

Landmarks Preservation Commission
November 20, 1990; Designation List 229
LP-1790

ANTIOCH (formerly GREENE AVENUE) BAPTIST CHURCH and CHURCH HOUSE, 828 and 826 Greene Avenue, Brooklyn. Church: built 1887-92; architect, Lansing C. Holden. Church House: built circa 1892-93; architect, Langston & Dahlander.

Landmark Site: Borough of Brooklyn Tax Map Block 1620, Lots 25 and 24.

On July 10, 1990 the Landmarks Preservation Commission held a public hearing on the proposed designation as a Landmark of the Antioch Baptist Church and Church House, and the proposed designation of the related Landmark Site (Item No. 7). The hearing had been duly advertised in accordance with the provisions of law. Seven witnesses, including the pastor and other representatives of the church, spoke in favor of designation. No witnesses spoke in opposition to designation. The Commission has received several statements in favor of designation.

DESCRIPTION AND ANALYSIS

Summary

The Antioch (formerly Greene Avenue) Baptist Church was designed in the Queen Anne style with Romanesque Revival elements by Lansing C. Holden and built in 1887-92. While it clearly reads as a religious building, its striking design harmonizes with the adjacent residential streetscape by reproducing the scale, texture, and overall character of the neighboring rowhouses. Among these is the adjacent Antioch Baptist Church House, which in its exterior materials and details is a well composed architectural complement to the church. Designed as part of a row of seven houses by the Brooklyn firm of Langston & Dahlander, this structure was built in circa 1892-93 as a single-family residence; it was purchased by the Antioch Baptist Church in 1961 for use as a church house.

The Antioch Baptist Church has played a prominent role in Brooklyn's religious history. It was built by the Greene Avenue Baptist congregation, which was a white group originally founded in Bushwick in 1854 and is remembered for its many philanthropic programs. As economic and demographic changes transformed the Bedford-Stuyvesant area surrounding the Greene Avenue church from a mixed-income white neighborhood to an economically diverse black community, this church remained a visual and social anchor. The building was sold in 1950 to the Antioch Baptist congregation, which had been established in downtown Brooklyn by Rev. Moses P. Paylor in 1918. Upon relocating to Greene Avenue, the Antioch congregation continued its dedication to social justice and spiritual enlightenment, receiving as guests nationally renowned civil rights leaders, politicians, performing artists, authors, and many other influential people, particularly black Americans. Today, Antioch persists as a prominent institution in New York's most populous black community, whose cultural roots stem from the communities of Weeksville and Carrsville which were founded by blacks and flourished nearby in the mid-nineteenth century.

History of the Neighborhood and the Site¹

In the 1660s, the hamlet of Bedford was established within the eastern limit of the Town of Brooklyn. It was settled by Dutch farmers, who brought with them African slaves, and by a few free blacks. By the time of the American Revolution, one-third of Bedford's people were black slaves. They were gradually emancipated (the remainder being freed in 1827 when New York State abolished slavery) and, together with the already-free black founders of nearby Weeksville and Carrsville (aka Carrville), they formed the core of what would eventually become our country's second largest black community.² The black villages of Weeksville and Carrsville flourished between the 1830s and the 1870s. Around mid-century they together contained two churches, a school, homes for the aged and orphans, the Weeksville Assistance Society, and the national headquarters of the African Civilization Society. The expansion of development eastward from downtown Brooklyn beginning in 1834, incorporated Bedford and adjacent areas in 1854. The grid of streets cut between 1850 and 1870 engulfed and almost obliterated these communities.

During the nineteenth century, Bedford was largely transformed from an agricultural to a residential district. In the 1830s, the Brooklyn and Jamaica Railroad (later L.I.R.R.) extended through Bedford and a commissioners' map platted part of this district with a grid of streets. In the subsequent decades, urban growth encouraged Brooklyn's first horsecar routes to commence on Fulton Street and Myrtle Avenue and its previously planned streets to be built. Many of these streets became lined with gracious suburban villas. When the horsecars were replaced by the elevated railways along several avenues during the 1880s, Bedford was transformed into a more urban neighborhood, characterized by a diversity of economic groups and including several areas of brick-and-brownstone rowhouses for middle-class white residents. As in other Brooklyn neighborhoods, these streetscapes were punctuated by the silhouettes of churches, earning the city the sobriquet, "The City of Churches."

Between 1880 and 1920, these residential areas assumed the form that is largely preserved today. Greene Avenue between Lewis and Stuyvesant avenues is an example. Although two groups of rowhouses were already standing on the north side of Greene Avenue, almost opposite the future site of the church, most of the residences -- as well as the church -- comprising these two blockfronts were built between 1887 and the early 1890s.³

The establishment of Bedford as a major black neighborhood began after World War I, when about four percent of its population was black. At the close of the war, many white residents left for newly developed parts of the city or for the suburbs; they were replaced by less affluent white immigrants from Europe and blacks from the West Indies. The opening of the subway's "A" line in the 1930s joined this area to New York's already established black community, Harlem. Residents from overcrowded Harlem and a large influx of blacks from the rural South increased Brooklyn's black population. Conflicts between blacks and whites during the 1930s earned the area a notorious reputation, identified with the composite name "Bedford-Stuyvesant," which incorporated the name of a small neighborhood within the confines of the larger Bedford area. At the onset of World War II, Bedford-

Stuyvesant was twenty-five percent black and many residents were employed at the nearby Brooklyn Navy Yard. By 1950 the area was slightly more than half black; the decrease in the white population was tied to the deterioration of public services, racism, the relocation of industry, and an unstable real estate market, among other things. By 1970 Bedford-Stuyvesant was about eighty-five percent black and had surpassed Harlem as the city's largest black community. Brooklyn's black community has produced some famous Americans, such as collector Arthur Schomburg, inventor Samuel Scotrun, Congresswoman Shirley Chisholm, educator Dr. Philip White, singer Lena Horne, and Dr. Susan Smith McKinney-Steward, the state's first black woman physician. Much of the credit for stabilizing today's mixed-income Bedford-Stuyvesant -- the emergence of the black community in its present form-- belongs to these and other such notable people, through their involvement in national and local organizations and in the black church.

