

## NOMINATION REPORT

**Montclair Heights Reformed Church  
71 Mount Hebron Road**

**BLOCK 2806  
LOT 1**



**Prepared By:  
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The Township of Montclair Planning Department  
205 Claremont Avenue  
Montclair, NJ 07042**

**August 2013**

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This report has been prepared in accordance with **Montclair Code Section 347-135B(1)**.

347-135B(1): Nomination Proposals. The party proposing for designation under this section shall prepare and submit to the Commission a nomination report for each proposed property, site or district. For individual landmark designations, the report shall include one or more photographs, the tax lot and block number of the property as designated on the Official Tax Map of the township and a physical description and statement of significance and proposed utilization of the site.

## **I. Executive Summary**

The Township of Montclair Historic Preservation Commission was created by ordinance in June of 1994. The Historic Preservation Commission is charged with accomplishing the protection, enhancement and perpetuation of especially noteworthy examples or elements of the township's environment in order to:

- (1) Safeguard the heritage of Montclair by preserving resources which reflect elements of its cultural, social, and architectural history
- (2) Encourage the continued use of historic and/or noteworthy buildings or structures
- (3) Foster civic pride in the history and architecture of the Township
- (4) Promote the economic welfare of the township through the preservation of historic sites and landscapes
- (5) Enhance the visual and aesthetic character, diversity continuity and interest in the township and its neighborhoods
- (6) Discourage the unnecessary demolition or other destruction of historic resources
- (7) Encourage beautification and private investment in the township
- (8) Promote the economic welfare of the township through the preservation of its historic sites and landscapes

As per **Montclair Code Section 347-135A**, criteria for designation, "the Commission shall consider as worthy of designation those buildings, structures, objects, sites and districts that have integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling and association and that meet one or more of the following criteria:

- (1) Are associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- (2) Are associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- (3) Embody distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction; that represent the work of a master; that possess high artistic values; or that represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction.
- (4) Have yielded or may be likely to yield information important to prehistory or history.
- (5) Are otherwise of particular historic significance to the Township of Montclair by reflecting or exemplifying the broad cultural, political, economic or social history of the nation, state, region or community."

## PROPERTY FACT SHEET

### Zoning Description

Address:	71 Mount Hebron Avenue
Block:	2806
Lot:	1
Zone:	R-1 One-Family Zone
Property Size:	100 x 217 ft
Acres:	0.4982 acres

### Physical Description

Year Built:	1898-1901 Church Building; 1913 Parish House
Style:	Gothic Revival
Designer/Architect:	Church building by Alfred W. Simpson of Speer and Simpson;  Parish House by Frank Vreeland, Architect and John Picken, Builder
Stories:	Single story plus basement;  2 ½ story rear addition
Exterior Finish:	Rubble masonry laid in random courses

## **II. History of the Site & Architectural Description**



71 Mount Hebron Avenue, Montclair Heights Reformed Church, was originally built at the corner of Mt. Hebron Avenue and Valley Road from 1898 to 1901<sup>1</sup> as a mildly Gothic Revival style, English rubble stone church. The main church building is a single-story plus basement rubble stone structure. A two-story stucco Parish House with double-story ogee-arched Gothic windows, designed in a modified Akron Plan, was built behind the church to the east along Mt. Hebron Road in 1913.<sup>2</sup> In 1924 the two buildings were connected by what is now a two-story extension.<sup>3</sup> Renovations occurred in 1945 and 1950, and in 1964 the flat east elevation of the Parish House building was altered into a pentagonal end to add more classrooms.<sup>4</sup>

The building presents an overlapping gable end facing Valley Road, with one of the gables set back from the main facade. A centered gable graces the Mt. Hebron Avenue facade, and the building is anchored by a prominent corner bell tower entrance at the southwest corner. The roofing of the main church building includes red asphalt roofing, with coursed rubble stone masonry walls. The bell tower is crowned by a soaring broach spire, roofed in the same red asphalt roofing and set apart from the stone facade with a simple frieze and dentil moulding. Double entry doors with a Gothic arched window above, mark the south facade entrance of the bell tower, and a single Gothic-arched bay window marks the tower's west facade at ground level. At the second story of the bell tower, both facades are designed with the same open Gothic-arched bays, enclosed with louvers. The bell tower and stone church building are reinforced at the corners by stone angle buttressing.

Double-story rose windows with a trefoil design and bar tracery are central to the facades of the main church building facing Valley Road and Mt. Hebron Road, and consist of three and five bays respectively. Above the rose windows are three lancet windows grouped together with a continuous stone sill. The bays flanking the rose window are thinner windows with more pronounced Gothic arches.

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<sup>1</sup> Garrett C Roorda. The Little Stone Church on Cow Pasture Corner: A History of the Montclair Heights Reformed Church, Upper Montclair, New Jersey 1897-1972. (Garrett C. Roorda, 1996) 17.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. 33.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid. 36.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid. 66-68.

The fifth bay and roofline at the southern facade's right (east) end is recessed back from the main facade and flanked with stone angle buttressing. This bay contains an entry door that has since been blocked with a metal panel. The roofline throughout the main church building consists of overhanging eaves with brackets and trefoil cut-outs at the ends of the eaves.

