

**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

For HCERS use only

received FEB 29 1980

date entered APR 23 1980

1. Name

historic Reformed Church of Newtown Complex

and/or common

2. Location

street & number 85-15 Broadway

not for publication

city, town Elmhurst, Queens

vicinity of

congressional district 8

state New York

code 036

county Queens

code 081

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
☐ district	☐ public	☒ occupied	☐ agriculture
☒ building(s)	☒ private	☐ unoccupied	☐ commercial
☐ structure	☐ both	☐ work in progress	☐ educational
☐ site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	☐ entertainment
☐ object	☐ in process	☒ yes: restricted	☐ government
	☐ being considered	☐ yes: unrestricted	☐ industrial
		☐ no	☐ military
			☐ museum
			☐ park
			☐ private residence
			☒ religious
			☐ scientific
			☐ transportation
			☐ other:

4. Owner of Property

name Consistory of the Reformed Church of Newtown

street & number 85-15 Broadway

city, town Elmhurst

vicinity of

state New York

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Queens County Register's Office

street & number 90-27 Sutphin Boulevard

city, town Jamaica

state New York 11435

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Designation Report LP-0138
Landmarks Preservation Commission

has this property been determined eligible? ☐ yes ☒ no

date July, 1966

☐ federal ☐ state ☐ county ☒ local

depository for survey records Landmarks Preservation Commission, 305 Broadway

city, town New York

state New York

7. Description

Condition

☐ excellent
☒ good
☐ fair

☐ deteriorated
☐ ruins
☐ unexposed

Check one

☐ unaltered
☒ altered

Check one

☒ original site church
☒ moved date 1906
hall

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

Located in an area of mixed commercial and residential use, the Reformed Church of Newtown is a remnant of an early period in the development of Elmhurst, Queens. The church is linked to a chapel and a hall and the ensemble is enclosed, with an early cemetery, within a simple iron fence. Together the buildings and graveyard form a complete and picturesque unit within a modern setting.

The church and the hall are both constructed of wood and designed in a simple, vernacular Greek Revival mode. In 1965, both buildings were covered with random-width aluminum shingles. The two buildings are rectangular in form, with their gable ends facing Broadway. The Fellowship Hall was originally situated closer to the street, but in 1906 it was moved back to line up with the church building and was connected to it by a covered passageway. The flat-roofed porch on the church and the columned portico on the Fellowship Hall were both added after the original construction, although the exact dates are not known.

The church was built in 1831 and has the cornerstone of the preceding Newtown Reformed Church incorporated into its foundation. The front facade is three bays wide, with three pairs of double doors recessed within the one-story porch. Two more entrances were made to correspond with these. While they are also located within the porch, they are not a part of the main building, but lead to the adjacent passage and chapel. Three small windows on the second story align with the three original doors and are of similar design to the five, double-height windows which are spaced along each side of the church.¹ The leaded glass and tracery of these round-headed windows are formed into geometric designs. A history of the church notes that new windows were placed in the sanctuary in 1906.² It is likely that these stained glass windows were added at that time.

A squat, square bell tower rises from the ridge of the roof at the front and contains the bell from the original 1731 church building, which was recast at one time. The tower is topped by an octagonal lantern set with small windows interspersed with engaged colonnettes. The lantern has a copper roof and is surmounted by a golden weathervane. Three small ventilation stacks have been added to the roof of the church and are spaced along the ridge, behind the bell tower.

The Fellowship Hall was built originally as a chapel in 1858 and the exterior shows many motifs similar to those on the church building. The gable of each building contains a round window with typical Greek Revival detailing and both buildings are trimmed by a simple cornice with modillions. A small spire on an octagonal base is a later addition and rises from the ridge of the roof of the Fellowship Hall.

The hall now contains a plain meeting room with a stage, and kitchen

(See continuation sheet)

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NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

Reformed Church of Queens County
CONTINUATION SHEET Newtown Complex ITEM NUMBER 7 PAGE 2

facilities. A small wing, which houses offices and classrooms, was added to the rear of the Fellowship Hall in 1954.

The passage which was made in 1906 to connect the hall and the church first housed a meeting room for the church consistory. In 1943, this room was remodeled into a small chapel and the windows on the front were changed to correspond with those on the church and hall. Unpretentiously decorated, the chapel has a small chancel set off by a balustrade and straight wooden pews.

