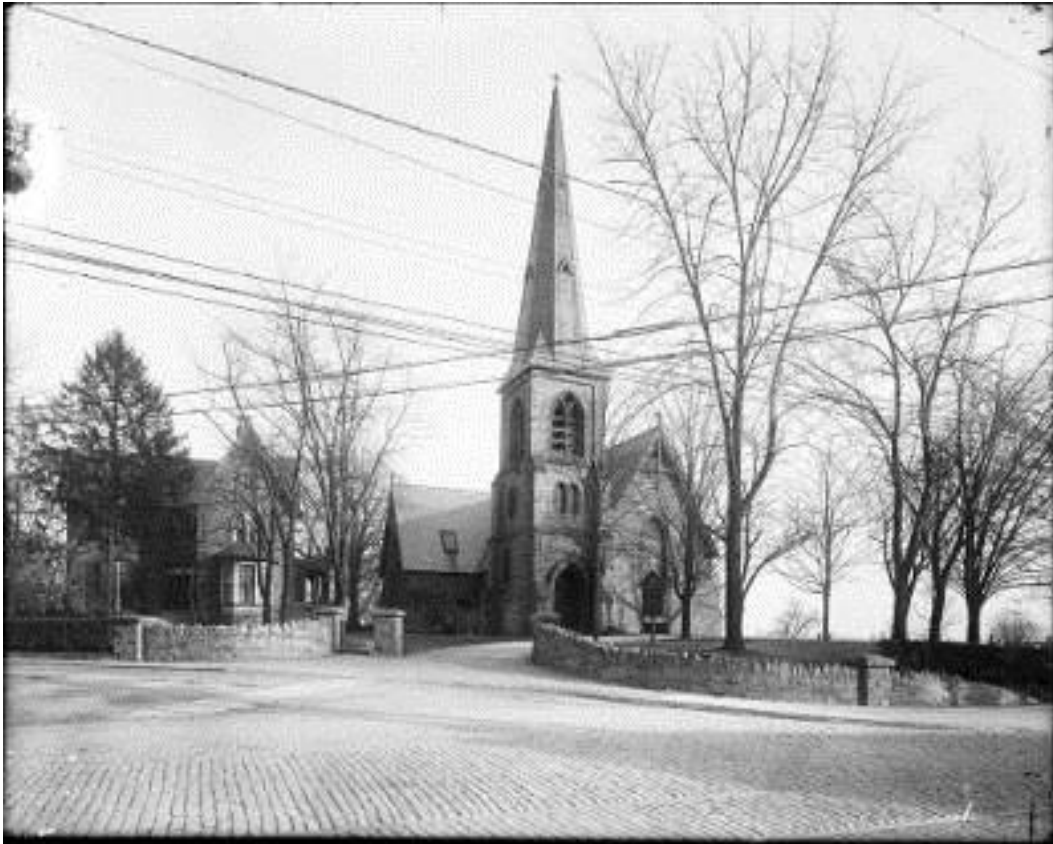


**The Commission for Historical and  
Architectural Preservation**

**Landmark Designation Report**

**April 8, 2014**



**Saint John's in the Village**

3009-3009 ½ Greenmount Ave and 3001 Old York Road  
Baltimore, Maryland



Commission for Historical & Architectural Preservation

Eric Holcomb and W. Edward Leon, *Acting Executive Directors*

Charles L. Benton, Jr. Building 417 East Fayette Street Eighth Floor Baltimore, MD 21202-3416

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STEPHANIE RAWLINGS-BLAKE  
*Mayor*



THOMAS J. STOSUR  
*Director*

## **Summary**

Located in the northern neighborhood of Waverly in Baltimore City, St. John's in the Village was founded as a country church in 1843, known as St. John's Church, Huntingdon, and later as St. John's Protestant Episcopal Church, Huntingdon. The English Gothic Revival stone church constructed in 1858 was designed by John W. Priest, founding member of the American Institute of Architects, and the transepts and chancel designed in 1875 by Priest's protégé, John M. Congdon. Both architects specialized in ecclesiastical architecture. The property also has a rectory (1868) and parish house (1914), also both designed in the Gothic Revival style. In the cemetery are buried many important Baltimore citizens, including the author Lizette Woodworth Reese. The property is significant for the role that it has played in Baltimore's history, its buildings serve as excellent examples of Gothic Revival style that was touted by the Ecclesiological Movement of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, and the property as a whole is significant due to its intact nature, retaining the church, rectory, parish house, and cemetery, looking still like a rural church even though the city has long since grown up around it.

