

NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK NOMINATION

NPS Form 10-900

USDI/NPS NRHP Registration Form (Rev. 8-86)

OMB No. 1024-0018

EMMANUEL EPISCOPAL CHURCH

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United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

1. NAME OF PROPERTY

Historic Name: EMMANUEL EPISCOPAL CHURCH

Other Name/Site Number:

2. LOCATION

Street & Number: 957 W. North Ave.

Not for publication: __

City/Town: Pittsburgh

Vicinity: __

State: PA

County: Allegheny

Code: 003

Zip Code: 15233

3. CLASSIFICATION

Ownership of Property

Private: X

Public-Local: __

Public-State: __

Public-Federal: __

Category of Property

Building(s): X

District: __

Site: __

Structure: __

Object: __

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing

1

__

__

__

__

Noncontributing

2 buildings

__ sites

__ structures

__ objects

2 Total

Number of Contributing Resources Previously Listed in the National Register: 1

Name of Related Multiple Property Listing: NA

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4. STATE/FEDERAL AGENCY CERTIFICATION

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, 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.

Signature of Certifying Official

Date

State or Federal Agency and Bureau

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

Signature of Commenting or Other Official

Date

State or Federal Agency and Bureau

5. 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 of Keeper

Date of Action

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6. FUNCTION OR USE

Historic: Religion Sub: Religious Facility

Current: Religion Sub: Religious Facility

7. DESCRIPTION

Architectural Classification: Late Victorian: Romanesque

MATERIALS:

Foundation: Sandstone

Walls: Brick

Roof: Slate

Other:

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Present and Historic Physical Appearance.

(The following description has been taken from the Historic American Buildings Survey report on the Emmanuel Episcopal Church [HABS No. PA 426] by John Milner, Architect, 1963.)

Designed by the Architect H. H. Richardson, the church was erected in 1884-1886. The builder was Henry Shenk. The original plans submitted by H.H. Richardson were for a stone building, approximately the same size as the present church, but designed using the central-tower theme (similar to the Trinity Church in Boston). The estimate of \$25,000 was found to be too high and the congregation rejected the plans. A new budget of \$12,000 was presented and plans for the smaller brick church were submitted and approved.

This building represents one of the finest later works of H.H. Richardson. Of special interest is the relatively simple design given vitality by the delicate brick detailing and the handsome laminated truss system. The building is a one story, simple rectangle with semicircular apse at one end with over-all dimensions of 49' 4" x 100' 0".

The walls are of red brick with various patterns, the richest being on the gable end. The semicircular apse continues the line of the exterior wall at the other end of the building. The battered bases continue the line of the roof slope. Bands of vertical brick (soldier's course) run across at the top and bottom of the windows and the brick at the edge of the gables are at right angles to the slope.

The roof is a steep gable with the ridge running north and south. It is slate covered with a molded copper ridge plate. The steep roof descends to relatively low sidewalls. The cornice has a three-course corbel at the eaves. The wood ovolo and cavetto cornice molding extends around the sides and apse of the building. On the east and west elevations, the roof also has three low slate-covered pedimented dormers about one-third up the gable roof. Ninety percent of the roof is still original.

The entrance facade (north elevation) has a high plain gable completely unadorned except for the patterned brickwork. Three low wide arches (the center being the largest) with imposts and plinths of rock-faced blocks of brownstone and broad archivolt of five bands of brick voisoirs are flush with the building plane. This front façade contains three arched lights made of Tiffany glass above the entrance doors, taller in proportion than the entrance arches, with brick banded voisoirs. There is a slot window in the center of the third level with a flat brick arch. Three stone steps with four risers and three treads lead to the large arched wood double doors painted red with large elaborate black iron hinges. An open narthex with balcony overhead is directly inside the door.

