary, though tending more towards the Tudor Gothic. The interior of both sections remain largely as conceived and built, with little alteration, and they collectively continue to convey the design intent of their respective architects. The interior of the 1912 church is further distinguished by the collection of memorial stained glass which occupy the large windows in the nave and chancel; these windows, given by members of prominent parish families in memory of loved ones, provide historic depth and context for contemporary parishioners, in addition to offering themselves as a compelling aspect of the interior's aesthetic program. Charles A. Hoag, who studied architecture at Cornell University and worked for a time in the New York City architectural office of Barney & Chapman, died just a few years after the completion of this commission, at age 48; Oscar Vatet, who worked from an office in New York City and later Pleasantville, was active in Westchester County during the 1920s and later saw his professional fortunes dampened by the Depression. The nominated building ranks foremost among the Village of Pleasantville's architectural landmarks, distinguished by the quality of its overall design, its high level of physical integrity, and its prominent visual position on a major village thoroughfare. It is being nominated in association with National Register of Historic Places Criterion C, in the area of Architecture, as an outstanding example of Late Gothic Revival-style ecclesiastical architecture designed by Charles Hoag, with a major early addition built to the plans of Oscar Vatet. Additional significance is also claimed, again in association with Criterion C in the area of Architecture, for the rectory; that building remains an outstanding example of regional vernacular domestic design constructed ca. 1800.

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**Narrative Statement of Significance** (Provide at least **one** paragraph for each area of significance.)

**HISTORICAL CONTEXT**

The origins of the present-day Village of Pleasantville, located in the Town of Mount Pleasant in Westchester County, date to the last years of the seventeenth century. Isaac See, of French Huguenot ancestry, settled there in 1695, acting as an agent of Frederick Philipse I, the first Lord of the Manor of Philipsburg. By the time of the American Revolution the area had been settled in large measure by tenant farmers who leased land from the Philipse family, until the dissolution of the manor in 1779. The area was settled early on by a diverse population comprising, among others, the Dutch, English, French Huguenots and Quakers. During the war British spy Major John André traversed the present-day village, carrying information conveyed to him by Benedict Arnold that was to be delivered to the British in New York City. André was captured nearby and was soon thereafter hanged for treason in Rockland County. By the dawn of the nineteenth century the hamlet had come to be known as Clark's Corners, a name taken for resident Henry Clark, who owned crossroads property there; this area represented Pleasantville's original commercial center and it remained such until the arrival of the railroad necessitated a new location for commercial interests. The church's rectory, which was acquired in 1920, dates to this general period of the Pleasantville's development. In the 1820s the hamlet's newly appointed postmaster, Henry Romer, was directed by federal authorities to provide a name for the community's post office. Romer's proposed name, Clarksville, was rejected as that name was already in use;

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Pleasantville was instead forwarded as an alternative and accepted, and the new post office was placed in service in February 1828.

The arrival of the New York Central Railroad and the New York & Harlem Railroad during the 1840s was a transformative moment for Pleasantville and the surrounding region, and one that would have immediate as well as longer-term repercussions for the nature in which the hamlet grew and further developed. Railroad transportation supplanted the Hudson River and overland routes as the principal means of communication with New York City and its arrival soon spurred new commercial development and an expanding population. By the 1870s Pleasantville sustained a number of modest industries, among them four shoemaking businesses, a shirt-manufacturing business, and a pickle factory, and in 1886 its first newspaper, *The Pleasantville Pioneer*, initiated publication. By the end of the century the small farms and orchards that were once a common feature of the local landscape were giving way to subdivision and new construction was erected to meet the needs of a growing middle-class population. The 1890s witnessed the development of considerable civic infrastructure in the form of police services, a volunteer fire company, and a circulating library. The formal incorporation of Pleasantville as a village occurred in March 1897.

During the early twentieth century, Pleasantville began to slowly assume the character that it continues to maintain today, that of a densely developed railroad suburb of New York City, populated by residents, many of whom commuted between the village and the city on what is today Metro-North Railroad's Harlem Line. The village's roads were paved for the first time in this period, water mains were installed, and electricity became available. The transformation of Pleasantville from its late seventeenth-century origins into a Westchester County railroad suburb had largely been completed by the time of the Second World War.

The origins of St. John's Episcopal Church date to the mid-nineteenth-century period of the village's development. The parish was established in 1853 as a mission of Grace Church, located in White Plains, New York. Grace Church's rector at that time, the Rev. Robert W. Harris, served as the fledgling organization's first priest and presided over services that were conducted in a local schoolhouse prior to the construction of a dedicated house-of-worship. In 1885 the St. John's completed and occupied its first church, a wood-frame building of relatively straightforward appearance which was subsequently modified in 1890. It was in this building, in 1891, that the daughter of the *New-York Tribune* editor Horace Greeley, Gabrielle Greeley, was married.<sup>2</sup> The organization occupied this building until the completion of the nominated church in 1912, during the rectorate of the Rev. Dr. Stephen Holmes; at that time the original church property was sold to a Christian Science congregation and presently serves as home to the Pleasantville Community Synagogue, thereby continuing its service to Pleasantville's religious community.

The new stone Gothic Revival-style building was erected at a cost of \$22,674 and was built to the plans of Charles A. Hoag by the local contractor Reuben Brundage, Jr. It was dedicated on May 7, 1914 at a ceremony presided over by Bishop Charles S. Burch, Suffragan Bishop of New York, and was consecrated on October 14, 1923 by Bishop William T. Manning of New York, the parish having been freed from debt. The growth of the parish soon required the expansion of the facility in order to satisfy a growing social agenda. In 1929 the parish hall was completed to the plans of architect Oscar Vatet at a cost of \$52,000, a building campaign which occurred during the rectorate of the Rev. Emmons Parkman Burrill.<sup>3</sup>

Preeminent among the historic events associated with St. John's Episcopal Church was the December 1928 marriage of Estelle Romaine Manville to Count Folke Bernadotte of Wisborg, the latter a nephew of King

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<sup>2</sup> Material drawn from Matthew Ruvo, "History of St. John's Episcopal Church."