To the east of the main church building is the 1924 flat roofed, four-bay, two-story, stucco connecting structure, with a red asphalt-shingle-covered shed roof projecting over the first floor entry doors. Original double entry doors have been replaced, but original six-over-one double-hung windows appear to remain in this hyphen building between the main church and parish hall. The first floor of the hyphen is not in line with the church. The connecting building projects one bay width forward from the line of the main stone church.

Further east is the 1913 parish hall, with a centered red asphalt gable roof, pronounced wooden brackets and wide eaves. The east elevation is a half-round pentagonal plan with windows on each of the five bays. The windows in this section of the building are two stories tall with rounded-arch ogee-shaped windows, consisting of operable double-hung replacement windows flanked by inoperable single-pane casements on the first and casements only on the second levels of the window formation.

The main church building plan is rectangular in shape with a central aisle and a notch cut out of the southwest corner of the sanctuary for the bell tower entry. Interestingly, windows at the rear wall of the church do not line up with the center of the interior altar. The symmetry that marks the exterior is lost in the interior, which is apparently not uncommon of the architect's designs.<sup>5</sup>

The church building is situated on the corner of Mt. Hebron Avenue and Valley Road. Landscaping along the Valley Road side of the church and a sidewalk separate the church from this busy road. On the Mt. Hebron Avenue side, the sidewalk is closer to the building and helps mark the side entrance to the connecting, hyphen building. The church currently allows parking off the road on the gravel at the edge of the road here. A playground for the preschool is situated on the grounds along the east end and rear of the building. The church grounds are tightly confined on the north and east by unsympathetic chain-linked fencing to separate the church from the cemetery.

### Historical Background

In the mid to late 1800s, the northern portion of Montclair, now Upper Montclair, was its own small community known as Speertown, home to Peter G. Speer and eight other farming families of Dutch descent.<sup>6</sup> Peter Speer was the third or fourth generation in the New World of the Speer family, a descendant of immigrant Hendrick Jansen Spiers who came in 1659 from Holland to New Amsterdam, settling in modern day Jersey City and founding the Old

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<sup>5</sup> Ibid. p.12. See plans on pp. 13 and 15 of this text.

<sup>6</sup> Philip Edward Jaeger. Images of America: Montclair. (Arcadia Publishing, 1998) 70.

Bergen Church c. 1660.<sup>7</sup> Hendrick's eldest son Jan or John Hendrick Speer, was part of a deal with the Native Americans, which gained them land in Newark, Bloomfield, the Oranges, Belleville, Glen Ridge and Montclair; John Speer ultimately settled in Speertown, centered at the junction of Little Falls Road (Long Hill Road) and Clove Road, and there they remained for farm for generations.

The Dutch settlement consisted most of what is Upper Montclair down to the dividing line at Watchung Avenue.<sup>8</sup> The Speers held land in the northwest corner of the town later known as Montclair Heights. An entry in Gordon's Gazetteer of 1834, notes that the small village consisted of "20 to 30 dwellings, one tavern, a Dutch Reformed Church, and a school," and remained small until 1873 when the Greenwood Lake Railroad was constructed in the area. By 1801, Speer and his family took part in Reformed Church services at the Brookdale Reformed Church in Bloomfield, then known as the Dutch Reformed Church in Stone House Plains. It was here that we can imagine the inevitable meeting and subsequent union of Peter Speer's daughter Caroline with Thomas Van Reyper of Stone House Plains.

Caroline and Thomas Van Reyper married, took over the Speer farm and built their vernacular Italianate mansion at 848 Valley Road, constructing what is now known as the Van Reyper-Bond house for their family home.<sup>9</sup> In the event of poor weather, families would meet at the Van Reyper's house for worship, and in 1892 it was the location where it was decided to organize a Dutch Reformed church closer to home for their growing community. A local newspaper article told of the meeting:

"To forward the enterprise, divine service was held n July 31, 1892, at the home of T.C. Van Reyper. Although the day was stormy, the residents gathered and presented an excellent audience. At the close of the service, there was a free and open exchange of thought and approval and urging of the project."<sup>10</sup>

The land opposite the Van Reyper's house had previously been dedicated as Mt. Hebron Cemetery by Peter G. Speer; the cemetery's adjacent cow pasture at the corner of Valley and Mt. Hebron Road was now being set aside for the building of the Montclair Heights Reformed Church by the Van Reypers as a memorial to Peter G. Speer.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Roorda, Garrett C. The Little Stone Church on Cow Pasture Corner: A History of the Montclair Heights Reformed Church, Upper Montclair, New Jersey 1897-1972. (Garrett C. Roorda, 1996) 1.

<sup>8</sup> Price, Eleanor McAreyve. "Historic Resources of Montclair Multiple Resource Area." *National Register of Historic Places Nomination Report*, April 1982, Item 8, 6.

<sup>9</sup> Phillip Edward Jaeger. Images of America: Montclair. p.70. Also in Eleanor McAreyve Price. "Historic Resources of Montclair Multiple Resource Area." *National Register of Historic Places Nomination Report*, April 1982, Item 8, 43. The Van Reyper family's home is the Van Reyper-Bond House at 848 Valley Road, which is locally, state and nationally listed on the Register of Historic Places.

