

GRACE EPISCOPAL CHURCH MEMORIAL HALL, 155-24 90TH Avenue, Queens
Built, 1912; architects, Upjohn and Conable

Landmark Site: Borough of Queens Tax Map Block 9754, Lot 7

On February 9, 2010, the Landmarks Preservation Commission held a public hearing on the proposed designation as a Landmark of the Grace Episcopal Church Memorial Hall and the proposed designation of the related Landmark Site (Item No. 2). The hearing was duly advertised in accordance with the provisions of law. There were four speakers in favor of designation, including representatives of the Historic Districts Council, Four Borough Neighborhood Preservation Alliance and Queens Preservation Council. There were no speakers in opposition to designation. The Commission received three letters in support of designation from State Senator Shirley L. Hunter, Queens Borough President Helen M. Marshall and the Greater Jamaica Development Corporation and one email in support of the designation from a representative of the Rego-Park Preservation Council.

Summary

Grace Episcopal Church Memorial Hall is part of one of the most historic church complexes in New York City. Grace Episcopal Church was founded in 1702 and the present English Gothic Revival style church building, designed by Dudley Field, was built in 1861-62 and enlarged in 1901-02 by Cady, Berg & See. Surrounding the church is a graveyard in which are buried members of many families important to the history of the city, including Rufus King. (The church and graveyard were designated a New York City Landmark in 1967). Northeast of the church building, behind the graveyard, is the Memorial Hall, constructed in 1912 to meet the needs of the growing congregation for a meeting place and social center. The Memorial Hall included a gymnasium, an auditorium, meeting rooms and offices. These facilities were needed as the role of the church expanded from solely providing religious services to include educational and social services. On the 250th anniversary of the founding of the church, the Memorial Hall was being used by 21 different organizations. Designed by the prominent architectural firm of Upjohn and Conable in Tudor Gothic Revival style to complement the church building, the brick building's symmetrical massing and flanking wings add a picturesque element to the church complex.



DESCRIPTION AND ANALYSIS

Development of Jamaica¹

Jamaica, one of the oldest settlements within the boundaries of New York City, developed into the leading commercial and entertainment center of Queens County. The southern part of the area was inhabited by a Native American tribe called Jameco (or Jemaco) when the first Europeans arrived there in 1655. In 1656, Robert Jackson applied to Governor Stuyvesant for a patent and “purchased” ten acres of land from the native tribe² and called the settlement Rusdorp.

Following the transfer of power from the Dutch to the English in 1664, Rusdorp was renamed Jamaica, after the original Indian inhabitants of the region. Queens County (incorporating present-day Queens and Nassau Counties) was chartered in 1683. The English established Jamaica as the governmental center of Queens County, with a court, county clerk’s office, and parish church (Grace Episcopal Church; the present structure is a designated New York City Landmark). Outside the town center, Jamaica was largely an area of farm fields and grazing land for cattle. A 1698 Census of Queens County showed a total population of 3,355 whites and 199 blacks. Although early records indicate the existence of slaves in Jamaica, throughout its history Jamaica also had a free black population. One of its most well-known African-American residents was Wilson Rantus who was born in Jamaica in 1807. Well-educated, he started a school for black children and became involved in the effort, along with African-Americans Samuel V. Berry of Jamaica and Henry Amberman of Flushing to achieve the right to vote for African-Americans.³

New York State incorporated Jamaica as a village in 1814. Jamaica’s central location in Queens County and the extensive transportation network that developed in the town during the 19th century resulted in the transformation of the community into the major commercial center for Queens County and much of eastern Long Island. It was the arrival of the railroads that began this transformation.⁴ The roads and rail lines connecting Jamaica with other sections of Queens County, with Brooklyn to the west, eastern Long Island, and ferries to New York City had a tremendous impact. Jamaica’s farmland was soon being subdivided into streets and building lots, and new homes were erected.

By the turn of the century, Jamaica’s importance as a commercial area became evident in the impressive buildings beginning to appear on Jamaica Avenue, most notably the Beaux-Arts style Jamaica Savings Bank, 161-02 Jamaica Avenue (Hough & Deuell, 1897-98, a designated New York City Landmark). After Jamaica was incorporated into the borough of Queens and became a part of New York City on January 1, 1898, additional transportation improvements brought increasing numbers of people.⁵ As a result, the population of Jamaica quadrupled between 1900 and 1920. Grace Episcopal Church built its Memorial Hall during this time.

It was during the 1920s, when the major mass transit links were in place, and during a period when private automobile ownership was growing at an extraordinary rate, that Jamaica experienced its major expansion as a commercial and entertainment center. By 1925, Jamaica Avenue between 160th Street and 168th Street had the highest assessed valuation in Queens County.⁶

During the 1920s and early 1930s, many small-scale commercial buildings were erected in Jamaica, as well as several major office and commercial structures, including the Jamaica Chamber of Commerce Building, 89-31 161st Street (George W. Conable, 1928-29, a designated New York City Landmark); the Suffolk Title Guarantee Company Building, 90-04 161st Street (Dennison & Hiron, 1929, a designated New York City Landmark); and the J. Kurtz & Sons Store, 162-25 Jamaica Avenue (Allmendinger & Schlendorf, 1931, a designated New York City Landmark). In addition, Jamaica developed into a significant entertainment center. By the mid-1930s, there were at least eight movie theaters on or just off of Jamaica Avenue, and there were over 60 restaurants, bars and clubs, ranging from small ethnic taverns to elegant restaurants.