## **Property History**

Today, St. John's in the Village can take one by surprise on York Road in the northern neighborhood of Waverly – a rural English parish church and grounds surrounded by the city. In fact, it started as a country church, but over the years the city has grown up around it. When it was founded in 1843, St. John's Protestant Episcopal Church, Huntingdon was located in the rural village of Huntingdon, a village marked by several large country estates in Baltimore County. The church was established on the York Road turnpike, and the first tollgate was located directly across from St. John's. The community retained its rural heritage even after it was annexed into the city in 1888. Mrs. Helen Satler Norris, writing in the *Baltimore Sun* in 1949, remembers that she brought her goat with her when she attended school at St. John's Parish School in the 1880s.<sup>1</sup>

When the church was founded, it was largely a missionary church serving the poor of the village. The first services were held in a Revolutionary War barracks located on the property. The Bishop of the Diocese, the Rt. Rev. William Rollinson Whittingham stated that on November 24, 1843, he had "preached in the temporary place of worship of St. John's Church, Huntingdon, near Baltimore; thus gathering the first fruits of that small, but very interesting field of missionary labor. The stone-building in which we worshipped, with about an acre of adjoining ground, has been purchased by the infant congregation, and will speedily be so altered and arranged as to become a neat and substantial church... and in a few weeks a parochial school will add to the already salutary influence of the mission in the neighborhood." However, the growth of the congregation was stymied by the lack of a suitable church building. This was remedied in 1847 with the construction of the first church, designed by Robert Cary Long, Jr.<sup>2</sup> This was a significant example of the Gothic Revival church architecture of the Ecclesiological movement, and was deemed the "most strictly correct and chaste ecclesiastic edifice in the

[Maryland] diocese” according to Bishop William Whittingham.<sup>3</sup> According to Phoebe Stanton, St. John’s was “the first in a long series of American churches inspired by the plans of St. Michael’s, Long Stanton (England) and St. James the Less (Philadelphia).”<sup>4</sup> St. James the Less was a replica of the medieval Long Stanton church, and the model was published in the *New York Ecclesiologist*.<sup>5</sup> The cornerstone for the building was laid on April 22, 1846 by Bishop Whittingham.<sup>6</sup>

In 1849, a lot to the south of the church was purchased by Dr. W.T. Wilson, and a parish school was erected. The following year, a lot in the rear of the church was purchased for use as the cemetery.<sup>7</sup> In 1854, a lot was purchased for the site of the parsonage.<sup>8</sup>

The church was destroyed by arson in the early morning hours of May 16, 1858, after being looted.<sup>9</sup> Due to the efforts of a fire company, the parsonage was saved.<sup>10</sup> Despite a reward of \$200 offered by the Vestry for the arrest and conviction of the persons responsible, the perpetrators were never caught.<sup>11</sup>

The parishioners quickly raised money to construct a new church, which was built on the foundations of the first church. The cornerstone was laid on September 11, 1858 by Bishop Whittingham, and the church was completed in 1859.<sup>12</sup> It was designed by New York architect John W. Priest, one of the founders of the American Institute of Architects and one of the few architects (and the only American) recommended by the Ecclesiological Society.<sup>13</sup> The 1859 church consisted of the first four bays of the nave, the south porch and chimney, and a tower that was not in the 1848 design.<sup>14</sup> Samuel Wyman was a generous benefactor, giving \$1,200 towards the construction of the church, and another \$3,000 towards the construction of the bell tower. He also gave another \$2,000 towards the church’s debt in 1860.<sup>15</sup>

The church underwent extensive improvements in 1875, achieving its cruciform shape with the addition of the transepts and chancel.<sup>16</sup> The shingle roof of the church and belltower was replaced with a slate roof, and paid for by Samuel Wyman. The additions were designed by New York architect Henry Martyn Congdon, who was a protégé of John W. Priest. W.H. Allen of Baltimore was the builder.<sup>17</sup>

The rectory was constructed in 1868, paid for with funds raised by the congregation.<sup>18</sup> The architect is unknown, and it is possible that the rectory was based off one of the popular architectural pattern books of the time.