The south elevation has three arched lights at the center of the semicircular apse also with banded brick voisoirs. On the east and west elevations there are three groups of three arched windows with banded brick voisoirs and a single arched window at the north end. These windows are wood, two-light casement sashes with three fixed arched lights above. There are three dormers

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with wood single light curved triangular sash. All of these windows contain Romanesque stained glass.

The interior is rectangular in plan with a center aisle. The semicircular apse at the south end of the building is partially cut off from the nave by banks of organ pipes at either side. There is a narrow rectangular open narthex at the north end with a small enclosed winder stair on the west wall leading from the narthex to the balcony. The narthex is 10' x 44'8"; the nave is 60'6" x 44'8"; and the apse has a 22'4" radius.

The walls have marble reredos, designed and executed by the firm of Leake and Greene of Pittsburgh, with bands of Cosmatesque mosaic in the chancel. (The altar has the same white marble and Cosmatesque mosaic work as the walls.) In the nave, the walls are random width beaded board wainscoting with chair rail. Above the chair rail there is plaster, painted pink, up to the heavily molded wood cornice. There are radiators along outside walls as a part of the central, hot-water heating system. The handsome wood-truss system is exposed on the ceiling.

There are three arched doorways at the north end of the church with plain recessed wood architraves leading from the narthex to the chancel. A plain five-paneled door leads to the parish house at the southwest corner of the nave.

The side windows contain Romanesque stained glass, and Tiffany glass is in the triple lights in the entrance gable. The original artificial light in Emmanuel was from three gas chandeliers that hung over the center aisle. At a later date, they were replaced with electrified metal and glass cones that hung over the pews on either side of the center aisle. In the 1998 restoration these were removed and hidden spotlights in the rafters were used to light the interior.

The floors are modern vinyl tile in the nave and marble in the chancel. The "bright Turkey red carpet" that covered the floor, which was very worn, was removed in the 1998 restoration, and the original pine floors were exposed, sanded and treated with polyurethane.

Also during the 1998 restoration, the oak and ash furniture was removed and cleaned and then put back in their original positions. The original pew cushions, upholstered in dark green velveteen, were replaced at this time with cushions of lipstick red velveteen.

The drapery hangings behind the present original altar, were removed when Mrs. William Thaw, Jr. gave the reredos in 1892 in memory of her husband. At that time the chancel area was extended and the original pine floors raised up, three marble steps put in and the new floor covered in mosaic tile in keeping with the mosaic tile on the altar.

The magnificent three-foot high brass cross, given by Bishop Cortlandt Whitehead in August, 1886 is still on the altar and the brass eagle lectern made by Gorham in New York is still in place. The baptismal font and cover are original.

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The organ is still in place but non-functioning as it was too costly to restore it. The carved oak casing and pipes were cleaned in 1998 along with the choir chairs.

According to architectural historian Richard Gantz:

In March of 1884, after completion of the Albany City Hall, Richardson dispatched Frank Alden to Pittsburgh to supervise the construction of the Allegheny County Courthouse and Emmanuel Church. He continued to work on both projects after Richardson's death in 1886. In 1887 he left Richardson's firm to join the architectural firm of Longfellow and Harlow. While a partner in that firm, he was called in to correct the outwardly splayed east and west walls in 1888. It is believed that the footings underneath the bearing masonry walls began to rotate because Richardson underestimated the ceiling beams' weight and thrust. Alden did not attempt to correct this defect in the wall. His approach was to design a new parish house to be built against the east wall to act as a kind of buttress and counterbalance the splaying on that elevation. However, because the west elevation of the building is adjacent to a public street, he could not construct anything to help restrain the movement of the wall. Although no records exist of any remedial work on this wall, perhaps he placed some underpinning below the footing to help stabilize it. A close inspection of this elevation reveals no evidence of further rotation or movement from the date of its original construction. All of the mortar joints remain in place, and there is no deformation of any other building components.

