

PH0356697

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

FOR NPS USE ONLY	
RECEIVED	APR 1 1976
DATE ENTERED	MAY 12 1977

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

NAME

HISTORIC

**

St. Peter's Episcopal Church

AND/OR COMMON

LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

Rector and Gordon Streets

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

Perth Amboy

VICINITY OF

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

15th

STATE

New Jersey

CODE

34

COUNTY

Middlesex

CODE

023

CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY

- DISTRICT
- BUILDING(S)
- STRUCTURE
- SITE
- OBJECT

OWNERSHIP

- PUBLIC
- PRIVATE

BOTH

PUBLIC ACQUISITION

- IN PROCESS
- BEING CONSIDERED

STATUS

- OCCUPIED
- UNOCCUPIED
- WORK IN PROGRESS
- YES: RESTRICTED
- YES: UNRESTRICTED
- NO

ACCESSIBLE

PRESENT USE

- AGRICULTURE
- COMMERCIAL
- EDUCATIONAL
- ENTERTAINMENT
- GOVERNMENT
- INDUSTRIAL
- MILITARY
- MUSEUM
- PARK
- PRIVATE RESIDENCE
- RELIGIOUS
- SCIENTIFIC
- TRANSPORTATION
- OTHER:

OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

St. Peter's Episcopal Church

STREET & NUMBER

183 Rector Street

CITY, TOWN

Perth Amboy

VICINITY OF

STATE

New Jersey

LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Court House

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

New Brunswick

STATE

New Jersey

REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

New Jersey Historic Sites Inventory (#2422.3)

DATE

1961, 1965

FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

Historic Sites Section, Department of Environmental Protection

CITY, TOWN

Trenton

STATE

New Jersey

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED DATE _____
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

St. Peter's Episcopal Church's present edifice was built in 1849-52 and is constructed of red brick accentuated with red sandstone.

The main section of the church is rectangular with 3 bays on the gable end facade and five on the long side. A square tower with spire projects out from the center of the gable end facade. This tower, highlighted at the corners with buttresses trimmed in red sandstone, is also brick and the equivalent to three stories high. The entrance vestibule, constructed in 1969 in front of the tower completely hides the Gothic arched double entrance as did an earlier small wooden vestibule. Above the entrance is a Gothic arched window over 12 feet in height. The bell emplacement is at the top tier of the tower and has Gothic arched fenestration on all four facades. The copper clad steeple replaced an earlier one in 1936.

The long facade of St. Peter's Church has five Gothic arched stained-glass windows depicting scenes of the life of Peter, the Apostle (after whom the church was named) and the colonial history of the church. Most of the stained-glass was added after 1918 when the Morgan munitions explosion in the Raritan Bay destroyed many of the original glass panels.

In 1905, St. Peter's Church was lengthened to the rear to provide for a larger chancel and an organ. This addition is of the same type construction as the main church. This was also probably when the baptistry was added to the side facade of the church.

In 1961 a Memorial Hall was built beneath the present church. This excavated cellar now has seven rooms - including Sunday school rooms, a vault, and a history room. Also completed in 1961 was the St. James Chapel, a one room addition off the side of the 1905 section.

In the last few years the 19th century churchyard fence, which surrounded three sides of the property, was replaced with a replica of the original.

The interior of St. Peter's Church has not been radically altered since its erection. Entrance into the tower vestibule is made by the small brick vestibule added in 1969. These vestibules open to the aisle of the main church which has pews to either side. At the far end of the original edifice, to the right, is the pulpit. Beyond the pulpit, to the center is the early 20th century chancel, choir, and altar. This addition has a vaulted arch with wooden trusses.

The main unit of St. Peter's also has wooden trusses bracing the vaulted plaster ceiling. Up until 1918 the ceilings

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St. Peter's Episcopal Church
Perth Amboy, Middlesex County
New Jersey

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were false covering up the wooden trusses. The Morgan explosion in 1918 forced some changes, however, including the replacement of fallen ceiling and plaster, and the removal of the western gallery.