A stone Gothic Revival schoolhouse was constructed in 1866 for the St. John’s Parish School. The \$6,000 cost was paid for by Mrs. Hannah D. Wyman, a former member of the congregation.<sup>19</sup> The footprint of which can be seen on the 1902 Sanborn Fire Insurance map. In 1914, a new building replaced the 1866 building. Designed by architect Norman E. Horn, the new parish house was designed to be in architectural harmony with the church and rectory. The building cost \$25,000, constructed of Falls Road granite, and was built by A.E. Schoenlein & Son.<sup>20</sup>

An orphanage for boys was opened in September of 1885, in a frame house on the northeastern portion of the property.<sup>21</sup> The parcel was given to the church in 1875 by Richard C. Hull for the establishment of a charitable institution, and the late Rev. Johnston gave money towards the creation of a boys' orphanage, though the majority of the funding for the building and endowment was raised by the parishioners.<sup>22</sup> The orphanage closed in the early 1900s, and the building was sold. Today, it is a private residence and is not located on the church property.

The property itself, with the land, cemetery, and Gothic Revival buildings, is significant as a whole and is eligible for designation as a Baltimore City Landmark, and is designated on the National Register of Historic Places. The church property was planned according to rural English Gothic Revival ideals touted by the Ecclesiological Movement and retains its integrity.

## **Contextual History**

### *Cambridge Camden Society and the Ecclesiological Movement*

Born from a group of students at Trinity College, Cambridge, England in 1836, the Cambridge Camden Society was created to reform Anglican church liturgical practice and architectural form.<sup>23</sup> The group believed that the Reformation had done away with important liturgical aspects of worship that needed to be restored. The architecture of modern churches did not lend itself to the earlier liturgical practices, and so the group also embraced a particular architectural style that was evocative of 14<sup>th</sup> century English parish churches: Gothic Revival. The replication of these churches was intended to evoke the virtues of an earlier time and Christian practice, and the group thought that the "Gothic church, in its perfection, is an exposition of the distinctive doctrines of Christianity, clothed upon with a material form."<sup>24</sup> The Cambridge Camden Society spread its doctrines to American and Canadian Protestant Episcopal churches through the Ecclesiological Movement. The Cambridge Camden Society published the journal *Ecclesiologist*, and published books which spread the group's ideologies and architectural ideals, such as *A Handbook of English Ecclesiology*.<sup>25</sup> In the US, the ecclesiological tenets focused more on the architectural aspects of Ecclesiology instead of the liturgical practice. A New York Ecclesiological Society was founded in 1848.<sup>26</sup>

The Gothic Revival architecture in Protestant Episcopal churches in Baltimore and Maryland at large is due mainly to Bishop William Rollinson Wittingham, who served as the Bishop for the Maryland Diocese from 1840 until his death in 1879.<sup>27</sup> He had a great interest in ecclesiastical architecture and was quite an expert in it. As Bishop, he consecrated all of the new churches in his Diocese, and in his annual reports to the Diocese, he mentioned the design and even the architect of the new churches, lavishing praise upon those that met his ideals of a parish church.<sup>28</sup>

## *Architects*

Robert Cary Long, Jr. (1810-1849) designed the first church that stood on the property. A prominent Baltimore architect, he proved to be a master of the Gothic Revival style with his first major commission in 1842: St. Alphonsus Church.<sup>29</sup> He also designed other Gothic churches, including Franklin Street Presbyterian Church and Mount Calvary Church, both Baltimore City Landmarks. Robert Cary Long Jr. was the only architect that Bishop Whittingham mentioned by name in his annual reports to the diocese between 1840 and 1850.<sup>30</sup>

John Weller Priest, (1825-1959) the New York architect who designed the new church in 1858, was one of the thirteen founding members of the American Institute of Architects.<sup>31</sup> The East Coast features a number of churches designed by Priest, though Baltimore can only boast St. John's and St. Luke's.<sup>32</sup> (A third, St. Barnabas, was demolished).<sup>33</sup> John Priest designed several other churches in Maryland, including St. Michael's Chapel at the Hannah More Academy in Reisterstown in 1854, which is a Baltimore County Landmark and listed on the National Register of Historic Places.<sup>34</sup>

Henry Martyn Congdon (1834-1922) designed the transepts and chancel of the church. He was the protégé of John Priest, and specialized in ecclesiastic architecture. He was a preferred architect of Protestant Episcopal churches, and was very well-versed in the Ecclesiological tenets, as his father was a founder of the New York Ecclesiological Society.<sup>35</sup> Congdon was also a secretary and Fellow of the American Institute of Architects.<sup>36</sup> He also designed the interior features of churches as well, including the reredos at St. John's.<sup>37</sup> Based in New York, the majority of his churches were located in New England, but his practice "stretched from Maine to Idaho and as far south as Baltimore."<sup>38</sup>

## **Architectural Description**

### *Property*

The property of St. John's in the Village is located on the east side of Greenmount Ave, just at the point where Old York Road joins with Greenmount Ave. The property is approximately 4.5 acres in size, and consists of three separate parcels - the parish house on the southern parcel, the cemetery and church on the center parcel, and rectory on the northern parcel. There is a low historic stone fence on the property bordering Greenmount Ave. and Old York Road that is topped with a modern metal gate. The grounds are well-manicured and there are some large mature trees. There is a non-contributing garage on the northern portion of the property.