The sanctuary of the Newtown Reformed Church is extremely simple in form and decoration. Rectangular in plan with a center aisle, it has a narrow balcony which runs across the rear. A platform-type pulpit is accessible through a center entrance and is separated from the rest of the church by half-height panelled screens. A large, severely plain cross on the wall behind the pulpit is set off by fixed draperies which hide the organ pipes behind them. Three large plaster rosettes are spaced along the length of the ceiling. Originally, large chandeliers hung from these decorative elements but now they contain a ventilating system and six smaller, stock lanterns hang from other parts of the ceiling.

The five large stained glass windows on each side of the sanctuary provide the greatest amount of color and decoration to the room. They are set within modified groin vaults in the ceiling above them and are separated from each other by engaged pilasters from which these vaults spring. These interior features have been changed and added during successive renovations but the basic form of the interior has remained intact.

Adjoining the Church building to the north is a small, crowded cemetery filled with simple tombstones dating from the early years of the church's history. The entire complex is enclosed by a more modern iron fence composed of plain spikes and posts topped by ball-shaped finials.

¹The Landmarks Preservation Commission Designation Report for this building states that the three small windows at the front of the church were originally square-headed. This has not been documented, however. An early picture, dated sometime after 1860 and found in the church archives, shows round-arched windows as are present today.

²Reformed Church of Newtown, 225th Anniversary Booklet, Elmhurst, Queens, New York: 1956.

8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
☐ prehistoric	☐ archeology-prehistoric	☐ community planning	☐ landscape architecture	☐ religion
☐ 1400-1499	☐ archeology-historic	☐ conservation	☐ law	☐ science
☐ 1500-1599	☐ agriculture	☐ economics	☐ literature	☐ sculpture
☐ 1600-1699	☒ architecture	☐ education	☐ military	☐ social/
☐ 1700-1799	☐ art	☐ engineering	☐ music	☐ humanitarian
☒ 1800-1899	☐ commerce	☐ exploration/settlement	☐ philosophy	☐ theater
☐ 1900-	☐ communications	☐ industry	☐ politics/government	☐ transportation
		☐ invention		☐ other (specify)

Specific dates 1831/1858-60 **Builder/Architect**

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Reformed Church of Newtown Complex is a picturesque ensemble of vernacular Greek Revival buildings. The Church, constructed in 1831 and the Fellowship Hall, built as a chapel in 1860, are among the oldest surviving wood frame buildings in Queens. Their siting and the similarity of their simple, unsophisticated Greek Revival details establish the buildings as a unified group, despite their different construction dates. Though altered several times over the years, these buildings embody an important tie with the early development of Elmhurst, Queens.

The Reformed Church of Newtown is part of the Reformed Church in America, started as the Dutch Reformed Church in America in 1628. Early Dutch settlers organized the church, which remains today as the oldest evangelical Christian Church with a continuous ministry in North America.

The area in which the church is located, now Elmhurst, Queens, was originally known as Middleburg and was founded by a group of colonists from New England. Although granted a patent by the Dutch in 1642, the town of Middleburg was not settled until 1652. The name was changed to Newtown in 1664, after the Dutch surrendered to the English. At that point, the mostly English settlers attempted to break all ties with their former administration. The annals of the church show that early members were both of Dutch and English descent, exhibiting such names as Lott, Rapelje and Springteen as well as Cornell, Culver, Hazard and Parcell.

The original building for this church was a small, octagonal structure, built of wood and constructed in 1731. It was in use for almost one hundred years, until the present structure was completed in 1831. This existing building contains the cornerstone from the original octagonal church in its foundation.

The present church was constructed as a plain, rectangular structure. An early picture in the possession of the Church and dating from sometime after the Fellowship Hall was completed in 1860, shows the two separate buildings, without their columned porch and portico, situated in the middle of open fields. This is an indication of how early in the development of the area these buildings were constructed and of the long duration of agricultural occupations in the vicinity.

The Greek Revival style, of which these buildings are fine examples, was the dominant mode of construction in the United States during the 1830's. To Americans, the style represented the ideal democracy, an ideal they were eager to attain for themselves. Its popularity lasted through the next several decades.