3 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW

PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> RELIGION
100-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE
1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE
1600-1699	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES

Congregation -1685 Building -1849 BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

St. Peter's is the oldest Episcopal congregation in New Jersey having held continuous religion services since 1685; when it communicants held their first service.

In 1698, the East Jersey Board of Proprietors gave a building to the congregation. Also during this year, the parish was officially organized.

A second building was dedicated in 1722 and lasted for nearly 130 years until 1849 when it was demolished.

The present edifice dates to 1852 when damages caused during extensive occupation to the earlier building during Revolution prompted the construction of a new building.

There was considerable opposition among the members of the parish to the plan to tear down the 18th century building in 1849.

Those who built the old colonial landmark seemed to have possessed prophetic knowledge of its end. When the ancient edifice was being taken down the following inscription was found over the portal: "O God! The Heathen have come into Thine inheritance. The holy temple they have defiled and made Jerusalem a heap of stones."

The inscription is from the seventy-ninth psalm, first verse, but it is not an exact quotation. The last part of Psalm 79:1 reads: "They have laid Jerusalem on heaps."

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Whitehead, William A., Contributions to the Early History of Perth Amboy
 New York, 1856.
 Clayton, W. Woodford, History of Union and Middlesex Counties,
 Philadelphia, 1882.
 Jones, W. Northy, History of St. Peter's Church, Perth Amboy, 1924.
 Stowe Walter Herbert, A Short History of the Church in New Jersey,
 Trenton, 1935.

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 2.5 acres

UTM REFERENCES

A	1 8	5 6 2 2 2 0	4 4 8 3 7 0 0	B			
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
C				D			

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Terry Karschner, Historian - Curator
 ORGANIZATION DATE
Historic Sites Section, Department of Environmental Protection 7/21/75
 STREET & NUMBER TELEPHONE
P.O. Box 1420 (609) 292-2023
 CITY OR TOWN STATE
Trenton New Jersey

12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL STATE LOCAL X

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

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE *Doris J. Brue* DATE September 26, 1975

TITLE Commissioner, Dept. of Environmental Protection

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION *Wm. Stantley* DATE 5/12/77
 ATTEST: *Charles Adams* DATE 5-26-77
 KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

St. Peter's Episcopal Church
Berth Amboy
Middlesex County
New Jersey 081

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St. Peter's Episcopal Church is the oldest Episcopal congregation in New Jersey having held continuous religious services on the same site since 1685; when its communicants held their first services.

There have been a total of three buildings, including the present one on this site used as a church.

The first was originally designed to be a courthouse and was built before 1685. In 1698, the East Jersey Board of Proprietors gave the building to the congregation for use as a church.

St. Peter's parish was a missionary church whose priests were supported by missionary societies in England and from 1702 by the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, which was established in 1701/

The first church was used until 1718 when the church received its official charter from King George I. This act inspired the congregation to replace the present church with another building. It was dedicated in 1722.

The years before the revolution were significant for Berth Amboy. It was the capital of the providence of East Jersey and later the capital of New Jersey. The royal governor and his wife were members of St. Peter's. In 1765 Lady Franklin, wife of Governor William Franklin, presented a surplice to the church.

During the American Revolution the Reverend John Preston was rector of St. Peter's, and chaplain of the 26th Regiment of England's soldiers quartered in Berth Amboy. The rector, like the governor, was a loyal and staunchly loyal to the British cause. The congregation was divided on the issues of the war.

St. Peter's was a very active place during the Revolution. The church was occupied in turn by the American Army and the British Troop. The church was used as barracks and was severely damaged. What areas were not used for quartering men, were used for horses, with the pews having been removed.

The church was repaired and services continued for many years after the Revolution. In 1819 it was decided that the church was no longer able to suit their needs and it was decided to replace it with the present church.