History of Grace Episcopal Church⁷

Grace Church dates its founding from 1702 when a missionary minister was sent out by the English organization, Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts, in response to a request from a group of Jamaica residents. It is one of the country's earliest Anglican (now Episcopal) parishes, the oldest parish on Long Island and, in New York State, second in age only to Trinity Church in Manhattan. In 1699 a stone church was built in Jamaica pursuant to the Assembly Church Building Act and was supported by compulsory payment, but by the time an Anglican missionary minister arrived a Presbyterian congregation occupied the church building. A dispute ensued between the "established" Anglican congregation and the "dissenting" Presbyterian congregation over the use of the church building and parsonage.⁸ At the time the congregation built its first church building in 1734 they had been meeting for several years in the county courthouse. In 1733 "Martha Heathcote of City of New York, widow of Colonel Caleb Heathcote" (and other heirs) deeded half an acre of land to "Rev. Mr. Thomas Colgan, present rector"⁹ for the purpose of erecting a church.¹⁰ Caleb Heathcote¹¹ was made a member of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts in 1704¹² and was mayor of New York City from 1711 to 1714. A frame church building was completed in 1734 and named Grace Church. In 1822, the first church building was demolished and replaced by larger frame church building. The church land was enlarged by gifts and purchases throughout the 19th century.¹³ On the morning of New Years Day in 1861, the second church building was destroyed by a fire that was believed to have originated in the flues of the furnace. The present English Gothic Revival style sandstone church building is the third on the site and was constructed 1861-62 to the designs of architect Dudley Field, and enlarged in 1901-02 by the architectural firm of Cady, Berg & See.

Farmers in Jamaica relied on enslaved African-Americans as agricultural laborers until the first decades of the 19th century, and several members of Grace Episcopal Church owned slaves. The register of the Reverend John Poyer¹⁴ records the baptism of African-American slaves as early as May 1714.¹⁵ There were also free African-Americans living in Jamaica in the early 18th century; one of the church's communicants in 1723-27 is noted to be "Judith, the negress."¹⁶ The Reverend Poyer baptized a free African-American woman and her three daughters in September 1731.¹⁷ Onderdonk, in his history of the church, notes that four new pews were put in the belfry for black worshippers in about 1803.¹⁸ A "Sunday school for colored children" was established as a week-day school as early as 1837 with a student body of 25 boys and 35 girls.¹⁹

The Reverend Samuel Seabury, Jr.²⁰ succeeded the Reverend Colgan and was rector of Grace Church from 1757 to 1766. Seabury was a loyalist during the American Revolution and in 1783 was consecrated in Scotland as the first bishop of the Episcopalian Church in America.

A large part of the church property is occupied by a burial ground. Some of the tombstones date from the 18th century. Burials represent many families important to the history of the city, including Van Rensselaer, Gracie, Delafield and Van Cortland. Rufus King, whose home is preserved in nearby Kings Park (a designated New York City Landmark), is buried in Grace Church Graveyard. He and members of his family in two succeeding generations were parishioners and active supporters of Grace Church. Rufus King²¹ was elected by New York State in 1789 to the first United States Senate. In 1796 he became minister to England by appointment of President Washington. His sons, Charles King, president of Columbia College (now Columbia University) from 1849 to 1864, and John Alsop King, governor of New York from 1857 to 1859, are also buried in the graveyard. A Sunday School was established in 1840 and in 1856 a Sunday School building was built on Parsons Boulevard on land deeded by John Alsop King. In 1873, after his death, his executors and heirs deeded additional land that included part of the graveyard. The Sunday School building was used until the Memorial Hall was built.

Grace Church established six mission churches in Queens between 1874 and 1926.²² In 1902, the Diocese of Long Island erected “St. Stephen’s Chapel for the colored” on the corner of Grand and North First Streets (now 168th Street and 90th Avenue) in Jamaica. The efforts to build St. Stephen’s were aided by the vestry of Grace Church. It was under the care of the Reverend H. S. McDuffy, “superintendent of colored missions” in the diocese.²³

Memorial Hall

The congregation of Grace Episcopal Church grew as the population of Jamaica grew, and the need for a parish house became apparent. Several attempts were made to build a parish house before the present structure was constructed. The Reverend Dr. Horatio Oliver Ladd, rector of Grace Church, wrote an article entitled “The Uses of a Parish House” in the church’s newsletter, *Grace Church Chimes*, in October 1899. He notes that the church is no longer simply an organization of religious services but its sphere now includes local missionaries, Sunday school instruction, guilds to clothe and feed the needy, industrial schools, youth activities, exercise, recreation and mental and moral instruction. He states that a parish house would include a large assembly room, gymnasium, guild rooms, library, reading room, rector’s room and reception room, and kitchen. Prominent Brooklyn architect Albert Parfitt was engaged to draw plans for a parish house. The building cost was estimated to be \$25,000 and the vestry voted against the proposal because of the cost.²⁴