The Greene Avenue Baptist Church⁴

In the spring of 1854 the white Baptists of Bushwick met for the purpose of organizing a Baptist church in that vicinity. A Board of Trustees was elected and the group was incorporated as "The First Baptist Society of the Town of Bushwick, Long Island."⁵ Soon recognized by the Baptist Council of Churches, it purchased its first house of worship, a structure on Bushwick Avenue opposite Wall Street which the Ascension Episcopal Church had recently erected but could not afford to keep. Having outgrown this building after twelve years, the society -- renamed the Gethsemane Baptist Church of Brooklyn -- moved temporarily to member J. Whittlesey's Omnibus House on Broadway near Sumner Avenue. The church members purchased property on Willoughby Avenue near Broadway and erected a new church, dedicated in 1868.

The future of the congregation would be linked to today's Bedford-Stuyvesant. A theological disagreement divided the group, and about thirty members withdrew and organized the Trinity Baptist Church in 1875; two years later they built a wooden chapel on Greene Avenue between Patchen Avenue and Broadway (within the borders of what is today considered Bedford-Stuyvesant, and now demolished).⁶ The church members remaining on Willoughby Avenue adopted the name Willoughby Avenue Baptist Church in 1879 and two years later they chose the Rev. Robert B. Montgomery (1839-1893) as their new pastor. A native of Scotland, Montgomery moved to Canada where he eventually studied for the ministry at the Baptist College of Ontario (later renamed McMaster University of Toronto) and served in various pastorates; he was pastor of a church at Seneca Falls, New York, when he was invited to the Willoughby Avenue church. It was Rev. Montgomery who led the congregation in 1884-85 as it sold the church and began worshipping in the hall of the Warner Institute, where it remained for several years. Meanwhile it purchased land on Greene Avenue, in the heart of the developing area which would eventually be called Bedford-Stuyvesant; in 1885 a building committee was chosen to solicit designs for the new church and to oversee the project.⁷ Plans submitted by Lansing C. Holden were selected,⁸ but before construction was completed, the plans were probably altered by Paul F. Higgs (see "Design and Construction of the Church," below).

The Queen Anne and Romanesque Revival Styles⁹

Popular in this country in the late 1870s and early 1880s, the Queen Anne style originated in England where it had begun to develop in the 1860s and flourished in the 1870s. This style, most often associated with English architect Richard Norman Shaw (1831-1912), was a reaction to the High Victorian Gothic; it tempered the "massiveness" and "muscularity" of the latter style by incorporating elements derived from domestic architecture of the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, a period of English history associated in part with the reign of Queen Anne. The buildings were generally brick with stone trim, incorporated projecting bays and oriels, and had high-pitched roofs broken by shaped gables, dormers, or ribbed chimney stacks. Favorite decorative elements included ribbed and gauged brickwork, crafted tiles, keystones, swags, rondels, and classical moldings. Having trained during the popularity of High Victorian Gothic, the architects adeptly "abandoned symmetry whenever it was convenient to do so, and concentrated on features in which, as [William] Morris later put it, 'some of the Gothic feeling was left.'"¹⁰ In its associations with crafted details and particular materials, the Queen Anne style was akin to the contemporaneous Arts and Crafts movement of Morris and his colleagues.

In the United States, the appearance of the Queen Anne style accompanied a growing appreciation for America's colonial heritage that was particularly receptive following the celebration of the Centennial in 1876. Returning from visits to England, American architects H.H. Richardson, Charles F. McKim, and R.S. Peabody adapted Shaw's Georgian-inspired aesthetic, incorporating applied pilasters and foliate friezes derived from American colonial architecture, and substituting shingles for English tiles. Other characteristic features of the style were small window panes, targeted gables, and bell-shaped roofs surmounted by finials. American architects also transformed the interiors: the discretely separated rooms desired by the English became a sequence of intermingled spaces, more appropriate to American needs and preferences. In New York, the Queen Anne style was primarily used for residential architecture, where it was often executed in brick; some of the finest and most interesting groups of houses in this style were erected in Brooklyn. By adapting to American functional requirements and materials, the so-called Shavian Queen Anne was transformed into an American style, seen as a national vernacular forming the basis of a new architecture. By the 1890s, however, many architects had shifted from this innovative design approach to an imitative Colonial Revival style.

American architects often combined Queen Anne designs with neo-Grec, Renaissance Revival, and Romanesque Revival elements. The Romanesque Revival style is, in the United States, most often associated with the work of Richardson, who created a highly inventive aesthetic by transforming the medieval Romanesque architecture of France and Spain into a modern form. Characteristic features of this style are round-arched openings emphasized in molded brick and carved stone, polychromy and varied textures, robust rustication at the basement level, bartizans (small structures which overhang fort walls) or turrets, and carved ornament of interlaced naturalistic forms.

Design and Construction of the Church¹¹ [see figs. 2-4]

The exterior of the Antioch Baptist Church is a striking example of Queen Anne design that incorporates Romanesque Revival elements. The horizontal expanse of its rusticated base, bowed central mass, and garland-embellished bands is balanced by the verticality of the stacked windows and of the four towers, particularly the turreted corners and arched narrow openings of the end towers. The steeple of the western tower accentuates the vertical, or medieval, ambience while serving as a counterpoint to an otherwise symmetrical design. Other Romanesque-inspired details are round-arched window openings, serpentine door straps and carved stone bases on the bartizans (overhanging corner towers). The contrasting colors and textures of the brick, stone, pressed metal, slate shingles, and roof tiles adds to the design's Queen Anne character.