<sup>3</sup> Ibid

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Gustaf V of Sweden. This event marked the first time that a member of a European royal family was married in a ceremony conducted on American soil. Over 250 guests attended the wedding, many attired in formal military dress, and over 1,500 people attended the ensuing reception held at the nearby Manville family estate, Hi-Esmaro. The following day, a luncheon was given in the couple's honor by President Coolidge and his wife at the White House in Washington, D.C. Estelle Manville Bernadotte was the only daughter of industrialist Hiram Edward Manville and a leading figure in the International Red Cross and Girl Scout movements. As for Count Folke Bernadotte, he was a Swedish diplomat who presided over the Swedish Red Cross during the Second World War, during which time he successfully negotiated the release of 31,000 prisoners from German concentration camps, among them 450 Danish Jews who were held at the Theresienstadt camp. Following the war, Bernadotte was unanimously selected to serve as the United Nations Security Council mediator for the Arab-Israeli conflict of 1947-48. He was assassinated in Jerusalem by the militant Zionist group Lehi in 1948 while dispensing his duties.<sup>4</sup>

**ARCHITECTURAL CONTEXT**

Charles A. Hoag (1869-1917), the architect responsible for the commission, designed the building but a few years prior to his death at age 48. He studied architecture at Cornell University and graduated from that institution in 1897. By 1907 he was employed with the architectural firm of Barney & Chapman, which maintained offices on Fifth Avenue in Manhattan, New York, during this period.<sup>5</sup> John Stewart Barney (1867-1924) and Henry Otis Chapman (1863-1929) were the principals of that office; the former was a graduate of Columbia College and also studied at the Ecole des Beaux-Arts in Paris, while the latter was, like Hoag, a Cornell graduate. The firm's work included a number of prominent estate houses on Long Island in addition to the design for the Church of the Holy Trinity in Manhattan, New York, ca. 1899, a building which successfully combined English and French design motives, and a project which Barney took the lead on.<sup>6</sup> The firm's first joint commission was for the Hart Memorial Library in Troy, New York, 1897. During his time in the Barney & Chapman offices, Hoag participated in the restoration of the Bruton Parish Episcopal Church in Williamsburg, Virginia. A period source noted the following on that project: "Much of the success of the restoration is due to the sympathetic and intelligent interest of the architect, Mr. J. Stewart Barney, of New York City, who gave his service to the church; and to the careful supervision of Mr. Charles A. Hoag."<sup>7</sup> In 1910 Hoag was a resident of Pleasantville and was living there with his wife, Margaret, and the couple's two-year-old daughter, Diantha; by 1915 he was still residing in the village, and the household additionally included a two-year-old son, Alvan. In 1916 Hoag's name appeared in an endorsement of the Samuel Cabot company of Boston, Massachusetts, in an advertisement touting their stains: "'Roof and siding stained with Cabot's Stain. Result most satisfactory.' Yours, etc., Charles A. Hoag, Architect, Pleasantville, N.Y."<sup>8</sup> Hoag died in 1917, just a few years following his work on St. John's Episcopal Church; his passing was quietly noted in *The American Contractor*.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Ibid

<sup>5</sup> *Cornell Alumni News*, vol. IX, no. 34, (29 May 1907).

<sup>6</sup> The following is noted in *Long Island Country Houses and their Architects*, eds. Robert B. MacKay, Anthony K. Baker and Carol A. Traynor (New York, NY: W.W. Norton Company and Society for the Preservation of Long Island Antiquities, 1997), 62: "The Long Island work of John Stewart Barney and Henry Otis Chapman consists of four country-house commissions dated between 1900 and 1908. In addition, Chapman executed three designs between 1912 and 1917, and Barney executed one around 1920, after their partnership had been discontinued." Prominent among the joint Barney & Chapman commissions was the Peter B. Wyckoff house in Southampton, ca. 1900, and the Henry H. Porter house in Lawrence, also ca. 1900.

<sup>7</sup> William A.R. Goodwin, *Bruton Parish Church Restored and its Historic Environment* (Petersburg, VA: The Franklin Press Co., 1907), 90.

<sup>8</sup> Advertisement for Cabot stains, *The Building Age* (August 1916), 18.

<sup>9</sup> *The American Contractor*, vol. XXXVIII, no. 31 (4 August 1917).

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Hoag's tutelage in the Barney & Chapman office exposed him to Barney's inclination towards "medieval revivalism" and Chapman's "restrained classicism," and both men shared an interest in religious design as expressed in Barney's work on the Bruton Parish Church and Holy Trinity projects and Chapman's designs for the Broadway Tabernacle and Rutgers Presbyterian Church.<sup>10</sup> These projects presumably shaped Hoag's own philosophies relative to religious design. For the design of St. John's Episcopal Church in Pleasantville, Hoag drew from well-established precedents for American Episcopal church architecture in his use of a distinctly English medieval parish church form. The form of the building, combining as it does a cruciform-plan nave with transepts, an offset bell tower, and a chancel articulated as distinct from the nave mass, was popularized in the mid-nineteenth century by architects such as Richard Upjohn and John Notman, whose work reflected the contemporary influence of the Ecclesiological movement and the Gothic Revival and drew heavily from medieval models. Inside, the differentiation between nave and chancel, the expressed roof framing, and the overall sedateness of the design again relate to the example of medieval English parish churches, which first came to inform American Episcopal design during the middle decades of the nineteenth century. Hoag's design nevertheless comports in general terms with guidance laid out by one of America's foremost ecclesiastical designers of this period, Ralph Adams Cram:

Build in stone or brick; plan with rigid simplicity; design both interior and exterior with reserve, formality and self-control; have the mass simple, the composition equally so; imitate no form or detail of larger structures, but work for the dignity and the reverence. Above all, let the spirit be that of the unchanging Church, the form alone that of the present day.<sup>11</sup>

Hoag's design, while rooted in a longstanding tradition of drawing from medieval English parish churches as an appropriate model for Episcopal Church architecture, nevertheless reflects an early twentieth century view of the Gothic Revival style. The building is characterized by the clarity of its plan and form, its relatively clean lines and restrained ornament, its aversion to slavish, archaeological detailing, and the quality of its masonry work. The interior expresses similar sentiments in the relative chasteness of the finish treatments, and the contrast between smooth plaster wall planes and the expression of the wood roof framing elements. It was during this period that many architects, among them Hoag, returned to the familiar and simpler forms of the Gothic Revival mode, following the late nineteenth century period, which was characterized by Late Victorian stylistic eclecticism and the broad adoption of new church types, among them auditorium-plan churches.

The growth of the parish and its desire to expand its social programming and infrastructure drove the late-1920s expansion of the church facility in the form of the construction of the parish hall, which extends southward from the earlier Hoag-designed church edifice. This phase of the complex's development was overseen by architect Oscar Vatet, who maintained offices in Manhattan in the early 1920s, on Fifth Avenue, and later practiced and resided in Pleasantville. Vatet was an active architect in Westchester County during this period whose work included a number of residential and civic commissions. In 1929 the *Citizen Sentinel* of Ossining published one of Vatet's drawings for an English Tudor Gothic cottage under the headline "Generous Breadth Marks Well Built House."<sup>12</sup> Constructed of stucco-clad hollow tile and built at relatively inexpensive cost, it was described as "...English in feeling, and in its every line it bespeaks the charm to be found in the English cottage." Commissions fielded by Vatet in this period in Westchester County included the Rome Theatre in Pleasantville, 1925, designed in a Spanish Mission-style vein, and a Tudor Revival-style manor house at Briarcliff Manor, which was built for Rev. Rufus P. Johnston, 1925. Vatet also offered designs for a new school gymnasium in Scarborough, ca. 1931, described by some observers as "modern" and

<sup>10</sup> Mackay et al, *Long Island Country Houses*, 62-63.

<sup>11</sup>Cram as quoted in Carole Rifkind, *A Field Guide to American Architecture* (New York, London and Scarborough, Ontario: New American Library, 1980), 157.

<sup>12</sup>"Generous Breadth Marks Well Built House," *Citizen Sentinel* (Ossining), 17 June 1929.