<sup>10</sup> Garrett C Roorda. The Little Stone Church on Cow Pasture Corner: A History of the Montclair Heights Reformed Church, Upper Montclair, New Jersey 1897-1972. (Garrett C. Roorda, 1996) 10

<sup>11</sup> Ibid. 8.

It is important to note that the Van Reyppers owned the Mt. Hebron Cemetery until 1927, when heirs sold their half-interest to the Mt. Hebron Cemetery Association, and that should services cease in the current building, the property would revert back to that organization by deed.<sup>12</sup> Montclair historian Henry Whitmore notes the connection of the Speers and Van Reyper families in this endeavor in his History of Montclair, "The Mount Hebron Association was organized in February, 1863, for the purpose of procuring land to be held in trust for cemetery purposes." Peter G. Speer served as President until his death, with Thomas C. Van Reyper serving as Secretary and Treasurer."<sup>13</sup>

"The Christian Endeavor Society of Montclair Heights" was subsequently formed in 1895, and regular meetings were held for 20 to 40 attendees at the new frame church on Mt. Hebron Road on the site of today's Bradford School.<sup>14</sup> The church society then engaged Alfred W. Simpson of Speer and Simpson, for "carpentry, building, architecture and real estate services".

A history of the Montclair Heights Reformed Church entitled The Little Stone Church on Cow Pasture Corner notes that Simpson designed the church with a pronounced English countryside stone church style, which visually and poignantly shows the blending of the English and Dutch communities. The church history further states, "these other (previous) church buildings all reflect the stolid Dutch character of a century before. The church that chose to be Montclair Heights instead of Speertown, was looking forward to a new age and a new century."<sup>15</sup> The stones for the building were hauled by horse and carriage from the local mountaintop quarry.<sup>16</sup>

Architectural plans reveal that Simpson never intended for the altar and rose window to align. Simpson originally designed the the new church sanctuary to include double aisles. This design changed when pews were acquired at a bargain from the local Phillips Presbyterian Church. At this time the plan was rearranged, and it was not possible to align the center aisle with the arch at either end of the sanctuary.<sup>17</sup> A bell was cast by McNeely Bell Company of Troy, New York, and is dated A.D. 1899, "in memory of Carrie, wife of Thomas C. Van Reyper. She, being dead, yet speaketh." and with the further inscription "Her gentle silenced voice around me lingers still, Like muffled echoes from the old church bell. And across the narrow vale, sweetly comes the strain, "With my Savior ever near, all is well".<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> Ibid. 8.

<sup>13</sup> Henry Whittemore. History of Montclair Township, State of New Jersey: Including the History of the Families Who Have Been Identified With Its Growth And Prosperity. The Suburban Publishing Company, 1894.

<sup>14</sup> Garrett C Roorda. The Little Stone Church on Cow Pasture Corner: A History of the Montclair Heights Reformed Church, Upper Montclair, New Jersey 1897-1972. (Garrett C. Roorda, 1996) 10

<sup>15</sup> Ibid. 12.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid. 70.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid. 14.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.16.



The first minister, Charles Wyckoff Gulick, newly graduated from New Brunswick Seminary, led the church from 1898, and organized the congregation in its tasks and duties.<sup>19</sup> Church services were held from September 1900, but the building was not officially dedicated until May 26, 1901.<sup>20</sup> The footprint of the church building alone appears on the 1906 Atlas of Essex County.<sup>21</sup>

The building was costly, and additional debt accrued. At the time of building, a “\$2,000 note at 5 percent at the First National Bank, secured by the signature of T.C. Van Reyper, and a mortgage of \$2.000 with the Board of Domestic Missions”.<sup>22</sup>

Land to build a dwelling for the minister was not stipulated as part of the original agreement for building the church, so the church sought to purchase the land adjacent to Mt. Hebron School at the northwest corner of Mt. Hebron Road and Valley Road to build a parsonage or manse. John Picken was chosen as the builder, and the building was constructed between February 21, 1907 and September 20, 1907 for \$5,200 with a \$4,300 mortgage.<sup>23</sup> The manse was again renovated for incoming minister Gary Roorda in 1960.<sup>24</sup>

After completing its own building project, the Upper Montclair Union Congregational Church generously donated an organ in 1901 to the Montclair Heights Reformed Church, however after organists repeatedly quit and the organ was deemed the culprit, it was decided that a new organ was necessary.<sup>25</sup> In 1905 the choir had to be dismissed for lack of funds and a new organ and choir fund was sought by Elder Holbrook, the chairman of the Music Committee, and Mrs. Brownlie who engaged in a series of musicals held in 1904 which earned enough to purchase an organ. The \$1,550 organ was installed by the Estey Organ Company in 1908, but not until new electrical wiring was installed in the church.<sup>26</sup> This organ was again replaced on April 27, 1952 and dedicated as “the Reverend George D. Hulst Memorial Organ,” commemorating the church’s former pastor who had passed away in 1944 after 25 years of service to the church.<sup>27</sup>

The church’s original parish house, a center of community, was built twenty feet east of the church along Mt. Hebron Avenue. The building was the design of architect Frank Vreeland and built by John Picken<sup>28</sup> Funds were limited, so the originally planned stone exterior was changed to stucco, and a passageway was unfortunately eliminated to keep costs down. Most notably, the plan for the parish house was a modified version of the Akron Plan, a

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<sup>19</sup> Ibid. 26.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.17.