### *Church*

The church is constructed with rough-cut irregular course granite blocks with brick window and door surrounds, granite sills, and stone keystones. Oriented east-west, it is cruciform in shape, with a five-bay nave, two transepts, and a chancel. The roof is clad with broad bands of plain and

fishscale gray slate. The windows on the nave are lancet stained glass windows. The west façade faces Greenmount Avenue. It has a large buttressed belltower on the northwest corner, with an arched entrance surmounted by paired lancet windows, topped by a belfry with traceried arched openings with louvers. It has a broach-style spire, clad with slate and punctuated by trefoil dormer windows. The remainder of the west façade has a large Gothic stained glass window. The south elevation has a south porch that features an arched double-door entrance with an arched stained glass transom, and arched stained glass windows on the east and west elevations. A chimney abuts the south porch. The south transept also features a central double door with stained glass lights and transom, flanked by two lancet windows. Above the door is a cinquefoil window. Located to the east of the transept is a one story baptistry (now Lady Chapel), which was likely part of the 1875 expansion by Congdon, and has paired arched windows. The west elevation (the chancel) features a central tripartite window. The north elevation features the belltower and the north transept with a cinquefoil window, and three one-story shed-roof additions. Located to the east of the transept is a one story portion that likely served as the vestry and was part of the 1875 expansion. One stone addition is located to the east of the belltower. It was constructed in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, sometime between 1914 and 1928, according to Sanborn Fire Insurance maps. Adjacent to this addition and connecting to the north transept is a frame addition constructed sometime between 1928 and 1953. These additions are stylistically appropriate to the building.

### *Rectory*

Located directly north of the church is the rectory, an asymmetrical two and a half story Gothic Revival building constructed in 1868. It is constructed with rough-cut irregular course granite blocks with quoined brick window and door surrounds, granite sills, stone keystones, and a roof clad with broad bands of plain and fishscale gray slate, all of which match the church. The corners of the building also feature quoining. The rectory has several gables, and decorative vergeboard on open eaves with exposed rafters and purlins. There are two chimneys located on the ridge of the roof with decorative chimney pots. The windows are uniformly 4/4, and are present in a variety of forms – paired, single, bay, arched, and circular. The architect is unknown, but it is possible that the rectory was based off of an architectural pattern book, which were popular in that period. The rectory has three porches (on the east, west, and south elevations.) The existing porches are not original to the building; the south porch originally featured decorative columns and vergeboard.

### *Parish House*

The three-story Gothic Revival parish house is located on the southern edge of the property. It is constructed with rough-cut irregular course granite blocks with quoined brick window and door surrounds, granite sills, stone keystones, and a roof clad with plain gray slate. A water table runs around the entire building. It is three bays wide and seven bays deep, with a one story rear addition that is two bays deep. The façade has a raised front porch on the north bay, with a gable-fronted porch roof with decorative cross-bracing. The central bay holds a large traceried tripartite

window spanning two floors, separated by decorative wood paneling, and the two outer bays are similar, but with only one arched window. There are two datestones on the building – one states “St. John’s School A.D. 1866” on the center of the façade, and a second larger datestone on the north corner that names it as the St. John’s Parish House, with the name of the rector and building committee members names, and that it was built in 1866, and rebuilt in 1914. The north and south elevation of the parish house features large traceried windows in each bay, with buttressing between the bays.