The modulation of the church's facade into several projecting and recessed masses, its set-back behind a small garden, its simple stoop-like staircases, and its varied silhouette allow the large volume of the building to harmonize with the adjacent residential streetscape. Several groups of rowhouses were already standing in the vicinity when the church was designed and the remaining rows were built during the construction of the church and slightly later; therefore, it would seem that this contextual approach to the design of the church was a conscious one on the part of the architect.

The estimated cost of architect Holden's proposed church was \$55,000 or \$60,000,¹² which was more than the congregation could afford; therefore, it was decided to build only the basement at first. The ceremonious laying of the cornerstone took place in August, 1887; the following April the newly christened "Greene Avenue Baptist Church" held services in the roofed-over basement, which had been built by F. Mapes and accommodated 570 people. At this time the almost 700-member church also resumed its Sunday school and missionary activity. The total cost of land and basement was \$35,000; when the \$10,000 mortgage was paid off late in 1890, the members decided to complete the church.

The intention to finish the building according to Holden's plans was not carried through, primarily due to financial restraints. New plans were solicited, but none were accepted. Instead, New York City architect Paul F. Higgs, who had been a competitor, was asked to revise Holden's original design¹³; the resulting scheme, published in the Brooklyn Eagle [see fig. 2], was estimated to cost \$27,000. The church took out a new \$25,000 mortgage and construction resumed in 1891. The opening of the auditorium was hailed by week-long dedication services, directed by Rev. Montgomery, in April, 1892.

The church exterior reveals the overall organization of the interior (not included in this designation), particularly that of the auditorium. The expansive auditorium takes on the traditional shape of a Greek cross. Surrounding the central space, which has a coved ceiling supported by broad arches on slender columns, are four vaulted "arms," one containing the bowed bay visible on the facade and another sheltering the raised sanctuary.

Design and Construction of 826 Greene Avenue [see figs. 1 & 5]

Contemporaneous with the completion of the church, the architectural firm of Langston & Dahlander designed a row of seven dwellings for the lots directly to the west of the church. Commissioned by Louis C. Schliep, a financial broker on Wall Street,¹⁴ the plans were submitted for a building permit in December, 1891, with an estimated cost of \$5,000 per building.¹⁵ Faced in brick and brownstone, these Queen Anne style houses with Romanesque Revival details have three stories and raised basements. Number 826 (now the church house) was designed and built¹⁶ as the easternmost of this group of rowhouses. Their alternating rhythm of pitched roofs and gabled facades and the sophisticated variation of details within the row support the theory that Nos. 814 (recently demolished)¹⁷ and 826 were designed with the same overall composition. Unlike the other five facades, each of the end houses at Nos. 814 and 826 were designed with a second story pierced by a single window and a pair of windows as well as paired third-story dormers. Apparently the architects were extremely sensitive to the design of the adjacent church, then just being completed, as they introduced at No. 826 corbeled lintels over the first-story openings, arched second-story openings with brick voussoirs that contrast with the color of the facade in an identical fashion as those on the church, slate roof shingles, and uneven dormer sizes in order to complement the church facade.¹⁸ Presumably, the seven rowhouses were executed between 1892 and 1893.

Lansing C. Holden¹⁹

A native of Rome, New York, Lansing C. Holden (1854/58-1930) received an M.A. from Wooster University (later the College of Wooster) in Ohio. He began practicing architecture in Scranton, Pennsylvania, where his designs include the Moses Taylor Hospital (1884-91, with I.G. Perry), the Green Ridge Library (1889), alterations to the Connell and Commonwealth Buildings (1895), and the perpendicular Gothic style²⁰ First Presbyterian Church and Parsonage (1897-1904). Holden concurrently established an office in New York as early as 1886, where his work is represented by: the Phillips Residence, a striking Romanesque Revival style mansion with Queen Anne details (1887, now in the Park Slope Historic District); the Buchanan Residence, a Francois I style townhouse (1893, now in the Upper East Side Historic District); the 677 Lafayette Avenue House, a Romanesque Revival residence (a designated New York City Landmark, located in Bedford-Stuyvesant); and the Delaware Lackawanna & Western Railroad Company Office Building, a limestone-faced neo-Classical building (erected at 26 Exchange Place, completed in 1892 and now demolished).

Closing his Scranton office in 1905, Holden devoted much energy to the architectural profession in New York until his death in 1930. He joined the Architectural League of New York in 1893 and subsequently became its treasurer and then director. An associate member of the American Institute of Architects, he eventually served as the president of that organization's New York chapter. To a large extent Holden was responsible for a version (now superseded) of the A.I.A. Code of Ethics; he was made a Fellow of the Institute in 1912. Holden was appointed to the state Board of Architectural Examiners in 1916.

Paul Franklyn Higgs²¹

The first known records of Higgs's architectural work date from 1888-90, during his partnership with Frank A. Rooke; the firm of Higgs & Rooke designed a Flemish/Romanesque Revival style flats building (now in the Upper West Side/Central Park West Historic District) and a group of Romanesque Revival style rowhouses (now in the Park Slope Historic District). Higgs then worked independently for nine years, designing more rowhouses in the Romanesque Revival style (examples of which are included in the Park Slope and Hamilton Heights Historic Districts). In 1899 he began practicing with James J.F. Gavigan.²² The following year Higgs again had his own office. Records testify to his continued practice in New York only until 1902.