<sup>21</sup> Kiser, Ellis. Atlas of Essex County. Philadelphia: A. H. Mueller, 1906.

<sup>22</sup> Garrett C Roorda. The Little Stone Church on Cow Pasture Corner: A History of the Montclair Heights Reformed Church, Upper Montclair, New Jersey 1897-1972. (Garrett C. Roorda, 1996) 20.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid. 23.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid. 56.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid. 27.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid. 31-32.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid. 53.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid. 33.

clever arrangement of a central rotunda surrounded by individual classrooms.<sup>29</sup> With more of an emphasis on public education formalized in Sunday school held between services, the Akron Plan Sunday school became popular in the late 19th century as a “rotunda” style setting, that could be sectioned off around the sides into surrounding smaller classrooms on one or two levels and that allowed both adults and children to attend the same lessons. Lessons were based on the Uniform Lesson System, allowing all to hear the same lesson but with lessons tailored to be appropriate to the particular age group. Larger churches might contain as many as 25 classrooms, but small rural churches such as this may only have two or three.<sup>30</sup> The construction of the Parish House went forward and was dedicated on February 2, 1913, for use as a chapel, Sunday school building, community hall and more recently, altered as a nursery school.<sup>31</sup>

An addition was added to the church in 1924, providing new classrooms to link between the church building with the parish house. At this time the parish house entrance subsumed by the new connection and was moved to face Mt. Hebron Road as part of the connecting building.<sup>32</sup>

Alterations in 1945 included excavating unused space between the two original buildings for a suitable kitchen and other general alterations to the basements as a whole, as well as providing heating and modern rest rooms.<sup>33</sup> By 1950, one member of the congregation, Will Missbach, single-handedly excavated the Missbach Room (now the Suydam-Missbach Room).<sup>34</sup> The parish house was again remodeled for an estimated \$80,000 beginning in 1964, the plan creating two more classrooms in an octagonal building end to the east of the existing parish house, which was dedicated on Palm Sunday, March 30, 1969.<sup>35</sup>

Though not connected to the building of the church, Magdalena Stoothoff Hulst, the mother of the church’s third minister George D. Hulst II, purchased six lots in Upper Montclair with hopes of expanding the church in the future. These lots were situated south of the church along Valley Road facing Elston Road.<sup>36</sup> The mortgage on the lots included the provision that the Elston Road lots could not be sold until the loan for the church buildings, including the church, parsonage, parish house, and 1924 addition, had been repaid, so it was impossible to go forward.<sup>37</sup> Today, individual houses have been built on these lots and it is doubtful that these properties are still owned by the church.

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<sup>29</sup> Ibid. 34.

<sup>30</sup> Brother Christopher Stephen Jenks. “American Religious Buildings: The Akron Plan Sunday School.” New York Landmarks Conservancy, Common Bond, December 1995.

<sup>31</sup> Garrett C. Roorda, The Little Stone Church on Cow Pasture Corner: A History of the Montclair Heights Reformed Church, Upper Montclair, New Jersey 1897-1972. (Garrett C. Roorda, 1996) 33.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid. 36.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid. 47.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid. 49.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid. 34, 66-69.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid. 35.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid. 36.

Stained glass windows in the church date to a later congregation's efforts under the leadership of the fourth minister, Harold W. Schenck in 1959. The windows were clear leaded glass at the time of building.<sup>38</sup> The congregants found the bright light streaming in to be distracting, and painted the windows brown. Later, when repairs were necessary, church window specialists Marchesi and Hamersma of Passaic were employed, but in the process the congregation decided to replace the windows and requested the specialists review a format for each window. Thomas R. DiGiacomo and George Schlagintweit designed the new windows appropriate for the building as a visual story of Christ's ministry.<sup>39</sup>

### Condition

The main church building is in overall good condition. The second story addition connecting the main church building and parish hall cuts into the main church building at the eaves line in an awkward way and introduces many irregular roof and building lines and boxy additions that were not well-thought through at the time of building. The exterior seems to be an afterthought, but is generally in good repair.

The parish hall also seems to be in good condition, however several original windows and doors have been replaced unsympathetically with vinyl replacements and solid metal doors. The octagonal east end is a more recent alteration than the original building, though appears to work well with the existing structure. The interior has been altered to accommodate a nursery school, and has few elements that one would look for in an "Akron Plan" design, which included a central space with surrounding classrooms that could be opened to the central space or divided off for individual lesson teaching.

### Utilization

The building has been a Reformed Church for the past hundred years, and the current deeds for the property stipulate that it be used for Reformed services, or the property will revert back to the owners of the adjacent cemetery.

The Montclair Historic Preservation Commission was contacted by concerned members of the congregation who wished the church placed on the local register, particularly citing the church's stained glass windows. The building is zoned R-1 and could easily and creatively be adaptively used as a private residence in the future.

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<sup>38</sup> Ibid. 14.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid. 50-52.