### *Cemetery*

The cemetery is located in the center of the churchgrounds, between the parish house to the south and the church to the north, and is approximately 1.5 acres in size. The front portion of the cemetery is surrounded by an iron fence manufactured by G. Krug and Sons in the 1980s, following some cemetery vandalism. The cemetery was first used for burial in 1850, and there are only a few available plots today. While most burials have a marker (and there are hundreds), there is an unmarked section in the rear of the church where the servants were buried.<sup>39</sup> The people buried in the cemetery were members of St. John’s and members of the larger community, and include some important Baltimoreans, such as the prominent 20<sup>th</sup> century poet and author, Lizette Woodworth Reese. A member of the church, she wrote extensively about St. John’s in her memoirs *A Victorian Village* and *Old York Road*. She also taught at the St. John’s parish school. In 1937, twenty Scotch and Austrian pines and a white English hawthorn were planted in the churchyard in memorial to Lizette Woodworth Reese.<sup>40</sup>

### **Staff Recommendation**

The property meets CHAP Landmark Designation Standards:

B. A Baltimore City Landmark may be a site, structure, landscape, building (or portion thereof), place, work of art, or other object which:

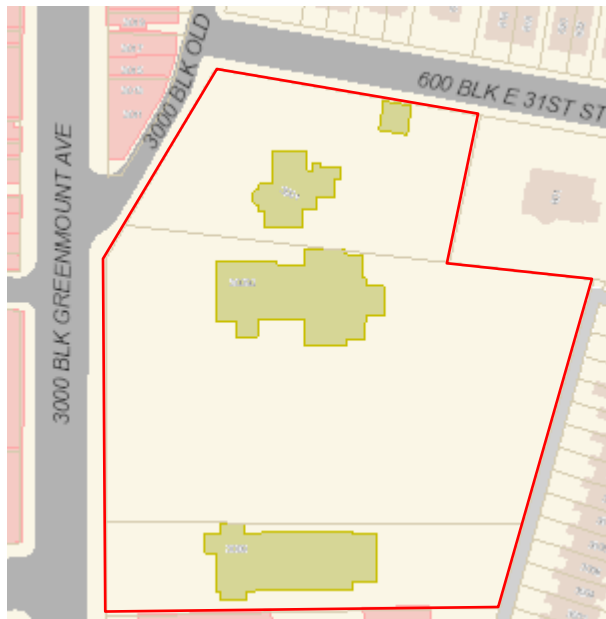
1. Is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of Baltimore history;
3. Embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, or that represents the work of a master, or that possesses high artistic values, or that represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction.

Located in the northern neighborhood of Waverly in Baltimore City, St. John’s in the Village was founded as a country church in 1843, known as St. John’s Church, Huntington and later St. John’s Protestant Episcopal Church, Huntingdon. The English Gothic Revival stone church constructed in 1858 was designed by John W. Priest, founding member of the American Institute of Architects, and the transepts and chancel designed in 1875 by Priest’s protégé, John M. Congdon. Both architects specialized in ecclesiastical architecture. The property also has a

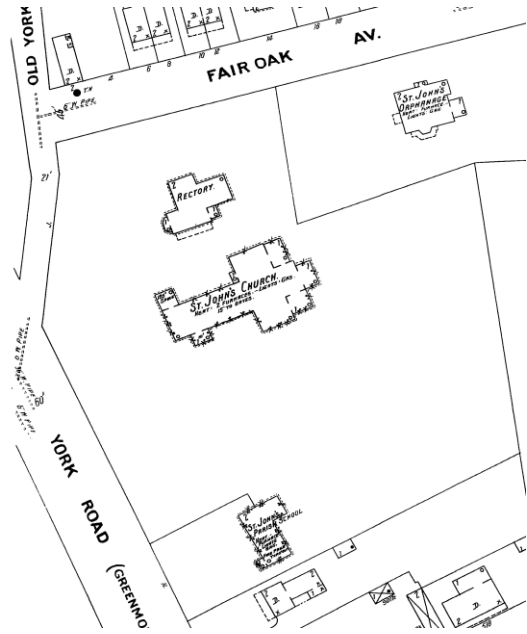


rectory (1868) and parish house (1914), also both designed in the Gothic Revival style. In the cemetery are buried many important Baltimore citizens, including the author Lizette Woodworth Reese. The property is significant for the role that it has played in Baltimore's history, its buildings serve as excellent examples of Gothic Revival style that was touted by the Ecclesiological Movement of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, and the property as a whole is significant due to its intact nature, retaining the church, rectory, parish house, and cemetery, looking still like a rural church even though the city has long since grown up around it.