In 1903-04 a renewed effort was made to build a memorial parish house with rooms named for deceased friends and citizens, and memorial tablets in the front hall with the names of donors. Although some funds were collected, the Reverend Ladd resigned as rector and the vestry refused to authorize the use of parish funds or credit for the purpose of building a parish house.²⁵ Efforts continued to build a parish house and Parfitt’s floor plans were printed in the *Grace Church Chimes* in February 1905 and

February 1906. It was noted that the location of the parish hall was to be decided by the vestry.²⁶

In 1911 under the rectorship of the Reverend Rockland Tyng Homans another attempt was made to construct a memorial parish house. A small booklet was published stating that the proposed Memorial House was “intended to stand for the present and future generations, expressing the lives and characters of those who in the past were connected with the town of Jamaica.” Proposed floor plans that were drawn by architect Harry E. Osborne²⁷ were included and the cost was estimated to be \$40,000.²⁸ In the following year, the Reverend Homans was successful in getting a parish hall designed by Upjohn and Conable built.

Architects Upjohn and Conable²⁹

Hobart B. Upjohn (1876-1949), son of Richard M. Upjohn and grandson of Richard Upjohn, attended Brooklyn Polytechnic Institute and the Stevens Institute of Technology.³⁰ After graduating from Stevens with a degree in mechanical engineering in 1899 he worked as engineer. In 1905 while working in the architectural office of Eidlitz & McKenzie, he received a letter addressed to his father (who had died in 1903) from the All Souls’ Universalist Church in Watertown, New York asking for a design for a new church. Upjohn designed a Gothic Revival style church, went to Watertown with his plans and received the commission. He left the engineering profession to become an architect at this time and opened an office. He is best known for his many designs of distinguished residences, churches and college buildings. These include the All Souls’ Unitarian Church at Lexington Avenue and 80th Street and buildings on the North Carolina State University campus. The first churches he designed were in the Gothic Revival style but later in his career he also designed churches in the Colonial Revival style. He was president of the New York Chapter of the American Institute of Architects, and the author of many textbooks and monographs on architecture.

George W. Conable (1866-1933) graduated from the Cortland State Normal School and Cornell University. Prior to establishing his own practice, he worked in the offices of C. P. H. Gilbert, Barney & Chapman and Ernest Flagg.³¹ While working for Flagg, he was in charge of the plans and working drawings for the Singer Building.³² He is particularly well known his designs of churches and hospitals, including Trinity Lutheran of Long Island City, St. Paul’s Lutheran in the Bronx, and Kingston Avenue Hospital in Brooklyn. Among the other notable structures designed by Conable is the Jamaica Chamber of Commerce Building in Queens.

Upjohn and Conable were partners from about 1908 to 1914 and maintained an office in Manhattan. One of their best known works is the bathing pavilions and other related buildings at Oakland Beach, Rye Park, Rye, New York.

Memorial Hall Design and Construction

The Grace Episcopal Church Memorial Hall was built in 1912. It was designed by the architectural firm of Upjohn and Conable³³ in the Tudor Gothic Revival style to complement the design of the existing church building, and was built at the far end of the graveyard in the northeast corner of the block at 90th Avenue and Parsons Boulevard.³⁴ The hall provided a meeting place and social center for the congregation, including a

gymnasium, an auditorium, meeting rooms and offices.³⁵ The estimated cost of construction was \$35,500.³⁶

The Memorial Hall was designed with architectural features from two variants of the Medieval Revival style: the Tudor and Gothic Revivals. Both styles were popular during the early 20th century but the Gothic Revival style was employed mostly in religious and educational buildings, while the Tudor Revival style was most often used for residential buildings. Architects during this period frequently employed an eclectic mix of different historical styles. During the middle of the 19th century, Alexander Jackson Davis and Andrew Jackson Downing promoted Gothic Revival style residential buildings. The Memorial Hall, although an institutional building, has many characteristics of residential buildings built in the Gothic and Tudor Revival styles, especially at the flanking wings with its intersecting gables. Hobart Upjohn used the Tudor Revival style several other times for parish houses associated with churches built in the English Gothic Revival style, including the West Side Presbyterian Church (1925-27) in Englewood, New Jersey, and Christ Church (1927-30) in Fitchburg, Mass.³⁷

Some of the features of the Memorial Hall that are found in both Gothic and Tudor Revival styles buildings include steeply pitched gable roofs with intersecting gables and bargeboard, and bay window with crenulated parapet. Tudor Revival style features of the Memorial Hall include Tudor-arched window and door openings, grouped leaded-glass and casement windows, some with transoms, paneled wood doors, materials with different colors and textures (red brick, limestone, wood and mock half-timbering), and large brick chimneys with decorative brickwork and multiple chimney pots. The label moldings above the windows are characteristic of the Gothic Revival style (although they are usually only hood moldings and do not form continuous bands in Gothic Revival style buildings), as are the buttresses and entrance portico with its characteristic pendant and quatrefoils. The symmetry of the facades of the Memorial Hall is not typically characteristic of the picturesque Gothic or Tudor Revival styles; but symmetrical facades are often found on Gothic Revival style buildings. The interior layout of the building may have influenced the symmetry, with the center portion of building containing the large auditorium/ gymnasium and the flanking wings containing the smaller meeting spaces and offices; although a 1924 article by Upjohn about Sunday school buildings and parish houses showed asymmetrical floor plans.³⁸