The final cost for the construction of the parish house was \$3,900. This structure demonstrates the depth to which Alden came to understand Richardson's ideas in the years he spent with him. The rounded staircase exterior, sheer unornamented brickwork, and massing enhance the form of the famous Emmanuel apse. The parish house complements Richardson's masterpiece.¹

From a newspaper clipping in the Diocesan Records we have this description of the interior at the time of dedication:

Inside nothing was used in the finishing but white ash and antique oak. The pews were all constructed of the former wood. The roof timbers are all exposed, even to the jack rafters. The windows, which are of stained glass, diffuse a subdued and rosy light over the bright Turkey red carpet that covers floor. The chancel furniture is constructed of antique oak, and its simplicity is made more prominent and the effect greatly heightened by a background of dark crimson and old gold draperies. The organ, made in Boston, is considered almost perfect in tone. The church cost \$25,000 and all is paid with the exception of a little over \$2,000.²

¹ Gantz, Richard. "Historic Structures Report," 1996, pps. 4-5.

²Pittsburgh Chronicle Telegraph, March 8, 1886.

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To walk into the church now is to walk into the church as it was in 1892. The extreme financial straits of Emmanuel for many years had one benefit, there was no money for modernization. In spite of its present surroundings, Emmanuel remains an impressive presence in the neighborhood.

The boundary also contains two townhouses (955 and 953 West North Avenue) which were built separately at another time by persons not associated with the church. At a much later date Emmanuel purchased them because of their proximity to the church. One building is used as the church office and the other is the present rectory. The townhouses are non-contributing to the nomination.

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8. STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

Nationally: X Statewide: Locally:

Applicable National

Register Criteria: A ___ B ___ C X D ___

Criteria Considerations

(Exceptions): A ___ B ___ C ___ D ___ E ___ F ___ G ___

NHL Criteria: 4

NHL Theme(s): III. Expressing cultural values
5. architecture, landscape architecture, and urban design

Areas of Significance: Architecture
Social History
Art (windows)

Period(s) of Significance: 1884 - 1886

Significant Dates:

Significant Person(s):

Cultural Affiliation:

Architect/Builder: Henry Hobson Richardson

Historic Context: XVI. Architecture
F. Romanesque Revival
2. Richardsonian

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State Significance of Property, and Justify Criteria, Criteria Considerations, and Areas and Periods of Significance Noted Above.

Henry Hobson Richardson was one of the great architects that emerged from 19th century industrialization in America. His national reputation was established with the construction of Trinity Church (1872-77) in Boston. He was chosen to design Pittsburgh's Allegheny County Court House and Jail in January of 1884 and concurrently the small elegant Emmanuel Episcopal Church. The simplicity and strength of this late work anticipate the later development of the Arts and Crafts tradition.

Emmanuel Episcopal Church began as a mission in 1867 by a group of ladies in Allegheny, located across the river from Pittsburgh, who felt there was a need for a Sunday School. In the beginning, Emmanuel Mission, as it was called, met in homes and then in rented rooms. The pupils were primarily the children of English workmen at the local factories in Manchester, then a section of Allegheny City and now the Northside.

Emmanuel Mission grew to a nucleus of 76 people who received a charter in September of 1868 from the Court of Common Pleas of Allegheny County to incorporate Emmanuel Episcopal Church in the name of the Rector, the Rev. William A. Fuller, the church wardens and vestrymen. In 1869 a frame church was built at the corner of Metropolitan and Juniata Streets in Manchester.

In 1875 the Rev. Marison Byllesby was called to Emmanuel. The congregation was growing and prosperous. Many large homes had been built nearby and post Civil War Pittsburgh saw expansion in every direction.

The little frame church was not large enough to accommodate the congregation physically nor did it reflect the new economic status of many members. In 1882 a building committee was formed with Malcolm Hay, a prominent lawyer and Postmaster General of the United States and a member of the congregation, as chairman. In 1883 they bought the plot of land for \$750 at the corner of Allegheny and North Avenues where Emmanuel now stands.