Langston & Dahlander²³

Frederick B. Langston was active as an architect in Brooklyn between 1889 and 1897 and possibly longer. He designed rowhouses in the Romanesque Revival, Renaissance Revival, and Queen Anne styles, often combining these styles within one design (examples of which are included within the Park Slope and Stuyvesant Heights Historic Districts). In 1891 to 1892 Langston maintained a partnership with Magnus Dahlander, who is credited with a long row of houses -- combining the Romanesque Revival, French Renaissance, and Queen Anne styles -- on Bainbridge Street (in the Stuyvesant Heights Historic District), and three groups of Romanesque Revival/Queen Anne style rowhouses (in the Park Slope Historic District), all of which were built in 1892-93. The firm of Langston & Dahlander designed the row of seven houses on Greene Avenue that includes the present Antioch Baptist Church House at No. 826. Between 1894 and 1896, Dahlander worked in partnership with A.S. Hedman. Together they were responsible for a long row of houses combining the Romanesque Revival and Renaissance Revival styles (in the Stuyvesant Heights Historic District).

Subsequent History of the Greene Avenue Baptist Church²⁴

The Greene Avenue congregation continued to prosper in its new location, which was occasionally called the "Baptist fort." Soon after Rev. Montgomery's death in 1893, the church elected Rev. Cornelius Woelfkin (1859-1928) as pastor. Born on Manhattan's West Side to German parents, Woelfkin was ordained to the ministry in 1886 and served as pastor of churches in New York and New Jersey before arriving at the Greene Avenue church in 1894. During his pastorate, the continued increase in membership (surpassing 1000 faithful by 1904) necessitated the building of a gallery in the auditorium and the church celebrated its Golden Jubilee in 1904. The following year, Woelfkin's abiding friendship with oil executive and philanthropist John D. Rockefeller, Jr., led to the clergyman's transfer to Rockefeller's Fifth Avenue (later Park Avenue) Baptist Church in Manhattan; in that location Woelfkin solidified his reputation as a well-respected anti-Fundamentalist. During the early twentieth century, the Greene Avenue congregation's continued vitality permitted the dispatch of members as missionaries to China, Cuba, and throughout the United States. Those remaining in Brooklyn supported philanthropic work, renovated the church interior (including the installation of new stained-glass windows in 1901

and 1910²⁵), and in 1922 hosted former Secretary of State and popular orator William Jennings Bryan for a speech against Darwinism.

After several decades of dwindling membership, the church sold its largely intact²⁶ house of worship to the Antioch Baptist Church in 1950. The remaining members of the Greene Avenue church moved to other Baptist churches and the funds from the sale were distributed to various charities.

The Antioch Baptist Congregation

A native of Mebane, North Carolina, Moses Prophet Paylor²⁷ arrived in New York State circa 1910, attended school in White Plains, and became a student at Columbia University. After his ordination, Rev. Paylor served as pastor of churches in Pleasantville, New York, and Bay Ridge, Brooklyn. At a time when the black contribution to the "City of Churches" began to be felt through the proliferation and growth of black churches,²⁸ Paylor founded the Antioch Baptist Church in 1918, purchasing the parsonage and church of the Concord Baptist congregation at 163 and 165 Duffield Street (now the Zion Shiloh Baptist Church) in downtown Brooklyn. He was an active member of the Empire State Baptist Missionary Convention, the Baptist Ministers' Conference of Greater New York and Vicinity, the National Baptist Convention, U.S.A., Inc., and a charter member of the Eastern Baptist Association of Brooklyn and Long Island, which held its first meeting at the Antioch Church in 1922. Clayton Williams University of Baltimore awarded Rev. Paylor the honorary degree of Doctor of Divinity (D.D.) in recognition of his achievements. He oversaw the group's purchase of the Greene Avenue church and move to Bedford-Stuyvesant in 1950, as part of a trend in which Brooklyn's major downtown black churches relocated to that neighborhood.²⁹ Paylor died in 1958, his work having enriched the lives of many New Yorkers and his Antioch Church one of Brooklyn's prominent African-American congregations.

The Rev. George Lawrence (1928-83) served as Antioch's second pastor from 1959 until his death in 1983.³⁰ A native of Winston-Salem, North Carolina, he lived in New York as a child, attended the divinity school at the University of Chicago, and was ordained to the ministry in Dayton, Ohio. A close associate of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Lawrence held many prominent positions, including northeastern regional director of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, director of communications and a founder of the Organization of African American Clergy, and director of public information for the International Freedom Mobilization Against Apartheid in South Africa. Well known as a journalist, commentator, community activist, and civil rights leader, Rev. Lawrence is remembered for his support of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) and the Urban League. During his tenure, the church sponsored many social awareness and neighborhood revival programs, and celebrated its Golden Jubilee in 1969.

Antioch's third and current pastor, the Rev. Dr. Phillip E. Elliott,³¹ began ministering to the congregation in 1986. Having first pursued graduate studies in business administration, he then earned a Master of Divinity and honorary Doctorate of Divinity from Virginia Union Theological

Seminary in Lynchburg. Rev. Elliott has served as director of the Education Division of the Ministers' Conference of Brooklyn and Long Island and was instrumental in strengthening Antioch's ties to the Eastern Baptist Association.

Antioch's prominence within the black church³² and the city's religious community is attested to by the enormous number of famous and influential guests it has hosted.³³ Among them are: civil rights leaders Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Rev. Ralph Abernathy, Rev. Dr. Adam Clayton Powell, Jr., Hazel Dukes (New York's head of the NAACP), and Rosa Parks; politicians including Governor Nelson Rockefeller and Mayors John V. Lindsay and David N. Dinkins; and African-American celebrities in many fields such as Aretha Franklin, Dick Gregory, Ossie Davis, Ruby Dee, Jackie Robinson, Spike Lee, and Langston Hughes. Many of these visits are memorialized in a large photo montage now located in a room adjacent to the church balcony.