### **III. Statement of Significance**

71 Mount Hebron Road, the Montclair Heights Reformed Church, meets several criteria for designation due to its association with the significant founding Speer and Van Reyper families, and as relating to the broad pattern of social history in the congregation's desire at the turn of the twentieth century to forego Dutch tradition in church building and instead to build a contemporary building that embodied the congregation's ideals and looked more to an English building heritage in a desire to be current with the period of building in Montclair.

The Montclair Heights Reformed Church is intimately associated with the lives of the locally significant Speer and Van Reyper families. The Speer family was the first Dutch family to own land and settle in the Upper Montclair area in the mid-to-late 1800s, forming their own community called Speertown. The Speers spent four or five generations farming the land here and slowly formed a small community of eight families of Dutch descent in what is now Upper Montclair. When Caroline Speer married Thomas Van Reyper of Stone House Plains and settled in the late 1800s in Speertown, the couple held meetings in their home at 848 Valley Road. It is here that the desire for a local church set the course for the Montclair Heights Reformed Church, with the Van Reyper family setting aside cemetery grounds for the building of the church. The Van Reyper and Speers served as founding fathers in the church, making many early administrative decisions, and even taking on loans for church building.

The desire to build a local Dutch Reformed church emanated from a group of Dutch families. Given the Speer and Van Reyper's strong Dutch backgrounds, it would make sense that the church would be constructed strictly in the guise of one of the variations of the Old Bergen Church built in Jersey City, with a bell tower at the center of a gable end building such as pictured below. The original c.1680 Dutch Reformed Church in Bergen County was an octagonal structure with a tower roof that came to a point in a crucifix. The second ca. 1773 Old Bergen Church shows the tower interrupting the gable-end facade, and by 1841 there was introduced a simple temple facade complete with Doric columns in a Greek Revival tradition that was popular during the Jacksonian era.

The Stone House Plains Dutch Reformed Church in Brookdale, Bloomfield, New Jersey, where the congregants held services prior to building their own church building closer to home was also built in the Dutch Reformed tradition of smoothly finished brownstone with a central tower interrupting a gable end.

Instead, the congregation decided to build a decidedly English style rubble stone church with asymmetrical entry and a corner tower (photo below). Nothing could be further from Dutch precedents of refinement. This departure from a fully Dutch tradition in architecture reflects a broad cultural or social history pattern at the turn of the twentieth century, where families set aside their cultural backgrounds and sought to be American first and foremost.

Further departure from the Dutch tradition was carried out in the naming of the new church as the “Montclair Heights Reformed Church,” with no mention of the Dutch heritage in the name. A brief architectural history of Montclair describing the multiple forms of architecture in the township firmly grounds this departure as a social pattern in Montclair of the time. The “preoccupation with English customs and culture, part of the prevalent trend along the Eastern seaboard from Massachusetts to Virginia, among upper class suburbanites, accounts for the number of homes based on English architectural tradition built at this time”.<sup>40</sup> One might argue that this trend played out most visibly in Montclair, with the rash of English and Tudor style buildings.

The congregation continued to look to contemporary building trends in the 1913 erection of the Parish Hall in a modified Akron Plan design. The Akron Plan apparently originated at a Methodist Episcopal church in Akron, Ohio that was built in 1866-1870, designed by George Kramer but planned by the church's Sunday School Superintendent, Lewis Miller to provide a flexible space for small meeting rooms for the Sunday School classes, which could open up into the regular auditorium so the classes might participate in a portion of the regular services. Sliding or folding doors or partitions shuttered the classrooms from the main auditorium, but they could be opened at appropriate times.<sup>41</sup> Though little of this modified Akron plan visibly remains in the parish hall today, it is clear that decisions regarding the architectural style and even the specific naming of the Montclair Heights Reformed Church, that the congregation was looking toward their future rather than their Dutch past as part of a movement glorifying English design sensibilities.

It is appropriate today that both the church's Dutch past and English design, which grounds the church in the temporal cultural trends at the turn of the twentieth century, need not be mutually exclusive, but instead are both inclusive of this institution's contributions to the history, social trends and architecture of the Township of Montclair. It is recommended this building be listed on the Local Register of Historic Places.

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<sup>40</sup> Eleanor McArevey Price, “Historic Resources of Montclair Multiple Resource Area.” National Register of Historic Places Nomination Report, April 1982, Item Number 8, p.33.

<sup>41</sup> James Hudnut-Beumler, “The Akron Plan,” <<http://www.materialreligion.org>>

Appendix A: Photographs



Appendix B: Tax Map



Block 2806 Lot 1

[New Search](#)

Block: 2806 Prop Loc: 71 MT. HEBRON ROAD Owner: MONTCLAIR HEIGHTS REF.CHURCH Square Ft: 0  
 Lot: 1 District: 0713 MONTCLAIR Street: 71 MT. HEBRON ROAD Year Built: 1911  
 Qual: Class: 15D City State: MONTCLAIR, N.J. 07043 Style:  
 Additional Information  
 Prior Block: Acct Num: Addl Lots: EPL Code: 23 10 40  
 Prior Lot: Mtg Acct: Land Desc: 100X217 Statute: 54:4-3.6  
 Prior Qual: Bank Code: 0 Bldg Desc: Initial: 110169 Further: 11011  
 Updated: 01/26/12 Tax Codes: Class4Cd: 0 Desc: CHURCH  
 Zone: R1 Map Page: Acreage: 0.4982 Taxes: 0.00 / 0.00