The present church was completed in 1852. It was and continues to be a focal point in the community and somewhat of a landmark in the city. It is one of the best examples of Gothic Revival church architecture in Berth Amboy.

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St. Peter's Episcopal Church
Perth Amboy
Middlesex County
New Jersey 030

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St. Peter's has a collection of communion silver that was a gift from Queen Anne in 1706, that has remained in the church since that time.

While it is not a very high style Gothic, it resembles many churches of the period such as Christ Church in Elizabeth New Jersey, designed by Richard Upjohn. The congregation has survived and grown strong over the years, each time being able to replace an old and outdated structure with a more useful and aesthetically pleasing one. The people were very fortunate to have built a fine structure in 1852 and be able to maintain its place as the most attractive church in Perth Amboy.

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PAGE

1.

McGinnis, William C., History of St. Peter's Church . 1956

verbal data supplied by: Fred Merritt, Associate Warden, St. Peter's Church

Stanton, Phoebe P., The Gothic Revival and American Church Architecture,

An Episode in Taste 1850-1856, Baltimore: John Hopkins Press, 1968.

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Continuation Sheet)

STATE	New Jersey
COUNTY	Middlesex
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE
MAY 12 1977	DEC 8 1976

(Number all entries)

St. Peter's Episcopal Church
Perth Amboy
Middlesex County
New Jersey 034

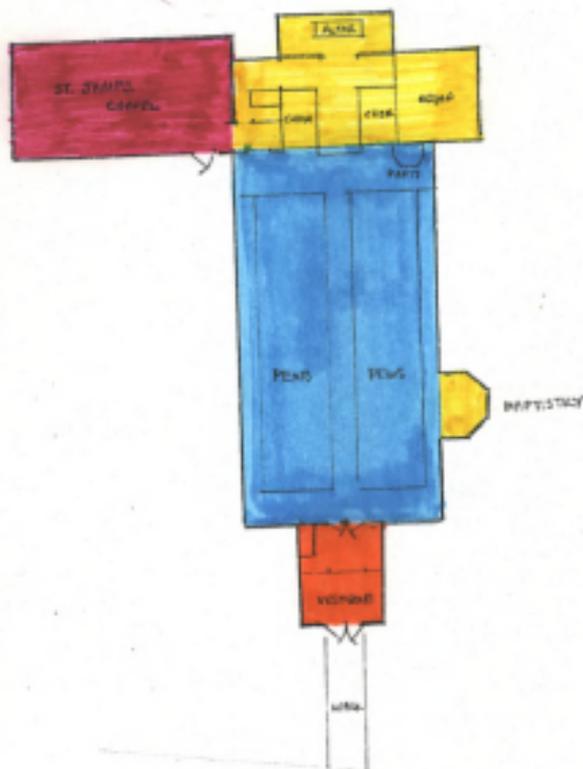
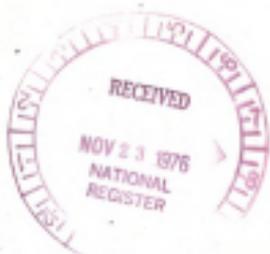
Description cont'd

The Parrish House of St. Peter's Episcopal Church was built in 1909 at a cost of \$12,000. The house could be said to resemble the English Tudor style. It is a 2½ story, 5 bay building of brick construction. It has a steep pitched gable roof and a central frontal gable. There is half timbering in the front porch and the gable ends. There are also lancet windows inscribed in each gable. There is a limestone watertable below the first floor windows. The window sills and the lintels are also limestone.

The Parrish House is located directly across the street from St. Peter's Church and the total acreage should be increased ½ acre to 3 acres total.



ST. PETER'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH
PERTH AMBOY
MIDDLESEX COUNTY
NEW JERSEY 034



- 1969
- 1961
- 1905
- 1849-52

MAY 12 1977