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“functionalistic,” much to the architect’s chagrin. That project, never built due to the circumstances of the Depression, led to legal action against the trustees of the school by Vatet, who claimed he was due \$8,000 in unpaid fees. Vatet’s professional fortunes were badly crippled by the Depression, which ultimately forced him to file for bankruptcy in 1933.<sup>13</sup> In later years he worked as an architect in the employ of the federal government.

Vatet’s design for the parish hall was compatible with, but at the same time distinguishable from, the earlier church. The use of similar stone and understated exterior Gothic detailing allowed the two sections to harmonize, particularly on the east elevation, though Vatet’s section is of a more distinctly Tudor Gothic nature, as expressed in the four-pointed arches that form the covered loggia and the stucco finish used the south and west elevations. Inside, the great hall echoes the architectural sentiment of the nave in its expression of the roof framing; it is a flexible mixed-use space that accommodates any number of uses and as such continues to function as intended.

The rectory has been a feature of the church property for nearly one hundred years; as such, it has assumed significance in this function and in association with St. John’s Episcopal Church, though the house’s early history is independent from that of the parish. This property’s recorded history dates back to the 1730s, at which time this land was owned by Samuel Ackerman, a Loyalist whose English sympathies led ultimately to the confiscation of his property; it was later owned by the Foster family, and yet later by the Earle family in the mid-nineteenth century. It was acquired in 1919 by Caroline Choate, a prominent member of St. John’s, who saw to its refurbishment prior to donating it to the church in 1920. It was at this time that the building was documented with photographs and measured drawings by the Historic American Buildings Survey. The house remains an outstanding example of regional vernacular design likely dating to ca. 1800, and it maintains features associated with both Dutch and English building practices and domestic tastes, and as such is typical of the architecture of the lower Hudson Valley in the post-Revolutionary period. Distinctive features include its broad and high-breaking gambrel roof, which on the south elevation sweeps beyond the wall plane to create a covered porch, once a common feature of Dutch vernacular houses in Westchester and Rockland County. Inside, the original main block retains many of its Federal-style finishes and its original side-hall floor plan.

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**Developmental history/additional historic context information** (if appropriate)

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<sup>13</sup>“Heavy Hardware Co. And Lighting Concern Have Claims,” *Citizens Register* (Ossining), 2 September 1933.

**ST. JOHN'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH**  
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**9. Major Bibliographical References**

**Bibliography** (Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form.)

*Cornell Alumni News*, vol. IX, no. 34 (29 May 1907).

Goodwin, William A.R. *Bruton Parish Church Restored and its Historic Environment*. Petersburg, VA: The Franklin Press Co., 1907.

MacKay, Robert B. and Anthony K. Baker and Carol A. Traynor *Long Island Country Houses and their Architects*, eds. New York, NY: W.W. Norton Company and Society for the Preservation of Long Island Antiquities, 1997.

Rifkind, Carol. *A Field Guide to American Architecture* (New York, London and Scarborough, Ontario: New American Library, 1980.

**Previous documentation on file (NPS):**

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67 has been requested)
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # \_\_\_\_\_
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # \_\_\_\_\_
- recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # \_\_\_\_\_

**Primary location of additional data:**

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

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): \_\_\_\_\_

**10. Geographical Data**

**Acreage of Property** 1.33 acres

(Do not include previously listed resource acreage.)

**UTM References**

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1	<u>18</u> Zone	<u>601762</u> Easting	<u>4554435</u> Northing	3	<u>                    </u> Zone	<u>                    </u> Easting	<u>                    </u> Northing
2	<u>                    </u> Zone	<u>                    </u> Easting	<u>                    </u> Northing	4	<u>                    </u> Zone	<u>                    </u> Easting	<u>                    </u> Northing

**Verbal Boundary Description**

The boundary for this NRHP nomination is shown on the enclosed mapping (4 total); all maps are entitled "St. John's Episcopal Church, Pleasantville, Westchester Co., NY."

**Boundary Justification**

The boundary has been drawn to take in only that property which is historically associated with the nominated church, inclusive of the addition of the rectory in the early twentieth century. No additional or "buffer" land has been included.

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**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title William E. Krattinger  
organization NYS Division for Historic Preservation date August 2016  
street & number PO Box 189 telephone \_\_\_\_\_  
city or town Waterford state New York zip code 12180  
e-mail [William.Krattinger@parks.ny.gov](mailto:William.Krattinger@parks.ny.gov)

**Additional Documentation**

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **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. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Continuation Sheets**
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items.)

**Photographs:**

PHOTOGRAPHS by William E. Krattinger, April 2016; original digital files at NYS Division for Historic Preservation, Waterford, NY 12188.

- 001 EXTERIOR, perspective view of the church, looking west
- 002 EXTERIOR, view looking south towards parish hall
- 003 EXTERIOR, view looking towards loggia, parish hall to left, church to right
- 004 EXTERIOR, church, view looking eastward showing rear (west) and north elevations
- 005 EXTERIOR, view looking to southeast showing west elevation of parish hall, basement entrance to church in foreground left
- 006 INTERIOR, church, view looking west in nave
- 007 INTERIOR, church, tower interior
- 008 INTERIOR, parish hall, view looking east in principal space
- 009 INTERIOR, parish hall, detail view of main window, east wall
- 010 EXTERIOR, rectory, view showing west and south elevations of main block, looking to northeast
- 011 EXTERIOR, rectory, view showing east, central and main block (left to right), looking south
- 012 INTERIOR, rectory, main block, view looking south in hallway

**Property Owner:**

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

name St. John's Episcopal Church, c/o Matthew Ruvo  
street & number \_\_\_\_\_ telephone \_\_\_\_\_  
city or town \_\_\_\_\_ state \_\_\_\_\_ zip code \_\_\_\_\_

**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.460 et seq.).

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18 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 Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.



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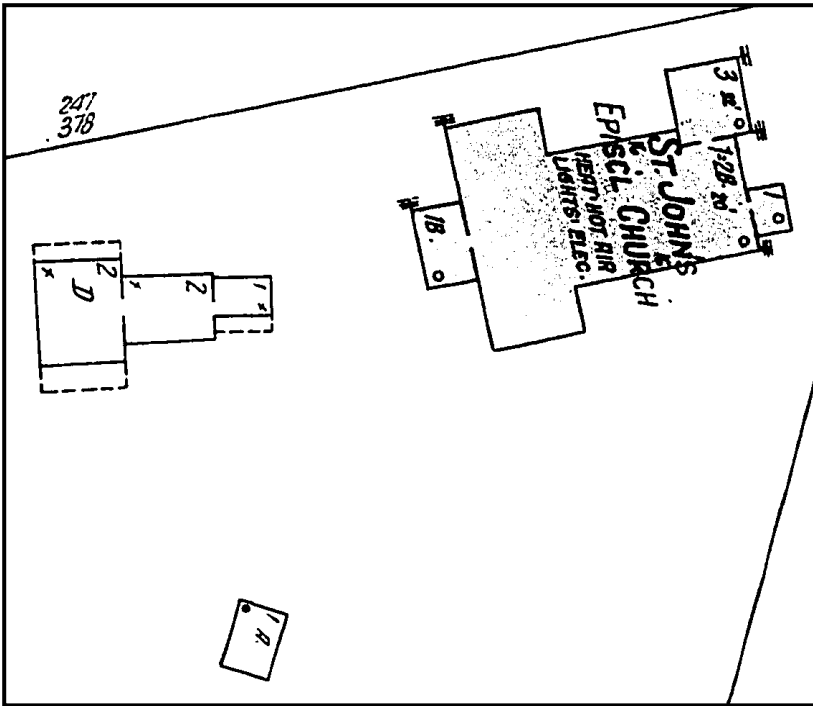
ABOVE, view of the nominated complex, Bedford Road at top of image and Sunnyside Avenue at right; image shows the interrelationship between the church and the parish house and also the rectory.