Subsequent History

In 1952, on the 250th anniversary of the founding of Grace Episcopal Church, the Memorial Hall was being used by 21 different organizations.³⁹ The church remains an active congregation whose demographics have changed as the surrounding neighborhood has changed. The Reverend Joseph H. Titus, upon his retirement after 33 years as rector of Grace Church in 1963, noted that when he came to Grace Church in 1930 there were only two or three black families but at the time of his retirement almost 500 of the 650 families in the congregation were black. He noted that they were primarily Anglicans from the West Indies.⁴⁰ The Memorial Hall still functions as a parish hall for Grace Episcopal Church. The building is largely intact except for the replacement of some of the window sash, which were arch-headed and square-headed multi-pane leaded-glass casement sash, with transoms at the first and second stories.

Description

The Grace Church Memorial Hall is a two story and basement building with gable roofs and has two flanking wings at the north and south facades containing two and one-half stories and basement and intersecting gable roofs. The building is constructed of red brick laid in common bond and has slate gable roofs with bargeboard and brackets. There is a continuous stone course around the building between the basement and first story. The windows (except at the basement, the bay at the east facade, and the west facade) are recessed with brick surrounds. All the arch-headed windows and doors have Tudor arches.

North Facade (90th Avenue): The center portion of the facade has a side facing gable with wings at either end that have front facing intersecting gables. The basement has multi-pane wood casement windows at the east wing, wood casement windows at the center portion, and frosted, wire-glass wood casement windows at the west wing, all with stone lintels and sills. The east wing and center portion basement windows have non-historic metal security grilles. There is an entrance portico at the western end of the center portion. The portico is set on a brick-and-stone base and is constructed of wood with brick infill and has a slate gable roof. It has a Tudor-arch-headed entry with a pendant and carved quatrefoils. The roof has bargeboard and is topped by a wooden cross. The entrance has arch-headed wood-paneled double-leaf doors with leaded-glass windows with mock half-timbering above the door. A stoop with three bluestone steps (second step also has non-historic red clay tile) and metal railings lead up to the entrance portico. The steps are painted gray and yellow. Above the door within the portico is a modern light fixture. Behind the portico is a pitched slate roof. Above the portico is an arch-headed window opening with a brick header surround, continuous stone band in the shape of label moldings above, a stone sill and four leaded-glass windows. The center portion of the facade has four two-story windows that are similar to the window above the portico but each one has three leaded-glass windows and all are covered with non-historic acrylic glass.⁴¹ The windows are separated by stepped brick buttresses that have stone coping. The flanking intersecting wings have arch-headed window openings at the first, second and attic stories with brick header lintels (with stone imposts at the first and second stories), stone sills and replacement metal window sash. There is a multi-pane wood casement window with stone lintel and sill at the basement and an arch-headed window opening with double-hung metal sash, brick header lintel and stone sill at the second story of the return wall of the projecting west wing. There are five metal leaders. At the easternmost end of the facade there is a stone cornerstone with the inscription "Memorial House Grace Parish" at the basement and a plaque with the inscription "Grace Church Memorial House" above.

South Facade (rear facade): This facade is similar to the 90th Avenue facade except that there is no entrance portico and the second story windows in the wings do not have stone imposts. The entrance is located in the lower half of the westernmost two-story window opening in the center recessed portion of the facade and consists of double-leaf wood doors with small windows and a metal landing and stairs with metal railings. The pickets in the railings form Tudor arches. The basement windows are multi-pane wood casement in the western wing (the two westernmost windows appear to have replacement sash), single-pane wood casement with metal grilles in the center portion, and multi-pane wood casement with metal grilles in the eastern wing. The windows in the projecting wings

above the basement have metal replacement sash. The four two-story stained-glass windows in the center portion of the facade are covered with non-historic acrylic glass.⁴² There is a metal vent/alarm at the eastern end of the center portion of the facade, a white electrical box, light fixture and exposed conduit at the first story windows in the western projecting wing, metal grilles at the first story windows in the eastern wing, wires attached across the facade in the center portion and eastern wing above the basement windows, and two metal leaders.

East Facade (Parsons Boulevard): There is an intersecting gable at the center with an angular bay window at the basement, first and second stories. The bay has four multi-pane windows at the basement with stone lintels that form a continuous band and stone sills and two single and a triple window at the first and second stories. The second and third stories of the bay are constructed of wood with panels between the two stories. The bay has a crenulated wood parapet. Above the bay window in the intersecting gable is a triple window in an arch-headed opening with brick header lintel and stone sill. There are windows with stone lintels and sills flanking the bay at the basement and arch-headed window openings with brick header lintels (with stone impost at the first story) and stone sills at the first and second stories. On either side of these windows are large brick chimneys that are capped by three chimney pots. The chimneys had stone coping between the first and second stories and decorative brickwork in the shaft. All the windows have metal replacement sash except the southernmost basement window, which is a multi-pane wood casement. The facade has a metal alarm box below the northernmost second story window in the bay, four metal leaders and metal window grilles at the basement and first story.