Sale Date: 00/00/00 Book: Page: Price: 0 NU#: 0  
 Sr1a Date Book Page Price NU# Ratio Grantee

TAX-LIST-HISTORY

Year	Owner Information	Land/Imp/Tot	Exemption	Assessed
2012	MONTCLAIR HEIGHTS REF.CHURCH 71 MT. HEBRON ROAD MONTCLAIR, N.J. 07043	480100 983900 1464000	0	1464000
2011	MONTCLAIR HEIGHTS REF.CHURCH 71 MT. HEBRON ROAD MONTCLAIR, N.J. 07043	724000 983900 1707900	0	1707900
2010	MONTCLAIR HEIGHTS REF.CHURCH 71 MT. HEBRON ROAD MONTCLAIR, N.J. 07043	724000 983900 1707900	0	1707900
2009	MONTCLAIR HEIGHTS REF.CHURCH 71 MT. HEBRON ROAD MONTCLAIR, N.J. 07043	724000 983900 1707900	0	1707900



### Appendix C: Survey Sheet

Please find the Individual Structure Survey Sheet #0713-005 for this property, authored by Eleanor Price for Preservation Montclair and dated March 27, 1981, attached in the following pages.

NEW JERSEY OFFICE OF CULTURAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES  
HISTORIC PRESERVATION SECTION  
INDIVIDUAL STRUCTURE SURVEY FORM

HISTORIC SITES INVENTORY NO. 0713 005

HISTORIC NAME:  
LOCATION: 71 Mt. Hebron Road

COMMON NAME: Montclair Heights Reformed  
BLOCK/LOT 1006/2: 2-1/71 Church

MUNICIPALITY: Montclair  
USGS QUAD: Orange  
OWNER/ADDRESS: Montclair Heights Reformed Church  
See above

COUNTY: Essex  
UTM REFERENCES:  
Zone/Northing/Easting

DESCRIPTION

Construction Date: 1898 Source of Date: Church Archives

Architect: Builder:

Style: Vernacular/Gothic Form/Plan Type: Extended Square

Number of Stories: 1 + B, extension 2 1/2

Foundation: Stone

Exterior Wall Fabric: Rough, finished stone in random courses.

Fenestration: Lancet windows, single & in groups.

Roof/Chimneys: Steep gable, red asphalt finish.

Additional Architectural Description:

The church entrance, below lancet arched openings, on the south side of a square turret which articulates the south-west corner of the structure.

Stone capped buttresses, rising to the top of the 1st floor opening, define the tower corners w/ ventilation shafts in the larger openings on 3 sides of the wall above. A bracketed cornice & decorative entablature encircle the turret below the broached spire above.

A large central lancet stained glass window w/ trefoil motif flanked by 2 smaller windows defines the walls of the north & west elevations, w/ a subsidiary doorway at the south-east corner of the south elevation, flanked by stone-capped buttresses.

Three narrow unglazed openings in each of the gable peaks.

PHOTO Negative File No. R3, 18



Map (Indicate North)



NEW JERSEY DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION, OFFICE OF CULTURAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES  
HISTORIC PRESERVATION SECTION, 109 WEST STATE STREET, TRENTON, NEW JERSEY 08625 (609) 292 - 2023

SITING, BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION, AND RELATED STRUCTURES:

Church sited on corner lot well set back from the north-east corner of Valley and Mt. Hebron Rd.

Lot: 148' x 139'.

SURROUNDING ENVIRONMENT: Urban  Suburban  Scattered Buildings   
Open Space  Woodland  Residential  Agricultural  Village   
Industrial  Downtown Commercial  Highway Commercial  Other

Church lies adjacent to cemetery on north side.

SIGNIFICANCE:

This vernacular Gothic church was built on land which was & still is owned by the nearby Mount Hebron cemetery. The original land was part of the holdings of the Van Riper family, important early settlers in Speertown (now Upper Montclair).

The families who first lived in this area were Dutch and attended church in Stone House Plains (now Bloomfield) before this church was built.

ORIGINAL USE: Church

PRESENT USE: Church

PHYSICAL CONDITION: Excellent  Good

Fair  Poor

REGISTER ELIGIBILITY: Yes  Possible

No  Part of District

THREATS TO SITE: Roads  Development

Zoning  Deterioration

No Threat  Other

COMMENTS:

REFERENCES:

Kiser, Ellis. Atlas of Essex County. Philadelphia: A. H. Mueller, 1906.

RECORDED BY: Eleanor Price

DATE: 3/27/81

ORGANIZATION: Preservation Montclair

## Appendix D: Bibliography

Hudnut-Beumler, James. "The Akron Plan," <<http://www.materialreligion.org>>

Jaeger, Philip Edward. Images of America: Montclair. Arcadia Publishing, 1998.

Jenks, Brother Christopher Stephen. "American Religious Buildings: The Akron Plan Sunday School." New York Landmarks Conservancy, Common Bond, December 1995.

<<http://www.sacredplaces.org/PSP-InfoClearingHouse/articles/American%20Religious%20Buildings.htm>>

Kiser, Ellis. Atlas of Essex County. Philadelphia: A. H. Mueller, 1906.