**ST. JOHN'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH**

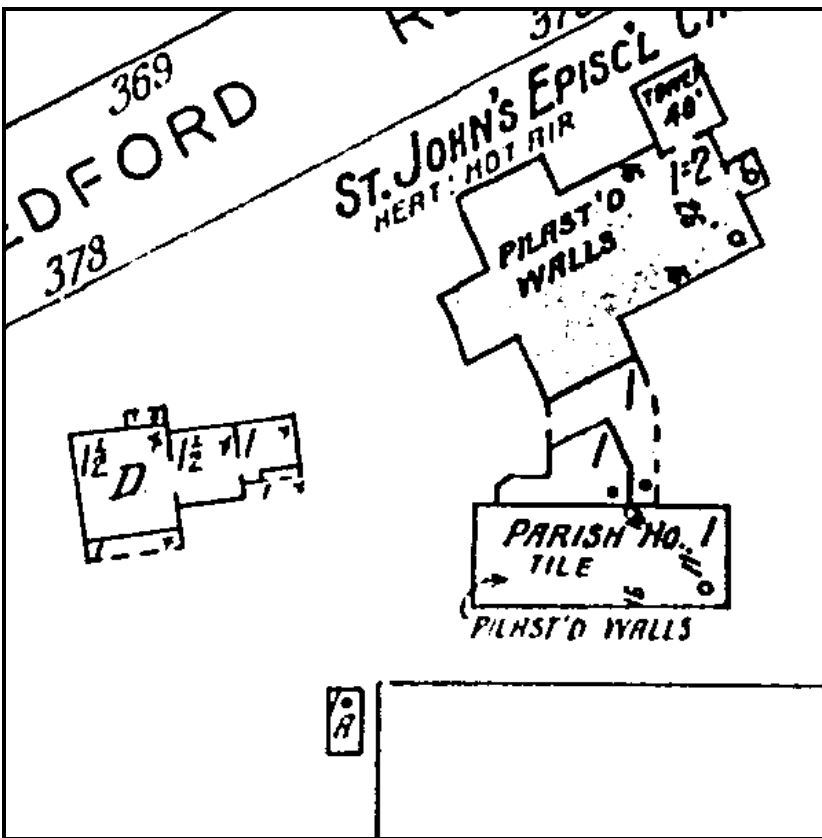
Name of Property

**WESTCHESTER CO., N.Y.**

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Sanborn Maps ABOVE, 1924; BELOW, 1933