Subsequent History of 826 Greene Avenue³⁴

The building that now functions as the church house was sold in 1894 by Thaddeus Halsted Myers to Frederick H. Norwood (aka Frederic H. Narwood), a manufacturer, for \$7,500. Norwood, in turn, sold the house to Elias Reiss in 1920. Seventeen years later it was purchased by Anna Perlman, whose family owned the house until 1948. In that year Mildred Lewis and Sentry Scarborough bought the property; they and their heirs owned the building, which was converted to a multiple dwelling, until 1961 when it was sold to the Antioch Baptist Church. Rev. Lawrence had the structure altered into a one-family parsonage in 1963-65. It currently serves as a non-residential church house.

Description of the Church³⁵ [see figs. 4, 6-7]

The church's nearly-symmetrical facade is composed of five sections, covered largely in rock-faced white and red-brown brick of elongated proportions, russet slate shingles, and white Indiana limestone.

The central section features a bay, sheathed in fish-scale and plain slate shingles, which projects from a limestone base and is flanked by a pair of brick towers. Resting on iron brackets, the bay is adorned by three pressed-metal bands, one decorated with swags, and a swag-embellished cornice. Each of the three round-arched openings, crowned by a projecting keystone, contains stained glass in its arched top section and flat-headed lower sections. The lower portion of the bay bears a long, narrow sign with the words "ANTIOCH BAPTIST CHURCH." The base, buttressed at its sides, is pierced by five double-hung wood-sash windows to which wrought-iron grilles have been added. This section's half-conical roof is now covered with asphalt shingles (originally Roman tile). The flanking red-brick towers terminate the buttresses and are surmounted by cornices and bell-shaped roofs with finials. The western tower bears the cornerstone inserted upon Antioch's arrival in 1950.

Adjacent to the central section are two identical, recessed sections. Their stone bases align with that of the central section; their red-brown

brick upper portions contain round-arched openings beneath contrasting white brick arches with stone keystones. Each opening contains stained glass and is divided by a swag-encrusted pressed metal spandrel into an arched upper portion and rectangular lower portion. Stained-glass windows, filling openings on three sides of the building, depict religious scenes, abstracted foliage, and geometric patterns.

The end pavilions take the form of matching towers with strikingly different crowns. Each red-brick tower has a long flight of stone steps flanked by original cast-iron pipe railings, some of which retain their intermediate cast-iron infill. Each pair of oak doors, their five-paneled surfaces painted red and embellished with serpentine iron strap hinges, is surrounded by a stone frame and capped by a prominent, hipped hood, now covered in asphalt shingles. At the mid-section, each tower is pierced by an arched opening with a double-hung wood-sash window, a brick arch, and a stone sill. The upper portion of each tower is bracketed between dentiled stone bands, reinforced by bartizans, and pierced by trebled double-hung wood-sash windows with intersecting white brick arches and a continuous stone sill. The western tower culminates in a tall steeple, now surfaced in asphalt shingles; in contrast, the eastern tower has a low pyramidal roof with a carved stone finial. The exposed sides of the end towers are articulated identically to the front of these towers.

At the bottom of each staircase now stands a cast-iron base of what must have been an early streetlight. While not original, these elements must have been added around the turn of the century. Between the staircases, a granite curb supports an original iron fence that protects a small garden. Within the garden is a modestly-sized announcement board with a glass front. Two narrow wings, deeply recessed behind iron gates, span the alleys between the church and the adjacent buildings. Sided in wood and painted dark brown, each of the wings has an arched opening with double-hung wood-sash window and rests on a ground-story arch; in the eastern wing, this arch is filled by a door leading to the Fellowship Hall, while its western counterpart remains open to the alley beyond it.

From the rear of the building, the main roof is visible: its hipped central section is intersected by pitched-roofs covering the arms, which terminate in gables. The rear elevation, partially obscured by an adjoining structure, is stuccoed and pierced by window openings. The brick side walls of the main body of the church, one painted white and the other stuccoed, are pierced by arched openings which contain historic stained glass windows at the auditorium level and recent wrought-iron gates at the basement.

Description of the Church House [see fig. 5]

To the west side of the church is the three-story rowhouse with a raised basement; it now serves as the church house. The box-shaped stone stoop, now painted, has a rock-faced front wall and smooth side walls. A non-original wrought-iron fence with a gate separates the sidewalk from the areaway, now filled in. Original iron gates remain at the basement entrance under the stoop and over the basement window. The parlor story is also fronted in rock-faced limestone. A projecting lintel, on end corbels,

shields the doorway. (The door is not original.) The window opening to the west of the door contains a pair of windows separated by a turned mullion and capped by leaded glass transoms that are bracketed by rounded corbels. A rectangular sign surmounts the parlor story and a flower box has been installed beneath the windows. The second story is fronted in rock-faced red-brown brick. Above the door, a small arched opening with a stone sill rests on a stone plaque carved with oak leaves and a shield. To the west are two arched openings. All three second-story openings are united by a stone springing course and have rock-faced white brick arches. A modillioned cornice is surmounted by the slightly pitched slate roof from which two dormers, of unequal size, protrude. Both have smooth surrounds, modillioned cornices, and slate-tiled hipped roofs, one with a ball finial. All windows have one-over-one double-hung wood sash. The house's gabled end walls project slightly above the roof. The eastern wall is of rough brick, and is stuccoed. The western wall is a party wall with the adjacent rowhouse.