McAlester, Virginia & Lee. A Field Guide to American Houses. Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., Random House, New York, 2000.

Price, Eleanor McArevey. Historic Resources of Montclair Multiple Resource Area. National Register of Historic Places Nomination Report, April 1982.

Price, Eleanor. "Individual Structure Survey: Site 0713-005." Preservation Montclair, March 27, 1981.

Roorda, Garrett C. The Little Stone Church on Cow Pasture Corner: A History of the Montclair Heights Reformed Church, Upper Montclair, New Jersey 1897-1972. Garrett C Roorda, 1996.

Whittemore, Henry. History of Montclair Township, State of New Jersey: Including the History of the Families Who Have Been Identified With Its Growth And Prosperity. The Suburban Publishing Company, 1894.

### Appendix E: Letters

Please find attached letters of support from neighborhood residents who support the nomination and long term preservation of the church.

Jeanne Barker and Jim Baity  
27 College Ave  
Montclair, NJ 07043

June 13, 2013

Dear Mr. Ross and Colleagues,

I am writing to urge you to do everything in your power to designate the Montclair Heights Reformed Church, located at 71 Mount Hebron Road, as a local historic landmark.

When one enters the town of Montclair from the north, the first building that greets them is the magnificent sight of the Van-Reypper-Bond House, located on a hill to the west. This important building has been designated a National, State and Local landmark for its significant place in the evolution of Montclair, for the people who were associated with building and living in this house, and for their participation in shaping Montclair. Esthetically, it is quite beautiful, and gives a great impression as one enters our beautiful town.

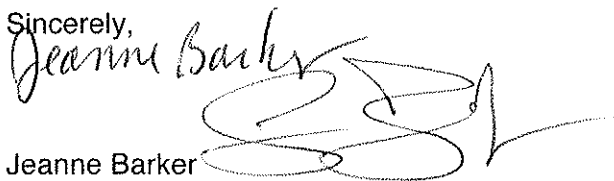
Intricately associated with and just as important historically is the Montclair Heights Reformed Church. This gem of a building has served thousands of Montclair residents throughout its more than 100 years of existence, including but not limited to the forefathers of Upper Montclair. Many historic leaders came to worship within the walls and one can only imagine the gatherings outside the church, and the discussions of politics, religion, gossip and planning of the building of Upper Montclair.

Currently, the church houses the Watchung Cooperative Preschool. It continues to serve the residents of Montclair in the way that the Van-Reypper-Speer families imagined. My own children attended this school and it was a thrill to walk to this magnificent building every morning. The residents of the neighborhood around the church consider this church and school an integral part of the neighborhood.

This building needs to be preserved because it is a corner piece of Montclair history, and because it is too beautiful to destroy. The church, the cemetery and the Van-Reypper-Bond House together, make up a very important piece of early Dutch Settlement in Speertown, or Montclair, as it is known today, and should be preserved forever.

Thank-you for considering Montclair Heights Reformed Church worthy of your important designation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jeanne Barker' and 'Jim Baity' joined together. The signature is written in a cursive style with some loops and flourishes.

Jeanne Barker  
Jim Baity

Helen L. Fallon

June 15, 2013

To whom it may concern:

I'm writing in support of landmark designation for the Montclair Heights Reformed Church at the corner of Mt. Hebron and Valley roads in Montclair.

As a nearly 25-year resident of Montclair Heights, and someone who spent a great deal of time at the building during the six years my children attended the preschool in the parish house, I've grown quite fond of the Heights Church. Additionally, I was recently recognized by the Montclair Township Historic Preservation Committee for my extensive research into the history of the northwestern neighborhood of Montclair in which the church is located. There is no doubt of the building's significance in the cultural, social and architectural history of the development of Montclair in the 1800s/early 1900s, particularly the Upper Montclair region originally called Speertown after its founding Dutch family.

The church was built on a small corner set aside in the late 1800s by the cemetery at the request of the Van-Reyper-Speer family, on property that had only a few years prior been actively worked Speer farm land. Speertown was growing and its residents were willing to make the commitment to build a local church for their local community. The building itself is quite beautiful, built with traprock from the nearby quarries.

I hope the Township of Montclair shares my neighborhood's pride in this historic, comely and iconic anchor of the north end of town.

Sincerely,



Helen L. Fallon

David G. Staubach, DVM  
12 Argyle Rd.  
Montclair, NJ 07043

December 5, 2012

Dear Mr. Ross

I am writing to request the preservation of Montclair Heights Reformed Church as a historical monument. This church served as the first place of worship for my family in Montclair. From 2003 until shortly before it closed doors in 2011 we came to this place for spirituality and community.

Having been raised in Old Tappan's only Dutch Reformed Church, it was a natural transition for me and my young twins to become a part of the MHRC congregation. The church, believed to be founded by the descendants of early Dutch families nearly a century ago, is the only reformed church in Montclair. It was with heavy hearts that we left it behind .

The MHRC It is an iconic edifice in the town. I hope that one day my children's children will see its Gothic stone and stained glass beauty as it was over one hundred years earlier and know how much it has meant to so many families in Montclair and its surrounding communities.