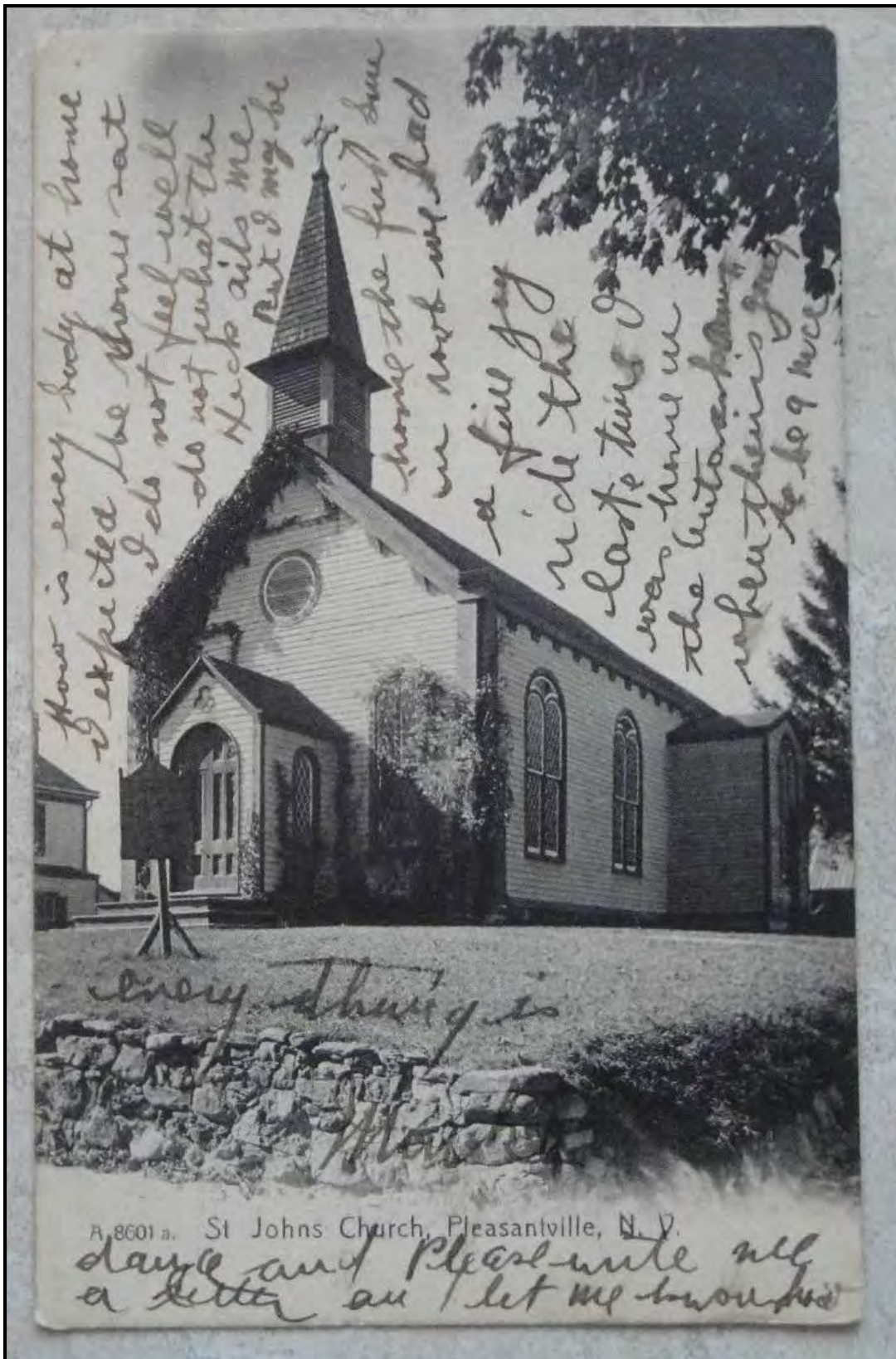


ST. JOHN'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH

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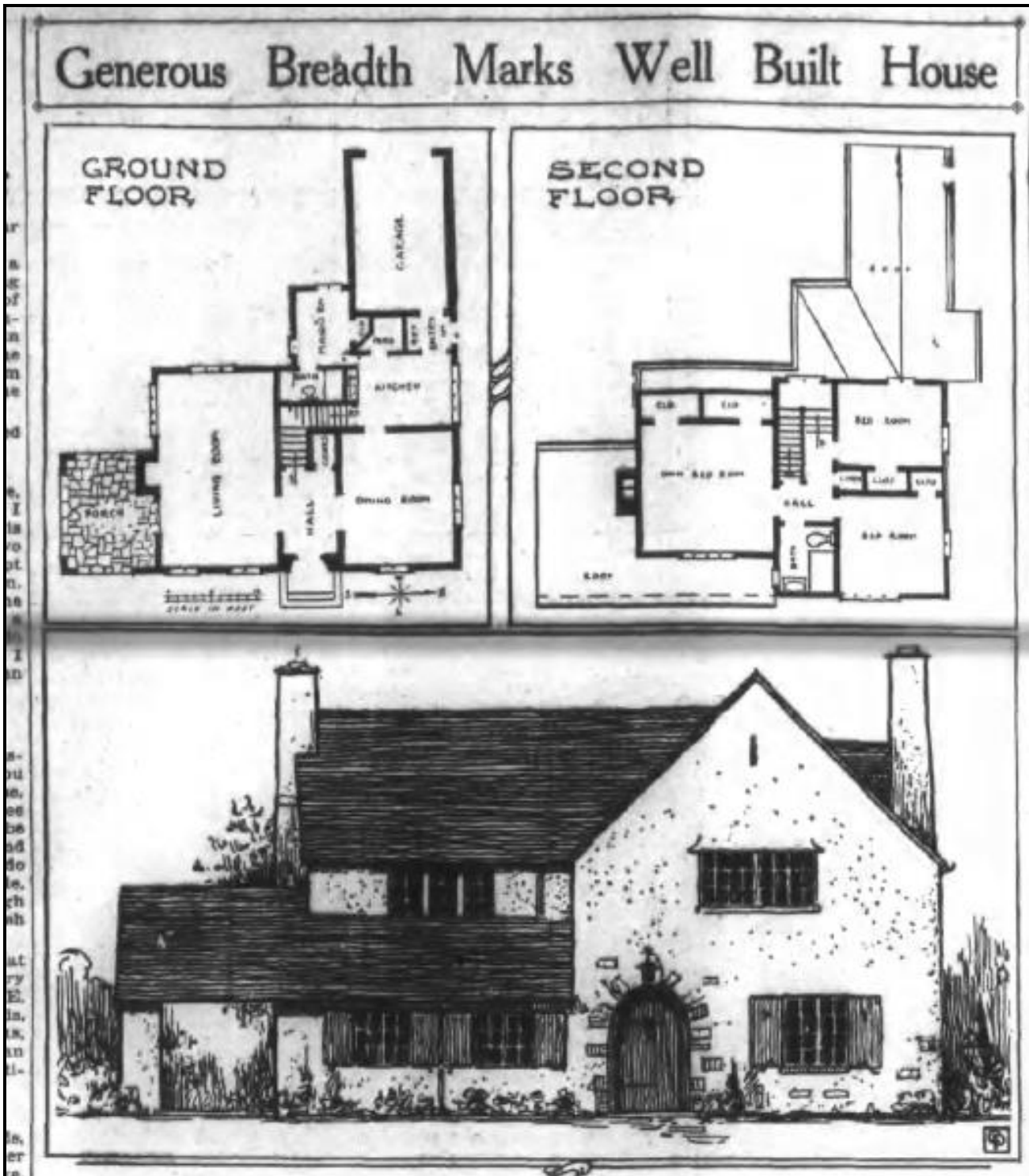
**ST. JOHN'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH**

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ABOVE, the first St. John's Church, postcard view, ca. 1910



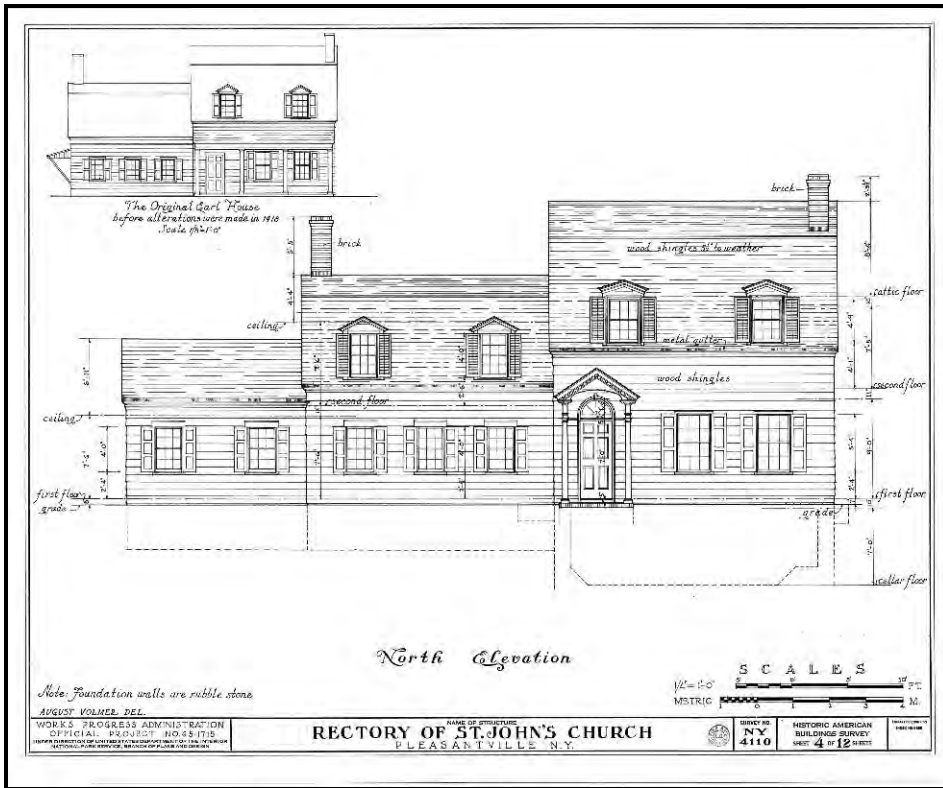
ABOVE, house designed by Oscar Vatet, ca. 1929, and published in the Ossining *Citizen Sentinel*.