West Facade: The northern portion of the facade is recessed with a Tudor-arched entrance door and one concrete step. The door has a stone lintel that forms a continuous band across the facade. There is a metal door and three square-headed multi-pane wood windows, all in arch-headed openings with brick header lintels, at the basement. The southern portion of the facade has a double front-facing gable roof and asymmetrical placement of arch-headed window openings with brick header lintels and stone sills except for a square-headed window opening with stone lintel and sill at the first story below the stone course. All of the windows have replacement metal sash except the square-headed window opening, which has a twelve-pane wood casement window and the other first story window, which has square-headed multi-pane wood casement sash in an arch-headed opening. There are two small window openings in the gables with vents. The facade has two metal leaders, a metal fire escape from the southernmost attic window, and exposed conduit with light fixtures above the second story windows. There is a brick chimney and an antenna at the southernmost end of the facade.

Site Features: There is a chain link fence at the north (90th Avenue) facade with a metal gate at the westernmost end and a historic wrought iron fence at the east (Parsons Boulevard) facade that continues around the cemetery. There are two metal fences (about three feet deep) perpendicular to the facade on either side of the entrance and a chain link fence perpendicular to the building at the west facade between the two southernmost bays. The south (rear) facade of the Memorial Hall is adjacent to the church cemetery and the west facade is adjacent to a parking lot of the neighboring building. There is landscaping at the front and eastern facades and a concrete areaway with one slab of bluestone and a concrete well at the west facade.

Report prepared by
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NOTES

¹ The section is taken almost in its entirety from Landmarks Preservation Commission, *La Casina Designation Report* (LP-1940) prepared by Andrew S. Dolkart (New York: City of New York, 1996).

² The Native American “system of land tenure was that of occupancy for the needs of a group” and those sales that the Europeans deemed to be outright transfers of property were to the Native Americans closer to leases or joint tenancy contracts where they still had rights to the property. Reginald Pelham Bolton, *New York City in Indian Possession*, 2nd ed. (New York: Museum of the American Indian, Heye Foundation, 1920, reprint 1975), 7, 14-15.

³ LPC, *Jamaica High School Designation Report* (LP-2316) prepared by Virginia Kurshan (New York: City of New York, 2009), 2.

⁴ In the early 19th century, the King’s Highway, which led from Brooklyn to Queens along the route of an Indian trail, had become a toll road, known as the Brooklyn, Jamaica & Flatbush Turnpike. In 1832, the Brooklyn and Jamaica Railroad Company was established. It purchased the turnpike and began construction of a rail line. Two years later the Long Island Railroad (LIRR) was founded. It leased the Brooklyn and Jamaica’s right of way, inaugurating service between Jamaica and a ferry at the foot of Atlantic Avenue in Brooklyn in 1836; the line was extended eastward to Hicksville a year later. The opening of the initial LIRR line through Jamaica established the village as a transportation hub, but other developments increased Jamaica’s importance. In 1850, Jamaica Avenue was converted into a plank road by the Jamaica & Brooklyn Plank Road Company, thus improving road transportation between the Fulton Ferry and Queens County. Horsecar lines began operation on the avenue in 1866 when the East New York & Jamaica Railroad Company inaugurated service; the horsecars were replaced by electric trolleys in the mid-1880s. In 1860, the LIRR began service from a ferry landing at Hunter’s Point to Jamaica, and in 1869 a rival railroad company, the South Side Railroad, began service between Jamaica and Patchogue.

⁵ These improvements included the widening and repaving of Jamaica Avenue (known as Fulton Street until about 1918) in 1898; the electrification of the LIRR in 1905-08; the opening of the Queensborough Bridge in 1909; the completion of the LIRR’s tunnel beneath the East River in 1910 (the bridge and tunnel obviated the need for ferries, thus cutting community time to and from Long Island and Manhattan); and the completion of the Brooklyn Rapid Transit Company’s elevated railroad on Jamaica Avenue in 1918.

⁶ The importance of Jamaica’s geographic location and the development of the area as a transportation and commercial hub were recognized in the *WPA Guide to New York City*: “Jamaica, the community around Jamaica Avenue and Parsons Boulevard, is the geographic center of Queens. Most of the important Brooklyn and Queens highways that lead to Nassau County and eastern Long Island pass through Jamaica. It is the terminus of the BMT and Independent subways and the principal transfer station of the Long Island Railroad. Along the main thoroughfare, Jamaica Avenue, there has evolved a comprehensive suburban shopping center.” *The WPA Guide to New York City* (New York: Random House, 1939; reprinted New York: Pantheon, 1982), 583.