(See continuation sheet)

9. Major Bibliographical References

(See continuation sheet)

10. Geographical Data

UTM NOT VERIFIED

ACREAGE NOT VERIFIED

Acreage of nominated property Approx. 1 1/2 acres

Quadrangle name Brooklyn

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UMT References

A

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4	5	1	0	2	5	0
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Zone Easting Northing

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Zone Easting Northing

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Verbal boundary description and justification

Borough of Queens Tax Map, Block 1836, Lot 112
See attached map

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state code county code

state code county code

11. Form Prepared By

Contact: Elizabeth Spencer-Ralph
518-474-0479

name/title Virginia Kurshan, Research Consultant for
Joan R. Olshansky, National Register Coordinator

organization Landmarks Preservation Commission date September, 1979

street & number 305 Broadway telephone 566-7577

city or town New York state New York

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national state x local

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

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

Stephen M. ...

title Director, Historic Preservation Field Services Bureau date 2/22/80

For HCRS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

for Bruce ... date April 23, 1980
Keeper of the National Register

Attest: *Lyn A. Babe* date April 17, 1980
Chief of Registration

**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service****National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

Reformed Church of

Continuation sheet

Newtown Complex

Item number

8

Page 2

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The builders of the Newtown Reformed Church were undoubtedly influenced by the popular taste of the period. While these buildings are not literal copies of Greek forms, they were constructed in a basic temple form, which carried symbolic importance for Americans at this time. The columns and triangular pediments are elements which proclaim their allegiance to this democratic, idealistic style of building, while the tower and interior features recall the seventeenth and eighteenth century tradition of English neoclassical churches. The buildings are also significant as two of the few remaining structures from the pre-Civil War agrarian era in what is now a totally urban community.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
HERITAGE CONSERVATION AND RECREATION SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

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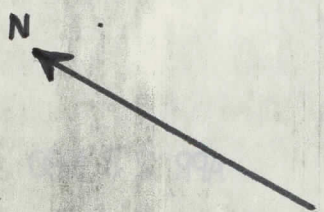
DATE ENTERED

Reformed Church of
CONTINUATION SHEET Newtown Complex ITEM NUMBER 9 PAGE 1

A more complete bibliography may be found in the New York City
Landmarks Preservation Commission research file: Reformed
Church of Newtown.

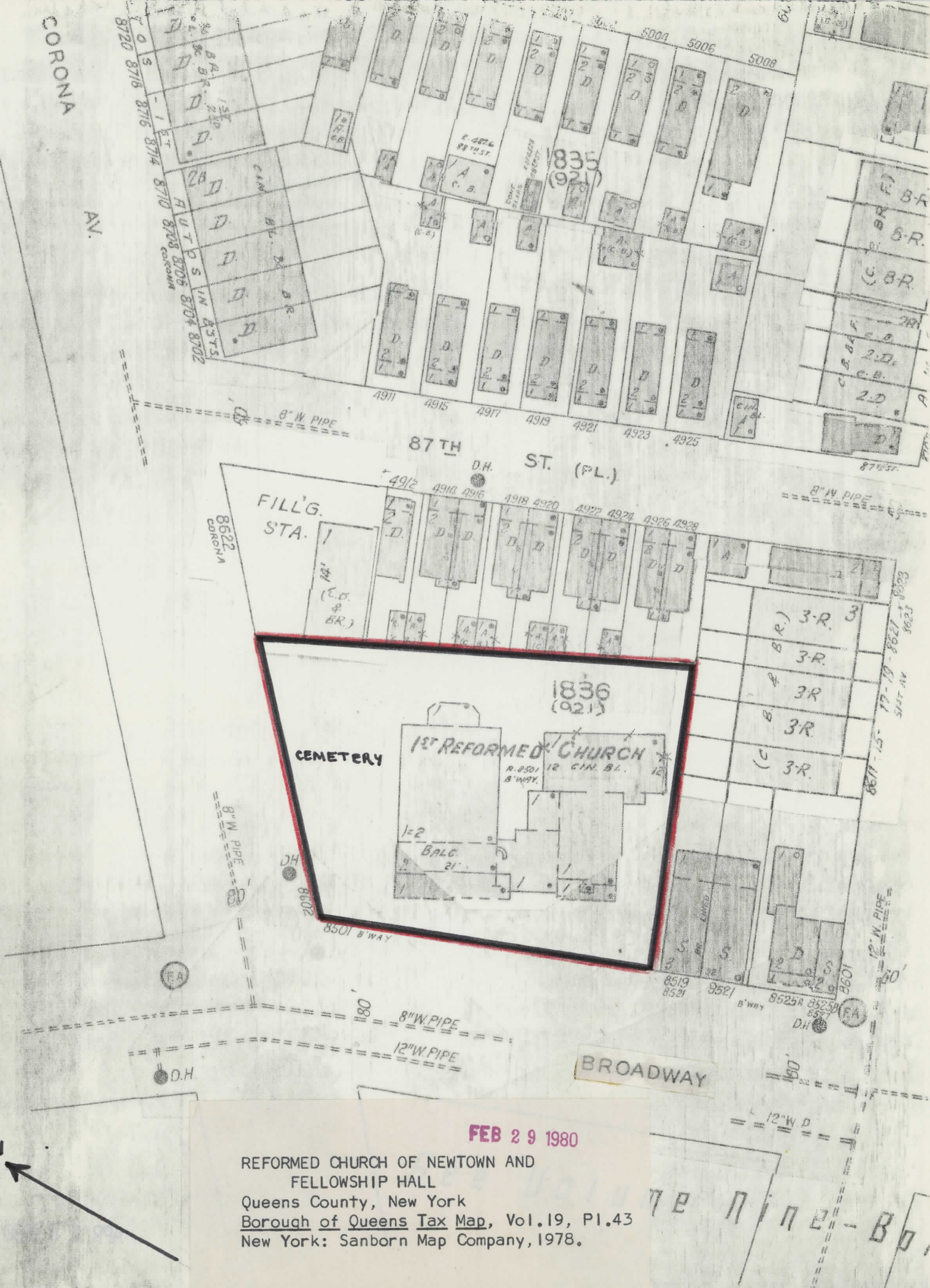
Kelley, Frank Bergen. Excursion Planned for the City History Club of
New York. New York: City History Club of New York, 1908.