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NOTES

1. For the overall history of the area: James P. Hurley, "Annotated Bibliography on Weeksville-Carrsville and Associated Topics in Brooklyn Black History," (typescript in the LPC files, 1978); Robert J. Swan, "The Origin of Black Bedford-Stuyvesant," in Charlene Claye Van Derzee, An Introduction to the Black Contribution to the Development of Brooklyn (Brooklyn, 1977), 72-84; Ruth Ann Stewart, "Black Churches & Brooklyn," exhibit catalogue (Brooklyn, 1984); David Ment, The Shaping of a City: A Brief History of Brooklyn (Brooklyn, 1979), passim; David Ment & Mary S. Donovan, The People of Brooklyn: A History of Two Neighborhoods (Brooklyn, 1980), 7-36; Brooklyn USA: The Fourth Largest City in America (Brooklyn, 1979), 27-32, 227-230; Henry R. Stiles, ed.-in-chief, The Civil, Political, Professional and Ecclesiastical History and Commercial and Industrial Record of the County of Kings and City of Brooklyn, New York, from 1683 to 1884 (New York, 1884), 155; Nancy Haber, "A History of Bedford-Stuyvesant," (typescript in the library collection of the Brooklyn Historical Society, 1969), 1-15.

For the history of the sites in question: NYC, Tax Assessment Records (Brooklyn, 23rd ward). Municipal Archives and Records Center [1893-97]; Kings County, Office of the Register, Liber Deeds and Conveyances, Liber 2257, p.391, and Lot Index for block 1620.

Dr. Joseph Brooks of the Survey Department of the LPC greatly assisted the preparation of this report through his research, suggestions, and photographic work.

2. By 1970, the area identified today as Bedford-Stuyvesant became New York's most populous black community. Its size is second only to that of Chicago's South Side. See Ment & Donovan, 33; Ment, 88.
3. NYC, Department of Buildings, Brooklyn, Index to New Buildings Applications, 1882-1893.
4. Greene Avenue Baptist Church, Records, 1854-1950 (three boxes of documents at the Brooklyn Historical Society); Stiles, 1076, 1080-81; "To Be Built This Fall: A Home for the Greene Avenue Baptist Church," Brooklyn Eagle (henceforth Eagle,) Aug. 2, 1891, p.19; William G. Bigger, "Our Church -- Its Past and Present," The Sentinel (published by the Greene Avenue Baptist Church) 8, no. 3 (Apr. 21, 1923) and subsequent issues.
5. Bigger gives this name. Other sources call the new congregation the "First Baptist Church of Bushwick."
6. The two branches of the congregation were consolidated in 1916. See Bigger's account.
7. The committee consisted of William C. Boone, Benjamin Thompson, and Abel Miller. There is no evidence that Mr. Miller is the same person as "A. Miller," who is listed in The Record & Guide 39, no. 1000 (May, 14, 1887), p.685, and 39, no. 1001 (May 21, 1887), p.723, as the "architect and builder" of at least four houses on Greene Avenue, near the site of the future church.
8. Although Bigger calls the architect Lansing H. Holden, it can be assumed he is the same person.
9. Mark Girouard, Sweetness and Light: The 'Queen Anne' Movement, 1860-1900 (New Haven, 1977), passim; Vincent J. Scully, Jr., The Shingle Style and the Stick Style (New Haven, 1971), passim; LPC, The Century Building Designation Report, Report prepared by Gale Harris (New York, 1986); LPC, Upper West Side/Central Park West Historic District Designation Report (New York, 1990), vol. 1, 42-43.
10. Girouard, 18.
11. Bigger, passim; "To Be Built," Eagle, Aug. 2, 1891, p.19; "Greene Avenue Baptist Church: Programme of Dedication of Its New House of Worship," Eagle, Apr. 12, 1892, p.1, and other brief articles during the week of April 16-23, 1892.
12. The first amount is given in The Record & Guide 39, no. 1000 (May 14, 1887), p.685; the second is found in Bigger's account.
13. The attribution of the church's design to Holden limits Higgs's role to revising his predecessor's scheme; it is based on (1) the Index to New Buildings, Application 303-1887, listing Holden as the architect; (2) the absence of any other New Building or Alteration applications, which

certainly would have been required if Higgs had executed a substantially different design; and (3) the ambiguous account in "To Be Built," Eagle, Aug. 2, 1891, p.19, which states (emphasis added),

The original plans [Holden's] would involve an outlay which the congregation was not prepared to carry. New plans were called for but none of them were accepted. Among the competing architects was Paul F. Higgs of New York city. His plans, although not well thought of at first, finally became the choice of many, but an arrangement was afterward made by which Mr. Higgs was induced to draw other plans similar in many respects to the ones at first offered. After two attempts Mr. Higgs turned out a church which seemed to meet the approval of all and that one was accepted. It is the one shown here.