**ST. JOHN'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH**

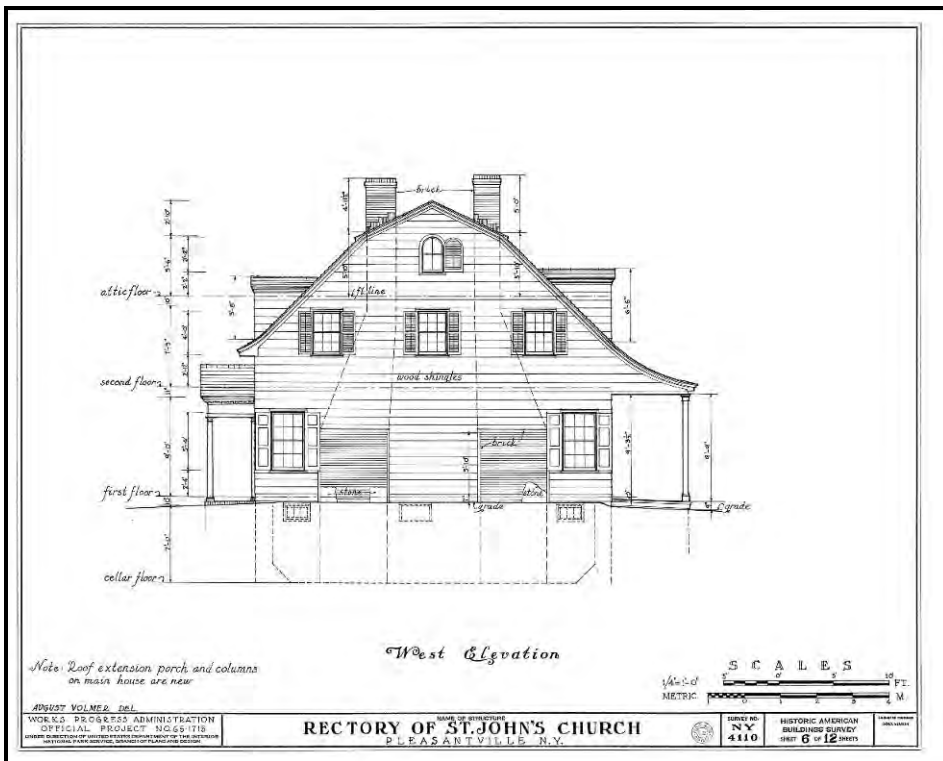
Name of Property

**WESTCHESTER CO., N.Y.**

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ABOVE & BELOW, rectory, HABS documentation