Reformed Church of Newtown. 225th Anniversary Booklet. Elmhurst,
Queens, New York: 1956.



FEB 29 1980

REFORMED CHURCH OF NEWTOWN AND
FELLOWSHIP HALL
Queens County, New York
Borough of Queens Tax Map, Vol. 19, Pl. 43
New York: Sanborn Map Company, 1978.



RECORDS SECTION

APR 19 1980



NO. 100-100000

APR 23 1980

BOND

Property

Reformed Church of Newtown Complex

80002751

State

NY - Queens

Working Number

2-25-80 708

TECHNICAL

CONTROL

Photos 5Maps 2

HISTORIAN

The Reformed Church of Newtown complex is an example of regional vernacular architecture showing the influence of the Greek Revival style. Although the application of aluminum siding in 1965 was unfortunate, most of the building's notable architectural elements remain intact.

ARCHITECTURAL HISTORIAN

Accept P. Reed 4/16/80

ARCHEOLOGIST

OTHER

HAER

Inventory _____

Review _____

REVIEW UNIT CHIEF

Accept
L. Beebe
4/17/80

BRANCH CHIEF

KEEPER

National Register Write-up

Federal Register Entry

2.3.81

Send-back

Re-submit

Entered

APR 23 1980



/ Reformed Church of Newtown Complex
85-15 Broadway *county*
Elmhurst, Queens^A, NY
photo by: Stephen L. Senigo 1979
Neg at: New York City Landmarks
Preservation Commission
View from west

APR 23 1980

FEB 9 1980

1085



2 Reformed Church of Newtown Complex

85-15 Broadway

Elmhurst, Queens, ^{County} NY

Photo by: Stephen L. Senigo 1979

Neg. at: New York City Landmarks
Preservation Commission

Interior of Church APR 29 1980

FEB 29 1980

2085



3 Reformed Church of Newtown Complex
85-15 Broadway ^{County}
Elmhurst, Queens, NY
Photo by: Stephen L. Sanigo 1979
Neg. at: New York City Landmarks
Preservation Commission
Interior view towards rear of Church