14. Trow's New York City Directory (1890-91), 1113.
15. Application 2252-1891, as recorded in The Record and Guide 48, no. 1240 (Dec. 19, 1891), 815, and NYC, Department of Buildings, Brooklyn, Plans, Permits, and Dockets, Block 1620, Lots 18-24. NB 739-1891.
16. Although the permit (NB 739-1891) found in the block and lot folder of lot 18, covering lots 18 to 24, does not list commencement and completion dates for construction, a survey of the New Buildings Applications Index for the subsequent years reveals that no other applications were submitted for these lots. Since Iain & Healy's Elite Directory of Brooklyn (Brooklyn, 1897) indicates that these sites were occupied by 1897, we must conclude that the row of seven houses was built on the aforementioned permit.
17. See NYC, Department of Finance, Real Property Assessment Bureau, photographic records on LANDISC: New York City, Brooklyn 2 (New York, 1988) for a view of lot 18 just before the building was demolished.
18. Since the present church house was not owned by the church (nor a church member) until 1961 and no record of a twentieth-century exterior refacing is evident, the account given in this report seems the most feasible.
19. Joseph H. Young, "Early Architects and Architecture of Scranton, Pennsylvania," Charette 46, no. 20 (Apr., 1966), 11; Lansing C. Holden obituary, Architectural Forum 53, no. 1 (July, 1930), 33; Lansing C. Holden obituary, American Architect 138, no. 2585 (July, 1930), 118; "General Office Building, Delaware-Lackawanna & Western R.R. Co., L.C. Holden, Architect," Architectural Record 2, no. 2 (Oct.-Dec., 1892), 192; Dennis Steadman Francis, Architects in Practice, New York City, 1840-1900 (New York, 1979), 40; James Ward, Architects in Practice, New York City, 1900-1940 (Union, N.J., 1989), 36; LPC, Upper East Side Historic District Designation Report (New York, 1981), 1262-63; LPC, Park Slope Historic District Designation Report (New York, 1973), 18.

- LPC, 677 Lafayette Avenue House (Magnolia Grandiflora) Designation Report (New York, 1977). Another building in the New York City area by Holden is the Bayonne (N.J.) City Hospital.
20. This stylistic description is given by A. Margareta Archambault, A Guide Book of Art, Architecture, and Historical Interest in Pennsylvania (Philadelphia, 1924), 508.
 21. Francis, 39, 66; Ward, 35; Hamilton Heights Historic District Designation Report (New York, 1974), 11; Park Slope Historic District Designation Report, 130; Upper West Side/Central Park West Historic District Designation Report, vol.1, p.A68, vol.2, p.132, vol.4, p.P82.
 22. Francis, 39, notes that the Greene Avenue Baptist Church was credited to Higgs & Gavigan in Architect's and Contractor's Complete Catalogue of the Building Trades (New York, 1899).
 23. Francis, 87, 92; LPC, Park Slope Historic District Designation Report; LPC, Stuyvesant Heights Historic District Designation Report (New York, 1971).
 24. Greene Avenue Baptist Church, Records 1854-1950; Rev. Cornelius Woelfkin obituary, NYT, Jan. 7, 1928, p.17; Bigger, passim.; "Triple Celebration. Greene Avenue Baptist Church Begins Special Services May 1," New York Tribune, Apr. 10, 1904; "His Second Anniversary: Dr. Curtis Lee Laws and Mrs. Laws Honored by Large Reception," Eagle, Mar. 10, 1910; "Greene Avenue Church to End Its Long History," Eagle, June 3, 1950.
 25. Greene Avenue Baptist Church, Records, vol. 2, p. 275 and vol. 3, p. 219. In 1901 a memorial window to commemorate Rev. Montgomery was installed and in 1910 several memorial windows were added. A brief visual inspection suggests that these may be Tiffany windows; further research would be needed to confirm this hypothesis.
 26. For photos of the church at different times, see: "The Greene Avenue Baptist Church [photo]," New York Tribune, Apr. 10, 1904; "Greene Avenue Baptist Church [photo]," Eagle, Apr. 30, 1944 (showing only one pinnacle remaining at the top of the western tower); and "Greene Avenue Baptist Church [photo]," Eagle, Apr. 11, 1948.
 27. "Antioch Baptist Church New Home Dedicated," Eagle, Oct. 9, 1950; Christine Smith-Shick, "The Antioch Baptist Church History," (typescript in the LPC research file, 1989), 6-7.
 28. See Robert J. Swan, "The Black Church in Brooklyn," in Van Derzee, 55-57.
 29. Ibid., 55.

30. "Antioch to Honor Pastor's 1st Year," World Telegraph, May 21, 1960; "Tea to Feature Spirituals and Pastor's Prize," Daily News, Nov. 19, 1968; "Antioch Parish Is Celebrating Golden Jubilee," Daily News, Nov. 9, 1969; "Two Churches In Bed-Stuy Set Revival," Sunday News, Oct. 17, 1971; "Pastor to Talk of King's Life," Daily News, Jan. 13, 1973; J. Zamgba Browne, "Group buys hotel in Dr. King's honor," Amsterdam News, Dec. 18, 1983, p.1; "Heads Mission to UN," Daily News, Jan. 23, 1983, sect. B, p.3; "Rev. Lawrence, rights activist dies," Amsterdam News, Dec. 3, 1983, pp.4, 41; Smith-Shick, 8.
31. Smith-Shick, 9-10; Amsterdam News, June 21, 1986, p.36.
32. Stewart, n.p., cites a definition of "The Black Church" from William A. Jones, Jr., God in the Ghetto: "That peculiar community of believers in Jesus Christ, brought together in history by a combination of their African rootage, their blackness, their common affliction, and their shared faith."
33. John Wicklein, "Brooklyn Negro Church Hails Governor as 'Layman of Year,'" NYT, Oct. 22, 1962. See also a list of famous guests submitted to the LPC files by Christine Smith-Shick and other church members.
34. Kings County, Office of the Register, Conveyance Index to blocks 1619-1623 (years 1895-1963); New York City, Department of Buildings, Brooklyn. Plans, Permits and Dockets, Block 1620, Lot 24. Alt 944-1963.
35. See "To Be Built," Eagle, Aug. 2, 1891, p.19.

FINDINGS AND DESIGNATION

On the basis of a careful consideration of the history, the architecture and other features of these buildings and site, the Landmarks Preservation Commission finds that the Antioch (formerly Greene Avenue) Baptist Church and Church House, 828 and 826 Greene Avenue, Brooklyn, have a special character, special historical and aesthetic interest and value as part of the development, heritage and cultural characteristics of New York City.