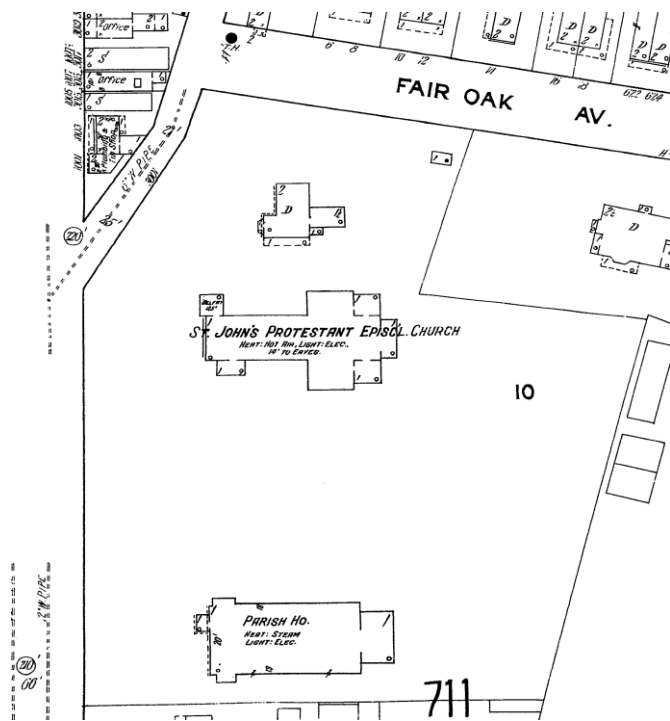
### Locator Map



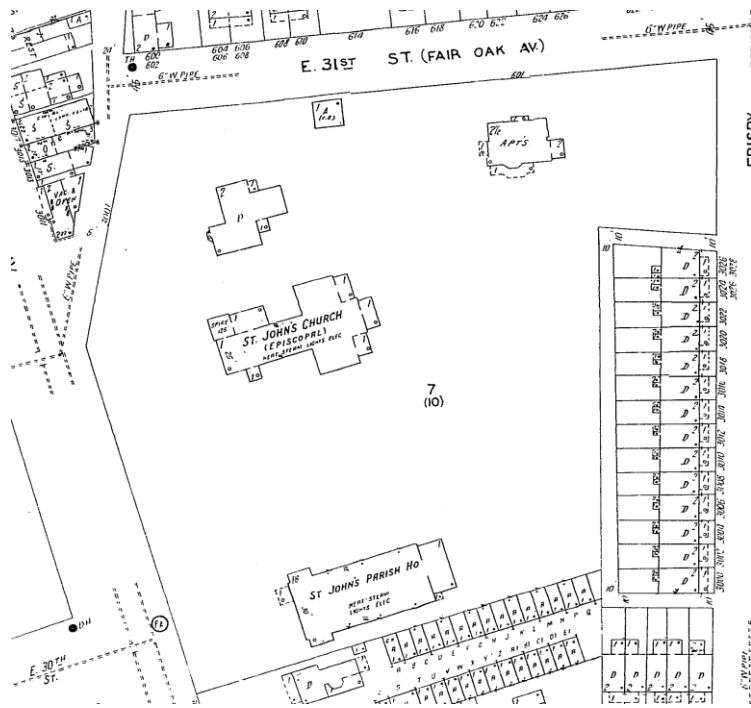
### Historic Maps



1902 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, depicting the Parish School, Church, Rectory, and Orphanage (which is no longer owned by the church). (Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps 1901-1902, Vol. 3, 1902, Sheet 349)