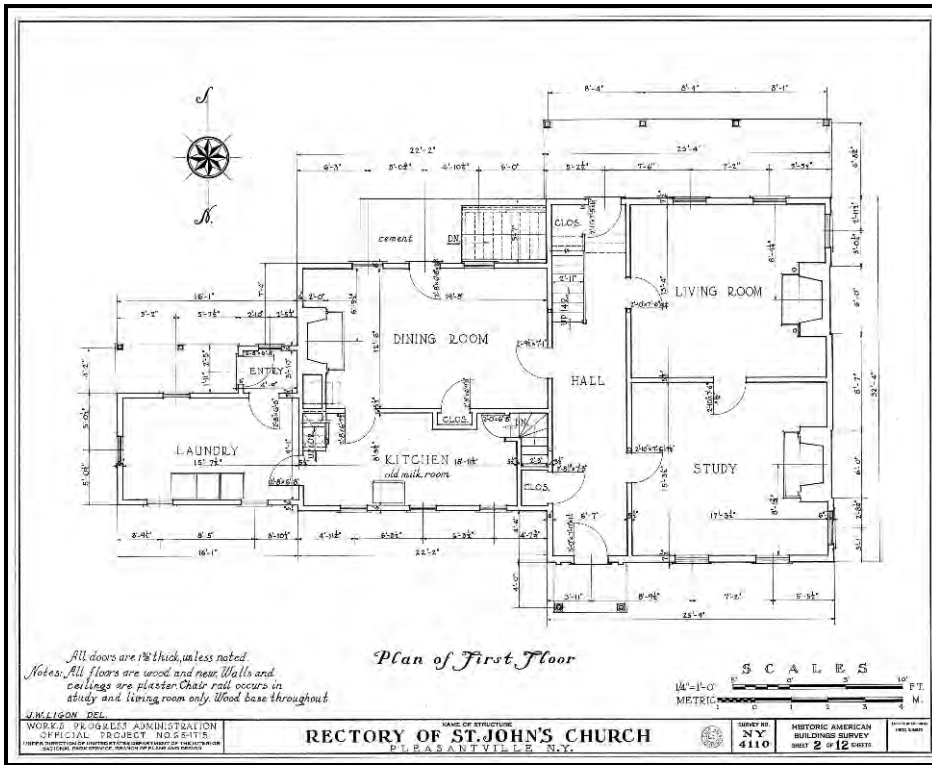


**ST. JOHN'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH**

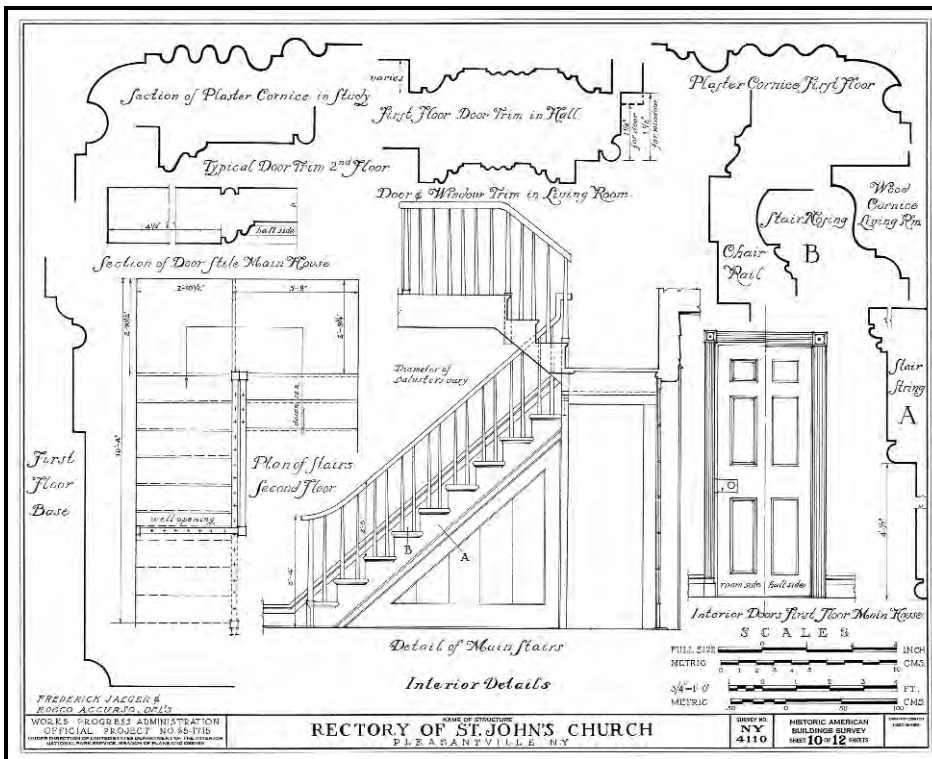
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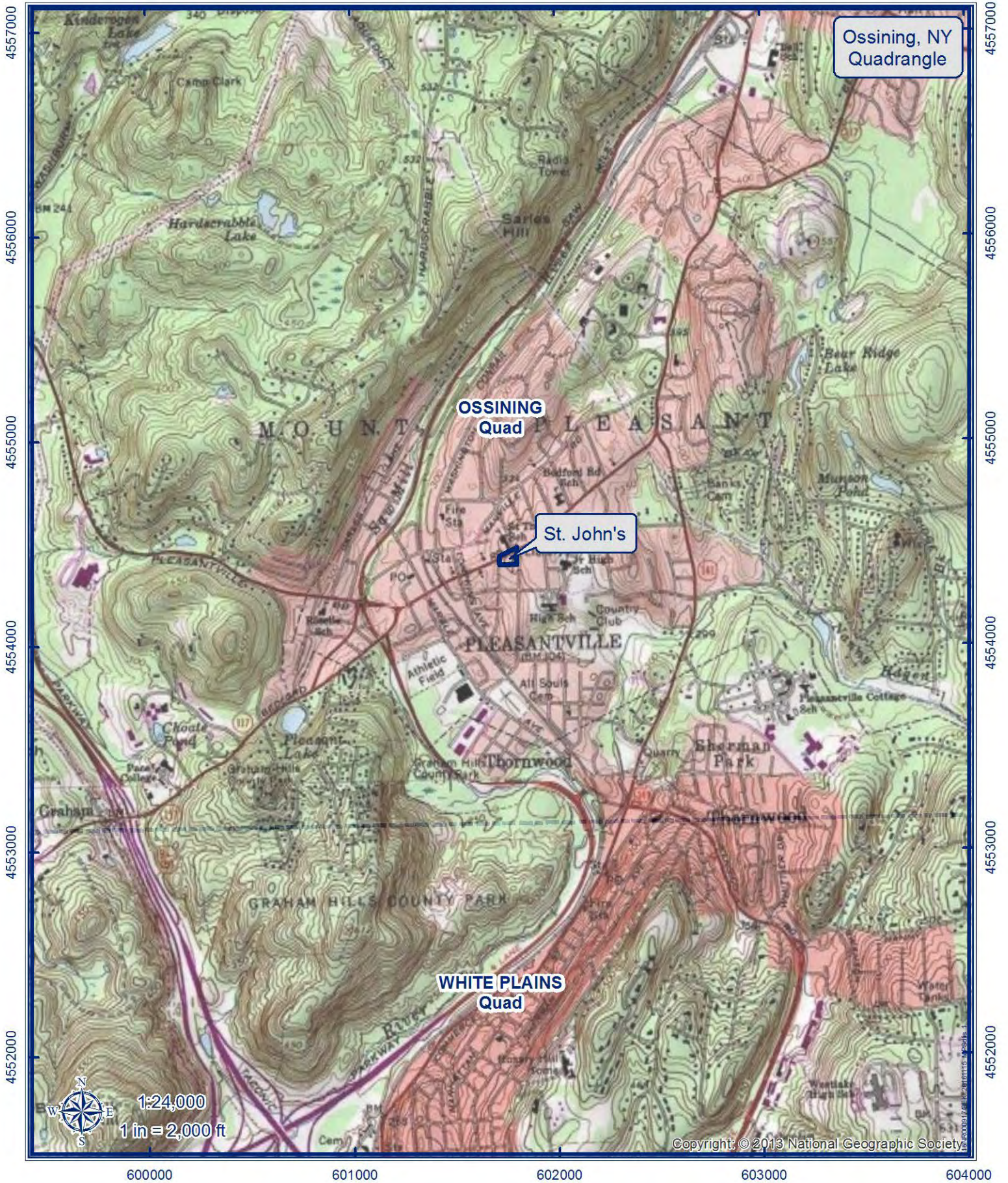
**WESTCHESTER CO., N.Y.**

County and State



ABOVE & BELOW, rectory, HABS documentation

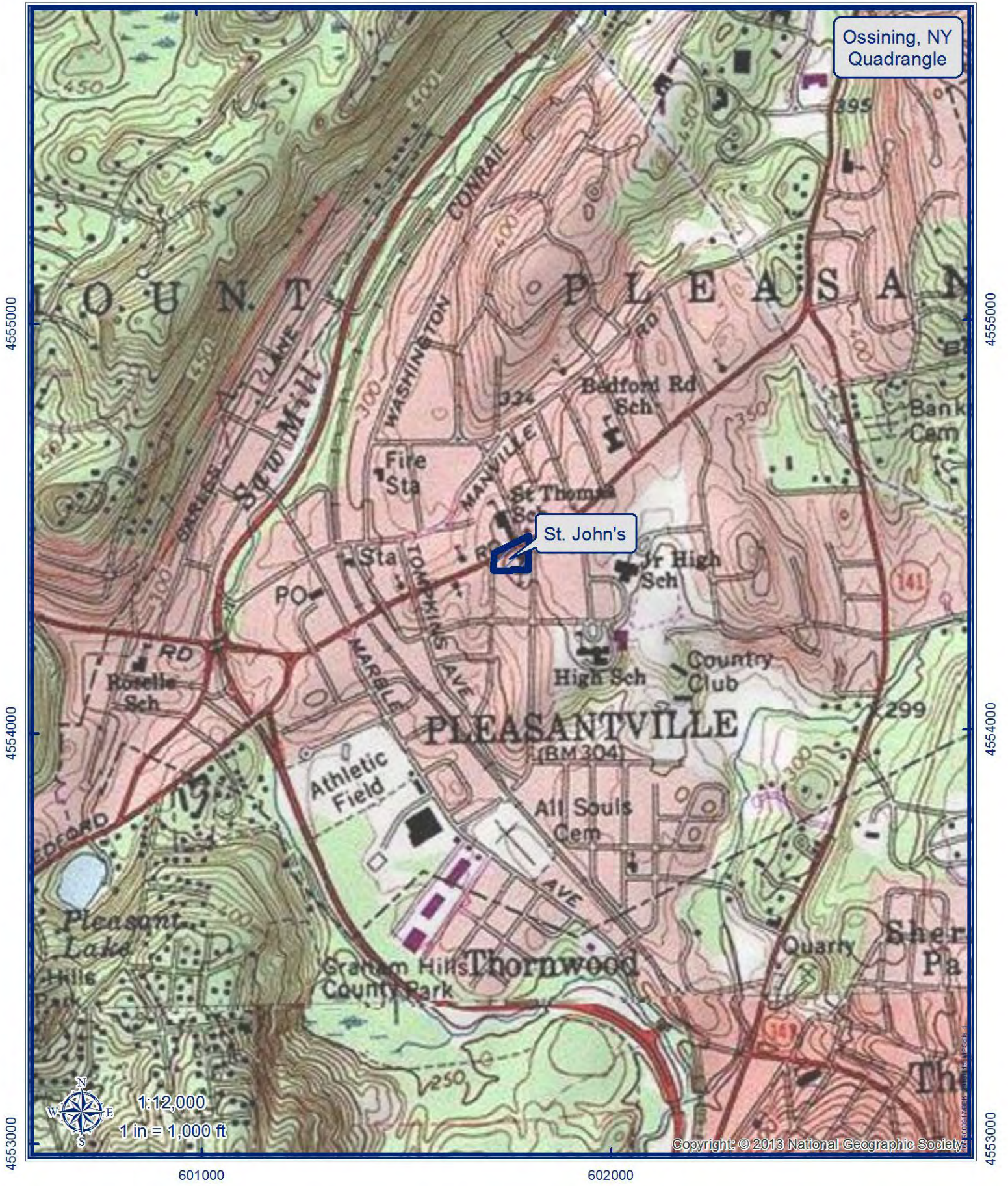




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Projection: Transverse Mercator  
Datum: North American 1983  
Units: Meter