The Commission further finds that, among their important qualities, the church and present church house were designed in the Queen Anne style with Romanesque Revival details, thus visually complementing one another; that the church's robust exterior, largely intact, displays features associated with these styles, such as its slate shingled bowed bay, lively silhouette, rock-faced brick surfaces in contrasting colors, stone base, and details in pressed metal, stone, and cast iron; that the massing, materials, and detailing of this building are arranged to complement the otherwise residential streetscape of this portion of Greene Avenue; that the church was designed by Lansing C. Holden, a well-respected architect, whose design was probably slightly altered by Paul F. Higgs, an architect who is noted for his many rowhouse designs; that the church was erected in 1887-92 for the Greene Avenue congregation, originally founded in Bushwick in 1854 and remembered for its many philanthropic programs; that the present church house, acquired by the Antioch congregation in 1961, was designed by the firm of Langston & Dahlander and erected in 1892-93 as one of a row of seven houses; that its unusual and striking design combines the features of this row with clear references to the materials and detailing of the neighboring church exterior; that the Antioch Baptist congregation, which was established in downtown Brooklyn by Rev. Moses P. Paylor in 1918 and acquired the present church building in 1950, remains devoted to social justice and spiritual enlightenment and has received as guests nationally renowned civil rights leaders, politicians, performing artists, authors, and many other influential Americans; that this church is a prominent institution in Bedford-Stuyvesant, New York's most populous black community, whose cultural roots predate the urbanization of the neighborhood; and that the congregation has maintained the architectural integrity of the church and church house.

Accordingly, pursuant to Chapter 74, Section 3020 (formerly Section 534 of Chapter 21), 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 Antioch (formerly Greene Avenue) Baptist Church and Church House, Borough of Brooklyn, and designates Tax Map Block 1620, Lots 25 and 24, Borough of Brooklyn, as its Landmark Site.

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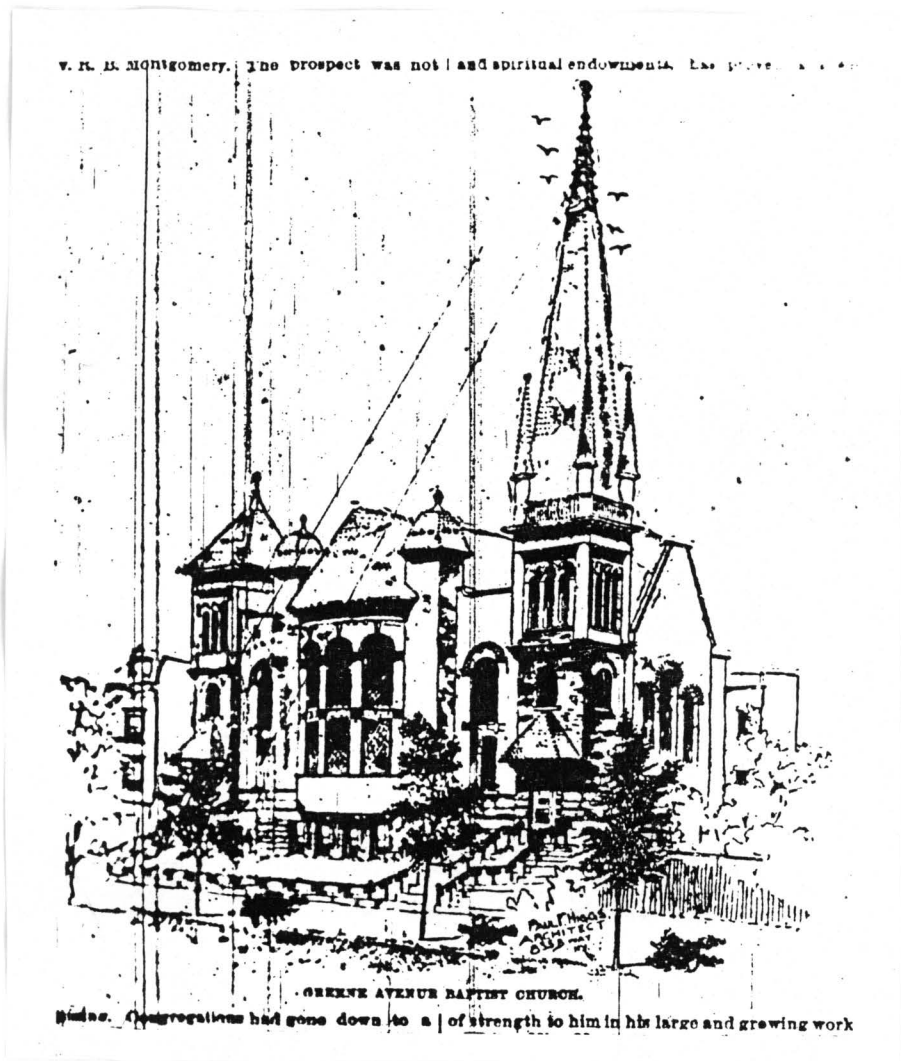


Fig. 2 Paul F. Higgs, drawing of the Greene Avenue Baptist Church in "To Be Built," Brooklyn Eagle, Aug. 2, 1891, p.19



Fig. 3 Greene Avenue Baptist Church, early twentieth-century postcard view in the LPC files



Fig. 4 Antioch Baptist Church

Photo: David M. Breiner



Fig. 5 Antioch Baptist Church House Photo: David M. Breiner



Fig. 7 Antioch Baptist Church, view from southeast (Lexington Avenue)
Photo: David M. Breiner



Fig. 6 Antioch Baptist Church, eastern tower
Photo: David M. Breiner