The congregation of Emmanuel was young and prosperous. They wanted something that was new and fashionable and different, and they wanted an up and coming architect like Henry Hobson Richardson. He had already executed a number of designs for buildings that were quite well known; his Trinity Church in Boston, built in 1872, was nationally famous.

Richardson's first plan was declined by the Vestry as being too expensive, and a second design was drawn which was accepted. Henry Shenk of Erie, Pennsylvania became the contractor and the church was built in 1885 for \$12,000 and dedicated in March, 1886. Richardson was too ill to attend and died a month later.

With the new building, Emmanuel became a "society church" with elaborate weddings, a large Sunday School, young people's group and choir. However, during the next twenty years things

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began to change. People began moving out of the mansions because of the proximity of the factories. An address on Ridge Avenue, Allegheny was not the smartest address anymore. In 1907 Allegheny merged with Pittsburgh, and the Northside of Pittsburgh, as it had now become, became filled with the small homes of working class people as many of the larger homes were torn down. The area then turned from residential to commercial.

In 1930, with no jobs available on the Northside, the Rev. A.W.S. Garden, then the Rector, secured temporary wages from the Allegheny County Relief Society to pay for unemployed men to excavate the ground underneath the church and build an undercroft and kitchen. In 1934 Garden Hall, as it was called, was used as a social service center by all the churches in the Manchester area to distribute food and clothing to the needy.

After World War II, times were hard for the Emmanuel congregation but they never closed the church's doors although the congregation dropped to a few families. Today Emmanuel has a dedicated, racially mixed congregation who take part in the life of the area which is now called Allegheny West.

The brickwork, still in its original condition, makes Emmanuel so outstanding and a tribute to the men who did it. As Margaret Henderson Floyd says in her book "H.H. Richardson, A Genius for Architecture":

The Emmanuel facade is a simple wall of finely articulated flush brickwork with three large entrance arches on the ground floor and three round-arched lancet windows in the gable above....Emmanuel represented for Richardson another opportunity for exploitation of sheer brick as an alternative to his more characteristic quarry-faced ashlar.³

James Van Trump, writing of Emmanuel, says:

The church is a simple rectangle covered by a huge roof whose sharply sloping exterior descends to relatively low side walls, the battered bases of which continue the slope of the roof. On both sides, the great expanses of slate are relieved by three low, stunted dormers, which help to light the cavernous interior. The entrance-facade is a plain high gable, completely unadorned save for the patterning of the brickwork, especially the brick banding of the voussoirs of the loggia arches and the three windows above.

These flat walls, so intricately and delicately incised, seem, in full sunlight, like the rippling surfaces of a stream touched by the wind and they form a dramatic contrast to the intense, mysterious shadows of the entrance arches which are hollowed out like caves at the base of a cliff.⁴

³Floyd, Margaret Henderson. *Henry Hobson Richardson; A Genius For Architecture*. New York. Monacelli Press, 1997.

⁴ Van Trump, James. *Life and Architecture in Pittsburgh*. Pittsburgh, PA. Pittsburgh History and Landmarks Foundation, 1983. pps. 159-165.

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Walter Kidney in his book, "Landmark Architecture", says of the brickwork:

Such ornamentation as the building has comes mainly from the treatment of the brickwork. The entrance arches are laid in five rings, with a narrower outer ring; a very conventional way of building an arch in brick. Above these, to the sill level of the upper windows, the bricks are laid in a basket-weave pattern. Other levels in the wall are marked by soldier courses, laid with bricks on end, and the gable coping is formed by tumbled work, with bricks perpendicular to the gable slope and making tooth-like indentations into the main gable area. At the top is a rounded capstone. And that is all.⁵

In his book, "Pittsburgh : An Urban Portrait," Franklin Toker says:

Richardson here ignored the two venerable crutches of American church design, the spire and the transept, and conceived Emmanuel with nothing more than the vividness of the brickwork and the power of a severe triangular gable set low on an arched and battered base. The brickwork designs are richer than any Richardson had designed before, which shows his trust in the skilled Pittsburgh laborers who executed them. The designs called for five concentric circles of brick around each of the three entrance arches, a zone of complex basketweave on the gable wall above, and *muissetanden*, or "mouse teeth," infill triangles along the gable edge (Richardson surely copied this feature from Dutch Colonial architecture in the Hudson River Valley, which he knew from his work on the New York State capitol at Albany). To the shape, texture and color of the exterior shell Richardson added his expertise at rhythmic groupings, so that the interior of the church, with its three bays demarcated by laminated wood arches, is perfectly expressed in the one-over-three rhythm of the exterior windows. Entering this dynamic space, the worshipper feels enwrapped in a spiritual cocoon.⁶

Several prominent architectural historians have written about Emmanuel Episcopal Church.

Margaret Henderson Floyd writes at length about Emmanuel. Says Floyd,

Although Richardson designed several unexecuted ecclesiastical buildings such as Albany Cathedral, he built only two more churches following

⁵Kidney, Walter C. *Landmark Architecture: Pittsburgh and Allegheny County*. Pittsburgh, PA. Pittsburgh History and Landmarks Foundation, 1985

⁶Toker, Franklin. *Pittsburgh: An Urban Portrait*. Pittsburgh and London. University of Pittsburgh Press, 1986. pps.167-168.

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Trinity Church, Boston. The second, Immanuel Baptist Church, Newton, Massachusetts (1884), executed in quarry-faced ashlar and now much altered from a damaging fire in the 1960s, was developed from a rejected design for the first Emmanuel Episcopal Church, Pittsburgh (1883-86), for which the final proposal incorporating sheer brick surfacing was accepted and implemented. Richardson had already been successful in the competition for the Allegheny County Courthouse and Jail when the project for a small Episcopal Church came to the firm in 1883. Richardson's first designs were of quarry-faced ashlar, as were his other buildings, but the original estimate of \$25,000 was rejected by the congregation. Richardson's final design was bid at \$12,000, a savings achieved by changing the exterior material to brick and by eliminating the tower and all sculpture. The reductive geometry of the executed building has generated its reputation as one of Richardson's most memorable designs, "the Church Beyond Fashion."⁷

James F. O'Gorman writes of Emmanuel,

Although not thought of primarily as a "church architect," Richardson in twenty years did produce well over a dozen executed and projected ecclesiastical designs. They were of considerable significance in his career, and in our estimate of it.... Trinity Church, Boston, is the key monument of his early maturity, and his first building of national importance. The Albany Cathedral project was among his most discussed creations in the nineteenth century, and the little brick Emmanuel Church in Pittsburgh among his most praised in the twentieth⁸

Henry Russell Hitchcock says of Emmanuel:

Emmanuel Church in Allegheny County (now part of Pittsburgh) was commissioned in August 1883. Although it is very small and simple, it is certainly one of Richardson's best later works...Altogether this church is very superior to most of the more considerable work Richardson designed in this year.⁹

Perhaps because it is small and simple that Emmanuel has managed to survive; much larger and grander churches in Pittsburgh have been torn down. Franklin Toker touches on this point. Says Toker,

⁷Floyd, Margaret Henderson, *ibid.* p.227.

⁸ O'Gorman, James F. *Selected Drawings: H.H. Richardson and His Office – A Centennial of His Move to Boston 1874.* Boston. Harvard College Library, 1974. P.41.

⁹ Hitchcock, Henry Russell. *The Architecture of H.H. Richardson and His Times.* New York. Museum of Modern Art, 1936. p.255.