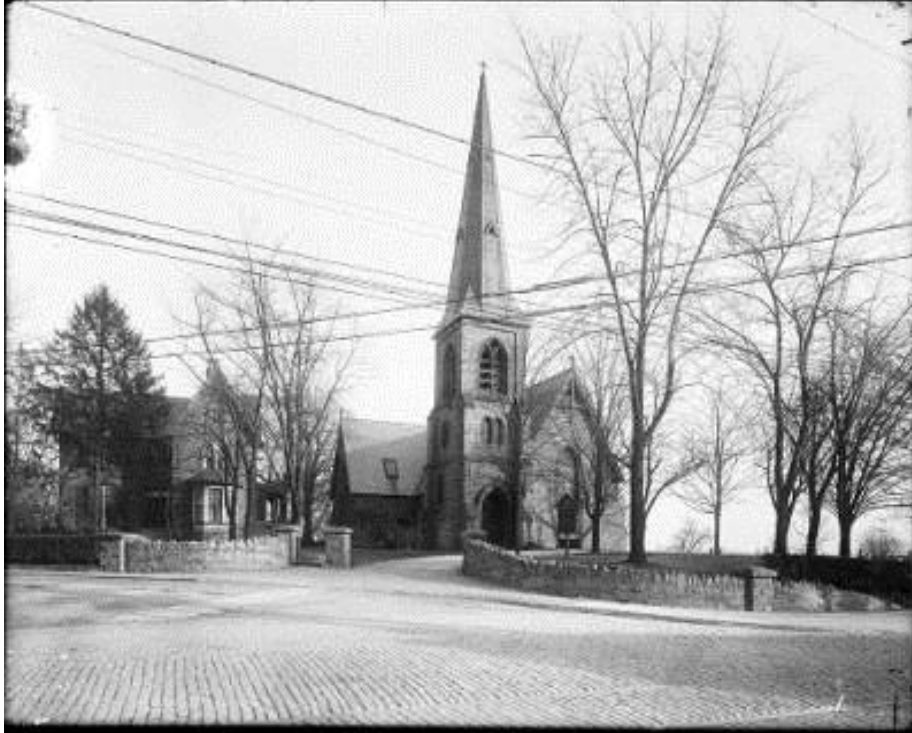


1915 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, depicting the new Parish House (constructed in 1915), the Church, and the Rectory. (Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps 1914-1915, Vol. 7, 1915, Sheet 718)



1953 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, depicting the addition of a garage at the north of the property. (Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps 1914-1953, Vol. 7, 1953, Sheet 735)

### Historic Images



Saint John's Protestant Episcopal Church, circa 1900-1920. (UMBC Hughes Company Collection, P75-54-A166g)

### **Current Images**



View from Greenmount Ave.



The rectory.



The church



The cemetery and church.



The Parish House.

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<sup>1</sup> Helen Sadtler Norris "...A Goat Followed Me To School" *The Sun* (1837-1988); May 15, 1949; ProQuest Historical Newspapers: Baltimore Sun, The (1837-1988), pg. MG2

<sup>2</sup> John Dorsey, *Look Again in Baltimore* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 2005), pg. 42

<sup>3</sup> "Bishop's Address" in *Journal of the Sixtieth Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in Maryland, 1848* (Baltimore: Joseph Robinson), 1848, pg. 21. Available as a Google book under the title *Journal of the Fifty-Sixth Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in Maryland*