⁷ This section is adapted from LPC, *Grace Episcopal Church and Graveyard Designation Report* (LP-0487) (New York: City of New York, 1967) with additional information from Henry Onderdonk, Jr., *Antiquities of the Parish Church, Jamaica, (including Newtown and Flushing,) Illustrated from Letters of*

the Missionaries, and other Authentic Documents, with a Continuation of the History of Grace Church, to the Present Time (Jamaica: Charles Welling, 1880); Horatio Oliver Ladd, *The Origin and History of Grace Church, Jamaica, New York* (New York: Shakespeare Press, 1914) and *Grace Protestant Episcopal Church 1702-1952* (Jamaica, New York: The Grace Church Anniversary Committee, 1952). The early rectors of Grace Church also served the Anglican churches in Flushing and Newtown.

⁸ The disputes did not end with the building of first Grace Church in 1734. The Anglican Church was the “established” church and all members of the community had to make a compulsory payment to support it, even though the majority of the inhabitants of Jamaica were not members of the Anglican Church. This enabled non-Anglicans (“dissenters”) to control the vestry of Grace Church until at least 1761.

⁹ Thomas Colgan owned an African-American slave at the time of his death in 1755; in his will left “my negro woman ‘Dinah’” to his wife. New York County Surrogate’s Court, Abstract of Wills on File in Surrogate’s Office, City of New York, vol. V (1754-1760), 110 (liber 20, page 21). His house and 66 acre estate was purchased by Rufus King in 1805 from the estate of Colgan’s daughter. LPC, *King Mansion Designation Report* (LP-0923) (New York: City of New York, 1976).

¹⁰ The other heirs were James DeLancey of New York and his wife Anne (former Anne Heathcote, daughter) and Martha Heathcote Junior (daughter). The one-half acre deeded was part of approximately 17 acres that Caleb Heathcote had bought from Thomas Whitehead, deceased. Colgan paid 5 shillings for the land according to the deed. The original deed is in the possession of the church and a photocopy is contained in the L. K. Parsons Collection of Miscellaneous Church Documents in the Long Island Collection of the Queens Library. James DeLancey was governor of New York State (acting 1753-1755, and 1757-1760). James DeLancey owned enslaved African-Americans; one named Othello was hung as a conspirator following the slave uprising of 1741. Jill Lepore, *New York Burning: Liberty, Slavery, and Conspiracy in Eighteenth-Century Manhattan* (New York: Vintage Books, 2006), 171-176.

¹¹ Caleb and Martha Heathcote had enslaved African-American persons in their household. The register of the Reverend John Poyer notes the baptism of “Hester & Diana Negroes of Caleb & Martha Heathcote 9ber (sic) 2, 1718 at Jamaica.” Ladd, 273.

¹² Dixon Ryan Fox, *Caleb Heathcote: Gentleman Colonist* (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1926; reprint, New York: Cooper Square Publishers, Inc., 1971), 214 (page citations are to the reprint edition).

¹³ Queens County, Office of the Register, Liber Deeds and Conveyances. Deed from Maltby Gelson and his wife Mary dated May 1, 1834, recorded April 30, 1834 at Liber FF, page 232 (purchase price is noted to be \$5,500); deed from John A. King and his wife Mary dated September 1, 1851, recorded September 12, 1851 at Liber 92, page 145; deed from Gasper Phraner and his wife Ruth dated April 7, 1855, recorded April 9, 1855 at Liber 129, page 285; deed from Brockholst L. Carroll dated September 18, 1857, recorded December 27, 1859 at Liber 174, page 301; and deed from John A. King and Richard King as executors under the will of John A. King deceased dated December 12, 1873 and recorded April 28, 1874 at Liber 436, page 420. This last deed includes plots in the graveyard.

¹⁴ John Poyer had servants and enslaved African-Americans in his household. Onderdonk, 36-37.

¹⁵ “James & Sarah, Negroes of Samuel Clowes May 23, 1714 at Jamaica.” Ladd, 270.

¹⁶ Onderdonk, 36.

¹⁷ “Lucretia Martise a free Negro-Woman & her Daughters Helena, Rachel & Sarah 9ber (sic) 11, 1731 at Jamaica.” Ladd, 279.

¹⁸ Onderdonk, 95.

¹⁹ Ladd, 154-55.

²⁰ The 1790 U.S. Census lists a Samuel Seabury Jr. living in Lebanon, Conn.; there were no enslaved persons in his household.

²¹ The 1810 U.S. Census lists two free non-white persons and one enslaved person in the household headed by Rufus King in Jamaica. The 1820 U.S. Census does not list any non-white persons or enslaved persons

in his household, although it is noted in Onderdonk's history of the church that on December 16, 1821 he manumitted a slave Margaret, 20 years old, whom he had purchased from John Hewlett of Flushing. Onderdonk, 111.

²² *Grace Protestant Episcopal Church 1702-1952*, 27.

²³ Ladd, 240.

²⁴ Ladd, 220.

²⁵ Ladd, 246.

²⁶ The *Grace Church Chimes* has additional references to the proposed parish house. In April 1905, it was noted that the land was lying idle and unproductive and there was no doubt need for a parish house; in November 1905, all the new parish houses built or to be built by other congregations were noted, donations were requested and mention was made that a considerable sum was already pledged; and in February 1906 it was noted that the vestry had voted to build a new building for the Sunday school and guilds as soon as they have the money, it asked that the subscriptions promised be paid.