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H.H. Richardson's Emmanuel Episcopal Church (NE corner Allegheny and W. North Aves, 1886) looks at first glance to be nothing more than the power plant for Calvary. (Calvary Methodist Church located a block away) This completely unpretentious building (its neighbors call it the bake-oven) cost only \$25,000 to construct--one percent of the expense lavished on his courthouse. The two buildings are chronologically intertwined, but whereas Richardson's courthouse explores the integration of a complex series of shifting geometrics, Emmanuel is reductionist and minimalist, perhaps more than any American church of the nineteenth century.¹⁰

Perhaps the last word on the significance of Emmanuel should go to the late James Van Trump, Pittsburgh author and architectural historian. In an article entitled, "The Church Beyond Fashion: A Discussion of Henry Hobson Richardson's Emmanuel Episcopal Church, Pittsburgh, PA," he writes,

Although H.H. Richardson (1838-1886), one of America's great architects, designed several church buildings--the most famous of which is Trinity in Boston--the small and inexpensive Emmanuel is not only one of his best ecclesiastical structures, but it ranks as among the most forceful and interesting works of his later career. The largely unadorned structure has an elemental grandeur, a monumental simplicity, which was not eminently characteristic of the Eclectic age which produced it, but which today commends it highly to the modern aesthetic view. Beyond fashion and beyond the caprices of the changing stylistic seasons, it seems to possess a curious timeless serenity, more than a hint of architectural immortality.

He concludes,

For Henry Hobson Richardson it (Emmanuel) is not the least memorial to his talent and for us it remains an embodiment and a reminder of eternal architectural virtues.¹¹

¹⁰ Franklin Toker, , *Pittsburgh, An Urban Portrait*. Pennsylvania State University, State College, PA, 1986.

¹¹ Van Trump, *ibid.* pps 159-165.

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9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

MANUSCRIPTS

Gantz, Richard. "Historic Structures Report: Emmanuel Episcopal Church," 1996.

Richardson Papers, Houghton Library, Harvard University.

Archives of Emmanuel Episcopal Church which includes Vestry Minutes

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Seventy-fifth Anniversary of Emmanuel Episcopal Church, 1886 to 1961; the Rev. Charles P. Martin, Rector.

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Floyd, Margaret Henderson, *Architecture After Richardson*. University of Chicago Press, 1994.

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Van Trump, James, *Life and Architecture in Pittsburgh*. Pittsburgh, PA. Pittsburgh History and Landmarks Foundation, 1983.

Van Trump, James D. *The Romanesque Revival in Pittsburgh*. Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians, Vol.XVI, Otober, 1957.

Various 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: #HABS 426
- Recorded by Historic American Engineering Record: #

Primary Location of Additional Data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State Agency
- Federal Agency
- Local Government
- University Houghton Library, Harvard University
- Other (Specify Repository): Pittsburgh History and Landmarks Foundation
One Station Square
Pittsburgh PA, 15219

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10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

Acreeage of Property: Less than an acre

UTM References:	Zone	Easting	Northing
	17	583170	4478490

Verbal Boundary Description:

All that certain lot or piece of ground situated in the Sixth Ward of Allegheny in the county of Allegheny and the state of Pennsylvania bounded and described as follows: Beginning on the eastwardly side of Market Street at the distance of one hundred feet northwardly from Washington Avenue and thence extending northwardly along Market Street twenty feet and thence extending back eastwardly parallel with Washington Avenue one hundred feet to Laurel Alley twenty feet thence westwardly parallel with Washington Avenue one hundred feet to Market Street at the place of beginning.

The street names were changed for Allegheny was a separate city when Emmanuel was built. When it was incorporated into the city of Pittsburgh in 1907, the sixth ward became the present 22nd ward, Market Street became North Avenue, Washington Avenue became Allegheny Avenue and Laurel Alley became Buttercup Way.

Boundary Justification:

The boundary includes the church and attached parish house, which have historically been known as Emmanuel Episcopal Church and which maintain their historic integrity; and two non-contributing townhouses built separately at a later time and not associated with Emmanuel Episcopal Church at the time of their construction.

NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK NOMINATION

NPS Form 10-900

USDI/NPS NRHP Registration Form (Rev. 8-86)

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EMMANUEL EPISCOPAL CHURCH

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United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

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