APR 23 1980

FEB 29 1980

3085-



4

Reformed Church of Newtown Complex

85-15 Broadway ^{county}

APR 23 1980

Elmhurst, Queens, New York

Photo by: Stephen L. Senigo 1979

Neg. at: New York City Landmarks

Preservation Commission

Bell tower and lantern of church

4085

FEB 29 1980



5 Reformed Church of Newtown Complex
85-15 Broadway

Elmhurst, Queens, NY ^{County}

Photo by: Stephen L. Senigo 1979

Neg. at New York City Landmarks
Preservation Commission

View of cemetery and church, from north

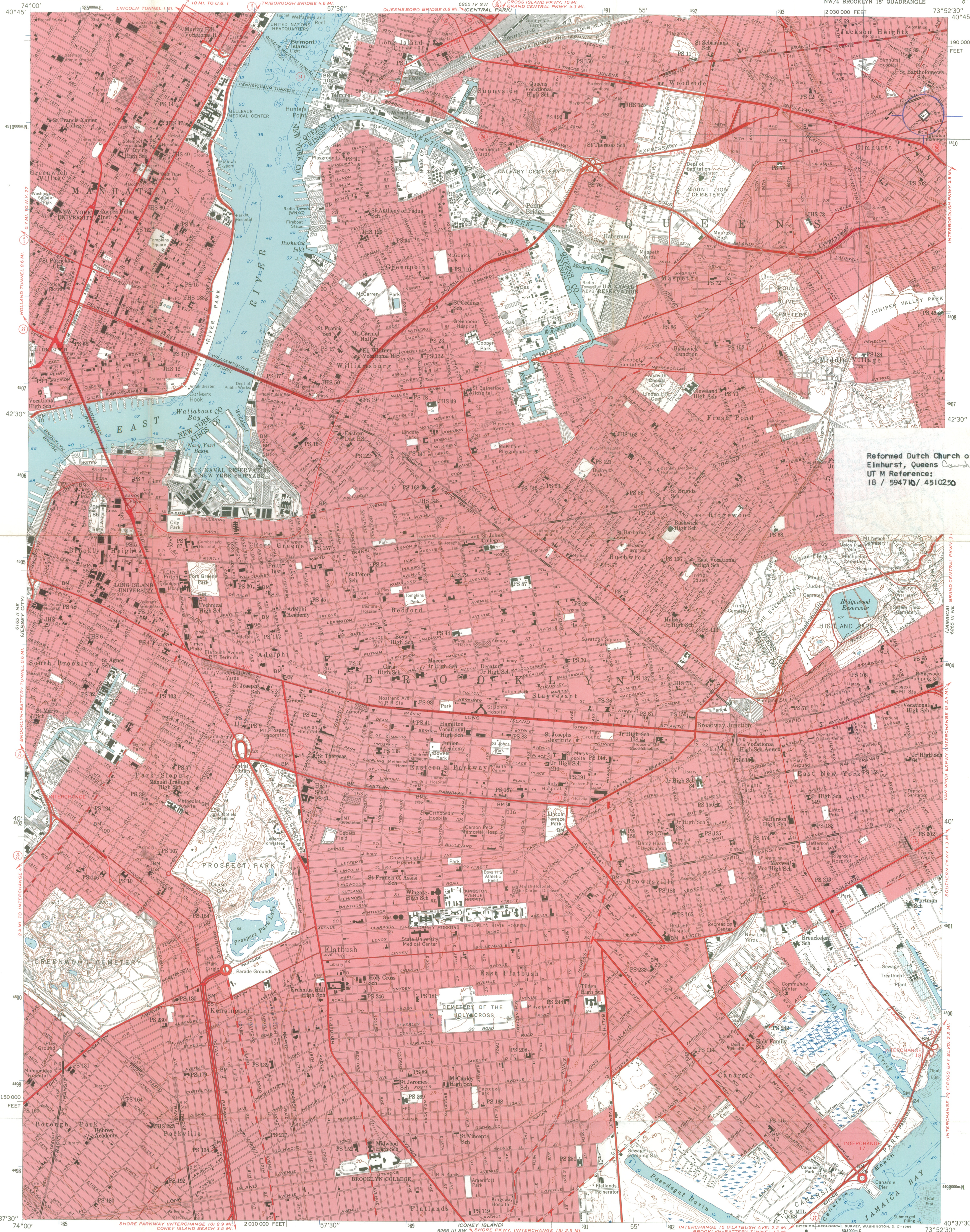
APR 23 1980

FEB 29 1980

5085

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
GEOLOGICAL SURVEY

BROOKLYN QUADRANGLE
NEW YORK
7.5 MINUTE SERIES (TOPOGRAPHIC)
NW/4 BROOKLYN 15' QUADRANGLE



Reformed Dutch Church of Newtown Complex
Elmhurst, Queens County
UT M Reference:
18 / 594710 / 4510250