Parks, Recreation  
and Historic Preservation



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1 in = 1,000 ft

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Coordinate System: NAD 1983 UTM Zone 18N  
Projection: Transverse Mercator  
Datum: North American 1983  
Units: Meter



Parks, Recreation  
and Historic Preservation





$\Sigma = 1.33$  Acres

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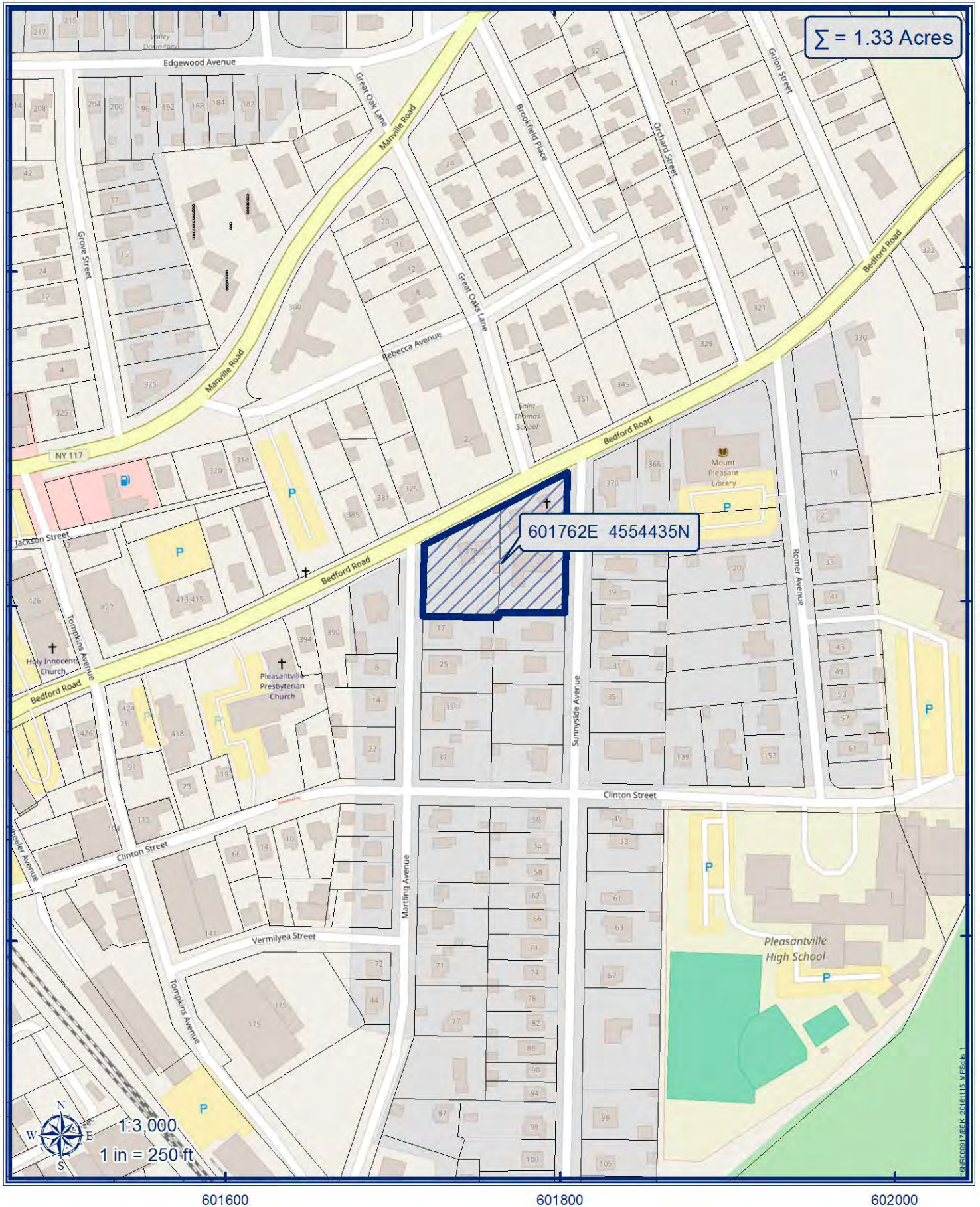
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Projection: Transverse Mercator  
Datum: North American 1983  
Units: Meter



Parks, Recreation  
and Historic Preservation





EST. 1892



**St. John's Church**  
EPISCOPAL  
Welcome

SUNDAY SERVICES  
8:00 AM • 9:15 AM (FAMILY) • 10:45 AM

**OPEN**  
Mon. & Sat.  
10:00 - 2:00





Eagle Scout  
Project  
Hardware Store &  
Camping Plus

University of  
Maryland System  
College Park, MD

2025-2026  
OPEN  
Mon, & Sat.  
10-12





Upper level  
Entrance

1141-4512

HONDA

















UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

Requested Action:

Property Name:

Multiple Name:

State & County:

Date Received: 12/16/2016      Date of Pending List:      Date of 16th Day:      Date of 45th Day: 1/31/2017      Date of Weekly List: 2/9/2017

Reference number:

Nominator:

Reason For Review:

Accept       Return       Reject      1/31/2017 Date

Abstract/Summary Comments:

Recommendation/ Criteria

Reviewer Alexis Abernathy      Discipline Historian

Telephone (202)354-2236      Date \_\_\_\_\_

DOCUMENTATION:    see attached comments : No    see attached SLR : No

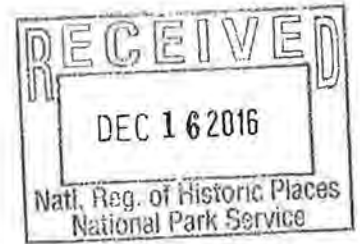
If a nomination is returned to the nomination authority, the nomination is no longer under consideration by the National Park Service.



**Parks, Recreation  
and Historic Preservation**

ANDREW M. CUOMO  
Governor

ROSE HARVEY  
Commissioner



9 December 2016

Alexis Abernathy  
National Park Service  
National Register of Historic Places  
1201 Eye St. NW, 8<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Washington, D.C. 20005

Re: National Register Nomination

Dear Ms. Abernathy:

I am pleased to submit the following six nominations, all on disc, to be considered for listing by the Keeper of the National Register:

LeRoy Downtown Historic District, Genesee County  
John Green House, Rockland County  
St. John's Episcopal Church, Westchester County  
Jewell Family Homestead, Chenango County  
Blauvelt-Cropsey Farm, Rockland County  
Cornwallville Cemetery, Greene County

Please feel free to call me at 518.268.2165 if you have any questions.

Sincerely:

Kathleen LaFrank  
National Register Coordinator  
New York State Historic Preservation Office