²⁷ Osborne is listed as a communicant of the church as of December 1, 1909. Ladd, 397.

²⁸ *The Memorial House of Grace Church Parish, Jamaica, New York: Together with a Brief Historical Sketch and Description of the Proposed Development* (Jamaica, New York: The Marion Press, 1911).

²⁹ This section is adapted from the LPC, *St. Paul's Avenue-Stapleton Heights Historic District Designation Report* (LP-2147) essay prepared by Gale Harris, building entries prepared by Donald G. Presa and architects' appendix prepared by Jennifer Farley (New York: City of New York, 2004), 110-112, 154-155.

³⁰ Additional biographical and architectural information about Hobart Upjohn is from Everard M. Upjohn, "Hobart B. Upjohn: An Informal Account as I Remember Him, 1972," TMs, Avery Architectural and Fine Arts Library, Columbia University, New York City.

³¹ "George W. Conable," American Architects' Biographies, Society of Architectural Historians (sah.org).

³² "George Willard Conable," *The National Cyclopaedia of American Biography* (New York: James T. White & Company, 1915), 16:367.

³³ New York City Department of Buildings, Borough of Queens, NB 1960-1912. The Reverend Rockland Homans and architect Hobart Upjohn were second cousins; their maternal grandfathers, Stephen Higginson Tyng and James Higginson Tyng, respectively, were brothers. Francis Higginson Atkins, *Joseph Atkins, the Story of a Family* (Las Vegas: Dudley Atkins, 1891), 108, 144.

³⁴ In the early 20th century a massive renaming of street took place in Queens with most street names changed to numbers because of the implementation of a unified house numbering plan, Fulton Street because Jamaica Avenue, Flushing Avenue became Parsons Boulevard and Grove Street became 90th Avenue (now also known as Rufus King Boulevard).

³⁵ *Grace Protestant Episcopal Church 1702-1952*, 21.

³⁶ NB 1960-1912.

³⁷ Everard Upjohn, 30-31. He states that his father chose the Tudor Revival style "quite often for that problem," when he was designing a parish hall and the existing church was designed in the English Gothic Revival style. In the appendix to his manuscript he notes when he believes buildings were designed by someone in the firm other than Hobart Upjohn. The entry for the Grace Church Memorial Hall does not indicate that someone other than Upjohn designed this building, although the NB application was signed on behalf of the firm by George Conable.

³⁸ Hobart B. Upjohn, "Some Thoughts on Modern Sunday-School Buildings and Parish Houses," *Architecture* (May 1924), 153-55.

³⁹ *Grace Protestant Episcopal Church 1702-1952*, 28-29.

⁴⁰ “33-Year Ministry in Queens Ends: Rector Notes Grace Church Changed with Times,” *New York Times*, November 3, 1963, 62.

⁴¹ It appears that the leaded-glass sash may have been removed at the lower eastern corner of the second easternmost window and the lower western corner of the second westernmost window on the 90th Avenue (front) facade.

⁴² It appears that the leaded-glass sash may have been removed at the lower eastern corner of the westernmost window, the lower western corner of the second westernmost window, the lower eastern corner of the second easternmost window and the lower eastern and western corners of the easternmost window on the south (rear) facade.

FINDINGS AND DESIGNATION

On the basis of a careful consideration of the history, the architecture, and other features of this building, the Landmarks Preservation Commission finds that the Grace Episcopal Church Memorial Hall has a special character and a special historical and aesthetic interest and value as part of the development, heritage, and culture characteristics of New York City.

The Commission further finds that, among its important qualities, the Grace Episcopal Church Memorial Hall is part of one of the most historic church complexes in New York City; that Grace Episcopal Church was founded in 1702 and the present English Gothic Revival style church building, designed by Dudley Field, was built in 1861-62 and enlarged in 1901-02 by Cady, Berg & See; that surrounding the church is a graveyard in which are buried members of many families important to the history of the city, including Rufus King; that the church and graveyard were designated a New York City Landmark in 1967; that northeast of the church building, behind the graveyard, is the Memorial Hall, constructed in 1912 to meet the needs of the growing congregation for a meeting place and social center; that the Memorial Hall included a gymnasium, an auditorium, meeting rooms and offices; that these facilities were needed as the role of the church expanded from solely providing religious services to include educational and social services; that on the 250th anniversary of the founding of the church, the Memorial Hall was being used by 21 different organizations; that the Memorial Hall was designed by the prominent architectural firm of Upjohn and Conable in Tudor Gothic Revival style to complement the church building; and that the brick building's symmetrical massing and flanking wings add a picturesque element to the church complex.

Accordingly, pursuant to the provisions of Chapter 74, Section 3020 of the Charter of the City of New York and Chapter 3 of Title 25 of the Administrative Code of the City of New York, the Landmarks Preservation Commission designates as a Landmark the Grace Episcopal Church Memorial Hall, 155-24 90th Avenue, Borough of Queens, and designated Queens Tax Map Block 9754, Lot 7, as its Landmark Site.