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- <sup>4</sup> Stanton, 274.
- <sup>5</sup> Stanton, 104 and 274.
- <sup>6</sup> *One Hundred Years at St. John's Church, Huntingdon, 1844-1944*, pg. 17
- <sup>7</sup> *One Hundred Years at St. John's Church, Huntingdon, 1844-1944*, pg. 19
- <sup>8</sup> *Journal of the Seventy-first Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in Maryland, 1854*. (Baltimore: Joseph Robinson) 1854, pg. 52.
- <sup>9</sup> "Front Page 1 -- No Title", *The Sun (1837-1987)*; May 17, 1858; ProQuest Historical Newspapers: Baltimore Sun, The (1837-1987), pg. 1
- <sup>10</sup> "Front Page 1 -- No Title", *The Sun (1837-1987)*; May 17, 1858; ProQuest Historical Newspapers: Baltimore Sun, The (1837-1987), pg. 1
- <sup>11</sup> "Display Ad 12 -- No Title", *The Sun (1837-1988)*; May 19, 1858; ProQuest Historical Newspapers: Baltimore Sun, The (1837-1988), pg. 2
- <sup>12</sup> *One Hundred Years at St. John's Church, Huntingdon, 1844-1944*, pg. 19; "LOCAL MATTERS", *The Sun (1837-1987)*; Sep 18, 1858; ProQuest Historical Newspapers: Baltimore Sun, The (1837-1987), pg. 1
- <sup>13</sup> "LOCAL MATTERS", *The Sun (1837-1987)*; Sep 18, 1858; ProQuest Historical Newspapers: Baltimore Sun, The (1837-1987), pg. 1; *The Churchman, Vol. 40*, (July – December 1879), pg. 234; John Dorsey and James D. Dilts, *A Guide to Baltimore Architecture, Third Edition* (Centreville, MD: Tidewater Publishers, 1997), pg. 313-314.
- <sup>14</sup> Stanton, pg 274.
- <sup>15</sup> *One Hundred Years at St. John's Church, Huntingdon, 1844-1944*, pg. 19;
- <sup>16</sup> *The Churchman, Vol. 40*, (July – December 1879), pg. 234.
- <sup>17</sup> "Launch of Coast Survey Schooners--"Composite" Vessels: Brief Locals", *The Sun (1837-1987)*; Nov 8, 1875; ProQuest Historical Newspapers: Baltimore Sun, The (1837-1987), pg. 4
- <sup>18</sup> Parochial Reports, 1867, pg. 57 in the *Journal of the Eighty-first Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in Maryland* (Baltimore: Published by the Convention, 1864) . Google ebook.
- <sup>19</sup> Parochial Reports, 1866, pg. 45 in the *Journal of the Eighty-first Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in Maryland* (Baltimore: Published by the Convention, 1864); Parochial Reports, 1867, pg. 57 in the *Journal of the Eighty-first Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in Maryland* (Baltimore: Published by the Convention, 1864) . Google ebook.
- <sup>20</sup> "OLD ST. JOHN'S TO EXPAND: Parish House Costing \$25,000 Is Now Being ...", *The Sun (1837-1987)*; Aug 15, 1914; ProQuest Historical Newspapers: Baltimore Sun, The (1837-1987), pg. 5
- <sup>21</sup> "Death of the Clerk of the House of Delegates", *The Sun (1837-1987)*; Sep 4, 1885; ProQuest Historical Newspapers: Baltimore Sun, The (1837-1987), pg. 4
- <sup>22</sup> "Affairs in Baltimore County", Correspondence of the Baltimore Sun, *The Sun (1837-1988)*; Mar 12, 1881; ProQuest Historical Newspapers: Baltimore Sun, The (1837-1988), pg. 4
- <sup>23</sup> Phoebe B. Stanton, *The Gothic Revival and American Church Architecture: An Episode in Taste 1840-1856* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1968), pgs. 12-13.
- <sup>24</sup> Stanton, pgs. 8-9, quoting George Ayliffe Poole, *The Appropriate Character of Church Architecture* (Leeds and London: T.W. Green and Rivington's, 1842), pg. 40-41.
- <sup>25</sup> Stanton, pg. 16; Ecclesiological late Cambridge Camden Society *A Handbook of English Ecclesiology* (London: Joseph Masters, 1847).
- <sup>26</sup> Stanton, pg. 29.
- <sup>27</sup> Stanton, pg. 216-217.
- <sup>28</sup> Stanton, pg. 218.
- <sup>29</sup> Stanton, pg. 225-227.
- <sup>30</sup> Stanton, pg. 272.
- <sup>31</sup> Swett, Richard N. and Colleen M. Thornton *Leadership by Design: Creating an Architecture of Trust* (Atlanta: Greenway Communications, LLC), pg. 31.
- <sup>32</sup> Stanton, pgs. 274, 300-301.
- <sup>33</sup> "LOCAL MATTERS", *The Sun (1837-1988)*; Dec 19, 1859; ProQuest Historical Newspapers: Baltimore Sun, The (1837-1988), pg. 1; "Old St. Barnabas' Church To Be Turned Into Garage: Structure Built By ..." *The Sun (1837-1988)*; Jan 19, 1941; ProQuest Historical Newspapers: Baltimore Sun, The (1837-1988) pg. 7
- <sup>34</sup> All Saints' Episcopal Church, "St. Michael's Chapel" <http://www.allsaints.org-md.org/St.%20Michael%27s.htm#top>
- <sup>35</sup> Joan M. Marter, ed. Congdon, Henry Martyn" in *The Grove Encyclopedia of American Art: Five-Volume set* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), pg. 534.

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<sup>36</sup> *The American Architect – The Architectural Review Volume CXXI, January to June 1922*, April 12, 1922, pg. 16. Google ebook; “TELEGRAPHIC SUMMARY, ETC.”, *The Sun (1837-1987)*; Oct 26, 1882; ProQuest Historical Newspapers: Baltimore Sun, The (1837-1987), pg. 1

<sup>37</sup> *The Churchman, Vol. 40*, pg. 233-234. Available as a Google book; “City Railway Complications” *The Sun (1837-1987)*; Aug 12, 1879; ProQuest Historical Newspapers: Baltimore Sun, The (1837-1987), pg. 1

<sup>38</sup> Joan M. Marter, pg. 534; Stanton, pg. 301.

<sup>39</sup> Father Jesse Parker, personal communication, March 29, 2014.

<sup>40</sup> “TREES DEDICATED TO LIZETTE REESE: Memory Of Baltimore Poet Honored ...” *The Sun (1837-1988)*; Apr 26, 1937; ProQuest Historical Newspapers: Baltimore Sun, The (1837-1988), pg. 4