Thank you for your consideration of this important matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "David G. Staubach, DVM". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping initial "D".

David G. Staubach, DVM



Lillian C. Cinek

136 Woodlawn Avenue

Upper Montclair, New Jersey 07043

December 7, 2012

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing this letter in regards to the Montclair Heights Reformed Church, located at 71 Mt. Hebron Road, Upper Montclair, New Jersey. According to records, this church was erected approximately 115 years ago and exemplifies an architectural style of that time, with its Gothic lines and elements. As a former member of the congregation of the Montclair Heights Reformed Church, I feel that this building should be considered for historic preservation. It is my hope that the Montclair Historic Preservation Commission will also recognize the need to preserve this important landmark for our town. Thank you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Lillian C. Cinek".

Lillian C. Cinek

55 Craig Place  
Bloomfield, NJ 07003  
Dec. 10, 2012

Historic Preservation Commission

Re: Montclair Heights Reformed Church

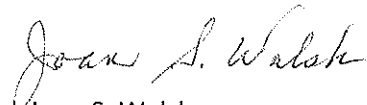
To whom it may concern:

The Montclair Reformed Church has been established as a worshipping community since 1897.

The stones for the church were brought by horse and wagon from a quarry on the nearby mountain by the young people of the church. The church bell was cast by the McNeely Bell Co. of Troy, NY dated A.D.1899. Exquisite stained glass windows were put in about 1935 by expert church window specialists Marchesi and Hamersma of Passaic, NJ along with the talented artists team of Thomas R. Di Giacomo and George Schlagintweit.

I ask the commission to give this request some deep thought. It would be a shame for anyone to have the opportunity to change what has been on the corner of Valley Road and Mount Hebron Avenue for such a long period of time.

Sincerely yours,

  
Joan S. Walsh

Helena Z. Wilson  
19 College Avenue  
Montclair, N.J. 07043

To Whom it May Concern:

I am a thirty-plus year resident of Montclair Heights, and am writing in support of our neighborhood's beautiful Montclair Reform Church.

It is rumored that the church may be sold and potentially be destroyed. The church is an integral part of our neighborhood, and it has personally provided me much pleasure. I have been to weddings there, and have witnessed many beautiful wedding parties outside the church. The building itself is historic, with stained glass windows clearly visible from Valley Road.

I would hate to see this building gone. I would feel as if part of my neighborhood was gone, and it would be very sad.

Thank you for your consideration in this matter.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Helena Z. Wilson". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the printed name.

Helena Z. Wilson

39 College Ave  
Montclair, NJ 07043

23 September 2013

Dear Mr. Ross,

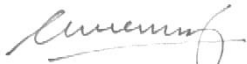
I lend enthusiastic support to recognizing the Montclair Heights Reformed Church on Mt. Hebron Road as a local historic landmark. This is a gorgeous and iconic building, one of the first things many people see upon entering town from New York. I actually remember gasping when the Decamp bus stopped in front of the church on my first trip to Montclair. It was a sunny day and the church's beautiful colored stone, picturesque gables, stained glass windows, and tasteful landscaping, combined with its dramatic position next to the cemetery, made a remarkable first impression. When the bus doors opened it was a bit like exiting the hatch of a time machine -- the modern skyscrapers and grime of Manhattan gave way to the parish church and cemetery of an English village like those I had seen in illustrated history books. Little did I know at the time that we would later move to Montclair. I sometimes wonder how much that remarkable first impression played subconsciously in our choice of communities.

The Montclair Reformed Church's aesthetic value and striking location adjacent to the cemetery certainly qualify it for landmark status as does its historical significance for the township. The entire northeastern quadrant of Montclair was one of the earliest settlements in the area (Speertown) and the lovely church was built by the same family that constructed the majestic Van Reyper-Bond House, which is already a local, state, and national landmark. The remarkable swath of open green space constituted by the church and its grounds, the parsonage and Bradford School across Valley Road, the cemetery, and the Van Reyper-Bond House and its grounds are themselves worthy of conservation because they are the last vestiges of the family farms that once characterized this neighborhood. The fields and prominent landscape setting of the Van Reyper-Bond House were themselves landmarked with the house because of this local agricultural history and Montclair State University students routinely conduct archeological digs on the grounds. New Jersey is stereotypically known for its population density, highways, and strip malls, which gives us even more imperative to preserve the few remaining vestiges of historical farmland we have in Montclair Township.

I would thus also recommend including the church's grounds, the parsonage, and the cemetery in the landmark nomination. A great deal of the church's charm lies in the way it is set back from the street in close proximity to the cemetery. Both parcels of land were contributed by the Van Reyper-Speer family to assist the developing community. As a result, these pieces of the original Speertown (church, cemetery, parsonage, and Van Reyper-Bond House) are intimately connected to the already landmarked Van Reyper-Bond House and its grounds. In fact, the entire neighborhood from Mt. Hebron to Normal Ave between Grove St. and Highland are part of the early Dutch settlement of Speertown and should be recognized as such.

Thank you very much for nominating the Montclair Reformed Church for landmark designation. It is a jewel of a building and truly worthy of landmark status, on both aesthetic and historical grounds.

With all best wishes,



Elizabeth Emery