Robert B. Tierney, Chair

Pablo E. Vengoechea, Vice-Chair

Diana Chapin, Roberta Brandes Gratz,

Christopher Moore, Roberta Washington, Commissioners



Grace Episcopal Church Memorial Hall
155-24 90th Avenue, Queens
Block 9754, Lot 7
North Facade
Photo: Christopher D. Brazee, 2010



Grace Episcopal Church Memorial Hall
South (rear) Facade
Photo: Christopher D. Brazee, 2010



Grace Episcopal Church Memorial Hall
East Facade
Photo: Christopher D. Brazee, 2010



Grace Episcopal Church Memorial Hall
West Facade
Photo: Christopher D. Brazee, 2010

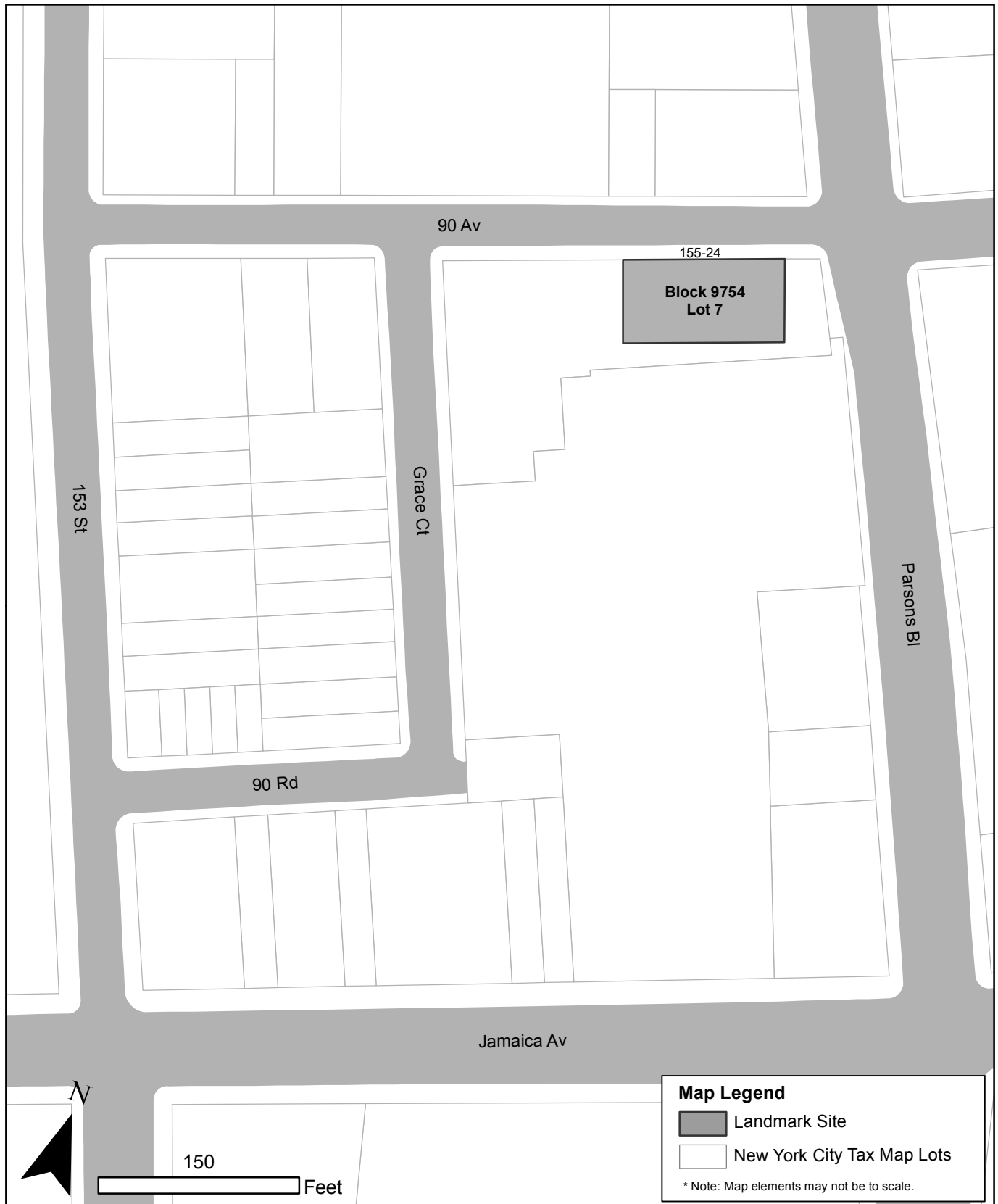


Grace Episcopal Church Memorial Hall
Entrance Door Detail, North Facade
Photo: Christopher D. Brazee, 2010



Grace Episcopal Church Memorial Hall, 1913

Source: Horatio Oliver Ladd, *The Origin and History of Grace Church, Jamaica, New York* (New York: Shakespeare Press, 1914)



GRACE EPISCOPAL CHURCH MEMORIAL HALL (LP-2394), 155-24 90th Avenue
 Landmark Site: Borough of Queens, Tax Map Block 9754, Lot 7

Designated: October 26, 2010