Mapped, edited, and published by the Geological Survey
Control by USC&GS, USCE, and City of New York Board of Estimate and Apportionment
Culture and drainage in part compiled from aerial photographs taken 1954, and from USC&GS charts T-5094, T-5335, T-5454, T-5459, T-5460, and T-8449
Topography by planetable surveys 1955-1956
Hydrography compiled from USC&GS charts 542 (1955) and 745 (1956)
Polyconic projection. 1927 North American datum
10,000-foot grid based on New York coordinate system, Long Island zone
1000-meter Universal Transverse Mercator grid ticks, zone 18, shown in blue
Red tint indicates areas in which only landmark buildings are shown
Entire area lies within New York City

SCALE 1:24,000
CONTOUR INTERVAL 10 FEET
DOTTED LINES REPRESENT 5-FOOT CONTOURS
DATUM IS MEAN SEA LEVEL
DEPTH CURVES AND SOUNDINGS IN FEET—DATUM IS MEAN LOW WATER
SHORELINE SHOWN REPRESENTS THE APPROXIMATE LINE OF MEAN HIGH WATER
THE MEAN RANGE OF TIDE IS APPROXIMATELY 4.2 FEET IN THE EAST RIVER AND 5.2 FEET IN JAMAICA BAY
THIS MAP COMPLIES WITH NATIONAL MAP ACCURACY STANDARDS
FOR SALE BY U.S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, WASHINGTON, D.C. 20242
A FOLDER DESCRIBING TOPOGRAPHIC MAPS AND SYMBOLS IS AVAILABLE ON REQUEST

ROAD CLASSIFICATION
Heavy-duty ——— Light-duty ———
Medium-duty ——— Unimproved dirt ———
State Route ———
BROOKLYN, N. Y.
NW/4 BROOKLYN 15' QUADRANGLE
N4037.5—W7352.5/7.5
1956
AMS 6265 III NW—SERIES 7821

APR 23 1980
RECEIVED
FEB 29 1980
NATIONAL REGISTER

ENTRIES IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

STATE NEW YORK

Date Entered

APR 23 1980

Name

Location

St. Peter's Roman Catholic Church

New York
New York County

Moore-McMillen House

Staten Island
Richmond County

Building at 85 Leonard Street

New York
New York County

Reformed Church of Newton Complex

Elmhurst
Queens County

New York, Westchester and Boston Railroad
Administration Building

Bronx
Bronx County

St. Bartholomew's Protestant Episcopal
Church and Rectory

Brooklyn
Kings County

Hanson Place Seventh Day Adventist Church

Brooklyn
Kings County

Union Theological Seminary

New York
New York County

Bailey House

New York
New York County

Also Notified

Honorable Daniel P. Moynihan

Honorable Jacob K. Javits

State Historic Preservation Officer

Honorable John M. Murphy

Mr. Orin Lehman

Honorable Benjamin S. Rosenthal

Commissioner

Honorable Mario Biaggi

Parks and Recreation

Honorable Frederick W. Richmond

Agency Building #1

Honorable Charles B. Rangel

Empire State Plaza

Albany, New York 12238

4/30/80

Byers/bjr

NR

For further information, please call the National Register at (202)343-6401.

ENTRIES IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

STATE NEW YORK

Date Entered APR 23 1980

<u>Name</u>	<u>Location</u>
Belnord Apartments	New York New York County
Schinasi House	New York New York County
Ponckhockie Union Chapel	Kingston Ulster County
Addison Village Hall	Addison Steuben County
Buffalo and Erie County Historical Society	Buffalo Erie County
St. Jean Baptiste Church and Rectory	New York New York County
Bouwerie Lane Theater	New York New York County
Bowery Savings Bank	New York New York County
Chanin Building	New York New York County

Also Notified

Honorable Ted Weiss
Honorable Hamilton Fish, Jr.
Honorable Stanley N. Lundine
Honorable Henry J. Nowak
Honorable S. William Green

For further information, please call the National Register at (202)343-6401.

ENTRIES IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

STATE NEW YORK

Date Entered APR 23 1980

<u>Name</u>	<u>Location</u>
Old Colony Club	New York New York County
Town Hall	New York New York County
Old Grolier Club	New York New York County
Public Baths	New York New York County

Also Notified

For further information, please call the National Register at (202)343-6401.